

'Dead Men Don't Rape' sign hinders cooperation, support

GUEST COMMENTARY

Joe
Bosnar

I attended the "Take Back the Night" rally Thursday night and was really into it. The speeches were great and were honestly inspiring. I was really happy to see that men's role in preventing sexual assault was a big part of the event. I am a male student here on campus and am a strong supporter of women's rights. I am strongly against any sort of violence against women and am sickened by the thought that a lot of men in the world don't feel the same.

I was really into the rally until I saw a young woman with a sign

that read, "Dead Men Don't Rape." I tried to relate to her, but the more I tried to see it from her point of view, the less I was able to. The sign really pissed me off! I felt it was completely inappropriate for any sort of rally, and especially for one where people are trying to work together for a common goal. What really upsets me is that she was not ashamed of her sign, even after two of the speakers really reached out to the male population for support.

This sign apparently had only one goal: to blame all men and make all men look like rapists. I am not a rapist. I would never do that. I know a lot of men who, like myself, would never even contemplate bringing any sort of violence against anyone, especially a woman. The creator of this sign

was not even attempting to help anyone. Perhaps she was angry, but attacks generalizing all men are not cool.

You can't fight oppression with oppression. I wouldn't expect to find such ignorance at a rally on a college campus, and I hope that before anyone brings a sign like this again, they think twice. There are a lot of men in this world who support the rights of women and will stand up and fight for them. That sign made me feel extremely uncomfortable and angry, and I hope we can all learn that in order to work together and make a change, we need to make everyone feel comfortable and welcome.

Joe Bosnar is a junior architecture major.

Full-time University arborist could be defining 'hazards' too harshly

GUEST COMMENTARY

Robert
Schofield

Fully one-quarter (eight of 32) of the large trees lining the stretch of 13th Avenue between the EMU and the University Bookstore have been cut down in the last five years (see the "University of Oregon Atlas of Trees," 1996). The reason for the alarming increase in cutting is that the University hired a full-time arborist five years ago. The overwhelming majority of these trees have been removed as hazards. The arborists and the grounds supervisor have argued to me that the increased hazard removal rate is due to increased scrutiny and recognition of hazards made possible by a full-time arborist. I would argue in addition that the burden of public safety has, understand-

ably, made the arborist overly conservative.

Whatever the reasons for the alarming rate of tree removal, I hope that the University community becomes vocal in its support for options to removal. These options often exist, though they may be costly or, to some, unsightly. For example, the Italian Stone Pine in front of the Volcanology building is scheduled for removal this week. I have been told by the arborist that this tree could be made safe, for the moment, with cables and topping, but that this would leave it an unsightly "bush" in declining health. I agree that the tree would look battle-scarred, but considering the removal rate (all neighboring older trees have been removed and two other large trees on 13th Avenue may soon be removed), I think we should attempt to prolong the life of every important tree. Besides, the Italian Stone

Pine often looks asymmetrical and struggling in its natural setting. In addition, this tree was donated under the Century Tree program and is the only remaining Pinus pinea, according to the 1996 Tree Atlas, on a campus famous for its diversity of trees.

I encourage others to watch for removal notification signs on trees and to express to the groundskeepers (they can be reached at timking@oregon.uoregon.edu) their support for options to removal — in the case of this tree and in the many cases to come.

Though we strongly disagree on the value of prolonging the life of the Italian Stone Pine, I am pleased with the efforts of the grounds crew to modify architectural plans, which often cause unseen damage, so that fewer trees will become hazards in the future.

Robert Schofield is a senior research associate in the physics department.

Letters

continued from page 2

doesn't even intend, then what is his voice saying?

It seems everyone has now been robbed of at least trust, and for men — always questioning every action that they make — even best intentions. When I stare into a woman's eyes (speaking only from a heterosexual perspective), I hope to get helplessly lost. In this world, it's so hard to look at her body and only admire and tell her that "she is nothing less than beautiful" because society doesn't. But if I can do this, then how do I?

Women can and should be empowered to have their voice heard, but then is there room for a male, or a true masculine voice to raise and protest the garbage he is also fed at work, school, the store, etc.? There isn't a how-to book for this.

So even in my mind, when I want to show my affection and

appreciation to anyone in her femininity and sexuality, how can I raise a little sign that says, "I'm not oppressing you right now"? I still don't think it changes what goes through her mind, either way.

Michael Beach
graduate student
exercise science/women's studies

Don't make 'coon' simply mean "a black person"

English is a colorful language. When we haven't seen someone in a long time, we might say it's been donkey's years, or a coon's age, or that he's getting long in the tooth. All that is meant is the passage of time.

We might also use "coon" as a racial epithet or "ass" as a character epithet, and we might joke about lawyers simply because the law they practice has teeth. Here is not meant the passage of time per se, though we use similar terms.

Of course, a coon or a donkey can be just animals and teeth a part

of anatomy. English is such a confusing language.

If our senior citizens have not been objecting to colorful expressions denoting age, that is their choice, which other minorities should respect rather than appropriate such expressions into their own taboo lists.

A donkey is light gray and a raccoon marked by a characteristic black mask. To let the longevity of the one animal but not the other denote the passage of time is to judge an animal by the color of its fur.

In Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail," he complained of "when your first name becomes 'nigger' and your middle name becomes 'boy' (however old you are) and your last name becomes 'John,' and when your wife and mother are never given the respected title 'Mrs.'" If we make every use of "coon" an ipso facto reference to black people, we've made that their name.

Earl Gosnell
Eugene

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