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OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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Racism is a problem that needs teamwork, not just teams

OUR OPINION: Every student, regardless of race, must take part in educating others before true diversity can be reached

African-Americans: Athletic lovers of rap music.
 Hispanic-Americans: Energetic, frequent members of gangs.
 Asian-Americans: Short, fast-talking mathematicians.
 Arab-Americans: Turban-wearing sexists.
 Native Americans: Bitter derelicts with strange last names.

We all know the preconceptions, the labels. They run rampant among the uneducated and the intolerant — those without understanding. But we're different. We students hate these notions. We join student unions

and task forces to fight stereotypes and promote diversity. These horrible labels could never thrive here, not with all our effort, right?

We'd all like to think that pillar of evil — racism — could not exist at the University. But there's a reason organizations like the Race Task Force are formed. There's a reason minority students increasingly feel alienated among an expanding white population.

Racism is alive and well — and all around us.

This isn't anything new to the 22 percent of the student body who lie in the minority. These students have known it all along. But for many of us, it's easy to deny the fact that racist incidents happen every day on this campus. It's easy to forget that many students with the same problems

we all face lead a more difficult life simply because of their ethnicity.

Unfortunately, because of this ignorance, minority students form innumerable student unions based on their heritage. They feel the need to congregate with their own so passionately, they often reject broader ethnic unions to create groups more specific to their background. Case in point: the larger, more established Asian-Pacific American Student Union and the newly formed United Women of Asian Heritage.

Is this splintering of groups really necessary? The problem of racism and misunderstanding is a difficult problem, but isn't massive grouping what we are all fighting against? Of course, most ethnic student unions claim to exist to promote understanding

and integration. And for many groups, this mission statement is followed strictly.

But for others, the mere formation of their union serves only as a place to feel comfortable with "your own" and as a means to receive ASUO funds for isolated events — certainly not for outreach. For without outreach, how can any ethnic student union claim a strong reason for existence?

Granted, student unions are valuable resources for minority students to feel "at home" and for younger students to become socially established. This ability to cater to its members is important for any student organization. But with such a large racism problem on this campus, interrelations with all student groups is needed — not isolationism. No student group is doing its

duty unless it attempts to promote understanding of its group among the general student population — and not for the purpose of increasing membership. Ethnic unions are all too important in this equation.

How can we become aware of the stereotypes and injustices minority students face if many of them are too content to entertain themselves, not educate? Fortunately, most student groups are working every day to promote understanding. And many students in the majority are receptive to other's experiences. But until every one of us, minority and majority, join in the fight, the horrific curse of racism will never be overcome.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.



ALL thumbs



To the University:

The administration has moved slowly to make older buildings on campus accessible to students and staff with disabilities. Architectural dinosaurs like Fenton and Friendly Hall must be revamped, following in the lead of Robinson Theatre's recent renovations.

To Eugene City Council:

On Nov. 4, the citizen governing body voted 4-3 to extend the West University dog and skateboard ban to Pearl St. along 13th Avenue. This is a good move, as long as the vote is the end of the ordinance. Other tactics must be used now to combat pedestrian congestion and drug dealing.

LETTERS

Boycott TCI

I like cable TV. However, like people who may enjoy sex but do not appreciate being raped, I do not like TCI Cablevision.

Our local rate-gouging, channel-swapping cable company has never been about consumer satisfaction but about the abuse of power. Because of the absence of direct competition, TCI's attitude has always been that its subscribers ought to understand that whatever it decides to do to them is inevitable, and they should just sit back and enjoy it.

I would like to point something out to the women in the community who complained about the removal of the Lifetime Channel. When Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man, it would have been a non-event except for the fact that she triggered a boycott by the black people of Montgomery, Alabama that brought that city's bus company to its financial knees. It seems that the bus company needed black riders more than black

riders needed the bus company.

I would also like to remind these women what Lorena Bobbit did to get the attention of her abusive spouse. I would think that a girlcort organized to perform a similar maneuver on TCI's cable that vowed no reattachments without a resurrection of the Lifetime Channel would make an appropriate point. I doubt that it has ever occurred to TCI that in the final analysis cable TV needs women viewers more than women viewers need cable TV.

Nicholas Urhausen
 Eugene

Priorities wrong

I was shocked by the wholehearted support the Emerald editorial board gave to mayoral candidate Jim Torrey (ODE, Nov. 1). You used to be able to think! Now you pick "crime prevention" as the number one issue for the mayor, meaning the ill-conceived "sweep" of 13th Avenue. Torrey just went around "talking" to people

but never had any solutions in mind for this complex problem. Also his idea of bringing "town and gown" closer together is old and empty blather — as in every college town.

You future leaders at the Emerald paid no attention to the important issues of growth, urban sprawl, traffic and monsters like Hyundai. Those deserve the attention in the future of Eugene, not petty crime of poor hippies.

Torrey is a strong proponent of tax giveaways for big business to lure them to this city, and he generally advocates "Chamber of Commerce" planning.

Is that what the Emerald stands for?

Are you for unsustainable growth, the status quo, no new ideas and more traffic?

You should all have been at David Suzuki's lecture or attend classes of John Baldwin! You might find out how bleak our future really is with more growth and development.

Hilde Cherry
 Eugene

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