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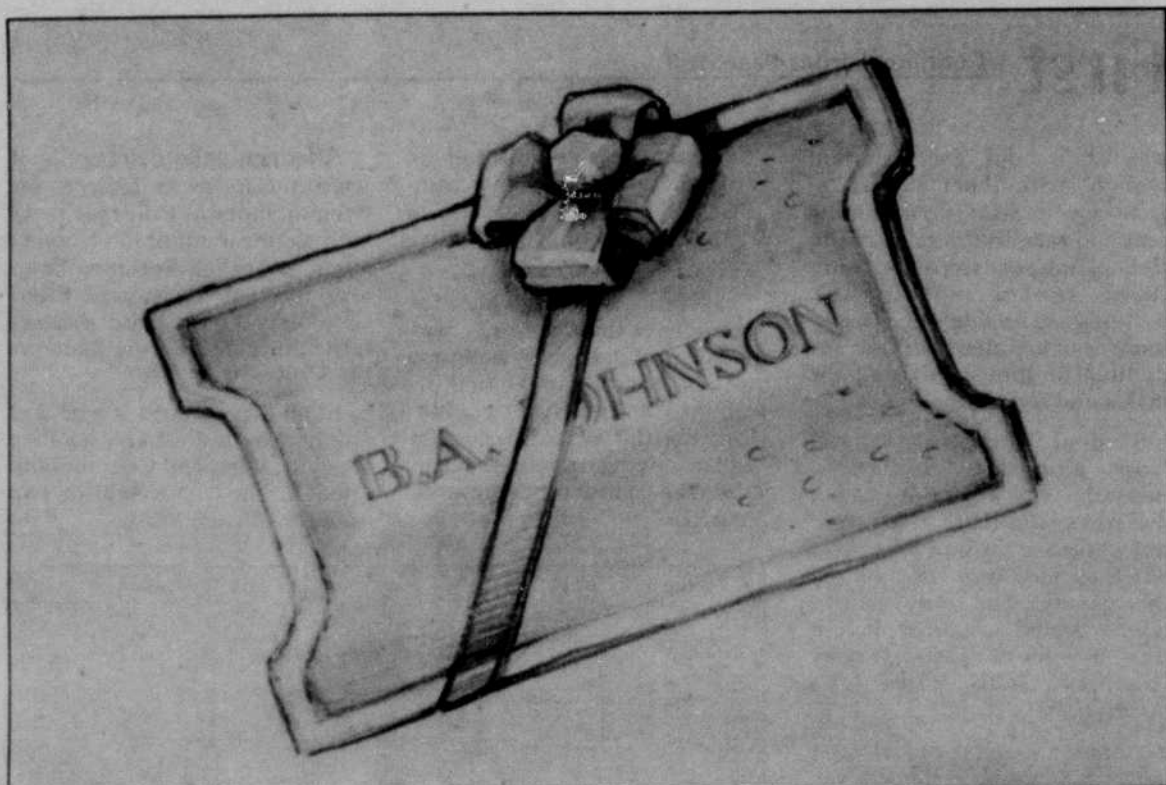


Illustration by Lorraine Rath

How many bricks in a memory load?

By Chris Norred
Of the Emerald

It hit like a brick. Tuesday, Chris opened his mail and there were the envelopes that he was expecting. The envelopes telling him how to go through the grand ceremonies of that long-anticipated graduation day.

The first envelope told him where to walk and what to wear and how many people he could invite if it rains. He was happy

Graduate's Notebook

to know he could invite four. Or he could buy several dozen tickets from friendless orphan graduates.

Anyway, it was the second envelope that surprised him. The second envelope contained a brochure asking him to donate \$100 to the University.

Like a lot of not-yet-graduates, he doesn't have a lot of dough. And the brochure was sympathetic to that fact.

He didn't have to pay the \$100 all at once. No, he could

take years to do it. The offer was sort of like a last chance student loan. What difference would another \$100 make in the midst of thousands?

But there was more to the offer. The \$100 would also buy him a "piece of the walk," a brick on which his name would be engraved for posterity. This brick would be placed on 13th Avenue along with a whole bunch of other bricks and engraved names. That is, if a whole bunch of other people buy them.

It wasn't the brick itself that upset Chris, nor was it the \$100 request from an unemployed and poor journalist, but it was the salesman or saleswoman behind the damn thing that really got to him that Tuesday.

"For a small premium... (this brick) is the best insurance that you'll be remembered at the University of Oregon."

That was the message, word for word, printed in the brochure.

After four years, and \$20,000, uncounted sleepless nights, (well, you get the picture, the guy was feeling like an unappreciated martyr) and the best insurance that he will be remembered around here is a \$100 brick?

Is it irony?
Is it fate?
Is it worth \$100 bucks?
An empty feeling overcame him. Chris began to wonder if,

in the future, people at the University would only remember him vaguely, during strange flashbacks. He imagined people seeing his face in a daydream, a flashback like the ones in which people remember a teenage sex film they saw at the drive-in the summer they turned 16: "Pinball Summer" or was it "Pickup Summer?"

That fatal insecurity nagged at his ankles throughout the afternoon.

"If nobody remembers you, did you ever really exist?"

"Was mom right when she said I should record my college life on Kodak film?"

"Good grief, we don't even have a yearbook."

"What if the law of averages overcomes my life, and I turn out simply average? What chance would an over-weight, mediocre reporter have of being remembered at the University?" The insecurity mounted.

The situation only worsened. A tele-conference with former University student Paul Simon, a Democratic presidential contender, was set for the afternoon.

Simon has been remembered here for 40 years. He didn't buy a brick. He didn't even graduate here.

Seeking a source of advice, Chris decided to listen to the tele-conference.

He was too late. At the door of

Turn to Bricks, Page 24B

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