

the front and reaching individuals in the back. We are all connected, hanging by a thread.

This independent activity was inspired by the Kogi people, an indigenous civilization in Colombia. They call themselves “Elder Brothers” and have been warning “Younger Brothers” about the risk environmental catastrophe poses to life.

Scientists know that the lag between extra carbon in our atmosphere and negative effects is about 40 years. Harm from this year’s pollution will not be experienced for a long time. If enough positive feedback loops are triggered, we face chaos and unknown hazards.

In the Kogi people’s documentary film *Aluna*, which is free on the internet, we can learn from the way golden thread is used by the Kogi. Each of us has the powerful influence of the butterfly effect and can lead a peaceful, global revolution.

Let us not wait a moment longer. We Younger Brothers must hear the Kogi and leaders such as Winona LaDuke. Now.

David W. Oaks  
Eugene

### BEWARE TRUMPLESTILSKEN

The resident-elect (no, I did not misplace the P key on my computer) has offered up as his cabinet the richest set of old white men (with an occasional equally rich and unqualified woman) this country has ever seen. Anyone who believes this pack of rabid billionaires has anyone’s interest but their own at heart is living in a fairy tale — perhaps *Trumplestilksen*, where an evil troll tries to convince everyone to spin things into gold for him.

Trump’s billionaires on the shelf have

already made it clear that their tax plans and other policies will favor the wealthy while at the same time leaving the rest of us uninsured, underpaid, sick and trying desperately to remind them that you can’t destroy the only planet we have.

But the people have recognized their own power. When we work together, we can truly have a system that responds to the people’s needs — stopping the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a treaty negotiated by and for the corporations, is just one example.

If you haven’t yet heard about the People’s Agenda, please check it out at [PopularResistance.org/peoplesagenda](http://PopularResistance.org/peoplesagenda).

The agenda includes 15 issues that 60 percent or more U.S. citizens support.

By working together, we can stand up to the “Mr. Burns” in this political *Simpsons* cartoon and make sure that all of us move forward into a more socially, racially and economically just world. And that we have a planet to live our lives on.

Leigh Anne Jasheway  
Eugene

### SUPPORT BLACK STUDENTS

Black students at the UO deserve extra attention from the local community on how we can better support their challenging reality of being under-supported and under-represented students.

The Black Student Task Force at the UO, with the backing of other student groups and many staff members, has asked for a Black Cultural Center to be built at the university. Only \$3 million is needed to build it.

I want to trust that UO President Michael Schill will raise the funds, but after

meeting with UO’s senior advisor and chief of staff Greg Stripp, I am not convinced that it is a priority for the administration. Stripp reminded me that it takes time to raise money and that you have to be asking for something the donors are interested in.

It is my guess that if the UO administration showed interest in building a Black Cultural Center, the donors would show commensurate interest in funding it. The white community, as the largest racial population at the University of Oregon and in the Eugene community, needs to put pressure on the UO administration to make sure the money is raised for the Black Cultural Center.

There are too many black students who have had to put so much of their own unpaid time trying to get the support they need at the UO. They deserve that safe space. The white community of Eugene must make it clear that we support the black students at the UO by emailing or calling Schill and/or by making donations in support of the Black Cultural Center.

It is my understanding that one of the reasons Schill was hired is because of his exceptional fundraising abilities. Let’s see the money!

Robin Quirke  
Eugene

### RISING RACIAL TENSIONS

My name is Brian Sun. I am an international student from China at the University of Oregon. This is the first time I am trying to reach out to share my ideas with others in the newspaper, how exciting! (And I’m a bit nervous, of course.)

Anyway, I attended South Eugene High for the past four years. The point I am try-

ing to make is about the “segregation” that occurs among international students and domestic students at the UO, and why it is what it is now. I know Oregon is one of the most progressive state in the U.S. but, believe me, the “segregation” does exist!

In the past four years and a quarter, I see lots of my international student peers, especially Asians, struggling on socializing with domestic students. So many of them end up staying in their own racial community and refuse to keep “fitting in” the society.

At the time when America got a new president, racial tensions are starting to grow and Hollywood is complaining about running out of Asian actors, I think it is important to talk about these issues.

Brian Sun  
Eugene

### OVER OR UNDER?

Regarding Gregg Ferry’s carefully considered analysis of the vital “toilet seat up-toilet seat down” controversy [Letters, 12/15], he seems to have made one glaring omission. Surprisingly, he has somehow overlooked (or intentionally avoided) one of the most hotly debated aspects of the issue before us — or rather, besides us — one that arguably demands equal scrutiny.

Does one place the dispensing tissue tube so that the tissue turns over or under the roll? On this matter, there should be no equivocation. As it stands (or rather sits), the jury is still out. Popular opinion is most definitely divided.

At this impasse, perhaps the Electoral College should make the definitive decision and put this tissue to rest.

W.C. Crutchfield  
Eugene

## VIEWPOINT BY SHAWN BOYLES

# Lamentable Response

THE UO LOSES A TEACHABLE MOMENT

**I**t is difficult not to lament the fate of the University of Oregon in light of the inept administrative response to what should have been seen, at worst, as a teachable moment gone awry.

On Halloween a respected scholar, in the privacy of her own home, attempted to open a discourse about white privilege using props consisting of a blackened face, a stethoscope and a white coat.

Someone without the wit to understand the intellectual exercise or the courage to voice his or her concern, instead resorted to what can at best be seen as a cowardly tactic — publishing a photo of the costume props out of context.

Suddenly, 23 members of the law school faculty, who are either fools or sheep, called for the scholar to resign and the administration failed to gather the facts before issuing a sincerely fatuous letter including one especially odious paragraph:

*“We condemn this action unequivocally as anathema to the University of Oregon’s cherished values of*

*racial diversity and inclusion. The use of blackface, even in jest at a Halloween party, is patently offensive and reinforces historically racist stereotypes. It was a stupid act and is in no way defensible.”*

This feckless and uninformed behavior of UO president and provost in their letter to the campus on the day after the alleged racist incident is appalling. They paid no heed to the threat against academic freedom inherent in the mob mentality brought about by a faceless assassin using social media.

Failure to understand the facts before issuing such a letter would be a grave error by any university president. When the president is a lawyer, such a failure raises questions as to his professional competence. Opinion is not fact and propitiation without investigation is not leadership.

The subsequent “investigation” of the incident concluded that the university’s interest in preserving a learning environment free of racial harassment outweighed a faculty member’s free speech rights and

academic freedom. What nonsense. To see the incident as racial harassment reflects a willingness to confuse narrative with reality — a dangerous consequence of post-modern thinking. While it is important that students feel physically safe, the University is under no obligation to shield them from often uncomfortable intellectual positions. A rigorous education ensures that students confront and defend their most cherished values and beliefs. Anything less does them a disservice.

This debacle has embarrassed those of us who cherish academic freedom. One can only hope for a strong response from the University Senate.

It remains to be seen whether the university will remain among the community of academic institutions or devolve to a poorly run business under a board of trustees that collectively seems to see academic freedom of inquiry purely as a tool of capitalism and hires accordingly.

*Shawn Boles, Ph.D. is an experimental psychologist, who retired from the University of Oregon’s University Center on Human Development in 1999.*