

Oregon's welcome mat for meth? Take it away

■ **OUR OPINION:** Dealers, makers and users of this drug aren't welcome here

For decades now, this state has been a major source of attraction for Californians tired of smog, traffic jams and a high cost of living. Many Washington residents, as well as people from Idaho to New Mexico, have also decided to pull up their roots and move to Oregon.

After all, the state still has breathable air, there's no state tax, we have beautiful beaches, incredible mountains, rolling farmlands, lush countrysides and even rustic deserts — not to mention a strong commitment to environmental issues that allows the state's natural beauty to thrive.

For these and other reasons, another group of individuals has also found that Oregon suits its needs better than any other state on the West Coast: chemists and dealers of methamphetamine.

Meth dealers from California, Nevada, Idaho and Mexico are taking advantage of Oregon counties such as Malheur and Harney — not for their serene settings — but because Oregon has such lenient penalties for drug crimes and because it is convenient to drive across the border to sell the drugs in remote locations.

Unfortunately, Ballot Measure 11, the 1994 initiative that gave mandatory prison time for violent crimes, failed to even address drug-related offenses.

Oops. How the heck did we let that happen? Come to Oregon, visit the

forests, recycle all your paper, glass and aluminum, and if you're going to make meth, for heaven's sake, don't let your lab blow up and burn down any of our trees!

Aside from meth mushroom clouds in the sky, meth production has become easier due to the substitution of some of the ingredients used to make the drug.

Faced with increased restrictions on ephedrine and hydriotic acid, meth chemists have been forced to substitute the controlled chemicals with ones that are easier to get — like the ingredients found in head-cold medicines and other common over-the-counter drugs.

One of the other sinister aspects of meth is that it can be manufactured in almost any place a person can set up a stove. Residents of Burns found that out when a lab blew up and burned the local Motel 6, causing \$3 million in damage. The criminals were arrested, but the reason they weren't caught before the fire was because the substitute chemicals they used did not have the usual tell-tale odor.

Aside from the highly toxic side-effects and harm to people and the environment that come with its production, the drug is a nasty and incredibly addictive one that can severely damage the brain.

So, if you like seeing Oregon's beauty while being high on meth, it's your life, go right ahead, knock yourself out. But go buy a scenic book and stay home. We don't want methheads (or its makers or dealers) ruining our state.



LETTERS

Misinformation?

When Bobby Lee was a candidate for City Council, he sought the *Emerald's* help in suppressing his critics, I being one of them. Lee has a long history of opportunism and unethical practices, so it was no surprise that he acted predictably during his campaign.

I helped distribute fliers that warned prospective voters of his questionable character and dubious ties.

When someone caught him removing them from the mailboxes in the ASUO office, the *Emerald* leapt to his defense. It did this in part by repeating Lee's accusation that I was "stalking" him.

Did the reporter who wrote the story published May 20 bother to call me to ask whether Lee's charges were true? No. But if he had, I would have pointed out that I was wisely exercising my right to free speech by warning voters that Lee has a habit of making false claims and opportunistic political maneuvers.

Instead, the *Emerald* allowed Lee to proclaim himself a victim of "intimidation and lies." If this seems plausible to the reader, it is because the *Emerald* and *The Register-Guard* alike refuse to hold their favored candidates up to public scrutiny.

Indeed, their practice is publishing lofty sound bites designed to distract listeners from social problems — so much that Lee won his "race" for the council seat because the monied interests found him adept at giving lip service to citizen involvement and eager to help legislate their exploitative designs on the land and people of Eugene. What a combination!

The *Emerald's* defense of Lee extended to former ASUO President Jennifer Williamson, who took the fall for him on the removal of the flyers from mail boxes.

The *Emerald* reported that Williamson claimed responsibility for removing the flyers, as Lee had said she did, and that she cited a policy that authorized her to take such action. But the reporter never asked to see the policy. It just reported

Williamson's statement that it exists.

Thus, the *Emerald* was serving as a mouthpiece to politicians engaged in political wrongdoing. Even though the Eugene police have apologized to me for misleading the reporter, the fact remains that this in an incidence of political repression.

The correction and apology to me by the *Emerald* do not reverse the impression that if you speak up against an authority figure, you stand a pretty good chance of becoming the target of misinformation.

Free speech has been chilled. Yet another opportunist will take office in Eugene. Many concerned citizens plan to follow Lee's actions on the City Council and report them to the electorate.

Thinking back to this incident, I will necessarily conclude that more free speech is needed to defend our community and our civil liberties.

No matter how much Lee tries to stop people from learning about his history, he will undoubtedly keep creating it.

Tooraj Fooladi
Eugene

Save UWAH

I founded the United Women of Asian Heritage at the beginning of this school year and have been working as a co-director for the organization.

Here we are, very close to the end of the year, and we can't even have an election because of lack of interest and participation. Many of us, including myself, who worked hard to establish UWAH are graduating this month, and I am very concerned about the future of our organization.

About 5 percent or more of the student body at the University, I would think, consists of women of Asian heritage, but there was no specific group that attempted to deal with various issues that this population of students confronts on an everyday basis prior to UWAH's existence. We were under represented.

It is important that we do not lose the voice we have gained this year. I urge you to come

participate and continue the effort to raise issues that women of Asian heritage face in this society. Without your support, UWAH will disappear very soon.

You don't have to be a woman of Asian heritage to join UWAH. All registered students who are concerned about the issues are welcome to participate. Because it is a new group, our program is flexible. If you want to do something, just come and do it. We need your participation and support.

Miyuki Taguchi
co-director United Women of Asian Heritage

Designated success

The Designated Driver Shuttle has served students for its first full year. We gave more than 650 rides to people who might have otherwise driven, and we expect to have higher numbers next year as DDS becomes better known across campus.

DDS takes students from licensed drinking establishments, including restaurants, to their homes. We will be operating our usual times, Wednesday to Saturday, 10 p.m. to 3 a.m., this week.

If blowing off the pressure of finals this weekend should cause you to need our services, please call 346-0621. Dead Week is our final week of operation — don't let it be yours.

Among the many people and organizations that have been essential in the success of our program, I would like to thank the DDS driving team, our operations manager, the ASUO and all of the students who voted for the DDS ballot measure.

Thanks for the generous support from the University Physical Plant, the Health Center, OPS, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Project Eugene, Doc's Pad, Renny's Landing, Southtowne Pub, Goodtimes Cafe and Max's.

To the graduates — congratulations; and we will see the rest of the students in the fall.

Thomas McCarthy
DDS Director

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