

CYBERHATE

Racists use Websites to propagandize young people

The Internet is more than just an entertainment-soaked distraction. It is a tool. An exceptionally easy tool, especially for the 2,000 hate groups that have sprung up on the Web since 1990.



BEVERLY MIRELES

These Websites support the links that can make bigoted software, paraphernalia and countless manifestoes available with the click of a mouse. The sites are exceedingly easy to reach. If one wanted to find sites relating to anything racial, it seems almost certain that they would come across Websites such as the World Church of the Creator site, White Pride Network or the homepage of the ironically named National Association for the Advancement of White People.

For those with a commitment to spreading hatred and intolerance, Websites are easy to acquire and easier to maintain.

Positive things about the "information superhighway," such as accessibility and its low cost, have taken a decidedly ugly turn on the Internet, where hate groups have used the Web's accessibility to reach out to not only children but the youthful and educated.

Much has been made of the obvious attempt to target children by hate groups. Kids are malleable, and unfortunately, it does not take much convincing to teach a kid that he is superior to people that are different.

However, there are ways to fight back. For parents, there are "Hate Filters" supported by the Anti-Defamation League that can block certain marked hate group sites.

Also, many Internet service providers (ISPs) have parental controls that can block any Website, making parental discretion the most formidable control.

Hopefully, those types of blocks will keep children from reaching the sites dedicated to turning them into young hate-filled zealots.

But those devices rarely stop the average college student from delving into the hateful underbelly of the Internet.

It is something that is overlooked, but college students happen to be particularly susceptible to the rallying cry of hate groups.

Most Aggies are from Southern states, and a large percentage are from small towns.

Aggies know better than most how insidious racism really is. Personally, it is hard not to notice when your town had a white and non-white cemetery until just recently.

On a college campus, it is hoped the presence of so many different types of people would lead to a certain racial equality and understanding.

But we have to have noticed how many Confederate flags can be seen on assorted belt buckles, trucks and in residence hall rooms.

The sad truth of it is that some Aggies are bigots. When you have such a large population of Southern white people, there are going to be racists.

And due to the fact that we are separated from parents and other mentors, the possibility that those previously latent thoughts of racist origin will thrive increases.

It is disturbing to think some college students, being intelligent enough to get into universities in the first place, could harbor views that are so backward, but that is what hate groups are relying on.

They desperately need not only children, but somewhat educated people who can rationalize their horrible beliefs with pseudo-intellectualism.

College is a time where one can break out, learn new things and become cemented in certain beliefs. The behavioral rebellion that often comes with being away from home can spark a continued interest in racist propaganda.

College students have a tendency to fiercely support their convictions, and if those convictions happen to be racist, the possibility of those beliefs strengthening with age is great.

We cannot ban racist propaganda on the Web — ignoring the freedoms of the First Amendment would be as bad as supporting intolerance itself.

But there are ways of combatting it. Nonviolent methods might include contacting local equality groups or visiting civil-rights Websites.

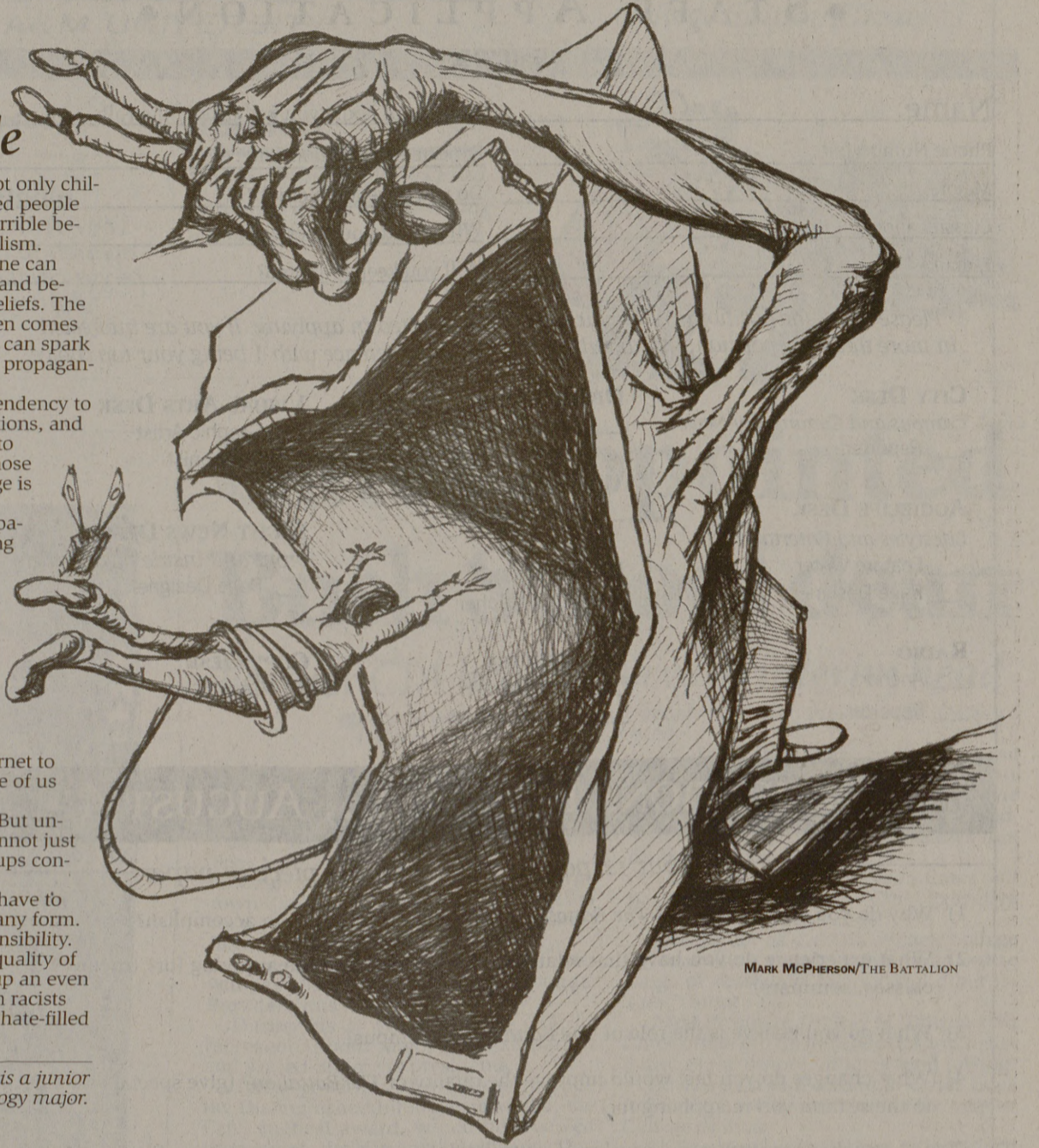
If racists can use the Internet to their advantage, so can those of us who seek out equality.

Racism should not exist. But until the day it does not, we cannot just stand idly by while hate groups continue to recruit members.

As educated citizens, we have to fight back against racism in any form. With education comes responsibility.

As people who support equality of all groups, we have to keep up an even greater level of intensity than racists do if we are to discredit their hate-filled views.

Beverly Mireles is a junior microbiology major.



COLLEGIATE ROUNDUP

from U-Wire editorial reports

Tax cuts misuse budget surpluses

From the Minnesota Daily at the University of Minnesota.

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — The House passed Friday a tax-cut proposal based on the projected federal budget surplus.

The proposal, however, is ill-timed and based upon unsound economic policy. ...

Assuming the economy continues to grow, the projected government surplus will total \$2.9 trillion over the next decade.

Rather than cutting taxes, there are a few more pertinent uses for the anticipated surplus, such as the solvency of Medicare and Social Security and the reduction of the national debt.

Funds for Medicare and Social Security are quickly being depleted by the demands of aging baby boomers.

The national debt, which is currently \$3.6 trillion, should be the largest recipient of surplus proceeds.

The proposed tax reduction disproportionately affects the wealthiest Americans.

Households in the highest one-fifth earnings bracket would receive almost 80 percent of the income tax reductions. The lowest one-fifth would receive only 0.3 percent of the income tax reductions. ...

2000 Olympics deserve support

From The Daily Universe at Brigham Young University.

PROVO, Utah — Ever since December of last year, the Olympic spirit has burned about as bright as a \$1.99 flashlight sold at a countryside gas station. The Salt Lake Organizing Committee scandal had a lot to do with it. ...

In the midst of the scandal, the integrity of both the IOC and SLOC as well as the ethics of the entire selection process were called into question on an international scale.

Naturally, the Olympics as a whole was cast in a negative light.

But have we forgotten about the year 2000? ... While Salt Lake City has been withering under the heat of the scandal, the anticipation for the 2000 Summer Games in Sydney has also suffered. ...

Yes, scandal will always grab the headlines, but perhaps we should now shift that attention back to Sydney. ... Scandal or no scandal — it's time to feed some enthusiasm back into the Olympic spirit. ...

Regardless of whether the reasoning behind it is justified, rioting seems to be growing more common among today's generation. ... The only way to prevent more riotous behavior is for people to stop and take a look at themselves and the consequences of their actions.

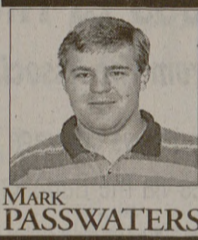
EAST LANSING, Mich. — The riots that broke out at the conclusion of Woodstock '99 are only part of the problem with how our increasingly violent generation reacts when a large group is assembled. ...

The root of this riot is the mob mentality that is giving our generation a bad image.

Regardless of whether the reasoning behind it is justified, rioting seems to be growing more common among today's generation. ... The only way to prevent more riotous behavior is for people to stop and take a look at themselves and the consequences of their actions.

Outcome of Iranian protests holds great consequence for U.S.

Back before Saddam Hussein's leadership led Iraq to the top of the "Islamic Nations We Can't Stand" list in 1990, the Islamic Republic of Iran was considered the greatest threat to American interests in the Persian Gulf region.



MARK PASSWATERS

Under the Ayatollah Khomeini, the Iranians had taken American citizens hostage inside the U.S. embassy in Tehran, had financially supported terrorist organizations and had threatened American allies such as Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

Under Khomeini, Iran had become a theocracy — that is, a nation whose law is based upon religious tenets.

Since 1979, Iran's laws have come directly from the Koran. These rules require women to dress from head to toe in black and do not allow them to do many things that Western women take for granted.

Also, Iranian schools emphasize religious studies over other areas. In order to prevent the corruptive influences of the outside world (primarily the "Great Satan," the United States), very strict censorship has been set in place. Iran has become a police state by using Islam as a pretext.

Now, two decades after the revolution that ousted the Shah from power, forces for change have started to appear.

The Iranian people elected Mohammed Khatami president in 1997 after he promised to reform the current system. Khatami was elected over the objections of Iran's powerful spiritual leader, the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Khatami's proposals of change in Iran can be considered staggering. Khatami has loosened some of the restrictions on the media and has allowed some negative coverage to emanate

from newspapers loyal to him. He has also stated he would like Iran to improve relations with the West, including the United States.

The prospect of having a more open nation while still clinging to its Islamic ideals has captivated young Iranians, just as Khomeini's message did their parents.

However, Khatami is not going to get what he wants without a struggle.

Khomeini and his fellow religious leaders are still strongly conservative and are also in control of the military.

Acting on orders from Khomeini, Tehran police have arrested the city's mayor (an ally of Khatami) and have shut down several of the more moderate newspapers in the past three months.

ly. An eruption of violence in Iran could lead one of two ways: the collapse of the theocratic state or a repeat of Tiananmen Square.

Both of these could have possibly negative consequences for the United States.

If Khatami and his supporters win, the United States may be able to resume a friendship that had existed long before 1979.

If they do, however, many conservatives who are opposed to America will become very powerful nomads, much like the Saudi terrorist Osama Bin Laden.

Almost certainly, America would be blamed in some part for the fall of the Islamic state, which may lead to a new rise in terrorist activity.

But if the conservatives succeed, then it is very possible Iran will retake the mantle as America's greatest threat in the region.

Unlike Iraq, Iran can still export its oil and import weapons. With instability rampant in the former Soviet Union, it is not out of the realm of possibility that some very potent weapons could move south, across the Iranian border.

The current situation in Iran may well come to dictate America's policy toward the Persian Gulf region for the next 20 years.

If Mohammed Khatami and his supporters succeed in creating a new, more approachable Iran, the United States would have one less foe to deal with and perhaps a springboard from which to fight terrorism and arms smuggling.

If Khatami fails, tension between Iran and the United States would almost certainly return.

From a purely American viewpoint, it certainly would be preferable to have Khatami succeed in his quest for reform.

If he does, a chance for a new start with an old foe is possible. If he does not, the consequences could prove catastrophic.

This situation is one the United States must watch very close-

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Mark Passwaters is an electrical engineering graduate student.