

Rain, rain, rain, etc.: summertime blues

The *University Bulletin*, in describing campus life, says thus: "Living in Oregon is one of the special benefits of attending the University."

OK with you so far.

Further, "The climate of Western Oregon is mild, with moderate winters and pleasant summers."

Whoa, back up there.

Pleasant summers? Apparently the publicists down at Oregon Hall have an unrecognized gift of humor. Either that or they don't look out their windows often enough.

This summer is shaping up to be like any other season in Eugene. Weather forecasts these past couple of weeks haven't exactly strained meteorologists' skills. It's not hard to predict rain, followed by scattered showers and more rain.

Summers in Eugene — especially the dog days of July and August — are supposed to have people in shorts, sunny meetings on bar patios and high pollen counts. Good golfing weather.

Recently, however, the only people golfing in the area are the ones used to teeing off above the Arctic Circle.

Our spate of rain should not come as any surprise to veteran Oregonians. Like Bill Cosby said in one of his old comedy routines: If it isn't raining, people in the Pacific Northwest think they've done something wrong and start sacrificing animals.

Eugene isn't the only spot on the globe with erratic weather patterns of late. With the Mississippi River opening up new branch offices, our little increase in rainfall is (pun intended) a drop in the bucket.

It is ironic that while the campus is teeming with prospective enrollees, Eugene is doing a December imitation. What better way is there to welcome new people to the campus than drown them in a typical, fun-filled Oregon rainstorm?

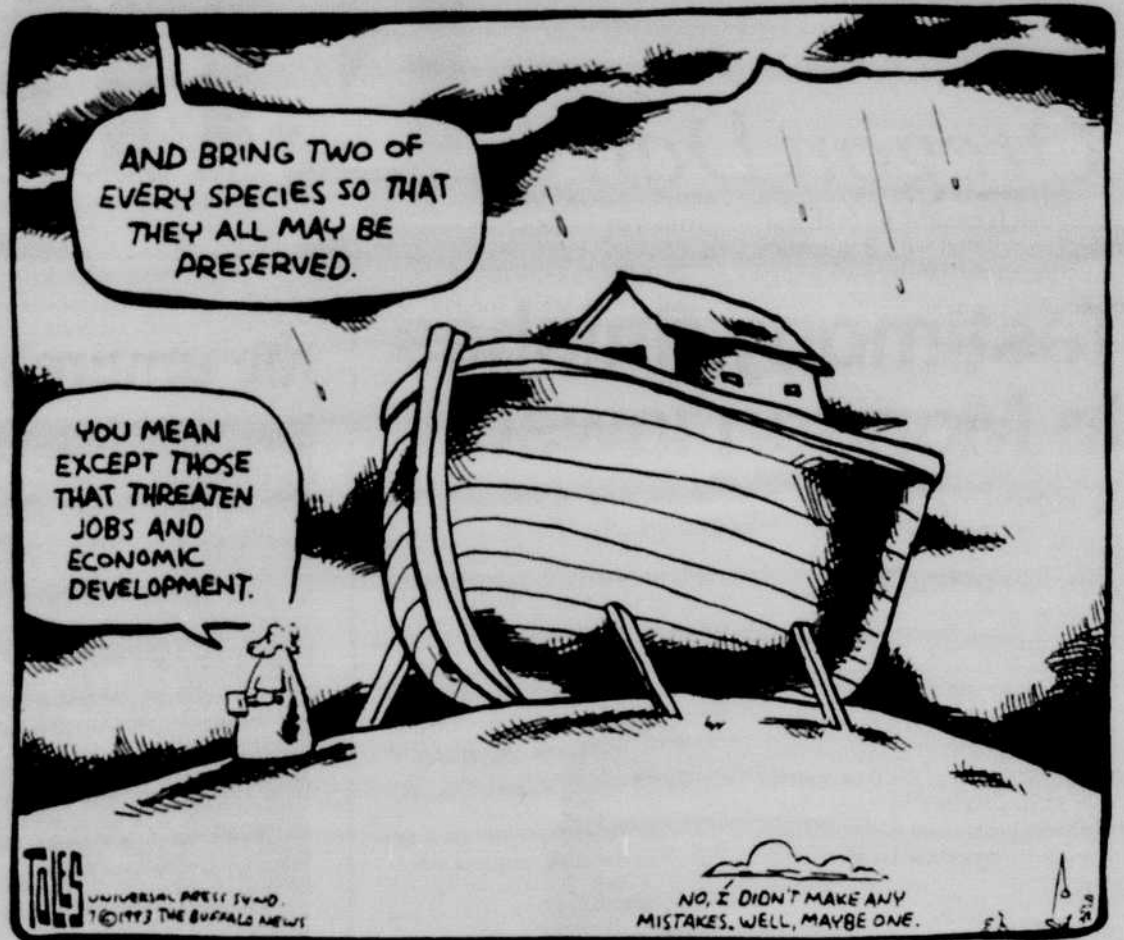
Take a hint: Invest in an umbrella.

Who can we blame for this downturn in summer fortune? The University administration? Congress? The greenhouse effect? Is this to be our new lot in life — the only difference between seasons being a tiny shift in the inches of rain?

No, we must be brave during this time of turmoil. Turn the other cheek to let both sides get wet. Keep your chin up because the rain runs off easier that way. At least the pollen count is lower.

And don't forget your umbrellas.

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OPINION

European beer better than U.S.



Things we have never experienced or known generally survive in our minds as stereotyped images as what we believe those things to be.

After returning from nearly a month spent abroad in Europe (certainly not enough time to completely understand the ways of Europeans), I have a couple of more stereotypes to spread. My "truth" — or how I perceive these things to actually be — follow each stereotype.

So go ahead and open up that list in your mind that begins with "all European women don't shave their legs or armpits" and "European kids know how to hold their alcohol."

STEREOTYPE: Everyone in Europe is polite and courteous. Anywhere you go, Europeans will treat you like one of their own — part of the family. In the United States, on the other hand, people kill each other over shoes.

TRUTH: In several countries — particularly Scandinavia and Germany, where much of my ancestry comes from, oddly enough — people seem to have been born with the "evil eye."

My small traveling group and

I, our American heritage apparently obvious, could not have received more stares had we been wearing signs that said, "Look at us. We like it" (written in several languages, of course).

People from other countries were more tourist-friendly, keeping their eyes to themselves. In Spain, where my pale legs, backward hat and Americanized Spanish accent certainly showed I wasn't a native, I was never afforded a second look.

STEREOTYPE: In Europe, people drive carefully. They are great drivers because their drivers' tests are much more difficult than in the states.

TRUTH: In Europe, people don't drive carefully. "Stop" is not in their vocabulary — it's more like slow down (briefly), honk and drive faster. Pedestrians beware — drivers may not notice you.

STEREOTYPE: Trains are the best way to travel around Europe. You can enjoy seeing the countries without the hassle of getting lost, buying gas or asking for directions.

TRUTH: Yes, driving around Europe would be a pain, but trains in Europe are overrated.

To enjoy trains, one must learn to sleep sitting up, ignoring those nasty jolts in the tracks; one must tolerate the enormous amount of American kids running around with their life's belongings on their backs, posing as a pack usually as large as the carrier; and one must not think about the toilets on the trains.

Rather than make like a mobile home and store the human waste gathered during trips, the toilets simply open up and say "hi" to the tracks when you flush, decorating the tracks with the toilet's contents. I guess that explains why the warnings (again, in several languages) in the toilet rooms say to close the lid while flushing and don't use the toilet while stopped in a station.

STEREOTYPE: European beer is much better than any found in the states.

TRUTH: Sorry, folks — sad but true.

Worse yet, the "imports" we receive from abroad are watered-down versions of the real thing, so if you want to drink a "real" European beer, go to Europe.

Czechoslovakia, the country that made the original Budweiser, wins the best beer in Europe contest. Nowhere else can you buy almost a liter of 12 percent alcohol beer (yep, 12 percent) for little more than a dollar.

The import, however, sells at Albertson's for about \$2, and don't expect it to be 12 percent.

STEREOTYPES: Hairy women and sober European kids.

TRUTH: Give me a break. Europeans are as human as the rest of us.

Women's legs and armpits are no more hairier than in Eugene, and kids will be kids — but their tolerance may be a little higher.

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