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# Perspectives

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## Men, speak out

Men can be victims of rape too, and most importantly, they can be vital components to stopping sex crimes against both genders

Men are almost always the perpetrators of rape and can often be the victims of the crime, despite some long-held notions to the contrary. Organizations such as Sexual Assault Support Services are attempting to educate and raise awareness that rape is a major men's issue. Men are becoming aware of the problem of rape and trying to stop it.

It's a positive trend that people accept that there is sexual assault against males and that they need support just like female victims. Men go through the same terrible shame and humiliation as their female counterparts but are often expected to be tougher and get over those feelings faster. Male-targeted sexual crimes often are not considered "sexual offenses" under the law but, rather, assault cases. This is testament to the old notions that men aren't often victims of rape.

Groups such as SASS play an important part in challenging those harmful stereotypes and offering a new perspective for those who don't realize men can be sexual assault victims. Changing any perception is arduous, difficult work that will take tremendous effort from dedicated people, but accepting the idea of men as rape victims could be especially hard because it deals with the social roles of gender.

Most of the male survivors of sexual assault cases who go to SASS were abused as children, as is the case with women. Getting people educated to that fact will ideally help prevent future assaults by making sure child victims of abuse are treated as early as possible.

The classic ideas about male-on-female rape are also changing. While until recently men weren't expected to do much to prevent rape except not commit the crime themselves, women were expected to take the responsibility of rape prevention and self-defense classes. Those low expectations for men and absurdly high expectations for women in preventing sexual assault are ridiculous and should have their end in sight as signaled by groups such as Men Against Sexism, which tries to focus attention on efforts men can make to stop rape.

The group tries to redefine the classic idea of masculinity and hopes men can be seen as unique individuals who want to share their emotions. They were involved in the Take Back the Night celebration and women's issues overall. They also claim that more men are showing interest and support for women and the Take Back the Night event.

These are just small first steps in tackling the problem of rape. The efforts by men to take responsibility for the problems of sexual assault, along with raised awareness about the role of men as victims, are noteworthy efforts that should be applauded, and more importantly, continued.

This editorial represents the view of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

### Letters to the editor

#### Men can stop sex abuse

Over 98 percent of all sexual assaults are perpetrated by men.

This statistic is shocking and probably a little unnerving for most men, but it deserves serious attention if we are ever to effectively confront sexual abuse. With Sexual Assault Awareness Month upon us, I wanted to write a letter that would help to locate men within the conversation about "violence against women" and to talk frankly about what it is that men need to do to help eradicate sexual abuse in our society.

There is nothing inherent in men that causes them to rape women. It is, instead, the lessons that men learn in our society about their supposed "natural tendencies" that gives them the idea that sexual coercion and assault

are ever justifiable. This ideology is one of the primary reasons we see so many instances of sexual abuse perpetrated by men.

As long as men believe that they are unable to control their sex drives, they will continue to feel justified in making sexist jokes, leering at women, coercing a drunken date to have sex and raping women.

On May 23 at 2 p.m. in the EMU Ben Linder Room, there will be a workshop on "Men's Role in Ending Sexual Assault." This discussion for men provides a powerful opportunity for men to stand in solidarity with women against the problem of male violence against women and to engage in dialogue with other men about this issue and what we as men can do to stop the violence.

Sean Potts  
UO Men Against Sexism

#### Aren't we here to learn?

We are writing this letter to share our disgust with the behavior of certain members of the University community regarding Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' 100-hour vigil. Although we recognize that many people believe animal rights are a controversial issue, people would be better off educating themselves than engaging in the immature behavior that we witnessed.

As participants of the vigil, we experienced everything from rude and sarcastic remarks to having raw meat and firecrackers thrown at us. We were compared to Nazis (we are still not sure where the logic of this connection is), and there were attempts to steal some of our possessions. It is obvious that such individuals engage in these activities because they feel threatened and have no logical way to back up their opinions. SETA wel-

comes intelligent discussion of animal rights issues (this is one of the main purposes of the cage), but comments such as "Umm, this is a good burger, want some?" do not qualify.

This group of students (99.9 percent white males) were attempting to anger us and belittle our ideas. Instead, they proved to us that they have no educated viewpoints about why animal rights are not an important and necessary issue. We are not writing this letter to whine. Rather, we are disappointed that on a University campus there are people who would rather degrade themselves to throwing water balloons than allow themselves to learn about something that might cause them to change their ideologies and behaviors.

Jennifer Neary  
Sara Stewart  
Rocky Stewart  
SETA

### THE WEEK IN THUMBS



#### To opportunity abounding

The unemployment rate in Lane County fell to 5.1 percent in April, reflecting a trend throughout the nation toward more jobs, according to the Oregon Employment Department.

#### To surviving in style

Nine students wounded in the Columbine High School shootings graduated Saturday in Columbine's class of 2000.



#### To a fiery faux pas

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said Thursday that the government is wholly to blame for flawed thinking that led to the Los Alamos, N.M., fires. However, Babbitt said the government would do whatever possible to compensate victims.

#### To the final lie

Researchers presented a study to the American Society for Clinical Oncology saying that terminally ill cancer patients rarely get a straight answer when they ask their doctors how long they have to live. According to the study, doctors either lie or refuse to say.