

OPINION

Lawnmower man strikes again



THE FINE PRINT
BY KIRSTEN LUCAS

I emerge from PLC, a woman with a mission.

My mission: to make it across the quad without getting drenched.

Fake to the left! Fake to the right!

I brave the sprinklers and make it to my 10:30 class - only to have my professor drowned out by an obnoxious lawnmower from hell. We are forced to shut the windows, sweat, and try to ignore it.

Let's face it, it's hard enough to get motivated to go to class in this great spring weather without having to compete with lawnmowers and sprinklers!

Aren't we paying enough tuition to enjoy the luxury of not having to deal with this nonsense?

I suppose lawn mowing and sidewalk sprinkling are nuisances at any hour. But couldn't they do it in the evening or early morning when fewer students are around?

In a word ... no.

Mower and sprinkler complaints are nothing new to the Physical Plant's Tim King, who is in charge of campus grounds.

"It's not very easy to work at

night," King said. "Early in the morning we can't see well enough (to mow). We've got to do it in the daylight. It's impossible to avoid."

"We try not to stay in one area very long," King said. "And we don't mind being told we're being disruptive. We'll try to accommodate people."

I wish I'd known that.

So next time you can't hear your professor over the roar of the mowers, go out there and tell the lawnmower man to take it someplace else.

If that strategy doesn't work, call Tim King at the Physical Plant (346-5243), like I did. He seemed like a pretty reasonable guy, but don't be surprised if he asks you to put your money where your mouth is. He asked me if I wanted to donate \$8,000 for new mowers.

The Physical Plant, like everything else at the University, is strapped for cash - and apparently a few mowers only go so far, so fast. Like it or not, they may just end up in your neck of the woods at an inopportune moment.

So the mowing can't be helped ... but what about those pesky sprinklers?

"We try to leave people a path from here to there," King said. "So we don't have to water people on sidewalks."

That's nice, but I'd still advise carrying an umbrella if you're going anywhere near

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PLC in a hurry - and don't want to get soaked on your way.

I didn't find a path. Instead I was forced to do the infamous PLC sprinkler scramble.

The Physical Plant is working on getting all of the sprinklers on an automatic system, and King said only one-third of the campus is left.

Because I haven't encountered these other sprinklers (the way it should be), I don't know where they are located. However, I wonder why the Physical Plant left one of the busiest thoroughfares on campus for last.

"We hope by next summer we'll have that taken care of," King said.

Until then, the forecast is for showers and mowers.

Kirsten Lucas is a reporter at the Emerald.



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LETTERS

All Natural

When most people think of "organic" agriculture, they no doubt think of poor-quality produce sold at overblown prices at a few "alternative" grocers.

To debunk this myth, organic simply means that fruits and vegetables are certified as being free of chemical pesticides, and are thus cultivated by sustainable farming techniques that do not exacerbate the hidden-costs of pesticide-based agriculture.

Did you know, for example, that 700 million pounds of pes-

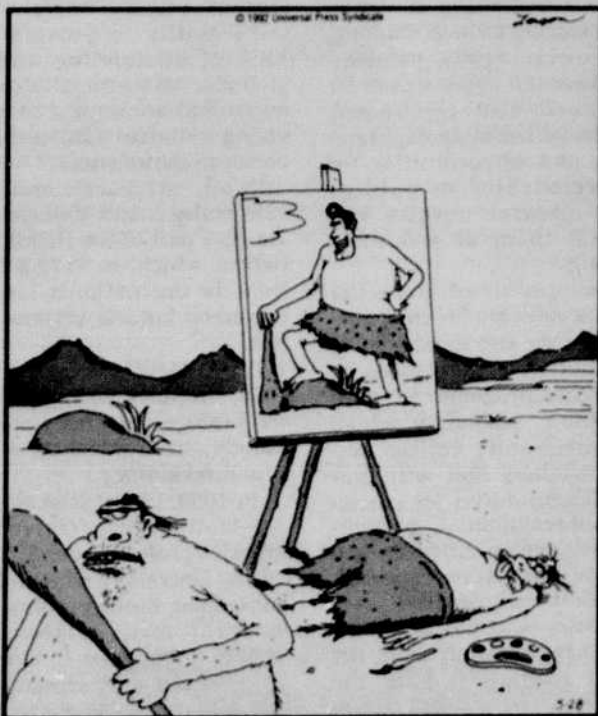
ticides are used in the United States annually at costs exceeding \$4 billion (that's roughly 3 pounds per person)? And did you know that once the environmental costs of soil depletion, groundwater pollution and soil erosion are tallied up, the known dollar stakes soar beyond \$8 billion? And these figures cannot begin to measure the 67,000 reported human poisonings attributed to pesticides each year in our country, or the innumerable wildlife, including natural pest-predators, that are killed or displaced.

Clearly, supporting the nu-

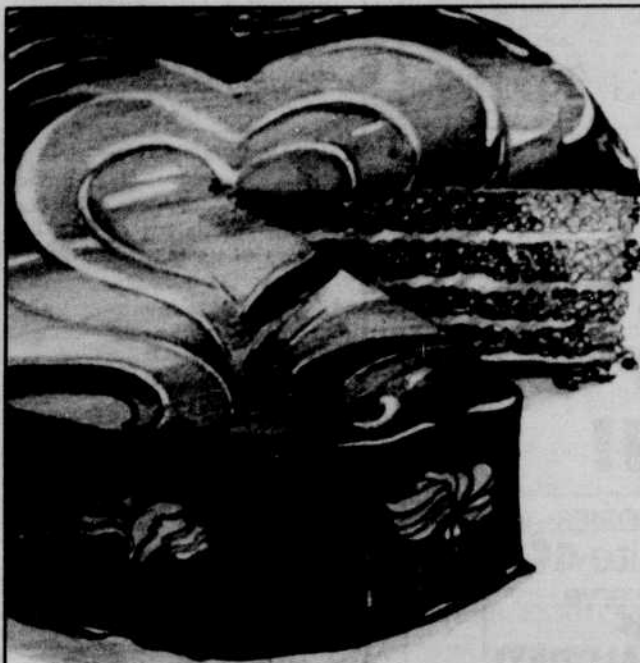
merous organically-certified farms that dot the Willamette Valley not only promotes the welfare of hard-working local farmers, but as any economist would argue, lowers the costs for consumers. Without consumer awareness and support, however, economic infeasibility will continue to keep organic produce on the sidelines. Along with the environment and peace of mind.

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By GARY LARSON



Modern art critic



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