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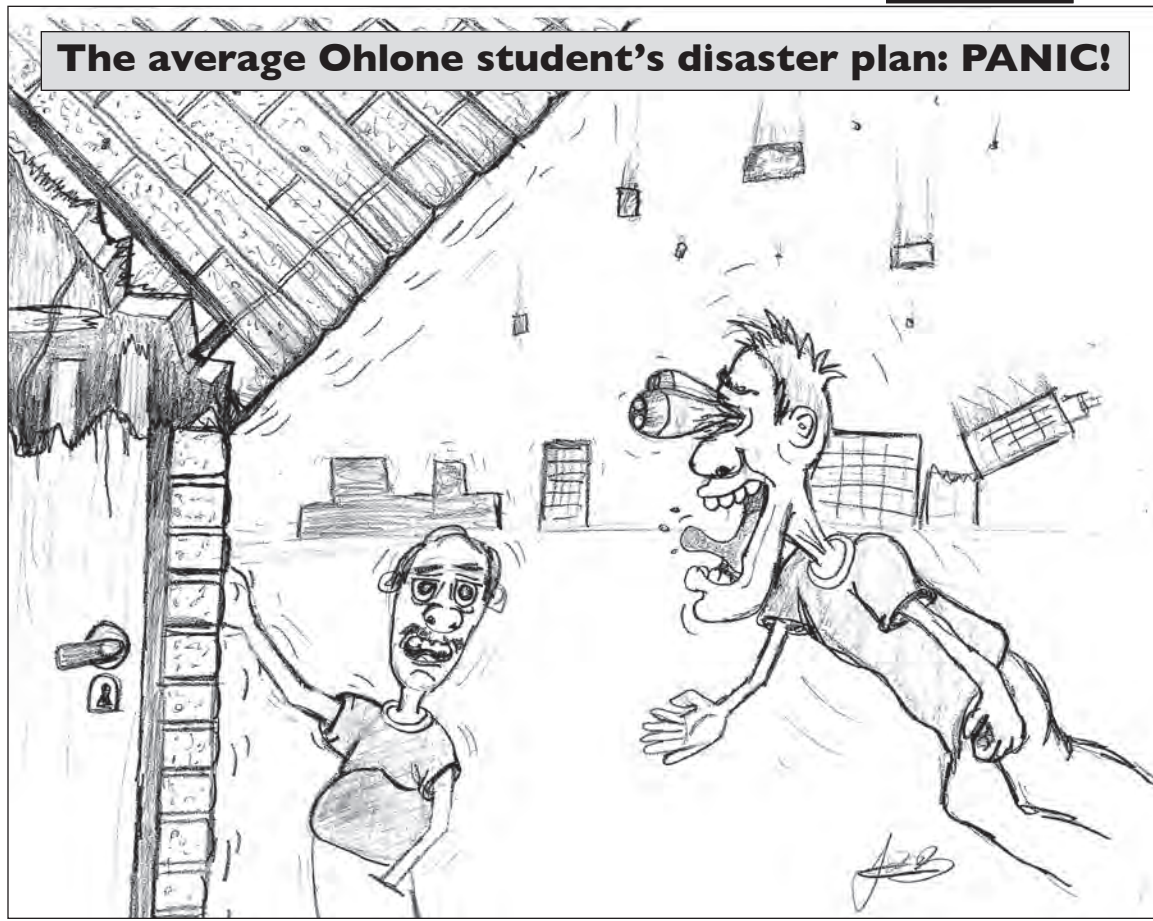


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OPINION

Earthquake preparedness: Think you are ready?

By GABRIEL VILA
Staff writer

We are doomed, but hey, what else is new?

With the centennial of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake just last week, you may ask yourself, "What in the name of (insert deity) am I doing in the Bay Area? Am I just asking to be crushed by moving walls of earth, shooting at me at 5,000 feet per second? Am I totally insane?"

Well, if you do ask yourself

that question now, then you worry too much. But the possibility of a devastating earthquake is not wholly improbable. While the 1906 earthquake occurred along the San Andreas fault line, Fremont sits almost directly atop the Hayward fault. The Hayward fault has an earthquake every 151 years, give or take 23, and the last earthquake along the line occurred in 1868, meaning that a new earthquake seems imminent.

Estimated damages from a big quake on the Hayward fault range

from shocking to utterly incomprehensible. It has been projected that more than 150,000 housing units could be destroyed, over 350,000 people displaced, thousands of roads closed and billions upon billions of property damage will be incurred.

Thinking about future disasters brings up a question; what is Ohlone College's disaster plans? As a student, I don't think I've ever been briefed in regards to earthquake plans. What kind of role would Ohlone play in Fremont given an earthquake? How would Ohlone

College fare in any sort of disaster? Are we really prepared here?

Setting these questions aside, are we prepared in our homes? I know for a fact that I'm not. My family tried to put together a disaster kit back in the dawn of history. A store of canned foods and water was placed in our garage, along with a sister store in the hallway of blankets, flashlights and a radio. Over the years, the canned goods were cannibalized (when you run out of cream of mushroom on Thanksgiving, what are you supposed to do?),

the water was thrown out, blankets brought out on cold days and the flashlights were used in late-night forays into the creek. The radio is still in the bottom of the bin as we haven't found a use for it.

We don't worry about disasters as a people and, as a result, we are woefully ill equipped to deal with them when they show up. Perhaps we should all think about stocking up on survival gear and supplies, just in case the next big quake hits... at least until Thanksgiving rolls around again.

Why the idea of race doesn't make much sense

By OMER AHMED
Opinion editor

Ever since taking my first standardized test, I've wondered which box I should check when asked for my race. I was particularly troubled about this when I was younger as I thought that I would lose points if I got the question wrong and having parents from two different races made the question confusing. Years later, I am smarter, hopefully, and understand that the ideas of race and ethnicity are meaningless as they are

constructs of society, not biology.

Just look at previous U.S. censuses. In 1880, the census did not ask for ethnicity or race. It asked for "color" and gave five options: White, Black, Mulatto, Indian and Chinese. The 2000 census asked for "race" and gave the options of White, Black, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, other race and the two or more races option. There was also a separate category for Hispanics. While this covers most of the options, it also emphasizes how vague the idea of race is.

Illustrating this, people of Middle Eastern descent are counted in

the census as White despite many Middle Easterners being as dark as many Africans. The census' structure has some basis in reality. Arabs are believed to be descended from people who lived in the Caucasus mountain region. The Caucasus region is also where European ie. Caucasian ie. White lineages are traced to. While based on real genealogical surveys, the descendents of the original "Caucasians" aren't all considered "white" by society at large. The average resident of Fremont's Little Kabul might even be offended if you called him "white." Adding to the confusion, people from the

Muslim countries east of Afghanistan are in the Asian group.

The idea of race and ethnicity is in a constant state of flux. The answer to "Who is what?" is always being redefined. Early in the United States' history, only Anglo-Saxons were considered white. The Irish, Russians, Italians were only reclassified as white later in our history.

Then there are people who are so much of a mix that they don't identify fully with any of their ancestors' races. Tiger Woods has Caucasian, Black, American Indian and Asian roots but he has more than once identified himself as Cablinasian.

Despite his decision, most people will say that Woods, who is only a quarter African-American, is black.

People will assign a person one ethnicity before they guess someone is multiethnic. This produces interesting results. While I'm a mix of Pakistani and Mestizo Mexican, people have guessed I'm Italian, Spanish, Aztec, Mongolian, Indian (both types), Chinese and Inuit. Those last two particularly confused me. If a young multiracial boy can be confused for so many supposedly distinct ethnicities, is there anything more to race than looks?

Campus Comment >>>

What is your opinion of this year's ASOC?



BOB BRADSHAW
Math Department

"The ASOC provides opportunities for students to be involved in: campus committees, etc."



CAROL LAUGHTON
Part-time faculty

"ASOC funds things that are vital to the students. People should know more about (ASOC)"



ELPIDIO RAFANAN
Chemistry

"As part-time, night, I'm not as exposed to the activities of ASOC as you might expect."



KRIS LYONS
Ceramics

"I know very little about ASOC; I'm a part-time instructor."



RALPH KINDRED
V.P of IT

"It's important to have opportunities for student involvement and decision making on campus."