

RIDERS VS. ARMED GANG

I was riding my bike the other day with some friends, enjoying a beautiful sunny afternoon when we were accosted by a gang of black-clad bikers. They pulled in front of us and forced us off the road. A very large man, carrying both a club and a gun, got off his bike and started to harass my girlfriend and me. It was an upsetting incident, and what made it even more so was the fact that no motorists bothered to stop and help us out or ask if we were OK, which we most definitely were not!

It turned out that the men who had stopped us were agents of the state, and they said that they had the right because two of us had been riding our bicycles side by side; apparently they don't like bikes on what they claim as their turf. They said that they controlled the whole town and that we would have to pay them if we wanted to leave. They even threatened to kidnap us from our homes if we refused.

I'm still not sure who they were working for, or what we can do to protect ourselves, but I would suggest that if we stand together as a community we might be able to do something to get rid of them. If you see any members of this brutal gang, please call your friends, get a video camera and do whatever is in your power to protect your neighbors. If you don't stand up for the innocent, who will?

*Taylor Pierson,
Peaceful Eugene Cyclist*

BARRIERS IN THE EW

Several topics are covered in the May 4 *EW* that reflects the limits of our thought processes and our barriers to open discussion.

The first is the Day Without Immigrants Rally, where Silver A. Mogart states that the reasons for the continuing influx of (illegal) immigrants to this country are "to feed their hungry children or who are running from war." If these are the true motivations, I think that someone should tell the immigrants that they are coming to the wrong country to alleviate these problems. We have native-born American children who are hungry, and our fascist government is gearing up to invade yet another country in the Middle East.

Any rational person is against building 700 miles of wall to keep people out and creating felons of anyone providing services to illegal immigrants. But why does the only *EW* photo show three young women holding up a huge Mexican flag? The questions of allegiance to the U.S., the effect upon legal immigrants who are already here, and the actual reasons that Latino people are coming to the U.S. should be open for further discussion.

The second topic is the movie review of *United 93*. Jason Blair does some analysis behind the filming of this movie, but he does not mention the controversy surrounding it.

By building "with the authority of a documentary," it shields filmgoers from the probability that United 93 was shot down.

The last topic is Mary O'Brien on "Ethics and Religion." She gives a few examples of the harm done by organized religions, but avoids denouncing the overwhelming interference and destruction enacted by organized religious belief on the environment, on humanity and on human progress.

*Robert Simms
Waldport*

THE LAST GROUP

I want to thank Mary O'Brien and *EW* for the article "On Ethics and Religion" (5/4). It is rare that we get to hear the atheist viewpoint, especially on the topic of ethics. Ethics come from intelligence, not a mythical god. It comes from the ability to perceive the benefits of family, team or community and the ability to empathize with others. Unfortunately there are those who are ethically challenged. They need the threat of punishment in order to do what's right. They need the threat of a monetary fine, time in jail or eternity in hell to live an ethical life. These are the people we shouldn't trust, not atheists.

The negative perception of atheists in our society is the result of prejudice. It's the result of a smear campaign religion has headed probably as far back as the first semblance of organized religion. As a result of this, atheist populations are often under-reported. Many choose to be reported as agnostic, secular or non-religious.

Studies show that non-believers have a lower divorce rate and make up a smaller proportion of the prison population. The more educated an individual, the more likely they are to not believe in a god. As homosexuals, Hispanics and Muslims gain acceptance in our society, atheists will probably be the last group to gain protection under the PC umbrella.

*Brian Crook
Eugene*

OUTDATED SCHOOL

Wednesday night (5/10) I attended the Creswell Middle School open house. I was both appalled and impressed by what I saw. I was appalled by the deteriorating conditions of the middle school facilities. I saw the year-round creek that runs below the northwest portion of the building; a portion of the foundation is actually cut away to allow the creek to flow through. That alone says volumes about the water damage that this old building has endured since its construction in 1941.

At the same time I was also amazed and impressed by Principal Shirley Burrus and her staff and students. They are clearly presented with a work and learning environment that has outlived its life, and they have perse-

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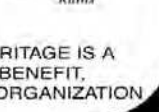
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