

TriMet incident tests a growing, changing city

Every now and then, something shocking rattles a community's foundation.

It's been one week since a man spewing racist epithets on a TriMet MAX train stabbed two men to death and seriously injured another. The men killed and wounded were trying to defend two young black women, the target of the killer's horrific attack. All of us at

Street Roots are saddened by these events, the loss of life and the latest reminder of the toxic racism people of color face every day.

We're also inspired by how people have responded in support of the victims, in opposition to hate, and in solidarity with the whole community. It is impossible to look upon the memorial at the Hollywood Transit Station where the violence occurred without feeling the overwhelming love displayed there. It is difficult to make room for it all.

In its wake, however, are rallies of the so-called altright, whose platform of racial and religious intolerance the killer embraced. The online world is abuzz with political extrapolations over the event. Labels are flying. But it wasn't politics that abused those girls or killed those men, it was hate and intolerance, fueled, possibly, by mental illness. Still, national political leaders are validating and empowering the most basic impulses of bigotry in this country – exploiting ignorance and hate for their own profit and power. There are terrible events happening all across this country under the banner this administration is waving.

As much as we would like to silence the hate, Portland honors free speech and expression above all else. Bring it on. We can take it. We're stronger than that.

Communities of color have endured these kinds of

aggressions for generations, right here in Portland. This event may have rattled hearts across the city – even reached across the nation – but it is definitely not a new thing.

And if the perpetrator had invoked Islam, we all know he would be labeled a terrorist. Instead it was the language of the extreme right used in our highest office, and reinforced by broadcasters on our airwaves and online. It is as much a gross distortion of "patriotism" as most of us know it, as terrorism is of Islam.

The killer in this case may be considered an individual and his violence an isolated incident, but he and many others are tethered together ideologically by white nationalist organizations that exist all across Oregon and the nation.

In fact, the Southern Poverty Law Center said that among metropolitan areas, Portland has had one of the highest rates of hate incidents since the election. The SPLC invited people to report incidents through its website, and since the election, it has gathered nearly 1,500 reports from the area – and they continue to roll in.

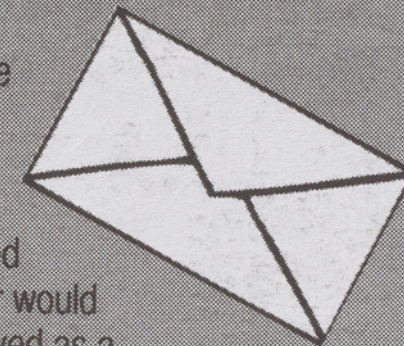
What happened on May 26 was horrific, even if it wasn't a total aberration.

We hope the emotions Portland is feeling now can take deeper roots. There's a vibrant network of cultural and civic organizations people can plug into to learn more about the diversity in our community and get more engaged. If the white nationalist rhetoric is trickling down into our community, then we will push back from the ground up.

As more people move into our city and region, with each passing year, Portland needs to reaffirm who and what we stand for. We stand united. We stand for love.

Write in

If you would like to have something that you've written published in our pages, or would like to get involved as a member of our reporting staff, contact Managing Editor Joanne Zuhl at 503-228-5657, joanne@streetroots.org. We ask that all submissions include the author's name and contact information, if available.



EDITORIAL

Street Roots

211 NW Davis St.
Portland, OR 97209
503-228-5657
Fax: 503-227-3117
www.streetroots.org
www.news.streetroots.org
Hours: 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Mon.-Fri., 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Sat. and 7:30-1 p.m. Sun.

Advertising

Interested in advertising in Street Roots?
Contact Israel Bayer at israel@streetroots.org

Staff

Executive Director Israel Bayer
israel@streetroots.org
Managing Editor Joanne Zuhl
joanne@streetroots.org
Vendor Program Director Cole Merkel
cole@streetroots.org
Operations Director Sarah Beecroft
Development Director Sarah Cloud
Program Assistant Meghann Van Pelt,
Jesuit Volunteer
Development Assistant Patricia Romero
Editorial Assistant Monica Kwasnik
Reporters Emily Green, Suzanne Zalokar,
Sarah Hansell, Leonora Ko, Jared Paben,
Amanda Waldroupe, Stephen Quirke
Photographers Diego Diaz, Joe Glode,
Arkady Brown
Canvasser Desmond Hardison

Board of Directors

Chairman Brad Taylor
Vice-Chairman Rachel Langford
Treasurer Heather Stadick
Secretary Dan Jones
Directors Rich Rodgers, Michael Anderson,
Sandra Hahn, John Brown, Nels Johnson and
Alison Hallett

Volunteers

Jan Bayer, John Barker, Stacey Heath, Anjali Rathore, Zoe Klingmann, Dan Jones, Dennis Hogan, Monica McKune, Susan Wolfe, Lucas Hawthorne, Thomas Buell Jr., Jeanie Lunsford, Yasmin Amirsolemani, Jason Cohen, Tom Ray, Doug Spangle, Susannah Kamala, Jon Raymond, Diana Richardson, Cherie Manning, Paul and Madeline Gefroh, Mary Anne Joyce, Del Shawn Davidson, Gillian Floren, Mark Oldani, Bridget Brown, Cody Travels, Bianca Butler, Robb Hengerer, Alex Cherin, Jenny Farres, Evan Firsick, Camber Hansen-Karr, Miranda Woods, Henry Brannan, Megan Smith, Luke Scheuermann, Annie Aube and Helen Hill. If you're interested in volunteering with Street Roots, please submit a volunteer application at streetroots.org/volunteer. Or you can call for more information at 503-228-5657.

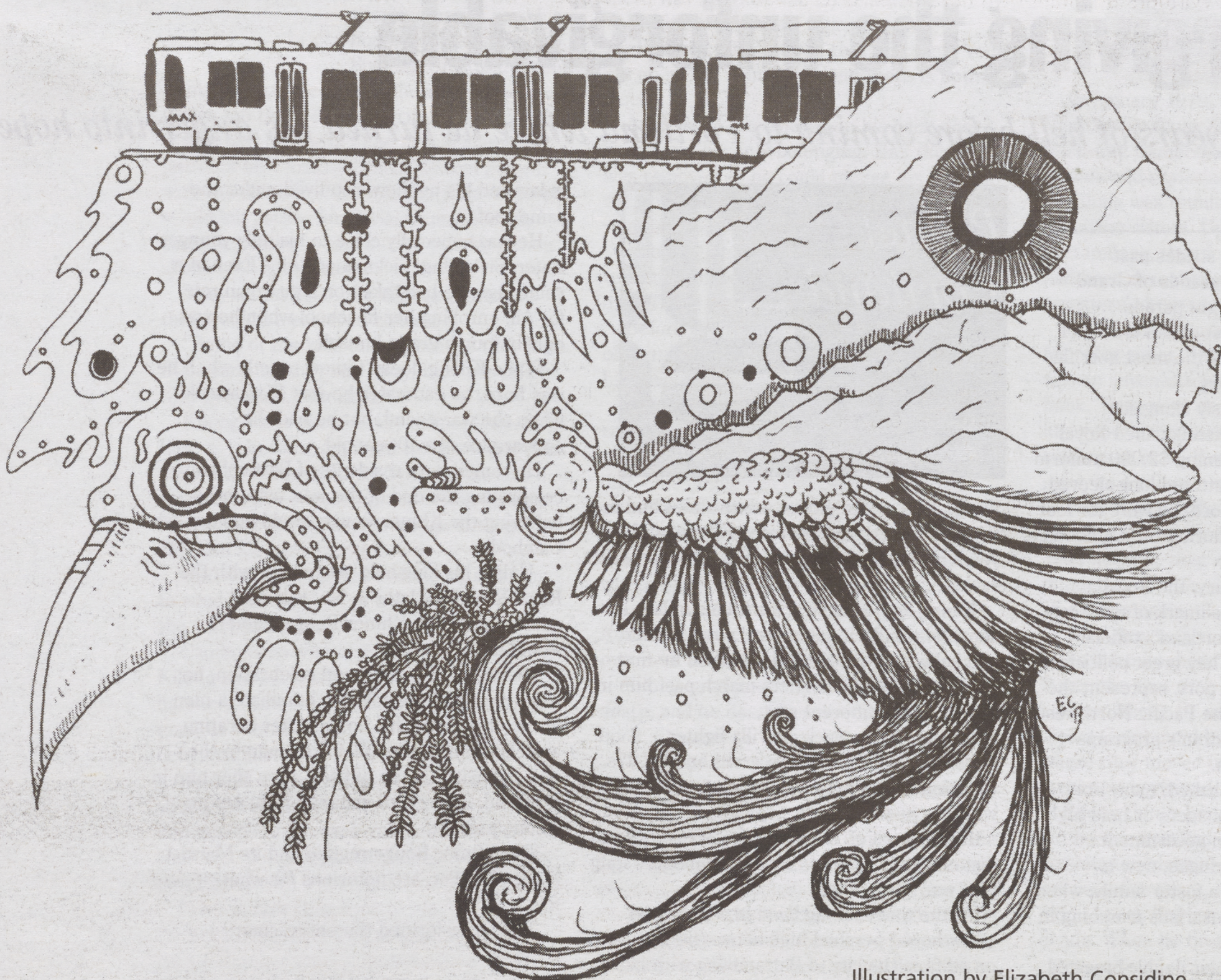


Illustration by Elizabeth Considine