



joan nyland

## suitable for comment

He didn't want me to see him pluck and eat berries from the bushes outside the EMU. Quickly he stuffed the ones he had into his tattered coat pocket and walked off.

And I know that hungry stranger is only one of many citizens barely surviving in Eugene — and everywhere.

This morning I read about "trolls" — jobless, homeless, too proud for charity, waifs — who live under freeways in Los Angeles. Descriptions of two hold-ups in Eugene last week read suspiciously like that of desperate jobless people. The food banks and charity organizations are flooded with calls

for aid.

The calls for help are being met. From University students, faculty and staff saving all but a handful of 300 ducks and geese in the Millrace to 18,000 more pounds of food this year than last year being given to Portland's St. Vincent de Paul Christmas baskets.

Money, however, is tight and charities note that gifts and time are more plentiful. It makes sense — few people have extra cash. Most people can make time.

Twelve days are left for giving time, gifts, food or money to someone or charity before

Christmas.

Perhaps it's the ego involved in charitable giving that makes it so gratifying — having "more than" someone else. Charity can be insurance coverage: "If I'm ever that down on my luck, I hope someone helps me out."

On less cynical days, giving to the needy is a sigh of relief — final admission that we depend on each other, some to a greater extent. No ego involved.

It crossed my mind the other day to ask that 25-30 year-old hungry citizen if he would like a sandwich or something. But I imagined the worst of him and walked on.

## letters

### Presentation

I would like to express my appreciation to Michele Matassa for a well-written article, "Agency, anti-draft spokesmen differ on federal ruling's effect." The young reporter, in a profession which often has problems fairly representing the views of those who do not blindly accept the corporate-media image of America as a benevolent military giant, effectively presented the essence of what I had said.

I do have minor objections to the sentence indicating that I agree with Selective Service Unit Commander Michael's statement, "... registration must go on as usual."

While legally eighteen year-olds may be required to register, that law is both a denial of individual rights guaranteed by our Constitution and a rejection

of the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

It acknowledges that the conscience of the individual, with its unique interpretation of the essence of life (God), supercedes the power of the state. One is required only to have "decent respect" for his or her fellow citizens.

Ron Phillips  
CORD

### Christmas list

The evolution of language is a fascinating subject and tells us much about the peoples whose languages are studied. Several of our political leaders and national administrations have made distinguished contributions to language evolution. Pres. Ronald Reagan, although in office only a brief two years, has already shown great

promise.

Here are my suggestions as to actions communities might undertake, in the Christmas spirit, to bring a greater degree of good cheer and well-being to their citizens.

In honor of Pres. Reagan I call it "My Reaganoid Christmas List." All of you can doubtless think up further helpful ideas.

1. **Children's Safety Enhancement:** Loaded handguns should be given to all the children in our third to fifth grade Sunday school classes with the explanation that we are giving them these guns so that they will never be used.

2. **Safety of the streets:** The city council should direct that all streetlights and other outside lights be turned off at night. This would conserve energy, save money and make it safer for citizens to walk the streets at

## letters

### Reluctant

This is a reluctant response to Margaret Laurine's question (Emerald, Dec. 10) about whether the fundamentalist preachers on the courtyard need be allowed to fill the air — and her ears — with their words and ideas.

I don't like being screamed at either, not that I take it personally. I do, however, believe speakers should be allowed to speak. A university is public property, but it is also one of the few places in this society where divergent ideas can collide in relative freedom. Collisions frequently make a lot of noise. The audience on the courtyard is subject to the noise of collision but is surely sturdy enough to survive.

The real issue is exactly as Laurine states it. Freedom of speech is a value we give lip service to (no pun intended). It is mainly a protection afforded the speaker. The value placed on this protection, especially at a university, protects everyone even if it means putting up with disagreeable or repulsive ideas. Would we really have it any differently?

It may no longer be in vogue to believe in the free marketplace of ideas, or in the inherent rationality of people trusted to make the "right" choices. In fact, given the human capacity to be profoundly irrational in almost any context, belief in the ultimate triumph of truth in a free

and fair fight with un-truth seems awfully naive.

Despite this, I still believe free speech means suffering the occasional babbling of people with whom I do not agree. (It usually seems like babbling to me!) There is always the chance they will present an idea that has some value.

So, yes, free speech does mean having this version of christianity "shoved down" our throats. We needn't be converted unless something in us requires it. The same holds for any ideas promoted on the courtyard.

It isn't an easy thing to put up with but then, who said it was supposed to be?

Raising this issue again is a way of using free speech to advocate repression of free speech. Yet, even this is protected from repression. It is open to debate.

I am thankful for that.

Doug Stanfield  
graduate, journalism

### Duck thanks

Many thanks to the community of Eugene, the University Physical Plant, Lane County Animal Regulation, the Outdoor Program and the students who responded so quickly to the cry of the ducks in the Millrace last Friday.

Without your generous help, we could not have gotten the ducks out of the millrace as quickly we did.

Survival Center

night since muggers and potential rapists could not see them as well.

3. **Toward fuller employment and job security:** The city should fire all its non-essential employees, such as parks, planning, and maintenance personnel, and give the money saved to the richest citizens in town — explaining to the people laid-off how this will stimulate the economy and promote fuller employment and increased job security.

Bayard McConaughy

### Drunk driver

The holiday season is soon to be upon us. Unfortunately, this means alcohol consumption will be increasing. This also means the number of drunk drivers on our roads will be increasing and many innocent people will be

murdered by these menaces to society.

What can we do to combat this problem? Plenty.

People who come into contact with intoxicated individuals should try to persuade them not to drive. But if persuasion fails then one should call the toll-free number set up by the Oregon State Police for reporting drunk drivers. That number is 1-800-452-7888. In reporting a drunk one should describe the drivers' vehicle, give the license number and the location of and direction the car is traveling. You are not required to identify yourself.

By reporting a drunk driver you might save the lives of one or more innocent people the drunk might crash into while he or she is on the road.

Michael Cross  
Springfield

## oregon daily emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during exam week and vacations, by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, 97403.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

News and Editorial 686-5511  
Display Advertising and Business 686-3712  
Classified Advertising 686-4343  
Production 686-4381  
Circulation 686-5511

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"Your turn" is an Emerald opinion feature submitted by members of the University community. "Your turns" must be limited to 500 words and typed. This editorial column will not be edited by the staff, but selection will be based on appropriateness.

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