

Hate between two dies after peaceful meeting

■ OUR OPINION: Conflict resolution meetings bring healing and hope

Simple pictures can often tell incredible stories.

Sometimes, a photo can be so compelling or bizarre, it takes a second, third and fourth look to really let the image sink in. Other photos defy reality and can challenge a viewer's acceptance of the image.

Ever see an evangelical Christian pastor and lesbian activist hug each other?

They did in the *Register-Guard* on Sunday.

Thanks to a series of conflict resolution meetings sponsored by the University's Humanities Center, the National Institute for Dispute Resolution and the efforts of two people who were willing to try and break down some of the barriers between themselves, such a photo opportunity existed in Eugene.

The picture was worth more than a thousand words.

John Koekkoek, pastor of Norkenzie Christian Church, and Nadia Telsey, faculty advisor of a service-learning program at the University, both committed two years ago to attend the New Community Meetings that began after the debate surrounding the controversial anti-gay rights Measure 9 ballot.

Through the meetings, the two found they could understand each other's concerns and actually respect and care for one another.

What an incredible thing.

Imagine what might be accomplished if one day skinheads could sit down with the people they supposedly hate so much, to

share their beliefs and reveal the origins of their misinformed opinions. Of course, Jews, African-Americans, Chicanos and any other group or race that was part of the discourse would have equal opportunity to share their concerns in the open forum as well.

Imagine the wounds of misunderstanding and distrust that could finally begin to heal between blacks and whites, between other racially divided groups, between the religious and non-religious and between the young and old.

Before any two "enemies" can meet though, there has to be an inner desire to want to change, to want to put an end to the hate and contempt that not only hurts the person or group it is directed at, but ends up poisoning the hater as well.

Telsey and Koekkoek found that the beliefs they held of each other were largely unfounded and could be bridged by mutual respect and understanding.

In meeting face to face, the stereotypes crumbled, phantoms disappeared and both people were able to find a measure of personal peace.

The process wasn't easy for Telsey or Koekkoek, and it won't be easy for anyone else who attempts to take on their own prejudices by meeting an antagonist face to face, but the payoff is worth the price of any discomfort.

Once on the path toward barrier-breaking, forgiveness and reconciliation, there can be no looking or going back.

And as Telsey said, "If we believe in diversity and tolerance, it has to go around to everyone."



President: Racism not to be tolerated

Recent national news — from beatings in California to arrests in Corvallis — demonstrates that racism continues to infect our country's psyche. And recent incidents have shown that our campus here in Eugene is not immune to this disease. While we are not immune, we need not be accepting of this particular evil.

We do not tolerate racist behavior at the University when it takes the form of yelling insults out residence hall windows. We do not ignore it when it surfaces in the form of "prank" letters sent to students of color.

Racism is not to be forgiven because it takes the form of an April Fools' Day joke. It is not overlooked because the insults are yelled during the pressures of Finals Week.

Racism is not explained away as part of a growing national trend. It is not excused because demagogic leaders give it voice. It is not made morally acceptable because some voters across the nation adopt racially charged positions on questions from immigration to education.

None of this gives us leave on this campus to regress into thoughtless, hurtful, ethically flawed and juvenile behavior.

We do not tolerate racism at the University. And we will take action to make certain that racial incidents are dealt with swiftly and surely. I have been advised by both the University Office of Public Safety and the Office of University Housing that any reports of racially based incidents on our campus will be answered quickly.

I have already called for a joint meeting of the University's Race Task Force and Racial Issues Advisory Council. We will use this gathering to discuss the recent incidents and find ways to best ensure a campus climate that will discourage their recurrence.

There are opportunities for us all to help broaden our understanding of the insidious

COMMENTARY

Dave Frohnmayer

effects of racial and ethnic intolerance.

Primitivo Rodriguez, co-founder of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, has arrived in Oregon to spend the next two weeks as the University's 1996 Wayne Morse Professor of Law and Politics. I encourage you to attend his public lecture on April 16, in the EMU Ballroom, on issues of economic and political integration between Mexico and the United States.

Then, in early May, the University will host an extraordinary gathering of Holocaust scholars at public events during its "Ethics After the Holocaust" conference.

It may seem a far leap — even an unimaginable leap — from slurs yelled out a residence hall window to the horrors of the Holocaust. It is, regrettably, not unthinkable. When we as a community allow or condone racist behavior of any sort, we have taken the first step onto a slippery ethical slope that denies our fellow humans essential respect. We cannot, and with your help, will not take that first steep step on this campus.

Our campus ought to be, in every corner, a special place where we encourage the free, open and respectful exchange of ideas. We must — and we will — work together to keep this a safe and accepting place for all of our students, faculty and staff.

It is important that we know about racial incidents as soon as they happen. If you see an incident occur in University housing, please notify your resident assistant. If it occurs on campus, notify the Office of Public Safety. I also encourage you to send me your thoughts and ideas via e-mail at pres@oregon.uoregon.edu.

Dave Frohnmayer is President of the University.

LETTERS

Saferide vital

As you know, we at Project Saferide strive to create a safe environment for women on this campus. Most students and community members are supportive, but unfortunately some people make our job very difficult.

Saturday night, a man stood outside our window and masturbated while watching one of our dispatchers. After a while he knocked on the window and alerted the dispatcher to his presence. While she called 911 and described him to the police, he stayed, with his pants around his ankles, and completed masturbating. Unfortunately, he left before the police arrived.

It is infuriating that a service

here to help women feel safe has been targeted in this manner. We now have to take extra precautions to ensure the safety of our staff and volunteers. We will not let this harassment deter us from our goal of creating a safe environment on this campus for women. We will not be silent either. If anything, this incident has strengthened our resolve to "take back the night."

The man is described as caucasian with long black hair in a ponytail. He appeared to be in his late twenties, had a medium build and was medium height. We believe that it is very important to publicize this incident so people can be aware of the potential dangers on this campus.

When people suggest that

Saferide is not an important or needed service on this campus, they should think again. This man was running around our campus at 11:30 Saturday night when many people were out. Students on this campus need to be aware of this so they are not lulled into a false sense of security.

Students concerned about this and/or other safety issues on campus, or are interested in helping Saferide, can stop by Suite 3 in the EMU or call 346-0653. If enough students are interested we would like to hold a meeting to discuss safety on this campus. As always, Saferide has room for input from both women and men.

Jenna Wasson
co-director Project Saferide

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