

Virginia Tech Backlash

Maybe it's always there, just below the surface, but we expect better of our college students.

Still, this is Oregon, which as a territory in the 1840s rejected slavery but voted 8-1 to ban African-Americans from legally living here via the infamous Exclusion Laws (not removed from the state constitution until 1926). This is the place where in the early 1900s, the UO refused to allow interracial rooming for women. And until 1953, Medford and Roseburg maintained unwritten "Sundown Laws" declaring that all minorities must vacate populated areas by sunset. The state's Prohibition of Intermarriage Law continued until 1959.

So maybe we shouldn't be surprised that in the wake of the Virginia Tech massacre by Korean-American Seung-hui Cho, Asian residents in Lane County — including UO students — have been the target of intimidation.

On April 25, Eugene's Asian community representative David Tam gave a press conference to announce that several local Asian citizens "have received very serious threats," adding, "Some are living in fear — they asked that we not give specifics."

Tam feels there has definitely been a Virginia Tech backlash both here and across the nation.

"We want to prevent this kind of stereotyping," he said.

Never mind the fact that of around 100 U.S. and Canadian school shooters since 1974, only four had any Asian heritage, three were black and one was Native American. Educated white males carry out 95 percent of such attacks, but logic does not apply here.

In this most violent of Western nations, the temptation to blame an entire class of foreigners for the brutal acts of a few individuals has a long pedigree. It happened after Pearl Harbor, although no one suggested interning German-Americans at that time for ongoing Nazi atrocities. It happened after 9/11, although no one suggested profiling all Caucasian gun-loving military veterans after Timothy McVeigh's Oklahoma City bombing ended the lives of 168 people and injured more than 500 in 1995.

A few Asian students at the UO and at other campuses around the state have found themselves being the recipients of shunning and nasty shouts of "Go home!"

UO exchange student Renaka S. told me, "Three times, walking in Allen Hall [the journalism building], white male students have said, 'Get out!' or 'Get off the campus!' as I passed by."

"How do you know it was directed at you?" I asked.

"Twice I was the only other person in the hallway! Another time, I was with two Japanese friends."

"How did you react? Did you report this?" I asked.

"I just kept walking," she said. "I don't want to give them the satisfaction of a reaction."

Among the various Asian students studying at the UO's American English Institute, some feel — unreasonably as far as statistics go — that Asians will be the target of the next campus shooting by whites. UO Media Relations head Pauline Austin acknowledged that, "Some students have reported feeling uncomfortable or anxious, but no specific incidents have turned up so far."

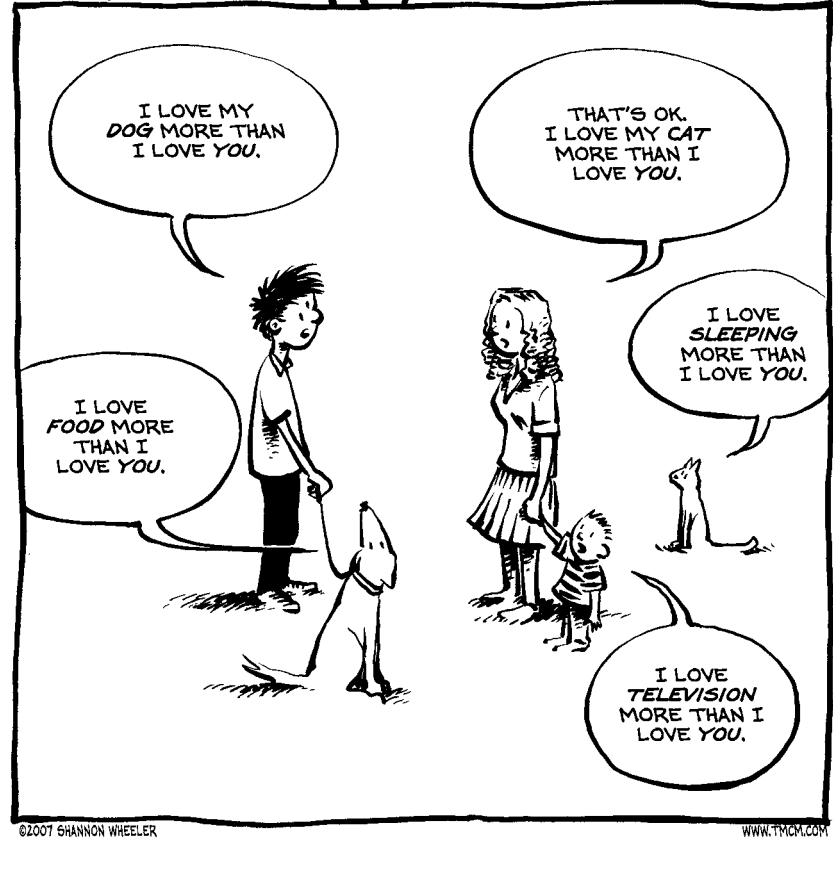
She said that all students have been sent email concerning emergency procedure plans, and all foreign students are told to report any acts of bigotry.

Virginia Tech authorities have gone out of their way to mention how there has been no backlash at all against Asian students on their campus. What they may not have mentioned is that the South Korean government pulled home close to 500 of its foreign scholars from that campus soon after the shooting, in fear of just such a backlash.

Joseph A. Lieberman of Eugene is author of *The Shooting Game — The Making of School Shooters*.

How to Be Happy

by Shannon Wheeler



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ANTI-TAX ZEALOTS

The recent "Slant" column condemnation of the negative recall effort against Commissioner Bobby Green resonates loudly with Diana Robertson's powerful expose ("Recalls a Waste," letters, 4/19) of just who's behind this vindictive push.

Bravo! Recalls are for removing elected officials guilty of criminality like embezzlement or sexual predation — not a noose for some political lynch mob.

Diana Robertson's letter properly exposes radical forces behind the original repeal effort — namely three antigovernment, anti-tax zealots with heavy out of county funding from "strident antigovernment crusader Don McIntyre and his Tigard-based Taxpayers Association of Oregon (\$2,000)." All three of the tax vote repeal petitioners are partisan Republican employees of Linn County-based Morse Brothers concrete products company, including two corporate executives.

Revealingly, the repeal group's website lists Ben Pooler and fellow petitioner Loren Later as recent 2004 arrivals in Lane County, with Pooler arriving fresh from Nevada. Not all of Nevada's illustrious traditions are welcome here. Lane County's tradition where honorable people disagree agreeably trumps nasty imported single-issue extremism.

As a home-owning, taxpaying Lane County resident of many years, I oppose abusing the recall process; while I don't always agree with Commissioner Green, he doesn't deserve this shabby treatment. Nor have Commissioners Bill Dwyer and Faye Stewart — next on this right-wing group's arrogant hit-list — earned this pettiness.

Sally Nunn
Eugene

DESPERATE TIMES

Unless you've been living on Mars, you know about the pending budget cuts that LCC is facing. Last week, the LCC paper, *The Torch*, ran an article that rather officially stated that LCC will be making cuts to con-

tracted faculty and staff, seven administrators and an undetermined number of part-time faculty. It appears that we have officially entered desperate times.

So here's my question: Why don't they cut all athletic programs? I love sports as much as the next person, but wouldn't cutting the sports programs from a community college make more sense than depleting the academic program to the breaking point? And for that matter, why not cut the music and drama departments, too? Yes, we highly value all of these departments, but when put in this impossible situation, are sports and music and drama more important than cutting teachers and staff?

In the end everyone loses; yes, I realize that. But I am personally not willing to sacrifice the quality of my education just so that LCC can have a couple more trophies in the athletic department showcase.

Let's cut all that which is not essential to academics and show that education is what LCC cares about most. I know that there will be plenty of people irritated by my suggestion, but if you have to choose between your son playing basketball on a community college team and getting adequate foundational education at that same school, what will you choose?

The time has come for LCC to stop whining and look at things with a realistic perspective. And while I'm at it, stop insisting on buying the school new computers every other year. That is just irresponsible money management.

Education is the most important thing for a community college. Not sports. Not music. Not drama. Desperate times call for desperate measures.

Linda Cathey
Eugene

CRUEL IRONY

Most people in Lane County are not aware that there is a county-funded Veteran Services office that serves by assisting veterans in filing claims for assistance with the Veterans Administration. Additionally, there are cur-

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