

## Education key for college drinkers

For decades, drinking has been a glorified part of the "college experience." Older generations brag about getting looped before the big Friday night dance. Movies such as *Animal House* portray college students as care-free beer guzzlers.

Is drinking on college campuses out of control?

This week the *Emerald* and local television station KEZI are examining binge drinking at the University and at other college campuses around the nation. People who drink five or more drinks at one sitting within a two-week period are considered binge drinkers.

The good news is that binge drinking at this University is less common than at other colleges. However, binge drinking is still a serious problem here, and students need to understand the dangers associated with drinking.

According to a study conducted by Columbia University, 50 percent of Columbia students are binge drinkers. Another survey, conducted at Harvard, found that 44 percent of 17,952 students on campuses nationwide are reported to be binge drinkers. At the University of Oregon, 41 percent of 686 students polled in winter term of 1994 qualified as binge drinkers.

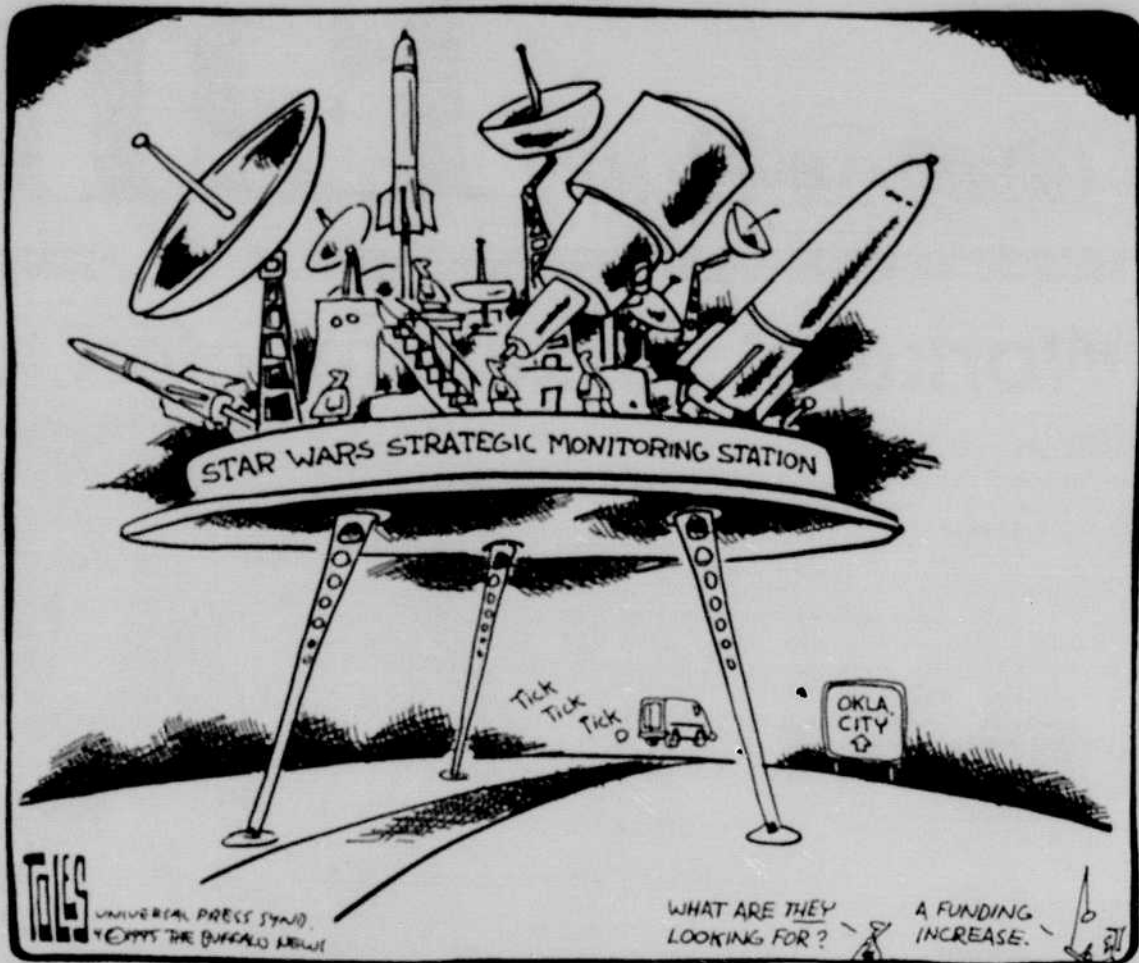
These statistics may not be alarming to those who view alcohol consumption as a necessity for the college social life. It would be encouraging to some to think that the other 69 percent of University students aren't heavy drinkers.

However, it is important to understand that these numbers only account for the people who consume five or more drinks at one sitting. Some college-age drinkers, especially women, can get intoxicated with only three or four drinks. Although they may be getting drunk regularly, they aren't considered in the binge drinking category. Nonetheless, they may still have a drinking problem and should not be excluded.

Drinking problems among college students are probably more serious than what these surveys indicate. Different people require different amounts of alcohol to get drunk, so the amount a person drinks is not a good indicator. More effective surveys might analyze blood alcohol levels of college students, but the practicality of such a study remains in doubt.

Along with the health problems associated with excess drinking, college students need to be aware of how drinking affects behaviors. According to the Columbia survey, 90 percent of campus rapes involved alcohol and 60 percent of sexually transmitted diseases are contracted while under the influence of alcohol. According to the Harvard survey, binge drinkers were 7 to 10 times more likely to have unplanned sex.

These statistics should be alarming to all college students who consume alcohol — not just those who can slam five drinks at a time. Anyone who drinks needs to be educated about the serious consequences of drinking.



### COMMENTARY

## Athletes deserve better treatment

Camara Jones and Rose Imbriano

**M**y name is Camara Jones and I am a student athlete here at the University. I am a member of the track team and have been for five years.

As a result of my athletic endeavors I have come in contact and in many cases become friends with many student athletes at the University. Throughout my career here at Oregon I have cultivated some wonderful relationships with people whose identities have been shattered because of your paper.

The article printed on the front page of the *Oregon Daily Emerald* (April 24-25) about athletes disturbed me for many reasons.

As a law-school-bound international studies and Spanish major, I feel that I have the knowledge to identify a lazy effort and lack of ethics in the journalism field.

Joe Harwood's story on athletes which targeted football players was an insult to every collegiate athlete on this campus.

According to Harwood, this story was a result of five months of investigation. If this is true, then why was only one side represented? Harwood might count Coach Bellotti's quotes as a representation of the student athletes, but obviously he needed to keep digging.

At one point in his article Harwood concluded that the claims were unsubstantiated, but he continuously repeated the allegations, using athletes' names. As a result, he degraded specific athletes and the collegiate athletic population at the University.

It would have been beneficial to myself and other readers if Harwood had included in his investigation a control group

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such as the general population of University students. I myself would like to know what percent of the University population has been involved in activities such as these. In addition, what percentage of Lane County cases are dropped before going to trial?

If this was a five-month investigation, then why were there only limited sources from the athletic department? Better yet, why weren't any of the football players contacted for comment?

I understand that as a student athlete we're put in the spotlight. As a matter of fact, as chairperson for Team Council, I have spoken to incoming freshmen on these matters.

At the same time, we are college students who make mistakes. Being a minority student on this campus I have already been put in one box. Many student athletes are identified as just athletes by their size and possibly their color.

I can't count the number of times I have been asked if I am a basketball player because of my skin color. Now, every day

people will wonder or assume that I or my fellow athletes are criminals who receive special treatment.

We can't argue the fact that these athletes have done something wrong. The fact of the matter is they have paid or will pay for their actions.

Football players and athletes in general wake up every morning and do a job for this University. We are criticized and scrutinized by people who wish they could do what we are doing, who don't have the skills necessary to compete and be a student at the Division I level, as we criticize those who have something we do not possess.

Taking responsibility for the position I have put myself in, I have accepted this criticism and will continue to do so as long as it is done in a fair and just manner.

I am using this article to fill in the gaping holes left by your inadequate investigation. You must remember these people you are so quick to point fingers at are the same people for whom most of the student body cheers on a daily basis.

Now I would like to say goodbye to my fair-weathered fans.

*Camara Jones is an international studies and Spanish major, while Rose Imbriano is a journalism major at the University.*

## Oregon Daily Emerald

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

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