

Invalid theory

Through his column, Larry Haftl promotes openness to new ideas with his musings on evolution, creationism and life on Mars (ODE, April 16). Certainly, few people are probably going to argue for close-minded rejection of new ideas. However, once new ideas have been aired, insistence on further uncritical acceptance promotes gullibility.

A journalist writing responsibly about scientific topics needs to distinguish between scientific theory, religious teaching and idle speculation.

Creationism is not a scientific theory; evolution is. Darwin's central insight — natural selection — undergirds evolutionary theory. No such insight underlies "creation science." Rather, creationists assume a creator — an assumption drawn further from their religious convictions. Instead of developing positive proofs for their assertions, creationists seek to discredit evolutionary theory, apparently expecting their account of creation to stand up to scrutiny if evolutionary theory is absent from the debate.

In 1987, the United States Supreme Court ruled that creationism is a religious doctrine, not a scientific theory, and so could not be taught alongside evolution in public school science classes.

Speculation that Martians or other space aliens brought life to our planet is interesting, but is neither scientific nor a theory. Such conjectures do precede, and sometimes engender, testable hypotheses. And some hypotheses, when tested, provide factual information that can be used to buttress or disprove particular theories.

Creationism and the "Martian origins theory" are not "theories" on a par with evolutionary theory as Haftl asserts. Neither have stood up to the kind of scrutiny that Darwin's dangerous idea has, nor has either been successfully used to predict natural phenomena, as the theory

of evolution has.

Uncritical acceptance of untested claims is as great an obstacle toward understanding as offhand rejection of ideas. If Haftl plans to write about scientific principles, he should read less John Lilly — whose drug-induced paranoia figures prominently in later writings — and spend more time reviewing the logic of scientific methodology.

Don Reynolds
Journalism

Dangerous situation

On the night of April 7, I was walking with a friend through the EMU around 11:30 p.m. Eugene police cars and OPS trucks were cruising the area with searchlights shining through the foliage looking for something. My friend and I figured they couldn't be looking for anything too dangerous or we'd have been told that it might not be a good idea for two young ladies to be walking around campus late at night, clothed in shorts and t-shirts. Nobody stopped to tell us anything about what had happened, let alone, warn us of any danger.

But a few days later, I read the article in the Emerald informing me about the occurrences on that Saturday night. To my surprise, I found that the police and OPS were searching for a man who had masturbated outside of Saferide Headquarters. The act that the man did was obviously an act against women and our efforts to keep each other safe.

The duties of a police officer and the OPS are to protect the safety of all civilians. Therefore, the Eugene police officers and the OPS failed to perform their duty. I am appalled that nobody stopped and informed me and my friend of the danger we could have encountered from this sexually perverted man.

A message to the police and OPS: Next time you find yourself looking for a pervert in the middle of the night, take notice of civilians who might be walking around and inform them of

danger that may be lurking. It is your duty.

Caroline Leedy
Freshman, Undeclared

Stop racism

The growing number of racist incidents on campus affects everyone who lives, works and studies in this community. We offer our assistance to those who have been targeted by such acts and we appeal to racists to consider the consequences of their behavior.

Many people target minorities and others who they perceive to be different to avoid facing their own insecurities. Group peer pressure makes this all the more tempting as some struggle to feel accepted and confident.

The problem is that scapegoating not only turns the other person into an object, it turns oneself into a robot — unable to see the other or to broaden one's experience. Even a comment or action made in jest can be very hurtful to those feeling increasingly threatened and vulnerable to racism. To avoid causing this sort of harm, we urge you to think before you act. Isn't that what a university education is all about?

We stand by those who are targeted by these acts and offer our emotional support, should you need to talk about your experiences.

Mark Evans
Gwen Tistadt
Robin Holmes
University Counseling Center

LETTERS POLICY

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

Do You Want Good Teachers?

Help us reward them. If you have had an outstanding teacher this year in an English composition class (any class with a "WR" prefix), nominate him or her for an Outstanding Composition Teacher Award. Leave a note or a detailed letter with the English Department or mail it to Anne Laskaya, Department of English, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403. Nominations must be postmarked or submitted by Tuesday, April 30. For information, call 346-3911.

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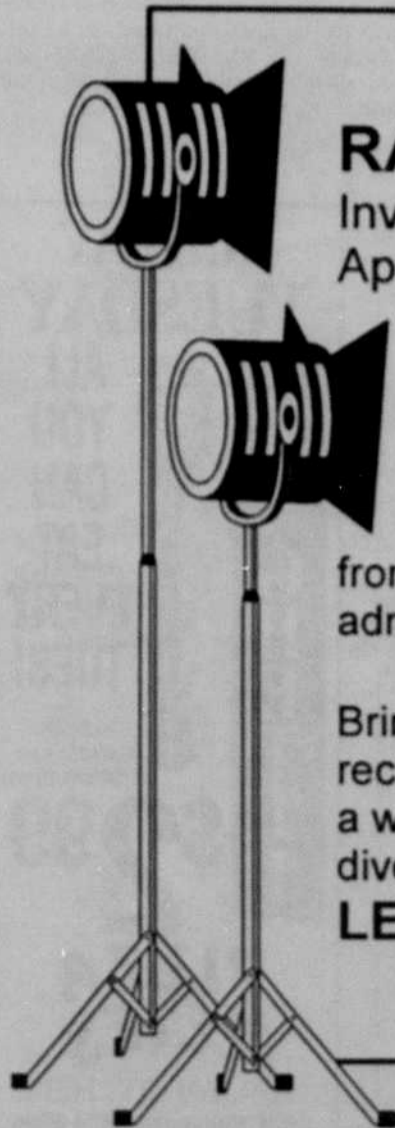
The RACE TASK FORCE

Invites You to Attend a Forum
April 24, Wednesday, from
3:00 to 5:00 in the
Multicultural Center.

Although special circumstances may prevent President Frohnmayer from attending, key university administrators will be present.

Bring your concerns and recommendations to help make this a welcoming campus that honors diversity.

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Chris Fonseca

Real-time captioning and a sign language interpreter will be provided.
For other accommodations please contact Hilary Gerdes @ 346-3211 by April 22
Major funding provided by Disability Service Project, the School of Journalism and Communication,
Specialized Training Program, the ASUO and RHGC (Residence Hall Governance Committee)