

faced with a Hobbesian choice: they could either starve or emigrate. More than one million were allowed to starve while more than three million emigrated to the U.S. When these poor, starving people started arriving in large numbers in the U.S., they were treated in the same way that Mexicans are arriving in the U.S. are today.

In 1999, former Gov. Kitzhaber signed into law Senate Bill 771, which called for the Oregon Department of Education to prepare, and Oregon schools to teach, a unit of instruction to be known as the Irish Famine Curriculum. Ask your school district how to access it and read what those Irish immigrants had to face, how they were treated by the media of the day and what contributions they and their descendants have made to this country before you decide your position on today's immigration debate. If we don't know our immigration history, we may be doomed to repeat it.

*G. Dennis Shine  
Springfield*

**IMPOSSIBLE MISSIONS**

The U.S. emerged from World War II riding an economic engine built on cheap and plentiful petroleum to survey a world full of nations, all who looked to our accomplishments and way of life as a goal. All nations, even those who saw us as competitors, wanted, or at least needed, to do business with us. What happened to us? What happened to Our Town?

What happened was two impossible missions — a U.S. foreign policy and immigration policy built on internally inconsistent (and thus self-destructive) assumptions and doomed to fail. Why? Because it is politically impossible for our leaders and psychologically impossible for our citizens to actually face the root issues that lay behind our foreign policy and our immigration policy.

We will NOT face the issue of changing the U.S. into a nation living within its means. The U.S. has not and will not learn to live within the budget of the natural and labor resources that lie within the boundaries of the nation.

**drawing as therapy** **by harvey dickson**



We will NOT face the issue of the changing face of the U.S. White America can no more stop Latin Americans than Native Americans could stop European colonists. The truth is the "them" pouring over our borders are going to be the new us!

In Norway, in the 1930s, my father's history teacher said, "There are two unstoppable realities behind all the talk of ideology and great men in history. Those two realities are available natural resources and migration." I agree with him.

*Leo Rivers  
Cottage Grove*

**NOT SUCH A THREAT**

Your news story "Terror Label" (5/10) makes clear the extent to which the government will go to justify its misguided war on

terrorism. While this supposed war was sold to the American people as protection against future 9/11s, we now find it being waged within our borders against young people who took a stand in defense of the earth and harmed no living thing. While the government has labeled the ELF/ALF the "#1 domestic terrorist threat," I think the FBI would be hard-pressed to find a citizen who feels threatened by them.

So, if the prosecution of these 10 activists is not for our benefit, then whose benefit is it for? Could it be for the benefit of an administration that has come up short in its search for those who participated in the 9/11 attacks? Property destruction as a tactic of protest, while contested among activists, has a long history in the U.S. dating back to the Boston Tea Party. The crackdown on dissent that has

occurred during this administration has worked to extinguish the channels through which people can express dissatisfaction with the government.

This campaign is taken to new heights by designating environmental activists as "terrorists." If the government is allowed to apply the terrorism enhancement to these young people, we will allow the vise to be tightened on what it means to stand up for what is right in the U.S.

*Steven Schuller  
Brooklyn, NY*

**AN EQUAL BLESSING**

I noticed your Slant comment (5/3) about the silence on gun control after Virginia Tech. Personally, as someone who was deeply affected by what happened (my stepfather was teaching the only class in the building not attacked), I was grateful for it — all of us who were deeply affected by the incident have needed time to simply understand what happened. But I have started to wonder — what do we do next? I think we need to take a deeper look at ourselves and our lives.

When some people in Eugene heard that I was headed to Utah for graduate school, I was warned about the conservatives, and, by some, the Mormons. Now, by some, when I come home to visit, I'm asked how I can live in such a conservative place. I have discovered in my short time here that we have a lot more in common than not. I could not have survived this very difficult first year in my Ph.D program without my conservative Mormon friends. While my friends back there in Eugene have been a blessing, these friends here have been an equal blessing.

I think the deeper look we need to take is at how we carry ourselves, how we treat each other and how we treat those who are different. I don't know what the solution to not ever having such an incident ever again is, but I do know that one place that can't hurt to go to is a place of compassion — for ourselves, for others and for those we don't understand.

*Brooke Robertshaw  
Missing Eugene from Logan, Utah*

**viewpoint** BY KAREN KENNEDY

**The Taser Dilemma**

Police weapon used to subdue can also kill

**A** few months ago the Eugene Police Department announced that it planned to equip its officers with Taser stun guns. These weapons are promoted as being non-lethal, but the facts do not support this. As a community, we should be aware of the health and safety problems these weapons could pose.

According to Amnesty International, the number of people who have been killed by these weapons has been steadily increasing each year. Sixty-one people died in 2005 after being shocked by law enforcement Tasers. At least 152 people have died in the U.S. since 2001 after being shocked by the weapon.

Most of those who died had pre-existing medical conditions, were under the influence of drugs or medication and/or were subjected to multiple or prolonged electro-shocks. Among TASER-related deaths in the past year, for example, 40 were shocked more than three times and one person as many as 19 times. A majority of those who died went into cardiac or respiratory arrest at the scene (Amnesty International report, March 2006).

Taser stun guns fire 50,000 volts of electricity via two wires lead by a piercing dart from distances of up to 21 feet. Tasers can also be applied close up as a "touch stun gun." Persons shot with a Taser experience severe pain and a loss of muscle

control which causes them to collapse.

Taser International, the company that makes Taser stun guns, claims that their stun guns will reduce injuries and save lives by giving officers an alternative to using firearms and batons. The company encourages liberal use of its weapon, and promotes it as a non-lethal weapon that saves lives. Police departments are naturally attracted to this type of weapon.

Taser International grossly downplays safety concerns. There has been little public scrutiny of this weapon, no consistent standards or guidelines on its use and no independent medical research conducted on its safety.

Amnesty International supports the development of non-lethal alternatives to firearms, and believes that police officers should have the tools they need to do their jobs safely and effectively.

However, Amnesty's research has shown that police are using the weapons routinely rather than as a last resort, often to subdue unarmed, non-compliant individuals who do not pose a serious danger to themselves or others.

I welcome the EPD's thoughtful pilot program to review safety and proper use of this weapon, and encourage the public to attend any public meetings regarding this issue. Providing our officers with better options other than the use of deadly force is something we can all support. However, in almost every case where Tasers might be used, there is no way to know if they would have been helpful in preventing death or causing death.



*Karen Kennedy serves on the UO Senate and has been active in Amnesty International for more than 10 years. The UO chamber of AI is active during the school year. See www.amnesty.org*