

Two April pranks show humor can be hurtful

■ **OUR OPINION:** The joke was on minorities but it just wasn't funny

April Fools' Day is supposed to be a time to trick your more gullible friends into believing something that isn't true, then kid them because they should've known better. But this year, some of the fools in this community were the ones playing the jokes.

Here on campus, some prominent minority students were recently sent official-looking letters on University letterhead declaring that all federal financial aid based on affirmative action was going to be discontinued at the University and that a meeting was scheduled for April 1 for students to voice their concerns. The letter was a forgery and a stupid prank, but looked real enough to trick some recipients into showing up to an empty EMU meeting room.

The most troubling thing about this case is not so much the acts of forgery and deceit involved, although those things are disturbing, too. What's really bothersome is the fact that someone apparently thought this prank was a funny thing to do. The idea of ending affirmative action, controversial as it is, is not what's offensive; it's the singling out of active minority students for a joke that can only have the effect of making them feel less welcome at the University. The message, whether intended or not, is that speaking up when you're a member of minority is an invitation for harassment on this campus.

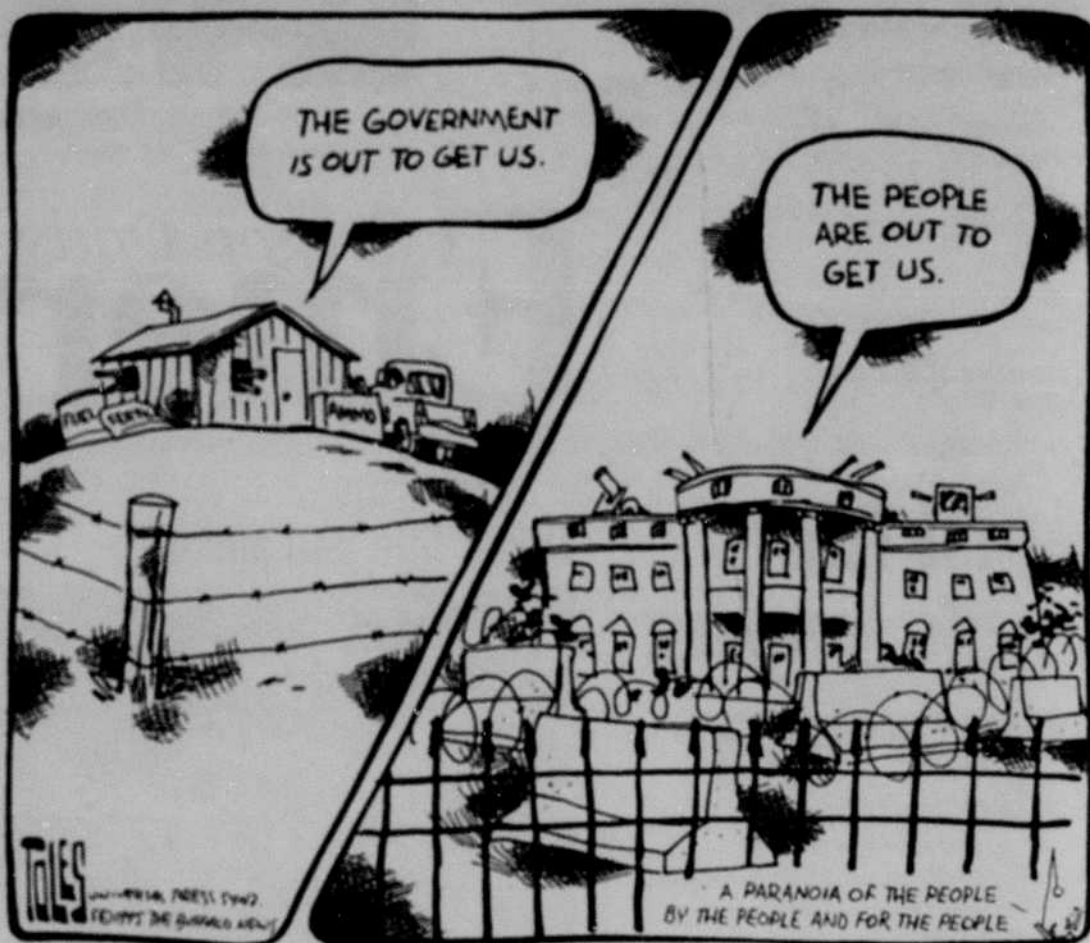
Whether the person or

people responsible for the letter were true racists or just jerks, however, will be impossible to tell unless they're caught — an unlikely possibility at best. For now, it's best to take this opportunity to remind ourselves that minorities are not just calling wolf when they say discrimination is still a problem in this community.

Another dumb joke was played out across the river, when students at Springfield High School published an April Fools' edition of the school newspaper, containing a cartoon depiction of stereotypically Hispanic-looking extraterrestrials in a low-rider spaceship below a headline that read, "Alien gangs surface at SHS." An editorial in the issue also joked that the U.S.-Mexico border should be mined so illegal immigrants would "explode" upon entering the country.

The students responsible for the issue apparently convinced their adviser to allow their "joke" to go to print. They must've been very eloquent in making their case, because it seems pretty obviously offensive to us — as it did to the 20 or so angry students who demanded a meeting with the principal and the authors of some of the articles in order to resolve the issue.

Both of these incidents can only serve to alienate minorities at a time when the University and the community both are struggling to earn a reputation for honoring diversity. On April 1, the fools came out this year. And they made us all look bad.



Watch out for cops, naked men in attics

Unfortunately, the Second Amendment protects even the rights of a fool to hold and bear arms — Anonymous

Whilst perusing the Emerald a few weeks back, I stumbled across a very interesting front page article dealing with the bust of a methamphetamine lab. It all seemed pretty basic — some white trash yahoo trying to play Mr. Science and Dr. Feelgood at the same time in his garage, the SWAT team gearing up for an assault on the house, the eventual arrest of the suspect, etc., etc., yada, yada, yada.

Then I got to the last paragraph. It seems that the reporter writing the story had not quite fulfilled her inch requirement for the article and so another little tidbit of information about the bust was added.

It appears that a certain SWAT team member, Derel V. Schultz, shot himself in the foot during the raid. Literally.

Oh, SWAT by the way stands for Special Weapons And Tactics. Yessiree bob, that was one hell of a tactic Schultz employed. And he even did it with what Mr. Rogers would call a very special weapon — a Heckler & Koch MP5, the very same weapon that Navy SEAL teams use.

Now tell me this — what kind of jackass goes and shoots himself in the foot? Some redneck from Springfield with too many cheap beers in his belly? A wacko from Idaho playing weekend warrior? Or could it be a member of Eugene's elite SWAT team? Hmmmmmm ...

The police say that the gun went off accidentally. Well even though I don't have a lifetime subscription to Guns & Ammo, I do know that HKs don't just "go off" accidentally. The reason that the military and SWAT teams use HKs is because they don't just go off. They are solid as a brick and perform flawlessly. If they didn't, military strike teams and SWAT teams from small podunk towns wouldn't use them. Rambo was probably trying to play cops and robbers a little too zealously and forgot that when your sneaking and peaking about looking for the bad guy, that you keep your finger on the outside trigger guard (if the safety's off) and not on the damn trigger, or you get — case in point — a big owie in your foot.

Great. And my hard earned tax dollars went to pay for his hospital bills and for the workman's compensation that I'm sure he'll get for "injuring" himself on the job. Nothing I like better than paying for someone else's stupidity.

So Schultz screwed up. Now he has to deal with the pain, the suffering, the rehabilitation, the loss of his pride and the asinine comments of some college puke. Damn straight he does. What if Einstein here hadn't shot himself in the foot? What if instead his gun had gone off "accidentally" and he plugged an innocent bystander

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JESSE BOHRER-CLANCY

or a cop?

Also remember that he was stomping around a methamphetamine lab. What if a round went off straight into the garage? Meth labs are known to use large amounts ether and other fun chemicals to make their little goodies. And ether isn't especially well known for reacting well to gun fire. You see, it tends to explode very easily. So now the garage goes boom and all of the other chemicals in there go up with it. Those that don't explode are then scattered all over the surrounding neighborhood. Instant superfund site and cancer mecca. I'm glad that it was just his foot.

This leads to the question: How well does the Eugene Police Department train its SWAT teams? As well as those trained in LA or New York. Should they be? The EPD doesn't usually have to go into gang territory where criminals are armed to the teeth. No, instead they go after half naked middle aged fat guys hiding unarmed in their attics. Well perhaps after Schultz's little "accident" the EPD should reevaluate its training procedures such as how to keep your finger off the trigger if the safety's off until you are certain that you're going to fire the thing.

Then there are those who would say that since I wasn't in the situation, I don't know what the hell I am talking about. They're right. I don't know what it's like to dress up like the cover of Soldier of Fortune and try to flush out an unarmed partially nude coward from the attic that he has been covering in for six hours. No idea. I imagine I'd get to play with all those neat little toys, dress up in those cool clothes and talk about the danger and the rush we all felt over cheap beer with the boys in a local saloon after it was all over.

Or perhaps if I had half a brain, my partner and I could just dress up in plain clothes and nail the guy on his way out of the grocery store — saving me from having to buy myself a new pair of sneakers. Oh, wait a minute, that was already done a couple weeks ago. The unarmed perpetrator was shot in the back "accidentally" while trying to get away. My, my, my, the EPD certainly seems to be having a lot of "accidents" lately.

I wonder if a jaywalker will have an unfortunate accident. And you know, I'll bet that Rodney King's beating was just an "accident" too. I certainly hope that someone doesn't "accidentally" knock on my door at 2 a.m. with a big black stick.

Jesse I. Bohrer-Clancy, a senior majoring in Biochemistry, is a columnist for the Emerald. E-mail: jbcclancy@gladstone.uoregon.edu

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Newsroom: (541) 348-5811; Display Advertising: (541) 348-3712

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