

Offhand Observations

Spring term—and it's time for the quarterly complaint about the grading system.

Are you one of those students who consistently make high C's (or high D's or B's) in your work? Comes the revolution, the guy sitting next to you who gets low B's, C's, or D's is going to be out of luck. No longer will you wind up with the same grade at the term's end in spite of the disparity in your work.

Some instructors—there'll be a place in Heaven for them because of their good intentions—use a total point system to keep close account of a student's progress over the



Complaint Dept.: Grading System

by Bill Rogers

course of a term. Others use some sort of a flexible numerical grade to avoid rough letter grades. Yet they are forced to give grades that are only approximate after all the results are in, and they know exactly where each member of the class stands in relation to the others.

Looking at the situation from the point of view of the students, it's worse. It's rough when you come up with an average of 79 and get a C for a grade, when the guy next to you may be making a B out of a score of 80. It's just as rough on another person who also got a B but had a score of 89.

If you're interested in the end result, after four years of college it's possible for you to wind up with the same GPA as someone else who may have averaged nearly ten per cent lower in his work. As far as the GPA idea is now concerned, it has absolutely no validity because of what it is based on.

Since the last suggestion for a new grading system as used at Whitman College seemed to meet with little favor, what about this one? Why not issue grades for individual courses such as 2.4, 2.5, 3.0, 3.1, and so forth. That way a grade point average would

have some significance, and wouldn't be appreciably harder to tally.

Skipping lightly over the caustic comments of one professor on four-day vacations and registration held concurrently with classes, what does the crew up at Emerald Hall do with grades once they are turned in? One student, who for the sake of convenience we'll call Bill Rogers, dropped by the joint to see if he couldn't get his grades sent to himself in Eugene rather than his parents, as he feels he is now big enough to be trusted with them.

He showed his yellow teeth in a fawning smile when he made the request, and even said "please." The response was highly unsatisfactory.

"It won't do ya any good," snapped the innocent-looking girl behind the information desk, "and besides, ya won't get yer grades for about a month anyway."

"What?" yelled Rogers. "Look, I was thinking of graduating. Do you mean to tell me I won't know whether I'm going to before the middle of Spring term?"

"Yep. Tough." This suspense is great isn't it?

Inexperienced

By Walt McKinney

Let's all bow down and Allah to the young and inexperienced University instructors who have set themselves up as little tin Gods. They know all, see all, and yet lack the mellowness and seasoning that comes from the experience of teaching. What kind of an instructor is it that refuses to discuss grades in an institution that places so much stress on GPA?

Small indeed, and most immature, is the young instructor who obstinately refuses to give ground when logical arguments are presented—who bases much of his grading on the personalities of his students in place of final and midterm examinations. Is the young instructor who refuses to sit down and objectively discuss grades, which seem to have become the measuring stick for success, in any way mature and capable to the degree of teaching in a University such as this? What kind of instructor is he who is unable to remain calm before his students, who turns his back and resorts to name calling in place of constructive discussion?

In my opinion, a person of this type has no place in teaching or any other activity which deals with a large number of people. The end of every term brings the same type of gripes. Many are justified and many are magnified by the heat of temper and feeling of self-indignation which easily arises. However, such behavior on the part of any instructor reflects little credit on the instructor's ability, the course, department, and the University itself.

Ritin' at Random Fame and Bellevue

by Jo Gilbert

Read two good books during the "vacation" (loosest possible usage of the term—since when has an extra long week-end been termed a vacation?) In fact I started one of the books, *THE PASSIONATE JOURNEY* by Irving Stone, during the late, unlamented final week and found myself unable to lay it down. At least that sounds like a good excuse for the lack of a four point.

Seriously, *THE PASSIONATE JOURNEY* is great! It is Stone's second try at a novel based on the life of a painter. Fifteen years ago he turned out the very fine *LUST FOR LIFE* based on the life of Vincent Van Gogh. Now he has used the American artist, John Noble, as the basis of history.

The improvement since the Van Gogh effort is tremendous. Improvement in writing technique, understanding, feeling, and expression is found throughout the entire book.

Noble, born in Wichita, spent his entire life searching, not quite knowing the wherefore of this compelling hunger that drove him on. The object of

this hunger, he discovered, was a creative unity, essence, universality and these he tried to express in his work, even in his life. His hunger took him from Wichita, to Paris, Brittany, and Cape Cod. And it was this hunger that made him eager to die, to meet the White Buffalo, the symbol of his search.

Around Noble, through good and bad, fame and Bellevue, is his wife, Amelia. Influenced by him are Francis, his first love, who persuaded her money-loving husband, Marty, to give the youth a chance, a chance that Noble didn't have. And Marty himself, who became an art collector by accident, though knowing nothing about art—all are well portrayed with Stone's skillful pen. A fine book, one of the best I've come across in a long time.

The second of the two books is Robert Lewis Taylor's biography of W. C. Fields (*W. C. FIELDS: HIS FOLLIES AND FORTUNES*). It is a competent, workmanship job of recording the life of the master comedian. However, all through the book I kept thinking of the job Gene Fowler could have done with the material (incidentally the book is dedicated to Fowler). If you saw Fields in the revivals brought to the Rex recently, you will especially enjoy the book. Taylor tries to understand the complex personality that was Fields and attempts a faithful portrayal of it. It's a good attempt, but to me, doesn't quite ring the bell.



A Peekaboo at Some Campuses Outside Oregon

As spring term opened amid a flurry of sunshine and the usual registration confusion at Oregon, other campuses around the country seemed to be having their ups and downs too. Maybe it was the weather and maybe it was just things in general, but a look-see at other institutions reveals that...

University of Connecticut was in a muddle trying to decide whether Professor Herbert J. Phillips, expelled last year from the University of Washington for being a member of the Communist party, should be permitted to speak on the campus.

Down in Dixie, University of North Carolina, was having its troubles because Negro Pianist Hazel Scott (who comes to Oregon later this spring) refused to perform before a segregated audience. Said Chancellor Robert B. House: "We follow the mores

and customs... There is no change in our policy." Said Miss Scott: "Separating Negro and white offends some people." She explained she had a personal rule against playing before such audiences.

At Louisiana State University, things were getting back to normal after the hottest student election in years.

On the Coast, University of California was still up in arms over the loyalty oath. And its little brother, UCLA, remained divided as to whether a liberal-minded student should be permitted to remain managing editor for a second term on the *Daily Bruin*.

To the north in Seattle, NROTC cadets at the University of Washington received some encouragement from the Navy department. A clause requiring

cadets to give names and addresses of all persons known by them to be associated with subversive groups was deleted from the loyalty oath. Proponents of the change called it "a singular triumph for liberal forces."

Only at the University of Mississippi did things seem entirely normal. Appearance of Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra had students dragging their best evening formals out of the mothballs—or the tuxes-for-the-rent shop.

Here at the University there were no rows over segregation or triumphs for liberal forces, and even Tommy Dorsey hadn't put in an appearance. But it will not be long before LSU, University of Washington, et al have company—for ASUO elections and Junior Weekend are right around the corner.—Tom King.

Sophomore Wisdom

A Sizeup of the Nurses in Berlin

by Bob Funk

On the front page of the Emerald Thursday was a small picture which practically broke up my fraternity and is causing me to take correspondence courses from Salem.

It was under the WSSF story, and had no caption.

When I first looked at it I decided that it was too early in the morning. Later I looked at it again, while drinking coffee in Renell's, and decided that it was still rather early.

"What do you think this is a picture of?" I asked a fraternity brother. He was one

of those who sleep and take vitamin pills, so I thought he might know.

"It looks like a nurse out in front of some ruins in Berlin." We all looked at the nurse. She seemed to be looking at another lady who was sitting down on what seemed to be

part of the ruins. Or maybe she was just awfully short.

"You can see it's a woman—she's looking toward us—sort of over her shoulder." The rest of the company could not see her looking toward us. In fact, she seemed to be looking the other direc-

tion.

"If she's looking toward us, she has hair all over her face," someone said. At that point we divided into two schools: those who were all hot for the looking-over-her-shoulder theory, and the rest of us,

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