



joan nyland suitable for comment

Thirty sixth graders sit in a circle around a '50s vintage two-slice toaster — all morning. They analyze the toaster material. They project what it would feel like to "toast" and they consider the value of burning bread. The math texts are put away — all year. The social studies unit skipped for the morning. The students are unbelievably bored after two hours of toast talk.

I have waited 11 years to tell my sixth grade class' toaster story. Eleven years for some National Commission on Excellence in Education to mention to the American public that students spend less time on homework and less effective time in the classroom.

The commission's report does not mention why we are in such a state of educational siege. It only points to the proof, test scores and surveys, and points a few fingers, poor teachers, poor teacher salaries and poor training.

Perhaps the appropriate response to the commission's report on American education would be "the horror, the horror." But I've become jaded in my 11 years of easing through schools that have never stressed excellence.

I am a high school graduate who passed my state competencies with straight A's. I could work such math teasers as, do you know how much change you get from a dollar if you purchase two cans of beans for 79 cents?

I was a breathing Oregonian with better than a 2.0 in 1978, so the University ac-

cepted me. I was still breathing with 186 hours and better than a 2.0 in 1982, so I graduated.

And excellence had nothing whatever to do with it.

My pedagogical career, if you can call it that, had to do with the experimental classroom and the easing of standards. The desks were moved around, the textbooks junked and we studied personal finance, career education, health, driver's education and in my case "personhood."

My years in grade and high school were also the years of Head Start and English as a Second Language, questioning authority and discussion of high school journalists rights. We learned something — it just wasn't Ivy League material.

The overriding impression of the Committee on Excellence's report is failure — failure of the opened-up, turned-on, hip classroom. The educational theme was freedom, survival skills and individual needs.

It had something to do with riots on campus and sending cousins off to Vietnam and disliking institutions. My perspective was a bit skewed at 4-foot 7-inches.

Maybe after the school districts put the desks back in rows, reissue a few classic texts and make everyone take composition and geometry we will have excellence in education; we will be able to enter "high technology."

I have a feeling we will just be responding to the mood of the era.

letters

Counterparts

I am distressed at seeing homosexuality espoused as a civil rights cause in the ROTC debate. Blacks have been accepted as officers by white enlisted men since black officials can set desired standards of skill and respectable behavior as well as their white counterparts. This is not the same thing as accepting overtly homosexual officers.

Recently, I visited Portland, and on arrival of the bus saw a black officer in front of a newly erected metal gate at the entrance of the bus terminal bathroom. I asked him why all the security. He told me that homosexual harassment of bus customers in the lavatories had resulted in a barrage of complaints which led to the new security measures.

Homosexuals don't have to proudly state, "Oh, I go to gay bars every night." I am certain that ROTC doesn't send snoopers after cadets in their off hours. What is missing in all the recent fuss is a discussion of how a gay lifestyle affects people living in a combat situation. I can state from personal experience that non-gays like myself consider it a violation of our civil rights to have the potential hazard of sexual harassment — like the shock of such a case as the Portland Bus Terminal situation.

I suggest that civil libertarians reconsider whose civil rights are being violated. Also, the analogy made between homosexuality and men and women of color is a gross insult to the morals of millions of non-whites in this country who have risked their lives for a better chance in education and career advancement.

Andrew Beckwith
graduate, physics

Contradiction

On Wednesday, May 11, a group of supposedly freedom-loving individuals held a noon vigil outside Johnson Hall to protest what they claim to be discrimination against homosexuals with regard to the practices of the military science department on campus. Ironically, their entire protest was nothing but a big contradiction.

On the one hand they chanted slogans calling for "affirmative action," while simultaneously calling for "ROTC off campus." So which is it?

Do they want "affirmative action" in the military science department, or do they want "ROTC off campus"? I'm afraid they can't have both.

If I'm correct, which seems likely, the outcry of discrimination against homosexuals is just a convenient excuse to promote a

long-standing effort to kick "ROTC off campus." The real issue doesn't concern homosexuals at all.

In fact, the real issue should concern a group of supposedly "open-minded" individuals who want nothing more than "ROTC off campus," and who will stop at no excuse to deny not only homosexuals, but blacks, whites, women, men, Jews, Christians, and students of every persuasion the right to enroll and participate in, by choice, the classes offered by the military science department. If that doesn't advocate the most overt oppression of individual liberties, I don't know what does.

Eric Stillwell
political science

letters

Poppin' pills

Poppin' the pills,
Poppin' the pills.
Gotta stay awake,
Even if it kills —
me.

I'm a die-hard pre-med,
Just a die-hard pre-med.
I may be a pre-med but dead
If I don't get to bed —
But I keep poppin' those pills.

I gotta study all day,
Gotta study all day.

My buddies go out to play,
But I also play —
The game of pre-med.

Some day it'll be me,
Yes, some day I will be,
Dispensing legally,
For a nice little fee,
Lotsa little pills!

Ain't life strange?

Arnold Jeffries

Bricklayers

The May 4 Emerald included a letter to the editor about

a physical plant bricklaying job. The letter stated "...one of our conscientious physical plant employees has laid about 160 bricks in four full days of work..."

Actually there are 600 bricks in the job instead of 160 as stated. Accepted industry standards indicate this job would have at least \$840 through an outside contract. The actual cost was \$812.

Harold Babcock
director, physical plant

letters policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor **must** be limited to 250 words, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in to the Emerald office. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, style or content.

"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.

Letters to the editor and "Your turns" should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300 EMU.

Unsigned editorials appearing in the Emerald are based upon the majority opinion of the editorial board.

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