

# EDITORIAL

## University bookstore is the place to order

Textbooks will not be available for this course at the University bookstore. Instead you need to walk three miles, turn left, go two blocks, turn north 180 degrees, continue through the double doors, up the stairs for seven flights, head to the last door on the right, give them the secret password, and the course books are available in a pile in the back. By the way, you can't sell them back.

In an attempt to promote business at smaller privately owned bookstores, among other reasons, some professors require students to buy their course books at stores off-campus. This is great for the professors and especially the store owners. The professors could optimally never even step foot in the store they are ordering from, but instead chose their text, call the store of their choice and the bookstore owner would, no doubt, be overjoyed to order the professor's books. The books would be nearly guaranteed to be sold as in most cases they are required texts. Certainly there are many jovial relationships forming between private store owners and professors.

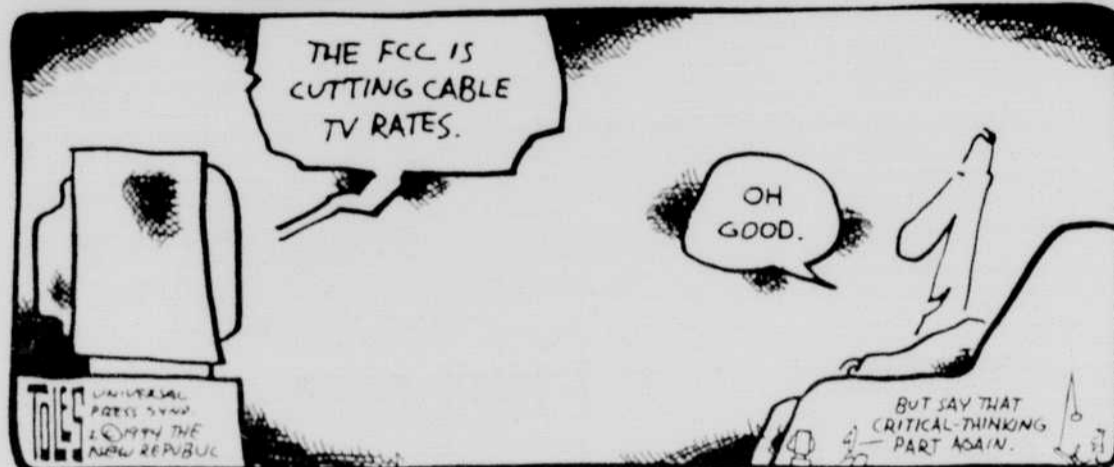
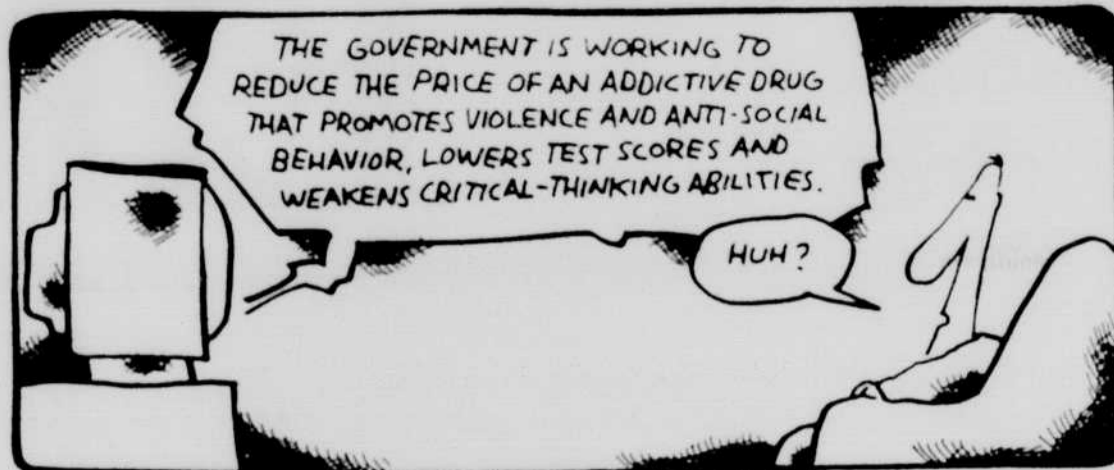
The University bookstore is a non-profit (although some of the text prices make one wonder) store operating as a service to the students. Working cooperatively with the professors and the students, books are ordered by the professors and sold to the students. Students also enjoy a 9 percent discount on any books bought there. Next time you go into a privately-owned bookstore, flash your student I.D. and tell them you want a discount, the most you'll probably get is a chuckle; much like a Eugene resident walking into the University bookstore, flashing a drivers license and demanding a student discount.

The lines can be long at the University bookstore, but in an effort to adjust they offer extended business hours to patrons. Try going to a privately-owned bookstore and tell the store owner that his lines are too long and he should skip dinner and man the register for a few extra hours.

When the term winds to an end and so does the balance in your bank account, the book buy-back at the University bookstore can come in quite handy. Granted it is a little repulsive, at times, getting back less than a third of the original cost. The University bookstore's general policy is to provide 60 percent of their new selling price for books that will be used next term, and they generally buy them back from mid-Dead Week through the end of Finals Week. Try taking a book back to a private bookstore that has been used, and most likely abused, for a term, and ask for your money back. Can I see your receipt please?

If the politics of the University bookstore are too overwhelming, then Smith Family Bookstore offers many of the same buying and selling services as the University bookstore and the walk is only a block down the road.

Certainly the local bookstore economy won't crumble without the support of professors requiring students to buy books there. Time spent reading the course books certainly would be better than time spent wandering aimlessly around Eugene in search of a bookstore that is buried deep in the bowels of the city.



## OPINION

### Dealing drugs on 'Sesame Street'



ROBBIE REEVES

It's amazing how times change. A couple of weeks ago, while flipping through the TV channels early one morning, I came across *Sesame Street*. Ah, what memories it brought back.

Many parts of the show were the same as when I watched it a little over 10 years ago. Bert and Ernie are still on the show, and Oscar still lives in a trash can.

Yet, a lot has changed. For example, loyal viewers of the show will remember the "In the Neighborhood" song, in which people of different common occupations, such as a police officer or a letter carrier, are portrayed, and are described in the song as "the people that you meet when you're walking down the street / the people that you meet each day."

Imagine my surprise at seeing consumer guru Ralph Nader and TV journalist Barbara Walters singing away on *Sesame Street*. After all, I guess, every five-year-old should know who Nader and Walters are. Yet, at first I felt that young kids should have a little innocence on *Sesame Street* before they had to read about exploding cars and crusading journalists like Barbara Walters.

But after thinking about it, I realized that this was totally wrong. *Sesame Street* is designed to educate young children about life. Why not go all the way with this idea?

True, teaching kids the alphabet and how to count in Spanish are useful skills, but what about teaching kids some things that might be a bit more, ah, relevant and useful to their everyday lives?

For example, for the "In the Neighborhood" song, people in some more common occupations could be portrayed, like carjackers and serial murderers. After all, in many cities in America, kids are more likely to run into a drug deal on the street than into the arms of a mailman or a police officer.

Everyone remembers the Count, the character who extolls the virtues of counting, and then demonstrates the art to all who will listen. He could start counting objects that are a bit more common than apples and oranges. "One, one pound of heroin. Two, two dead bodies on the corner. Three, three bullets in each body..." and so on. Kids can relate.

Murders and drugs aren't the only topics that can be touched on with this new *Sesame Street*. Kids should be able to hear about some more "adult" controversies in a format suited to the younger viewer.

Seeming that he has been everywhere else, Joey Buttafuoco could go on *Sesame Street*. While the current show has a magician on every once in a while to impress kids with his act, Buttafuoco could show kids a few "tricks" of his own. Mind you, I don't advocate what he did, but I acknowledge that a lot goes on in big cities.

Kids could learn about the Tonya Harding scandal by having Oscar the Grouch club Big Bird's knee. Oscar can then deny everything and go to court, just like Tonya did. The lesson for kids: Violence solves more problems than your parents will admit. (The Count will say

"One, one club to the knee. Two, two clubs to the knee. Three, three clubs and the victim goes down, ha ha ha.")

OK, I'll admit that I'm a cynic. A really big cynic, to say the least. However, society has changed a lot over the past 20 years that *Sesame Street* and other children's shows have been on the air. Violence and drugs are now major problems in society, but you would never know by watching *Sesame Street*. In fact, kids might learn a lot more about life from the evening news than by watching Big Bird.

Kids need to be able to learn about life somewhere. Given that it has been an extraordinarily popular show during its lifetime, *Sesame Street* might be the place for kids to learn about problems that they might encounter. I'm not advocating drive-by shootings on *Sesame Street*, but I do suggest that topics such as divorce and child abuse, things that children may very well encounter during their childhood, be covered in some sort of a kid-friendly format.

Fifty years from now, we might look back and say that *Sesame Street* was pretty tame just because Oscar shows kids how to put on a condom or because Ernie died of a crack overdose. Then, the show will probably need to show kids how to shoot burglars at home or how to launder drug money, just to keep pace with society around it.

Just give the show some time.

Robbie Reeves is a columnist for the Emerald.

## COMMENTARY

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* welcomes commentaries from the public concerning topics of interest to the University community.

Commentaries should be between 600 and 800 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

## Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3159 EUGENE OREGON 97403

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.

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