

NO EXCUSE

Is blackface just like dressing up as Darth Vader [Letters, 11/17]? Is blackface, like drag, simply a valuable tool of the theater? Is dressing up in blackface similar to being transgender?

White performers in minstrel shows (as recently as the 1960s) painted their faces black and exaggerated their lips in order to portray a caricature of a black person that reinforced all of the worst racial stereotypes: lazy, buffoonish, cowardly, criminal, uneducated. This was considered humorous and entertaining by white audiences.

Frederick Douglass called blackface minstrel performers “the filthy scum of white society, who have stolen from us a complexion denied to them by nature, in which to make money, and pander to the corrupt taste of their white fellow citizens.”

Why isn't blackface the same as dressing up like Darth Vader? Darth Vader is a fictional character. Black people are not fictional.

Is blackface just a theatrical concept like drag? Drag is a historical form of resistance to the oppression of queer identities, particularly queer people of color. Drag culture gives a middle finger to the hetero-patriarchy and celebrates the joy of queerness and femininity. It was created by queer people for queer people. In contrast, blackface is a white invention, created to mock and belittle black people.

Does putting on blackface have any similarity to being transgender? Transgender people are not dressing up as something they are not. Transgender people are dressing as themselves.

People who wear blackface are not trying to live a more authentic life. People who wear blackface are not discriminated against on a daily basis. They do not go through the exhausting process of coming out, do not have to deal with time-consuming and expensive legal bureaucracy in order to be recognized, do not feel afraid when they enter public restrooms.

People who wear blackface are making a stupid, thoughtless, racist decision to ignore historical context in order to make their white friends laugh. Blackface can never be isolated from a racist and shameful history.

We can't excuse blackface in order to focus on “real” issues, because blackface is one of many toxic reminders that racism is real and prevalent and insidious. People who wear blackface should know better. We should all know better.

Ana Sayavedra
Eugene

LIGHT UP THE DARK

“Let's go,” said my 7-year-old recently when he heard about the Nov. 10 Vigil for Hope and Respect at Kesey Square, advertised as family-friendly. Kids love lighting up the dark, so we held up our LED candles along with a few hundred people, singing together. As a newer reader, he was thrilled that soon the crowd sang a song from the lyrics sheet:

“Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world
Nothing to kill or die for,
A brotherhood of man ...”

Scores of candles spelled out “L O V E” beside the Ken Kesey statue.

THIS MODERN WORLD

THINGS TO BE
THANKFUL
FOR THIS
HOLIDAY
SEASON*

*THANKFULNESS NOT GUARANTEED

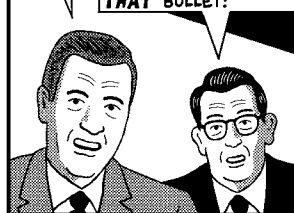
3) TRUMP DID LOSE THE POPULAR VOTE, WHICH YOU JUST KNOW WILL EAT AT HIM FOREVER.
HELLO, FAILING NEW YORK TIMES? THIS IS PUBLICIST JOHN BARRON CALLING! I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT PRESIDENT TRUMP IS BIGLY POPULAR WITH EVERYONE, EXCEPT THE LOSERS AND HATERS!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, “MISTER PRESIDENT”? THERE'S NO ONE HERE BY THAT NAME!

1) AMERICANS NARROWLY AVOIDED ELECTING A PRESIDENT WHO ONCE MISHANDLED EMAIL.

CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE THE CHAOS AND DISCORD WHICH WOULD HAVE INEVITABLY ENSUED?

WE'RE CERTAINLY FORTUNATE TO HAVE DODGED THAT BULLET!



4) IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE ABOUT TO HAND OVER TERRIFYING POWERS OF STATE SURVEILLANCE AND DRONE WARFARE TO AN ERRATIC, THIN-SKINNED SOCIOPATH.

OH WAIT--IT'S EXACTLY LIKE THAT!

WHO COULD HAVE EVER FORESEEN SUCH A MOMENT?



by TOM TOMORROW

2) UNDER A TRUMP ADMINISTRATION, THE JOKES WILL JUST WRITE THEMSELVES!

PRESIDENT TRUMP TWEETED THAT ROSIE O'DONNELL NEEDS TO LOSE WEIGHT--SO HE'S SENDING HER TO A FORCED LABOR CAMP!

SERIOUSLY, HE'S REALLY DOING IT.

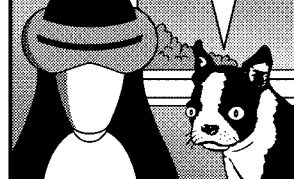
BOY, THE CARTOONISTS SURE HAVE PLENTY OF MATERIAL THESE DAYS!



5) IT'S POSSIBLE THAT TRUMP WILL RENOUNCE THE RACISTS AND ANTI-SEMITES WHO SUPPORTED HIM, AND GOVERN THE NATION WITH WISDOM AND COMPASSION AND-- OH, NEVER MIND.

WELL, IT WAS A NICE COUNTRY WHILE IT LASTED!

AT LEAST, SOME OF THE TIME!



With no sound system, vigil initiator Sam Rutledge's speech was amplified by the crowd, sentence by echoed sentence. He said we were privileged in Eugene to be accompanied by peaceful security officers, unlike Flint, Michigan, and Standing Rock, North Dakota, where protesters were met with tear gas or arrests.

Later, the large anti-Trump march came welling down Broadway and joined us. We sang “We Shall Overcome,” a Civil Rights movement anthem, as T. read along on his lyrics sheet:

“We shall all join hands,
We shall all join hands,
Someday.”

Since then, he has been singing the song again and again, alternating silly lyrics and inspiring verses. I fear the near future will be very tough for people who are being demeaned, feared and otherwise “other-ed.”

But in our children's hands, I trust all of America will be OK, and to reclaim the word, hopefully even *great*. Let us work together to hasten the day.

Sara Miura Zolbrod
Eugene

HONORED VALUES

One way we progressives can ease our depression is to use our resources in a way that honors our values. Our extended family has decided to buy no gifts at all this holiday season. Instead we are making donations to those groups that will be needed more than ever.

We expect sexual assaults and gay bashing to increase. White supremacists are already crawling out and strutting around. A woman's right to make her own health decisions will be under attack. The poor and hungry will be humiliated and scapegoated. Many poor families will lose their health insurance.

I can't imagine the level of fear and anxiety of anybody who is not white and heterosexual and not “Christian.”

Groups like Womenspace, Planned Parenthood, Food for Lane County, Whitebird, Southern Poverty Law Cen-

ter, PFLAG, for examples, will be needed more than ever. We don't need more things but our community needs our support.

Doug Hintz
Eugene

OREGON HIPSTER

Jennifer Clark's annoyance with the Best of Eugene's attempted humor, especially the “Best Eugene Stereotype,” includes the commentary being anonymous [Letters, 11/17].

Actually, it's pretty easy to figure out who wrote the snide swipe at “The Skipper.” It was another Eugene type, “Oregon Hipster” (*Millennium snarkus*) who can be recognized for his attempt to seem cool while hiding his anxiety that he spent way too much for his carbon fiber bicycle and then had the custom-crafted seat jacked so he can't really ride it.

Hipster also just learned that The Skipper's Greek fisherman's cap was something the old guy bought to keep from getting sunburned on his bald dome, while on a month long vacation in Greece last year. Hipster discovered this when Ubering Skipper back to the latter's Prius, which is also when Skipper remarked he had the same model and color Subaru back in the 1990s.

But it's all cool, except for Hipster's worries about his own Male Pattern Baldness that showed up a couple of months ago when he cut off his blond dreads.

Chuck Kleinhans
Eugene

LEFT BEHIND

Reply to Annie Kayner's letter in the 11/10 issue: When someone tells you they are in pain, do you tell them, “No, you're not”? I am an intelligent, educated, able bodied, theoretically employable single white man in Eugene. In practice, I am not able to support myself by working, nor am I able to pay the costs of a formal education.

Deep dysfunctions in a society become significant barriers to those they most di-

rectly affect long before they are visible to such quick-to-judge bystanders as Kayner. Just because you can't see it yet, does not mean it's not there.

Obtainable income from working jobs I can get is insufficient to cover living expenses incurred while holding those jobs. Support available to college students does not begin to cover costs of living (mainly rent). I can cover almost all the costs of attending college if I have free room and board.

Kayner said, “There are people who will help you obtain any of these things.” This is true if you are not a white male, and may likely be true if you have children. But any white male who is alone is expected to ride his privilege to success. Privilege is real: Police perceive a non-threat when they see me, and if I were rooted into the corporate ladder, I'd climb more easily.

But for one whose concerns are basic needs, survival and education, it works against those of us who are assumed to have advantages we don't have.

This is one of those social developments that is hard to see until it impacts you personally. People like myself will have an uphill battle and be punished every step of the way for superficially resembling someone who offended society as a whole. We can't realistically expect help, but when someone who can't see our situation promotes some arbitrary story about it as truth, we will reply.

No, being male and white does not give one an advantage in whether or not one is employed. No, adequate resources to support education are not there for everyone, nor even for most.

Yes, many Americans have been left behind, including some white men. I voted for Sanders and then for Stein.

Andrew Cottrell
Eugene

PRESERVE WATER

Freedom fighters of all stripes place high importance on Natives' Rights and treaties with the Indian Nations. It is true that many indigenous people and tribes still remain in North America and around the globe. The worth of our environment is that it sustains life. The value we place on it should compare to the love for all life that we each carry inside. This force has propelled countless generations since the beginning-less past till today.

Building a fuel pipeline under a source of some of the purest drinking water on this planet (of which our country has an unusual high proportion) endangers us. Its rupture would mean disastrous chaos to many Americans.

Let's stop dividing original settlers from colonizers and see this as a common problem. The division of today's people should be “those who will fight for life and those who will remain on their seats glued to the idiot box.”

On Nov. 15 a rally in support of NoDAPL (No Dakota Access Pipe Line) took place in downtown Eugene. It toured the banks and disrupted some exploitive businesses. One quality which distinguishes this local protest with possible future ones can be summarized in two words: non violence. This beautiful ideal demonstrated at Eugene's march will evaporate with the remaining potable water as the years ahead approach us and thirst will have to