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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PLEASE DONATE

I am a half-Thai Oregonian who recently graduated from the UO. I am currently in Thailand helping people look for missing family members lost from the recent disaster. The destruction here is indescribable and the state of the deceased bodies we are trying to identify is too gruesome for any imagination to create.

I know what kind of people Eugeneans strive to be: giving, loving, accepting. So, please, please, please donate anything you can to the organizations you trust that are helping with the disaster relief. And please don't take a second of your life for granted. You are so blessed to not be here enduring these horrors.

Nicole Sangsuree Barrett
Thailand

BIGGEST HATE GROUP

Props to Hope Marston for discussing important, but often ignored, problems at the Citizens State of the City Address (1/13). It's wonderful that so many in the Eugene community get (righteously) outraged by bigots distributing racist propaganda, or vandalism of a synagogue. But it's a shame more Eugeneans don't express outrage over institutionalized racism. The U.S. criminal justice system is in fact the biggest hate group in this country. It has implemented racial segregation in the prisons on a level that neo-Nazis can only dream of achieving.

Currently more African-Americans are in prison than in college, and we are one of the only countries in the world that still has people imprisoned for actions against the former apartheid regime in South Africa. Former members of the United Freedom Front — Richard Williams, Jaan Laaman, and Thomas Manning — have been imprisoned for more than two decades for clandestine attacks on financial institutions that did business with the brutal, racist regime. Most countries would have granted them amnesty years ago for doing what most people now consider justified.

Eugene residents who claim to be committed to social justice have a duty to oppose racial profiling, mass detentions, and other post-9/11 attacks on civil liberties. They should also work towards the release of the political prisoners of social justice movements, including Eugene's own environmental political prisoner Jeff "Free" Luers, who continues to sit in prison on a 22-plus years sentence for actions that harmed nobody. His co-defendant, Craig "Crittter" Marshall, was released on Jan. 7. It's time for "Free" to come home too. Please support his appeal and learn more about his case at www.freefreenow.org

Steven Gider
Eugene

AVERT A STRIKE

An open letter to Lane Transit District: While we realize that labor negotiations are inherently complex, we aren't interested in taking sides right now; we only wish to state simple facts.

Our TV news gives the impression that the worst we can expect from a strike will be students carpooling to class, but reality is nowhere near that simple. Your passengers take the bus to work, to go grocery shopping, and even to meet doctor's appointments. Due