

Court overrules students' rights

Student athletes in Vernonia may have to take aim at a plastic cup before they can aim for a basket after the Supreme Court ruled Monday that random drug testing for student athletes does not violate the students' constitutional rights.

The decision should not have shocked anyone. Not only has the Court often sided with high schools that choose to abridge students' First Amendment right to free speech, but in almost every case regarding random drug testing it has decided that the benefit to the state outweighed the rights of the individual.

The Fourth Amendment ensures "the right of the people to be secure in their persons ... against unreasonable searches and seizures" without probable cause. However, in cases regarding random drug testing for Federal Aviation Administration employees, train workers and Customs employees, the Court ruled against the amendment, citing that public safety was paramount to constitutional protection.

Drug testing is not unconstitutional, nor is it illegal to require potential employees to take a drug test prior to hiring them. At issue is the random testing of student athletes without probable cause. In addition, this case is unique because unlike the aforementioned workers whose intoxication can kill or injure many people, the state's interest in testing students lies in the discipline of minors rather than in the protection of the people.

Teachers in Vernonia, a northern Oregon town of approximately 1,700 people, said that prior to implementing drug testing in 1989, they were bombarded with unruly behavior by students. The decision to apply the drug test to athletes came from the assertion that the athletes' drug use was the main source of the problem.

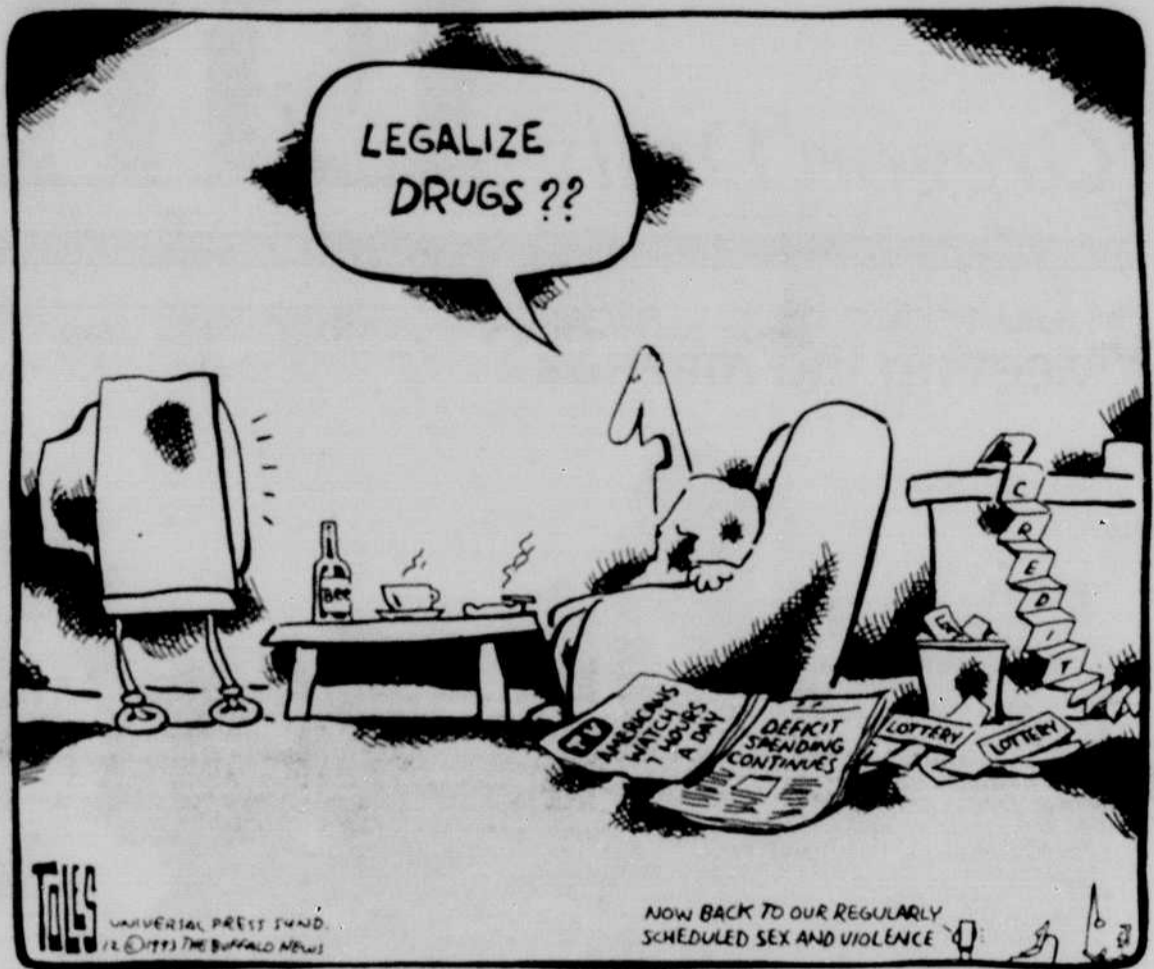
Not only does this assertion stigmatize athletes, but in Vernonia schools it would be almost impossible for athletes not to be the focus of any number of problems. With only about 300 students enrolled in grades seven through 12, almost 70 percent are athletes, according to Vernonia Superintendent Ellis Mason.

Both school officials and the Court have singled-out athletes for testing because they pose a health threat to themselves and other players if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This argument is dubious at best. It seems far more dangerous for wood shop students to be operating a skill saw while stoned, or band students to be carrying a tuba while wired than for the biggest men on campus to be speeding around a field in helmets and shoulder pads.

Student athletes, and members of any other extracurricular group, should be tested for narcotics if their behavior is erratic or otherwise indicative of drug use. This is probable cause. But lumping a group of minors in a category as broad as "athletics" and subjecting them to random testing is just an easy fix to a complex problem at the expense of the students' rights.

In the four years that Vernonia tested students, only two students tested positive for drugs, but Superintendent Mason said that several students admitted their drug use rather than taking the test. To that end, Mason said the policy has proved to be preventative rather than punitive, and discipline problems have dropped dramatically in that period of time.

Regardless of the Court's decision, random testing is, by definition, in violation of the Constitution. The question the Court keeps answering with increasing ease is to which people it does not apply.



OPINION

Summer, youth aren't eternal



JESSE I. BOHRER-CLANCY

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may
Old time is still a-flying
And that same flower that
smiles today,
Tomorrow will be dying."
— Robert Herrick

Summer. A time for relaxation. A time for enjoyment. A time for merriment and mirth. But more important, a time to act like the college student you are ... like an idiot. That's right, like a complete idiot.

Yes, I do realize that I am being somewhat sophomoric and perhaps a tad immature, but three years of college can do that to an individual. I'm also realizing that I'm only young once, and I'm going to make the most of it. So frankly my dear, I could give a damn what anyone else thinks. I'm going to gather up my rosebuds and sniff the daisies, 'cause life's short; so have fun with it. It's the only life we've got. So with that out of the way, crank up the Pougés, grab a pint of ale and read on for a smorgasboard of summer silliness.

- Throw a party ... a big party. Start in the middle of a street somewhere and invite the whole neighborhood. Invite the Eugene police department, too. Tell them the gas masks are complimentary. You provide the CS gas. Use 3 percent boric acid solution to clean it up.
- Call up KWVA 88.1 FM at odd hours of the morning and keep them company. If you get a DJ named Norman, tell him he's a sweetie and ask him to play Men Without Hats real nicely.
- Throw a campus-wide

vodeling contest atop Johnson Hall. First prize is President Dave's everlasting appreciation for your exquisite vocal talents and an invitation to kindly get off his roof.

- Rappel down the side of the center column in the Willamette Hall atrium and set up a base camp on the ledge halfway down.

- Find a bunch of freshmen during IntroDUCKtion and go snipe hunting.

- Dress up the Pioneer Mother in a toga. Then, go put the Pioneer guy in front of Fenton Hall in drag. Shave off his beard.

- Paint 13th avenue yellow and run down it screaming lines from the *Wizard of Oz*.

- Storm up to the Emerald office and demand my immediate flogging for writing such a ridiculous column.

- Have a barbecue in the woods. Dig a hole, line it with rocks (not river rocks, mind you — they tend to explode, and shrapnel can get in the way of a really nice day). Throw something on the fire, burn it and eat it while grunting and scratching yourself the entire time.

- Hanglide off the top of PLC.

- Throw a campus-wide Olympics. Do such events as the tire toss, the turkey (the supermarket variety) punt, underwater basket weaving, and the 100-yard streak.

- Become a campus vigilante. Seek out evil-doers who park in the red zone and who ride their bicycles on the sidewalks. Punish them with 20 lashes from a

wet noodle.

- Memorize the complete works of Bill Shakespeare. Go impress your lit. professor.

- "Borrow" one of those groovy OPS vans and somehow get it to the top of Oregon Hall without scratching it or eating the doughnuts inside. Don't forget to turn on the green and yellow lights.

These are only a few possibilities. Use your imagination. Be creative and try not to trash anything. Pull off a really clever practical joke — one that you'll be able to tell your grandkids about in the years to come.

Most people only go through college once, and then it's off to being a working stiff. So make the most of it. If you want college to be like *Animal House*, then make it that way! You only get out of life what you put into it. And if that means being a prissy, wine-sipping milquetoast, then you're pathetic and deserve a life of blandness.

But it's not too late.

Drink some beer. Act stupid with your friends, and wake up face-down on the pavement with a hangover and a grin on your face. You'll learn, and soon enough you'll actually like the taste of beer. You won't need to act like a complete twit; it'll just come naturally. Loosen up and enjoy life. You might just like it. And if people get all high and mighty, remember what the late Frank Zappa once said: "F@S* 'em if they can't take a joke."

Jesse I. Bohrer-Clancy is a columnist for the Emerald.

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Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

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.

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