

Path of education leads to small desks

There has been a recent interest in larger desks. This at first sounds like a ridiculous thing to spend time being concerned with, but the need is apparent.

As time passes and people grow old, the size of the desk seems to depreciate relative to the size of the student.

Day one of kindergarten: You head to class with a white-knuckled grip on a parent's limb. Tears suddenly fill your face when you're left behind in the shocking new kindergarten environment. The one thing you had was room to move. They weren't even desks, they were rather large luxurious tables. Luxurious tables when you really needed them the least — when you could still practically fit in the palm of your teacher's hand.

When the kindergarten days ended and it was time to head off to the real world of grade school, the tables were traded in for desks. The surface area decreased but you still had volume on your side. There was enough room in those desks to prop open the tops and store all your necessities. From math books to reading books to yesterday's lunch. There was room for it all.

After grade school it was time to give junior high a go. This was the first time that the desk space took a noticeable turn for the worst. Suddenly, there was no room. Junior high was bad, but torso size hadn't even begun to matter.

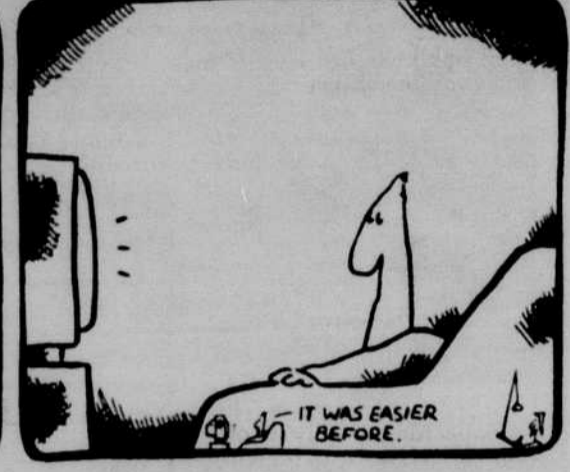
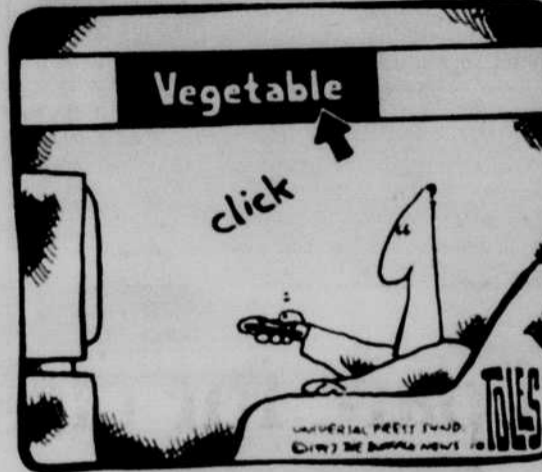
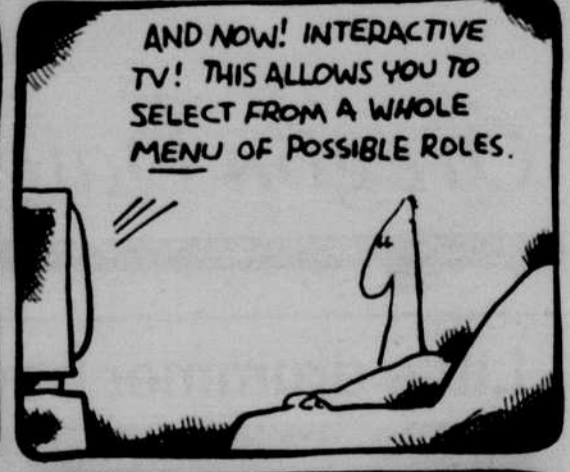
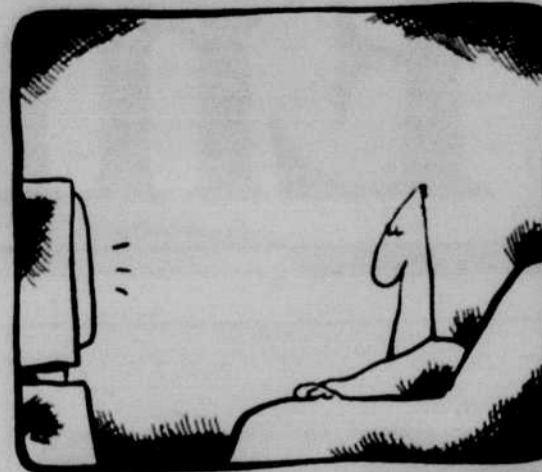
It was high school where changes began to happen. People were getting big. Desks were getting small. The work load was increasing and desk space was decreasing.

Now college is in session. People really don't get much bigger. Classes can't get much more crowded. People shouldn't have to cram themselves into the little area available to them in class. The last thing people should have to worry about is whether they can fit in one of those seats for up to an hour and twenty minutes, and still maintain enough self-esteem to take in a lecture or — even worse — a final exam.

Sure, the excuse for no new desks will be the same. There's just not enough money to spring for the new desks. The need just isn't really apparent. It is, however, and the need should be addressed. Some desks have been changed, but changed to the same old tiny, uncomfortable and restraining sitting devices we currently call desks. It really wouldn't be that hard to replace some of the desks with at least a table or two and some chairs.

When you're at school, you sit. It's no surprise. That's just how it works. Every day, every class, students sit. It's time to give them something to sit in.

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COMMENTARY

Coming out: tolerance's limits

By Jodi Mai and Spencer de Mille

Imagine this: You're a student who's left-handed. Your whole life, you've been encouraged to write with your right hand, to use it whenever possible. When you get to college, you assume people will be enlightened enough to mind their own business.

However, on your first day of class, your professor talks at length about how left-handers have led to the downfall of many civilizations.

In your dorm, you often overhear the other residents making crude jokes about left-handers. The resident assistant does not seem concerned by this.

Finally, when you're spotted shelving books with your left hand, you're fired from your job at the city library only to discover you have no recourse.

Seem ridiculous? Up until the latter half of this century, left-handedness was seen as "abnormal" and "deviant" behavior that was to be discouraged. Ironically, this is the same view that many now have about homosexuality.

By now, everyone is familiar with many of the challenges facing the gay community. The Oregon Citizens Alliance, the military ban and "family values" have been paraded around for most of the decade. But these obstacles are no worse than what we face every day in our normal lives.

The bigots and homophobes, frightening though they may be, are very easy to see. What's not so easy to see are the well-meaning liberals, who mind their manners in public but never examine their stereotypes.

For example, the person who proudly votes against Ballot Measure 9, but is uncomfortable with their child having a lesbian for a school teacher.

Or the guy who goes dancing at Club Arena, but gets nervous

when someone in his dorm comes out to him.

As a gay person, one of the first things you learn is the difference between someone who is truly accepting and someone who is just going through the motions. We call this tolerance.

An accepting person is willing to listen to you talking about your lover, without being uncomfortable and without asking for the "kinky" details.

People who are tolerant are frustrating because they're trying to fool us, and trying to fool themselves into thinking that they're allies in the struggle for civil rights. In reality, they're more of an obstacle because they refuse to understand.

We'd rather face an honest bigot than a close-minded liberal.

The problem we had with the *Emerald* article on Coming Out Day (ODE, Oct. 11) is it displayed the same, barely tolerant attitudes we've received all of our lives.

While Thor Wasbotten, freelance editor for the *Emerald*, is correct when he says, "Balance and neutrality are what every good journalist strives for when reporting," the article in question was neither. The article quoted people who were for and against Coming Out Day. Those who were for, however, had their quotes twisted into entirely new meanings.

It's true that the writer of the original article was writing as a heterosexual, from a heterosexual's point of view. What upset many of those who were quoted in the article was the way the writer of the article manipulated

their quotes to fit her point of view, which seemed to be, "Coming Out Day is all right, but it's not really necessary."

Also disturbing, Jodi Mai was misquoted twice as saying there were 300 "open" homosexuals on this campus, when in reality, she estimated 2,000. Mai estimated that 300 people, gay and straight, come into the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Alliance office every year. No mention was made about who, or what, is an "open" homosexual.

We don't expect everyone to be completely understanding and accepting all of the time. And certainly reporters bring their own biases to every story they cover. We know this and accept it.

But we will not stand for anything less than fair and accurate reporting. In our opinion, an article on this subject could have accurately stated how and why National Coming Out Day is important to many students, and unimportant to others, without changing the context of the quotes, or misrepresenting figures.

We can understand why people are tired of gays making a political issue out of this. We're tired, too. But as long as someone else isn't willing to leave us alone, we're not going to stop. The militant homosexual agenda is simply to live our lives in peace.

We are not going to be silent anymore

Jodi Mai and Spencer de Mille are co-directors of the University's Lesbian Gay Bisexual Alliance.

Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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