



1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980

## Ninety-one years of Emerald history

The *Oregon Weekly* was first published by the Euxatian, Laorean and Philologist Societies, Vol. 1, No. 1 appeared on Monday, Feb. 12, 1900.

When the newspaper resumed publication after the summer break on Oct. 1, 1900, it became a publication of the Associated Students of the University of Oregon, which it remained until 1952.

In the fall of 1909 the paper began publishing twice a week and the name was changed to the *Oregon Emerald*. In 1914 it began publishing three times a week. When publication was finally stepped up to five times a week in the fall of 1920, the newspaper became the *Oregon Daily Emerald*.

Between Sept. 23, 1952 and April 7, 1971 the *Emerald* was published by the Student Publications Board of the University of Oregon.

After more than a year of planning and preparation to make the *ODE* independent of the University, the Student Publications Board was abolished on April 8, 1971 and replaced by a semi-autonomous organization called the Oregon Daily Emerald Board of Directors.

The purpose of this body was to temporarily publish the *ODE* for several months while making arrangements to form an independent publishing corporation which would be financially and legally separate from the University.

On June 29, 1971 the *ODE* Board of Directors adopted a resolution to establish the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Company, Inc.

On Oct. 26, 1971 that organization came into a state of legal existence under the provisions of the Oregon Non-profit Corporation Act. The first meeting of the Board of Directors of the new corporation was held in the EMU on Nov. 2, 1971.

## EMERALD

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ministration and the paper," he said. "The administration at the University was of the opinion that it would not be a bad idea to absorb themselves of any responsibility," Kerans said.

"They said, 'You're on your own, and you can face the consequences, just like the big people.'"

Bushnell said cutting the legal ties between the *Emerald* and the University made it easier for the administration to deal with the state board and the Legislature when questions about the *Emerald's* content arose.

Although it helped that the administration would throw no obstacles in the *Emerald's* path to independence, Kerans said the paper still faced a number of stumbling blocks.

One was eliminated when the EMU, which acted as a bill collector, gave the *Emerald* a clean slate by absorbing thousands of dollars in past debt, Kerans said, which allowed the paper to apply for a bank loan.

With independence also came greater liability. The University and state board would no longer absorb the responsibility or the cost of any potential legal action, which meant the *Emerald* had to purchase libel and liability insurance.

"We were able to secure the insurance for a reasonable rate," Kerans said. "The insurance agent said it would be very hard to prove libel against a student publication because no one thinks it's a credible source."

Additional cost came to the newspaper because the independent *Emerald* was no longer part of the University, so it could no longer take any of its services.

The biggest service the pre-independent *Emerald* received free-of-cost was rent for the paper's office space, then in Room 301 Allen Hall.

Bushnell said the paper considered renting office space in a house off campus, but decided it needed to be "at the heart of the University."

That heart was the EMU, where the *Emerald* moved in 1973 to its current home in Suite 300, occupying space once used by the ASUO.

Another economic change, one that was part of the motivation to establish an independent *Emerald*, was that the paper would be able to accumulate whatever profits exist at the end of each fiscal year.

This change gave the *Emerald* growth potential, allowing the paper to purchase new equipment and modernize its production methods periodically.



## 20th Anniversary Issue

One of the first changes in production was the setup of the *Emerald's* own production shop. Previously, the University printing shop did the production.

"With our own production facilities, when stories happened we were able to react to them more quickly," Bushnell said. "We had control of our own destiny because our deadlines were more flexible."

Although the split from the University caused no tensions with the administration, the School of Journalism was less

than pleased, Kerans said.

Kerans said the split from the journalism school actually began in the 1960s with the upsurge in student activism.

"There had always been an old boy's network that had an informal control over the newspaper," he said.

Up into the 1960s, the *Emerald* staff mostly consisted of students who had been encouraged by journalism faculty, Kerans said. Then more activist-oriented students began to join the staff, tipping the balance.

"The journalism school kind of lost an effective control over the paper," he said. "No small amount of tension evolved from that."

Kerans said that tension made itself felt on the old publications board, which had a significant number of journalism faculty on it.

"It was a very, very chilly atmosphere in Allen Hall," he said.

At that point, the staff decided that because it had been running a different kind of press than what the journalism school had in mind, the paper might as well go independent, Kerans said.

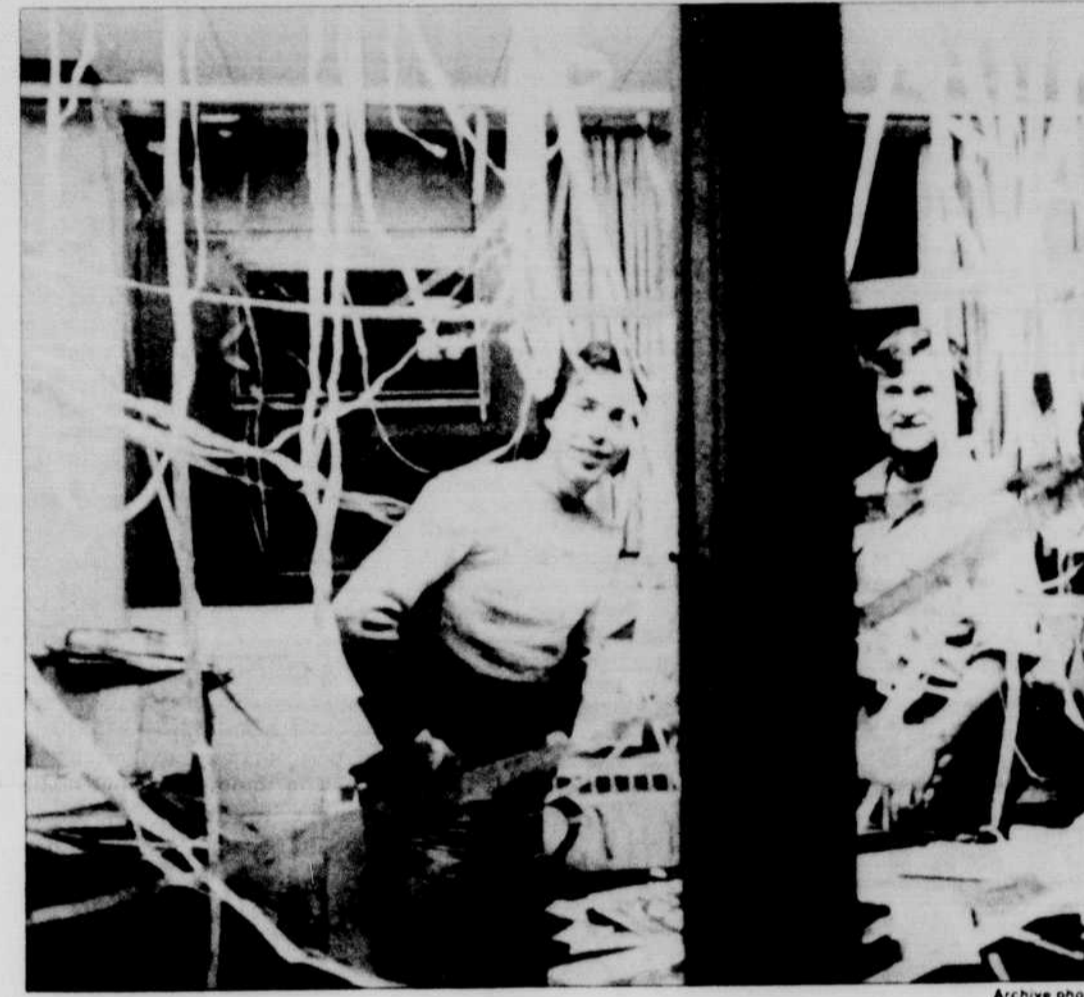
Before the *Emerald's* independence, the newspaper's management would sign up for a one-credit critique class. The journalism school dean would sit down with them during lunch on Fridays and critique the week's papers.

"The critique was in terms of what journalism educators thought about the product we were producing," Bushnell said, adding that the focus was more on style and grammar than on content.

Kerans said some faculty on campus felt that the journalism school should have held tighter control over what the *Emerald* published.

"The 'led' newspaper was the solution at a number of colleges," he said. "It happened at a lot of private colleges and at a lot of public colleges and universities."

"On this campus, it was not the majority opinion, but it was an openly held position."



Archive photo

Bushnell said even after the *Emerald* achieved independence, the paper managed to maintain a give-and-take relationship with the journalism school, often going into journalism classes to recruit staff members.

"I think we had a better working relationship than the paper does now," he said.

Along with the independent *Emerald* came the hiring of a non-student general manager, who was relegated to the papers business affairs only and would have no say in the content of the publication, Bushnell said.

"The whole idea was to strengthen and perpetuate the role the college press could play," Bushnell said. "It should be a place for some experimentation."

"We did things that the professional newspapers weren't doing, but are similar to what they are doing now."

It is for that reason — the need for student journalists to have a forum for experimentation — that Bushnell opposes the idea of college newspaper advisers.

"It seems that an adviser would put the newspaper back to the point we were trying to get out of," he said.



Far left: 1979-80 staff members John Healy and Jody Murray went crazy with perforated computer tape, stringing old *Emerald* stories everywhere. Top: The 1978-79 staff at work amid much clutter. Near left: Randy Shilts, managing editor in 1974-75 and author of *And the Band Played On*, a book telling of the early days of the AIDS epidemic.

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**Art Bushnell,**  
Emerald editor, 1971-72,  
Vice president, Reuters news agency

