

sally hodgkinson

even editors get the blues

He's dressed in Levi's and a football jersey, the top of his balding head bright red from the sun.

Hi, I'm Ken Kesey," he says to the high school journalist. Huge hand. Strong grip. "Let me show you around the farm."

The almost-18-year-old had just finished reading *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* and, like so many other groupies that made the trek to the Kesey farm outside Pleasant Hill, came to catch a glimpse of the legend — as if to reassure herself that crazy decade still had some remnants.

But further, the bus that survived the Merry Pranksters' adventures, is out to pasture. Cows graze nearby, ignoring the relic.

Kesey dutifully answers questions about the '60s as if talking about a faded photograph.

The Smithsonian Institute wanted the bus, but somehow I like it here, he says. It belongs.

The clouds scuttle over the green hills, cooling the air with a slight sprinkle. Amid the cows, the fading Day-Glo bus, the barn-turned-

house and his family, Kesey also belongs.

He doesn't regret the Pranksters days, he says. He had a great time.

I didn't want to come back, he says. I was having fun in California with the Pranksters. But something pulled me back to Oregon.

The hills enclose the quiet countryside, protective. A cow ambles over to a choice clump of grass near the wheels of the bus. Kesey proudly shows his blueberry plants to the visitor.

It doesn't make sense to plow up an orchard to put in mobile homes, Kesey says. If you got good roots, it's sensible to take advantage of them.

Three years later, Kesey is the keynote speaker at a benefit brunch for the University Library. He's wearing a tweed jacket — no tie. The top of his balding head is bright red from the sun. The last of his blond hair is gathered in tufts on the side of his head.

He sips a gin and tonic.

The crowd — many who probably tsk-tsked over Kesey's early adventures — fawn over him. "I once sent him a check for something," one senior says. "He had to endorse it, and that's how I got his autograph."

Kesey is the favorite boy come home. He talks of classics, the library, the damage the '60s generation did to the English language, growing up in Springfield and his youngest child's graduation from Pleasant Hill High School.

He ends his appearance with a story, "Little Tricker the Squirrel Meets Big Double the Bear." He's a master story teller, and the audience is captivated. "I'm Big Double," Kesey growls, "and I ate the ridges raw and the backwoods bald."

After the speech the former high schooler walks up to Kesey. "Do you remember me?" she asks. "Kinda," he answers, surrounded by suits and carefully manicured hairdos.

She shrugs, turns and walks away.

yours

Bikes and 'Nuts'

A couple of comments — one on the campus bicycle situation, another about the Mixed Nuts comic strip.

First — it seems to me that the transportation subcommittee of the Campus Planning Committee might have had its mind set on banning bicycles from campus walkways even before meetings began to decide what to do about the bicycle-pedestrian conflict. At the meeting I attended on April 17, most comments were certainly not in favor of the subcommittee's recommendation.

As far as I know, thus far nothing has been tried to reduce the frequency of bicycle-pedestrian accidents. It seems a little repressive to institute a regulation that in effect almost totally bans bike-riding on campus walkways, when less restrictive and potentially successful alternatives have not yet been tried. In my letter of April 23, I suggested one such alternative. I won't repeat the details here; however, I'm convinced that if the University public is made aware that a bicycle-pedestrian problem exists, and if the media and campus groups try to educate the public in campus courtesies, any need for the proposed regulation will subside. Newspaper articles, free radio plugs, handouts to bicycle registrants on campus transportation etiquette, and some well-placed signs would be far cheaper (an important factor nowadays) than the proposed regulation.

Also, I'd like to register my support of Mixed Nuts. Although Doonesbury is a great strip, I enjoy Steve Lafier's zany work more. In different ways both strips poke fun at our political, economic, and social mores. I enjoy watching a local artist develop. I enjoy reading a strip that can't be found anywhere else. Please



continue Mixed Nuts next school year.

Bill White

Graduate, special education

Crying wolf

At a recent meeting in the EMU, getting my hackles up when a young man called the United States "fascist," I called him ignorant. I am sorry about this harsh language. Confused would have been a better term.

I suspect our ruling elite, fearful that we the people have become unmanageable, (may) calmly contemplate bringing fascism to the United States. Precisely because of this real fear, I get up-tight at the constant cry (of) fascism emanating from a certain section of our left. Remember the shepherd who cried wolf once too often! Conjuring fascism before its time dulls our vision and weakens our vigilance.

Students who honestly believe fascism is here already should use the oncoming vacation to read books which depict fascism in action.

A.E. Brettauer

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Nice guys finish . . .

As a student who enjoys hot showers and reading by lamp rather than candlelight, I feel compelled to voice my discontent concerning EWEB's most recent rate increase. Why is it that our current economic system penalizes EWEB consumers for attempts to conserve power and use electricity more efficiently by a rate increase?

Furthermore, I do not support the use of nuclear power, and certainly do not approve of my EWEB rates increasing to

fund bonds for a financially troubled nuclear power plant under construction in Washington. After all, what purpose is there in financing additional energy generators when our rates are going up due to decreased use of present systems?

Tracy Smith

Junior, economics

letters policy

The Emerald will accept and attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on issues, ideas and topics of interest to the University community. Letters must be limited to 250 words.

Each letter must be signed and the author's field of study or faculty or staff status noted. Each should be dated, and must also include the address and phone number of the author for verification prior to publication.

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