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## In my opinion

# Fowl behavior



AILEE SLATER  
FURTHER FROM PERFECTION

The biting witty headline says it all: "U.S. chicken ducks jaywalking fine." And the looming photograph designed to coincide with the article cements it all: The bottom half of a chicken, faceless, lifting one menacing foot as though preparing to take a step — a step right into the battlefield at the heart of America.

Although this particular news service deserves some praise for avoiding a headline play on why the chicken crossed the road, the story's humorous element ends at the headline. Today it is one lawless chicken, tomorrow, who knows? This seemingly innocuous tale of a California chicken's devious act is just another straw in the ever-building haystack of chickens turning a blind eye toward the law. And, as long as our society continues to condone these actions with a passive silence, this string of civil mischief will not end.

After a lawyer was hired to defend the bird, the court quickly threw out a \$54 fine. Apparently, because the fowl was "domesticated," its actions did not fall under the same category as the actions of livestock. California law prohibits livestock from roaming highways.

Analyzing the ruling in this case, it looks like our government is more than happy to sign off on any and all activities domestic creatures. The line had been drawn in the sand, and

the message to citizens and winged creatures of the United States is clear: Equality of law does not apply to the masses.

What makes this story even more ridiculous is this interesting tidbit of information: The chicken's owners are now attempting to file harassment charges against the county Sheriff's department. Linc and Helena Moore subscribe to the belief of all-too-many Americans today; when they don't work for the law, it's better to make the law work for them. Take a moment and think about that fact.

It's the fact the someone sued Wendy's for a finger in her chili.

It's the fact that the repeat rate of youth crime is still going strong.

It's the fact that world opinion still doesn't match our government's utopian view that this country is as it should be.

Interesting comparisons can be made between this jaywalking chicken and the sad plight of those animals

not so lucky to be considered domesticated: I'm talking about the Helping Hands organization, built on the backs of monkeys. As detailed by writer David Sedaris, these "slave" monkeys are made to turn on lights, play CDs, apparently create a general sort of "atmosphere" for their disabled owners. One doesn't even need to ask if our California chicken has ever dealt with the hassles of audio-visual equipment. Why is it that some creatures of this earth are forced into the slavery of housekeeping while others are allowed to roam freely and commit illegal acts?

It is important to retain the cultural notion that when you commit a crime, you pay for it. Someone needs to teach this lesson to the chicken, and fast. Domesticated or not, the laws of America were designed to apply fairly to each and every member of the nation.

A high-priced lawyer might have gotten this barnyard fowl off the hook, but citizens of this country can only hope that other chickens will not be so lucky. Fame and fortune may be fodder enough to appear in the gossip section of elitist New York magazines, yet it should hardly be treated as an excuse to get around the law. Jaywalking chickens need to get the message, and they need to get it now: You will be prosecuted for your crimes.

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## Editorial

# Hate actions still a threat at 'liberal' universities

Earlier this month, Southern Oregon University experienced a series of events that seem anachronistic to the tiny, liberal town of Ashland.

A 19-year-old male student was harassed as he walked off of the SOU campus after his attackers perceived him as gay. About seven men verbally attacked the student then followed him back to his residence hall. Later that evening, one of those men spit on the victim.

Unfortunately, it was not an isolated incident. SOU has seen a wave of anti-homosexual sentiment, one of the largest examples being a series of threatening fliers. Posters have appeared in student unions and residence halls, with phrases such as "You Queers can vanish to volcanic ash, and reappear in hell with a can of gas and a match. I hate QUEERS and God hates QUEERS! And the Bible says that Homosexual Offenders should be put to Death!" and "(T)he Bible says that homosexual offenders should be put to death ... So help eradicate homophobia now. Kill the queer."

An upsurge in hate speech and hate crimes at a small campus in Southern Oregon has serious implications that certainly carry over to the University, as well as Oregon itself. As much as we liberal college campus students may praise ourselves on a lifestyle and set of beliefs actively opposing crimes against minorities, the truth is, hurtful ideology still runs rampant among us.

Although the posters may not have been physically dangerous to members of the homosexual community, their effects are far reaching. Using religion to condone murder is a scary thought, but nothing new. It is the same set of beliefs that greased the wheels of the Ku Klux Klan. Unfortunately, it seems that the Northwest is more susceptible to hate crimes than we thought. Citizens who believe that hate doesn't live in their neighborhood should take a good look around.

College campuses are not removed from the atmosphere of anti-gay sentiment, and neither is the government. Is the presence of hate speech and hate demonstration among students really that surprising when one considers the government's mixed opinions over to the legality or morality of homosexuality?

Luckily, Southern Oregon University has shown its colors, and they are a rainbow: SOU President Elisabeth Zinser has proposed a 10-point plan to respond to the posters and violence, and community discussions between faculty, students and others have also occurred to address the issues facing the campus gay community.

As the University works to perfect its issues with diversity (over class enrollment based on race, transgender students in the media, etc.), we can only hope that issues will be addressed with the same tact as those on the SOU campus. Community conversation, as well as a sharp stance against hate speech and hate crime, are always key to creating a school climate that is safe space for all. City, state and national government should take note.

## CORRECTION

In "Undefinable," which ran Friday, Toby Hill-Meyer was incorrectly identified as bisexual and as a Programs Finance Committee senator. Hill-Meyer prefers the term genderqueer and was an EMU Board senator. The Emerald regrets the error.

## Guest commentary

# Allegations of intolerance should not prevent educated discussion

A little more than a week ago, an informal three-on-three debate took place between students from a history class, Middle East Foreign Policy after 1933, and students representing the American Israel Political Affairs Committee and Hillel, a campus Jewish organization. The debate centered on Israeli policies as they relate to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict still underway today.

I have never been called Anti-Semitic before. I am a dedicated student who has taken the time to learn the comprehensive and nuanced history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. After reading dozens of books, chosen for their scholarly and journalistic merits and balanced perspective, I have found myself fundamentally opposed to Israeli policies and sympathetic to the Palestinian national struggle.

At the conclusion of the debate, the audience responded with mixed reactions and perhaps more questions than answers. It was agreed by both my team and our opponents from AIPAC-Hillel, that a second debate, slightly modified in format and thesis, would benefit all who wanted to attend.

This week, I am an Anti-Semite, or so it seems I am being told. It seems that Israel's strongest student advocates at the University, representing one of the most powerful lobbies in the nation, have pulled out.

A laundry-list of complaints about the debate or future debate was cited, none of which I felt were irreconcilable

given the concessions I offered. The only complaint that I could not respond to was the feeling I was being accused because of my own bias and ulterior motive.

The undercurrent beneath the decision to withdraw from the second debate is accurately reflected by the comments of the pro-Israeli audience members, many of whom alleged that the first debate was merely a forum for Israel-bashing and anti-Semitic rhetoric. These allegations miss the point, but deserve a response nonetheless.

A crucial and profound element of totalitarianism is the identification of state's policies with the people, society and culture of the state. This element is manifest in the conviction that criticism of the state reflects a criticism of the people, society and culture and thus, those who offer such critiques are enemies of the people who occupy the state.

While not uncommon in the West, students of history will recognize this ideal employed in its most impressive fashion under leaders like Stalin, Mao and Hitler. Furthermore, those with a good Jewish education should recognize the origins of this. It goes back to the Bible in which the evil King Ahab, in the second book of Kings, condemns the Prophet Elijah for his criticism of the King. Because the King identifies himself with the people, society and culture, Elijah's criticism prompts the King to pronounce him a "hater of Israel." It's unfortunate that this

ideal survives in the present.

Since the occupation began in 1967, Israel has instituted a set of Draconian laws in the West Bank and Gaza that it has used to seize Palestinian land and water, construct all-Jewish settlements and build infrastructure in continuation with a plan to subdivide the territories, effectively eliminating access to Jerusalem's holy sites and to other cantons. In a unanimous opinion, the justices of the World Court ruled these actions grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions. These war crimes exacerbate tensions present in both the Palestinian and Israeli populations. They are incompatible with a pursuit of a negotiated political settlement.

While my criticism of Israeli policy contains serious assertions, I consider them fair. I, like Elijah, am not a "hater of Israel." I have nothing but admiration for the Jewish "nation," which describes the collective body of those who share the Judaic faith.

We believe that both sides benefit from an academic exchange of ideas and arguments on the subject. The University community deserves to hear these arguments, and though at times the arguments may be divisive, concealing the problem is not an appropriate response. We urge the pro-Israeli community at the University to join the discussion in a tolerant and rational way. Don't hide behind phony allegations and feigned offense.

Brett Seyler is a senior in mathematics and political science