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PERSPECTIVES

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Police too slow in responding to 911 call

It took about 20 minutes for police to arrive at an apartment where a burglary was under way

While most members of the community prefer to see the West University area as a pleasant off-campus place for students to live, recent incidents make it almost impossible to ignore the reality that the area is not only growing more dangerous, but the protection it receives from law enforcement is not adequate.

If the drive-by shooting at E. 13th Avenue and Ferry Street early this September and the riot that occurred on E. 17th Avenue last weekend do not demonstrate this to city officials, I'm afraid nothing will.

OPINION



Nicole Kristal

In a recent meeting with City Council member Bobby Lee, I discovered the West University neighborhood has been a main source of criminal activity for some time. Lee himself has been the victim of burglaries and stalking.

College students and their safety must not be a high enough priority to merit additional police protection, and I say this because I experienced this neglect firsthand a few weeks ago.

At 2:45 a.m. on Sept. 28, I left my apartment to drive a friend home. I returned home five minutes later. As I exited my car, one of my neighbors approached me.

"Do you live in that apartment up there?"

I nodded.

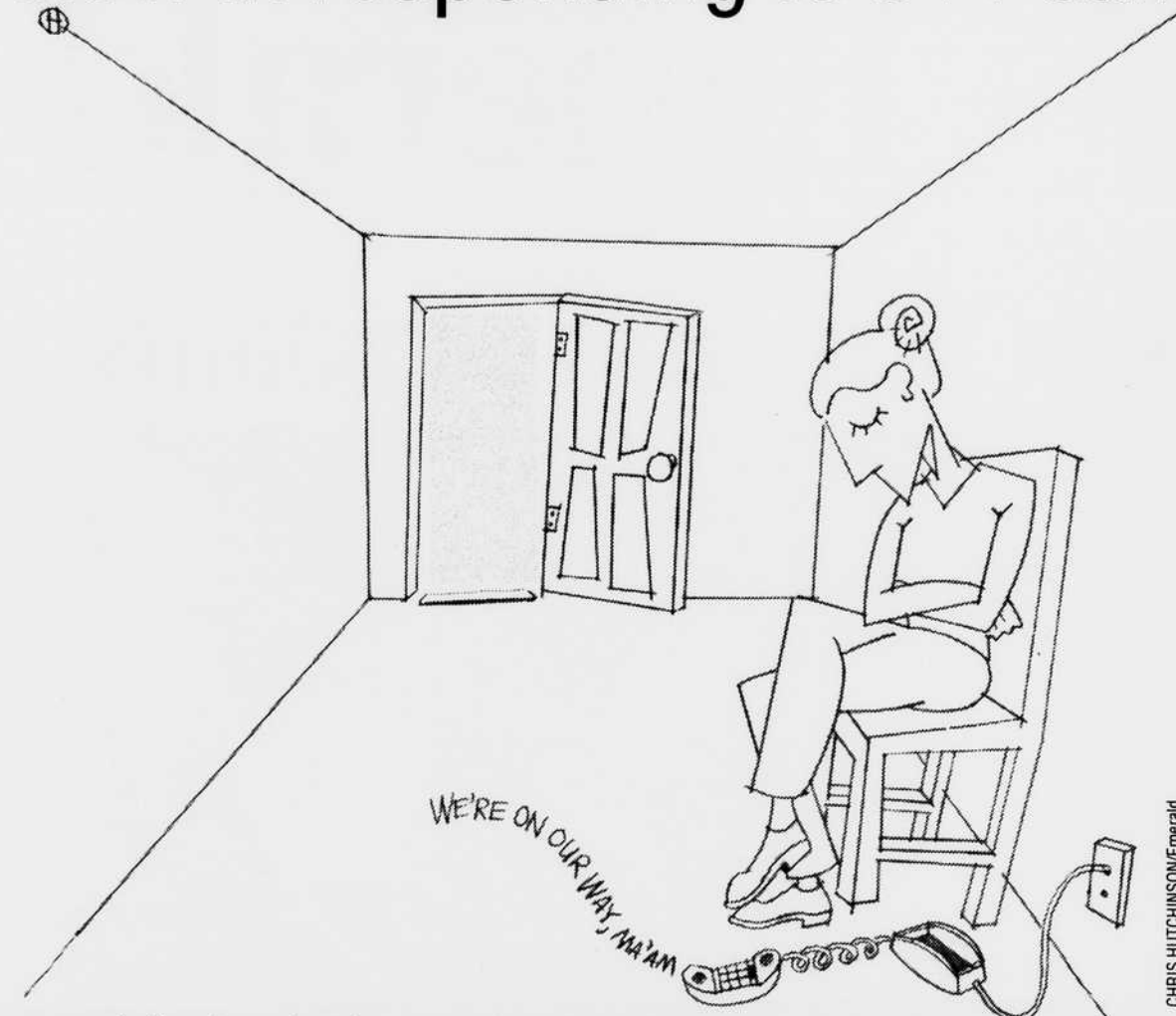
"Well, two guys just crawled into your kitchen window. We're on the phone with 911 right now. You can come on back to our apartment until the cops get here."

In their living room, another one of my neighbors was talking on the phone to a 911 dispatcher. She told the dispatcher I was there, and the dispatcher asked to talk to me.

As the woman asked me to repeat my address and phone number three times, I grew progressively more frustrated.

I told her that if an officer did not come right away, my possessions would be stolen. The dispatcher told me that her main concern was the safety of my roommate who might be inside.

Yet police failed to arrive at the scene until 20 minutes later. If my



roommate had been home, she probably would have been victimized long before they arrived.

At that moment, one of the neighbors who was looking out the blinds shouted, "They just took off up the alley on a couple of bikes."

"Did they have bikes before?" I asked.

"No," she replied.

I was furious. I dropped the phone and ran into my apartment. My bike and my roommate's bike were gone. I ran upstairs. My guitar and my \$1,500 four-track recorder had been stolen as well. My two neighbors came to the apartment. I told them not to touch anything.

We went downstairs and waited on my porch for the police to arrive. At that moment, the two burglars walked down the alleyway. They were carrying beer bottles.

"Is that them?" I whispered.

"Yes, let's get inside."

The two burglars had the nerve to say hello. We locked the door and ran upstairs. I called 911.

I screamed at the dispatcher, telling her that the burglars were in my front

yard and that officers still had not arrived. She asked me in which direction they were headed. I angrily reminded her that I was inside the house, protecting myself from assault and for that reason, I was not standing outside and watching them.

My neighbors and I went downstairs, and, after another three to five minutes, two officers arrived. One left to do an area search. But it was too little, too late.

The other officer went into my apartment, and I told her which items had been touched and moved. She removed a partial print from the window pane. She took our statements, commented on what a busy night it had been and left. By that time, it was 4 a.m.

I stayed awake wondering how the city can afford to spend \$30 million for repairs on the Ferry Street Bridge Corridor, and yet it cannot spare a few bucks to hire a few extra cops to cover a high-crime area on a Saturday night.

The only conclusion I could reach was that students are still not being taken seriously in this community

because of their age. But how can their contribution of more than \$150 million into the local economy not be taken seriously?

Every time I've called the station with a noise complaint about my neighbors, police have responded within five minutes; yet, the one time I called to report a more serious crime in my residence, they responded in 20 minutes.

Eugene police officers not only need the means (more officers on the streets) to respond to crime in the West University neighborhood on the weekends, but they also need to prioritize the emergencies over the noise complaints and adjust their response time accordingly.

I lost property valued at more than \$2,000 because of the city's reluctance to prioritize my age group. I followed all the rules. I followed all the protocol. I called for assistance. But assistance was too late.

Nicole Kristal is a columnist for the Emerald. Her columns appear on alternate Wednesdays. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Quoted

"Her lectures have inspired countless audiences across the country and around the world. Her achievements over the years have given black women a role model from which to draw confidence and pride in a time when such a figure was so earnestly needed."

Ryan Maughn, writing in Friday's *Emerald* about Maya Angelou's performance at the Hult Center.

"This was a taste of Angelou at her best — a riveting, funny and gloriously down-to-earth speaker with a gift for putting people at ease, urging them to laugh at themselves and showing them how it's done. A gifted writer and consummate performer, Angelou plies her crafts well — delighting in the lyrical power of language, sharing her joy."

Kimber Williams, reviewing Angelou's performance in Tuesday's *Register-Guard*.

"At the inaugural, Bill Clinton, whose signature on welfare 'reform' would follow three years later, used Maya Angelou, a very weak poet, as a new, mediagenic form of lawn jockey, and no one in the new black-culture orthodoxy, as far as I know, has uttered a word of criticism about her willingness to play the part."

Vinco Passaro, writing about African American literature in the July, 1997, *Harper's*.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Out List' voluntary

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Alliance (LGBTA) would like to clarify a statement made in Tuesday's Coming Out Week article (*ODE*, Oct. 7). Because the LGBTA is concerned about protecting the safety and privacy of its members, it is necessary to correct any misconceptions created by the definition Doug Irving used to describe what we call the Out List. The LGBTA does not "maintain an 'Out List' — a full page of names of students who have formally come out," as was stated in the article.

The Out List is instead a full page ad the LGBT Educational and Support Services Program produces in cooperation with the LGBTA as part of National Coming Out Week. The point of this list is to acknowledge the importance of being visible and to break stereotypes.

The list does not list every out LGBT person on campus that we know of, but only those who have given their explicit consent to be on this list. Anyone interested in being on the Out List picks up

and fills out an Out List form. After these forms are handed in, we carefully double check and verify the identities of the people on the forms and that they want to be on the Out List as either an ally or an LGBT individual.

We publish the Out List once a year around National Coming Out Day, and we do not maintain it throughout the rest of the year as the article suggests. Nor do we use this list for any other purposes than for this one Coming Out Week ad.

This year's list will be in this Friday's *Emerald*. If you have any questions about the Out List and the careful process we use to create it, we encourage you to contact the LGBTA at 346-3360.

Karen Vittek
 LGBTA co-director

Add-drop compromise

Ah, yes, University politics has once again espoused the old adage: Why compromise when you can have it entirely your way? Sorry, folks, this won't work for class registration procedures any better than it has in the past.

When Bill Miner says that students need more time to get a sense for a class, he is entirely correct. However, he appears to have overlooked the reasons that the deadlines were changed in the first place — students who wanted to be in some classes found themselves locked out until the third week because students who were "uncertain" didn't drop until the last minute.

Why not recognize that one week may be plenty of time in some situations and dreadfully inadequate in others? An alternative to the extremes — one vs. three weeks to drop — could go like this: When a class is 85 percent full, students should have to make their decisions quickly, on the grounds that certain more eager students may be locked out. Otherwise, let students have more time to decide.

Miner seems to have forgotten that when you push the pendulum too far in one direction, it will eventually — and inevitably — swing back toward you. Let's try compromise, eh?

Sean Williams
 Music education

CORRECTION

The LGBTA should have been identified as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Alliance in the article, "Coming Out Week' encourages support of gay community" on Oct. 7. The *Emerald* regrets the error.