

FAKE DIVERSITY

It is a load of garbage for Mark Harris in his interview of 12/23, to say that minorities are not represented in Eugene. It's also a crock to mislead people into believing that profiling by the police only happens to ethnic minorities. I grew up in the west side of Las Vegas, and as the only light-skinned kid in all of my schools (from second grade, to 11th), I can say with conviction that there is more representation in Eugene for more groups of minorities than in any major city in the U.S.

I live in Eugene because of its tolerance, yet have become disillusioned by its fake diversity. People are so wrapped up in their unwillingness to step on other people's toes, that they don't even realize they are perpetuating the continued separation of all peoples. Mark also seems incensed that white, suburban teens would borrow from African American terminology and culture. Well Mark, exposure, curiosity, and a longing for change in one's situation is where diversity (sometimes good, sometimes bad) comes from. Furthermore, mixing and blending helps us evolve, and changing cultures go along with that beautiful package. In my own opinion, Mark's views on representation are also sorely distorted.

You can say that having representation is essential, and a black student union helps disadvantaged students of color by giving them a voice and helping them find grants and opportunities; but guess what the white kid from a low socio-economic background thinks when he's struggling to find help, and walks past that very same office? Do you care about his representation?

Or, what do you think the homeless white guy feels, when he's been *economically* profiled by the police, and sees that there is no real legal help for him, because that kind of profiling doesn't outrage people. Or better yet, what if a guy's been battered and finds out that the court system is only set up to help women and he can't go in to receive the *same* assistance that his spouse would if he beat her, because he is the wrong gender?

These agencies scream for equality of the races, genders, and ethnicities, yet it is quite clear that this isn't what people are really after. (And don't pawn off any of that, well, it's mostly white men that do these things crap onto me, because, that, in and of itself, is the very same kind of profiling that everyone is whining about).

I have been discriminated against because people thought (mistakenly) that I am white, and somehow *my* ancestors committed crimes upon theirs. My ancestors were, in fact, as oppressed as theirs. The difference lies in the fact that my race wasn't deemed valuable enough to exploit, so they were simply murdered. What kind of public outrage do you think would come about if I should start my own white-looking mixed blood heterosexual married male outreach center?

Sure, there is a lot of work to be done on how minorities are treated, but the answer doesn't lie in creating more boundaries to cross. In fact, it lies in not stomping out discrimination with discrimination, but with finding the commonalities.

Mark is a very good drug counselor and instructor, but there are many facets to discrimination, not just the ones he describes.

Sean Westcott
A student of Mark Harris

COURAGEOUS ACTS

Whiteaker Community Council's Executive Committee wishes to thank the women of our neighborhood who came forward and testified in open court against the police officers who preyed upon them. Your courage and integrity helped get these criminals out of the Eugene Police Department, off the street and in jail where they can no longer victimize vulnerable women. The community is in your debt.

As a neighborhood association, Whiteaker Community Council has addressed police issues since the 2002 SWAT raid here (59 officers plus tank). In May 2004, our general meeting called for independent, external police review. Thanks partly to the Magaña/Lara debacle (and these women), there is now a clamor for external review.

Neighborhoods will be working with Chief Lehner to develop community policing. External review is not unrelated. As Lehner said to the City Club, "Trust between the community and its police department is absolutely fundamental to being able to deliver community policing in Eugene. Civilian review can help build that trust."

Now the question is what type of external review. Will it have teeth? Community members can help determine the answer. We urge everyone to get informed about the various civilian review models and take part in the public process by giving your input to the Police Commission.

For too long the word of these women was not trusted, and they could not trust the system. By supporting strong external review, all Eugeneans can join us in thanking these courageous women of Whiteaker.

Majeska Seese-Green
Gwen Jaspers
Whiteaker Community Council

ON SCHOOL CHOICE

Thanks Nancy Willard (1/27 cover story on school choice). You're right. America is so foolish with all these individual rights and freedom of choice. You're so smart to figure out that only the white and wealthy can test well in school. Imagine a poor kid being smart or a non-white kid having a loving, nurturing home that participates in the growth of their children. How impossible. And could you imagine that a rich, white kid could have a struggling home environment and test poorly in school? Now that would be ironic! But we know that would NEVER happen.

It's brilliant of you to suggest wiping out school choice, so kids are locked into their neighborhood school. I'm excited to see your plan to make the South Hills and Sheldon communities transplant themselves to the Whiteaker and River Road neighborhoods to balance out the class and race populous in our city. I'm sure you will receive lot of letters of thanks for helping so many of us understand the big picture. Your vision of a perfect gray race is all we can hope for.

I was so silly to believe that parents

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



should be the ones held accountable for the education of their children. Who knew that it is the district and government's fault for not monitoring and controlling the learning that needs to happen at home for children to succeed? I feel like such a fool for believing I was doing a very good job with my own children without any 4J or government help.

Chad Winkler
Eugene

HIRED GUNS

How would you like to die at the end of your days? Would you like to be bound and shot in the head by a stranger in front of your children, or would you prefer to have yourself, all your possessions, and your family destroyed in a fiery explosion? Perhaps you would like to be diseased by foul water, or poisoned by radioactive material? Not very appealing, you say? You want to die in peace, you say?

Why, then, do you visit these horrors on your neighbors? Why do you hire, through your representative government, at great expense to yourself, killers to do this savagery for you? Do you pretend to be a moral person when you have bought the services of someone who has been trained to view human beings just like you as unfit to live, someone who has been trained to commit the act of murder in cold blood, someone who occasionally admits they actually enjoy killing?

Do you think there is no balancing act in the universe, that a great forgiveness will envelope you at the end of your days, and that your death will somehow be more noble than the death you have repeatedly visited on your brothers and sisters? You don't want to think about it? Well, then, look at yourself in the mirror sometime, for you are dead already! What you have done to your fellow human beings you have done to yourself.

David Hazen
Eugene

MORE THAN MEAT

Tom Schneider (2/4) shows just how disgustingly anthropocentric and patriarchal people can be. He states, "farmers who grow their free-range animals slaughter it humanely."

First, farmers don't "grow" animals, they domesticate and kill them for profit. Second, there is no humane way to slaughter an animal. Murder is murder.

I agree that a diet based largely on processed soy-products is not the answer, but certainly an animal-free diet based on local, organic whole foods is. The annihilation of non-human animals is not healthy for humans, non-humans, or the environment. Just because your "meat" once lived in an open space rather than in a factory doesn't mean that you or the farmer has a right to eat and kill that animal.

Just as "we" once blatantly (and still do, less overtly) considered women and people of color to be subservient or inferior, we should now realize that animals, too, deserve to be more than just meat.

Ashlee Peters
Eugene

VISUAL REMINDERS

To the kind soul who has taken on the task of awakening those who are asleep. Bringing to our awareness and consciousness the importance of love, kindness, thoughtfulness and living a conscientious life. In our daily life as part of community, we must remember. And in our delicate presence as global citizens we must remember. As I drive around Eugene, I encounter those beautifully painted sign on the telephone poles that reminds me of my humanity. This visual reminds me of the importance of living consciously. Of how many still have a heart. How we are all connected. Reminds me every day of how precious our thoughts are. How precious our actions are. How it is such an honor to be alive today with the profound ability to make a difference with every word, deed, action and thought. What a profound privilege to be a part of the earth family. To be a part of the human family.

