

Only communication can solve the problem of racism

No matter where in the country, talking is the key to repairing the ills of racism

Racism is such a dirty word. In today's world, it is probably the dirtiest word in the English language. Those who have been labeled as racists have a very difficult time coming clean. There is so much about racism that is unclear, but the only way to make it clearer is to talk about it.

Race has been a burning topic on campus for a number of years. Is it because the students and faculty are unable to "honor diversity"? Are the ethnic student unions just making a lot of random noise? Difficult to say, but if no one was talking about race and race issues, then we surely would have a major problem.

People who know me have heard these stories a number of times: how I spent three years entrenched in the deep South of Columbus, Mississippi; how I went to three schools in those years and made the important dis-

inction between which ones were private and which were public. I think it is only after some distance and maturity that I am able to fully appreciate the magnitude of the social issues I was faced with.

Columbus is one of the many towns in the South that relies on busing to integrate the schools.

After my eighth grade year, the school was split down the middle with some kids being bused to one school and the rest to another. My freshman year

at S.D. Lee High School is one I'll never forget.

The school was 80 percent minority groups and overwhelmingly African American, thus making me a part of the actual minority. School elections and activities were a racially divided sight to behold. There was a black home-

coming court. Elections for most talented, likely to succeed, wittiest, etc. were all divided between blacks and whites.

The class officer elections were the only ones that had racially combined ballots and the majority of the officers elected were white. If we assume that the white kids vote for white kids and the blacks for black, that doesn't work out mathematically. I suspect that a majority of the black kids didn't vote. A friend of mine suggested that "when you don't feel a part of the system, you don't feel the need to participate." Very wise.

There were a lot of things that went down at that school that still confuse me about conflict between the races. And to say that anyone could leave that atmosphere without some prejudice and confusion is to tell a bald-faced lie. That was in 1990.

Since the public school system in the South left — and probably still does leave — a lot to be desired, my parents and I agreed that I was getting zero education. We decided that I would try the private school, Heritage Acade-

my, that was about two blocks away from where I was attending.

Looking back, I see very distinct lines between the social classes. There was the upper class that consisted of old, pre-Civil War money; the middle class that I feel was made up mostly of the military families; and the lower class, who were black. Heritage Academy was as snobby as old money could get.

The year before I attended Heritage, its rival private school, Emmanuel, had forfeited a football game against the school precisely for the reason that they had a black quarterback. Although it did make the local news for a day or two, the subject eventually became just a piece of the town's history.

At the end of my sophomore year there, we had elected the school's very first black student body president. That was definitely headline news, and you can bet that there were some parents who were not too happy about it.

The point I'm getting at is that no one ever really talked about

racism. You simply could not get a discussion going about race and equality in that town. The people in power didn't care and those that were vocal about change were few and faintly heard.

Racism appears on many different levels. Racism can be in-your-face or subtly ingrained in thought processes and actions. I get the message that the ASUO was trying to send by roping off the basketball seating section, but I think it's even more important that the incident happened. I thank whoever allegedly yelled epithets at the opposing team.

It is a reminder that the struggle of equality and understanding is not over. If we forget, then we have been ignoring the problem, and if we are ignoring the problem then we aren't talking. And without talk, the wounds will never heal.

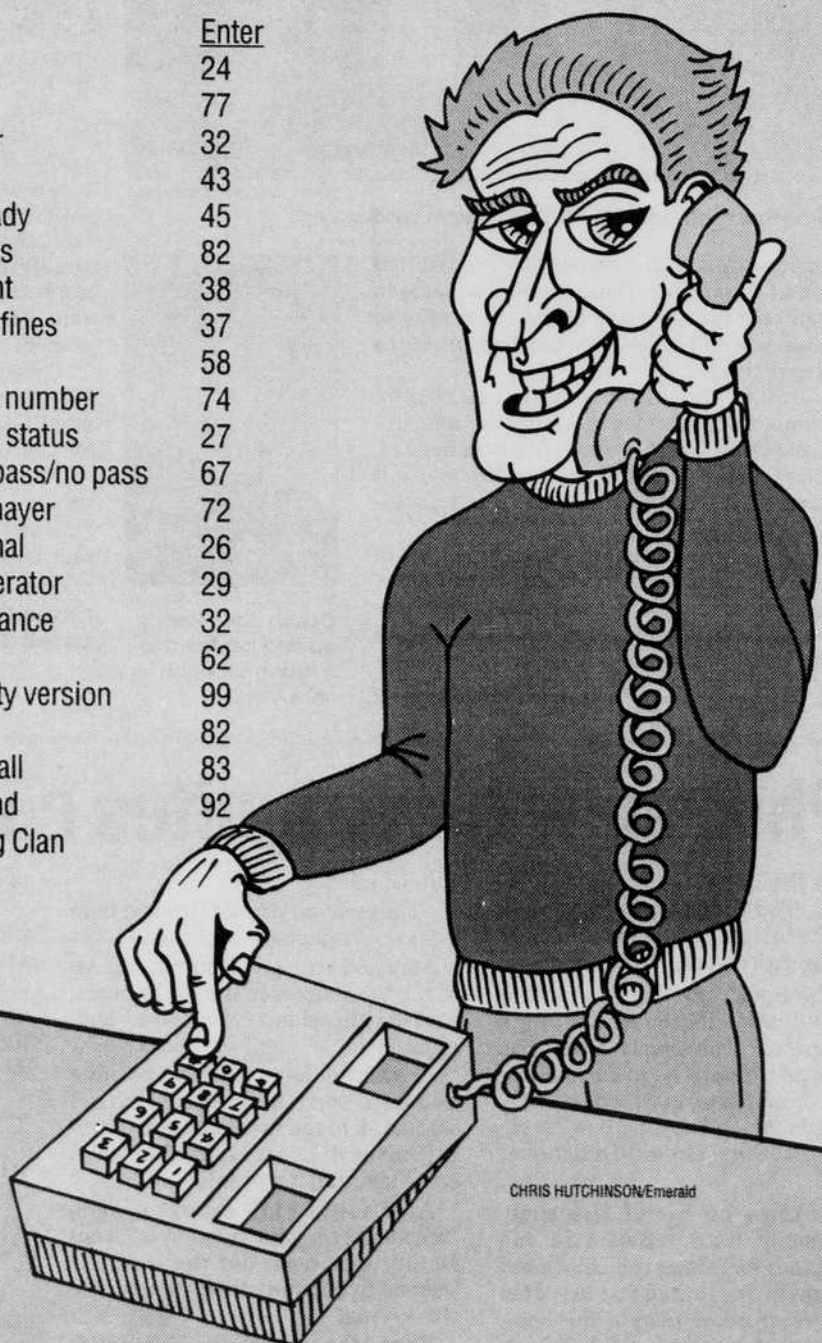
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Amanda Erickson

Duck Call codes we'd like to see

Code	Function	Enter
CG	Change grades	24
SP	Send pizza	77
DC	Destroy computer	32
GE	Graduate early	43
HL	Hit on Duck Call lady	45
U2	Buy concert tickets	82
FU	Register complaint	38
EP	Eliminate parking fines	37
LT	Lower tuition	58
PH	Professor's home number	74
CR	Change residency status	27
NP	Change major to pass/no pass	67
PC	Prank call Frohmayer	72
AO	Attendance optional	26
CX	Change sex of operator	29
EA	Erase account balance	32
OC	Order clone	62
XX	Duck Call: The dirty version	99
TC	Terminate call	82
TD	Terminate Duck Call	83
WC	Switch background music to Wu-Tang Clan	92



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

LETTERS

Game of life

I was truly disgusted to see Bill Sizemore in your "Winners" section on page 2 of the Feb. 24 *Emerald*. This man is not only responsible for the recent property tax caps that have caused sickening cuts into education funding, but has also not paid his taxes! A recent article in the *Register-Guard* went over the late/unpaid taxes that Sizemore has on his "numerous properties." It's one thing to own a home and be concerned about the property taxes of your land and having money for your family. But to be well off enough to own numerous properties, then bitch about the property taxes you need to pay on all of them, and then not pay it, truly deserves a "Loser" standing, not the "Winner" that you so narrow-sightedly gave Mr. Sizemore.

Mike Braden
Chemistry

Editor's note: There seems to be some confusion about the "Winners/Losers" section. Subjects are placed in their respective categories based on events in their own lives. For example, Sizemore was placed in the "Winners" column because his manifesto, Measure 47, passed in the polls, he has broad national support from taxpayers and may be making a run for governor. Regardless of our opinions of him as a person, Sizemore is "winning" at life.

Modern maturity

Those cartoons aren't racist, they "made just about everyone look dumb." Does anyone else see the fallacy of this statement by Jonathan Collegio in his let-

ter to the editor (*ODE*, March 3)?

I've heard people say more than once, on and around this campus, "I'm not a racist, I hate everyone equally." This seems to be the line of thinking that Mr. Collegio is following. Just because the Looney Toons made fun of everyone doesn't make them any less racist. Latinos, Asians, Native Americans... they were all represented in less than favorable ways, specifically playing on stereotypes white Americans held about those groups. Elmer Fudd and Yosemite Sam did not represent Caucasian people as a whole the way the occasional race-based characters did. Hunters or pirates or cowboys were represented, but not the entire Caucasian race.

I agree that we should be able to use these cartoons as focal points for discussion as long as we are willing to call them for what they were: racist in their depictions of people of color. How mature do we need to be in letter-writer Jason Fahrion's eyes before we can deal with the racism in cartoons? And when we are mature enough, does it mean that we'll be able to brush it off as just a cartoon as he seems to be suggesting?

You should feel embarrassed by the racism in these cartoons! Not because you're not mature enough to deal with it, but because at one time it was OK to make cartoons like this, and we still laugh at them. I will never forgive the prejudices of the past. Instead, I will use them to try and show my son the ignorances of the past and why we should strive to be above that.

Robert Wasson
English