

Editor's note: The Emerald staff is pleased to receive your letters of comment and criticism, and we're as frustrated as you are about the existing space limitations. We are including a full page of letters when possible so that your opinions will be published on a timely basis.

We also ask, in the interest of all Emerald readers, that letters to the editor be written as concisely as possible. The shorter they are, the more we can print.

Fallen partner

I did not cry when I heard that he was dead. The remorse built up in me slowly, over a period of days. I wondered why I missed him; I had not seen him in years. And we were never close. We disagreed about goals and tactics and everything else. But we stood together, many times, in the struggles against the war, the draft, sexism, racism and imperialism. They were not easy times. None of us was perfect. We learned as we went. We grew.

"Don't mourn, organize!" Like so many of the old radical catch phrases, that one rings hollow to me right now. The years force a certain amount of wisdom on us, whether we like it or not. I have to mourn a little.

"Iron Mouth" Joe Schoenfeld, the Emerald once dubbed him. He had the voice and he had the endurance to repeat a message enough times for it to sink in. This was back in the days when everyone said "right on" whenever they heard something, anything, of which they approved.

Joe once told me that all of our University activism was really bullshit, that what counted were the experiences we had and the things we learned. Later

in life, Joe said, when we left the University — that is when our true struggle for the betterment of human kind would take shape.

Racism, sexism and imperialism are still with us. Even war and the draft seem to be making a comeback. Will students be caught once again in the forefront of the struggle for justice? Is there another Joe Schoenfeld out there, one who has perhaps not yet held a bullhorn? It was people like Joe, millions of them across the United States, that finally forced Nixon and his superhuman crew to stop drafting people and then get us out of Vietnam.

Right on, Joe.

Timothy Travis

Missed mark

Once again the Emerald (mis)scores again. One would think that an appointment to the deanship of a major university like the Oregon Law School would not have to be relegated to the back page. Is it because you didn't have the space elsewhere, or are you naively feeling that us "colored folks" still ride on the back of the bus? You should be embarrassed, but probably not!! How insensitive!

Edwin L. Coleman
associate professor, English

Peace offer

I find the analogy which Bruce Yokum (Emerald, Jan 30) attempts to make between turning 18, getting married, buying liquor and joining the military somewhat amusing. Upon turning this fine age, no one from any governmental agency ever knocked upon my door,

grabbed my arm and dragged me down either to the nearest church or bar and demanded that I drink and marry under the threat of imprisonment.

Yet, when the age of 18 entered my life, so did Uncle Sam and his military machine: My chances of reaching 19 were greater through marriage or liquor than through defending my country. At least I was able to exercise a choice with the first two: The U.S. military system offered no such choice.

Mr. Yokum speaks of a patriotism which he feels is reflective of adulthood. Yet, many adults have said "No" to violence and senseless killing, while many children continue to hit one another with sticks and stones in want of some meaningless toy.

It is also somewhat ironic that Yokum has chosen the words of a man who was banished from his homeland and branded a heretic and a traitor in order to emphasize his point. In 1908, in a story entitled "The Four Graves", Kahlil Gibran first penned "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask rather what you can do for your country," a statement mistakenly credited to the late Pres. Kennedy. Interestingly enough, this story is of the oppression of the weak at the hands of the strong; the crushing of a people's liberty by a tyrannous authority; the condemning of innocent men and women by judges set up in office by corrupt hands.

Of this spirit called patriotism, Gibran also spoke with eloquence when he questioned: "What is the duty which separates lovers, and causes the women to become widows, and the children to become

orphans? What is this patriotism which provokes wars and destroys kingdoms through trifles? And what causes can be more than trifling when compared to one life? If duty destroys peace among nations, and patriotism disturbs the tranquility of man's life, then let us say, 'Peace be with you duty and patriotism.'"

Once again we are challenged to question the patriotic call to duty which is being sounded by military warlords and multinational investors. And once again we must join together and say "No" to war, "No" to violence, and "No" to senseless destruction, while all the time beginning to affirm life and the possibilities resident therein. It is a choice only we are able to make ourselves.

Michael Connelly
alumni, '78

No answers

An important point that Ralph Nader raised in his Mac Court speech was that American childhood and adolescence is a very long and drawn-out process. He accused college students of (more or less) playing the role of children at the age of 20, when others (perhaps "real" men and women?) of the same age or less were toppling revolutionary governments at the other side of the world.

In a very real sense, I think Nader was right. But did I ask to be raised as I was? Did I have any control over what kind of society I was to be brought up in? Did I or any of my generation have any say in when and where we were to be born and raised?

It seems that we were all forced to accept the validity of

this original sin in spite of our inability to cause, influence and sometimes even understand it. I woke up one day and took a very sober and objective look at the world and suddenly realized, "By God, I'm 20 years old, in my third year of college, and, despite all my schooling, experience, and education, I really have no idea what the hell is going on!" My only solace lay in the realization that few people were any more enlightened than I was.

But now, what I do know, what I can deduce and place into my narrow file of certainty, is that we are truly living in the age of madness. I thought that surviving college was going to be hard enough, but now it seems that me and my generation are destined to perhaps die in another war over issues that we, being very much still children, have no clear realization of or understanding about. I've always felt strongly about living for a worthy ideology, but I have always frozen in terror at the prospects of dying for any technology. By God, this is my life! I have nothing else in the world but it. I feel no shame in expressing how much it means to me. If I should lose my life, then everything else would become meaningless...

I must admit that I am nothing to the universe, yet everything to myself. Is it fair that I should one day wake up, barely aware of this complex and intricate world, and then be thrust into a war I never made? It is madness, and I can only ask if me and my generation are worthy of this detestable legacy solely because it was possessed by all the other generations before us. Original sin is forced upon us without even our acceptance or comprehension of it. It seems that "a man is born and at once he is guilty."

I love the United States and I am grateful to live here with my freedom and all the other benefits that go along with living in a democratic republic. Perhaps I have even grown lackadaisical and have come to take many of my blessings for granted. But by God, these are our very lives that we are talking about!!

Maybe there is no other solution but eternal war and death for the problems of humanity. Maybe it sounds naive and foolish for me to hope that nations might someday renounce their exclusive ideologies or at least stop from forcing them upon the rest of the world. But damn it all, I never asked for this kind of a world and I never made it turn out this way!

I have no solutions, only more questions. If I was to fight, then I would feel guilty for supporting a war I never wanted, made, or condoned. If I was to resist, I would also feel guilty for supposedly "deserting" my country and condoning the existence of a repressive regime with an intolerant ideology. It would seem that I and others like me are forced to confront many seemingly insoluble dilemmas and paradoxes. I wish I had an answer, but I don't...there is only madness.

Eric Malin
pre-journalism

Thursday, February 21, 1980

theirs

