

City and campus educate students in unique ways

■ **OUR OPINION:** Eugene provides students with challenging experiences

The University markets itself as a superior liberal arts institution nestled in an exquisite natural environment. Yet, in addition to the higher learning that takes place within the classroom, the campus and city communities provide students with educational experiences that cannot be measured in earned credit hours.

Eugene is unique. It's large enough to be interesting and small enough to be comfortable. It is eclectic and educated, liberal and loud-mouthed, whimsical and wacky. Unlike colleges and universities that are islands of liberalism in larger city seas of conservative thought, the University and Eugene occupy the same ideological landscape.

Eugene is an eavesdropper's Eden. Eugeneans are opinionated and like to argue about everything from politics to post-modern art. They are just as likely to engage a coffee-shop stranger in a conversation about Croatia as they are to ask for cream and sugar. While this type of vocal inquisitiveness is to be expected beneath the maple trees and cement arches of this university, the dialogues of ethics and economics create the hum of lunchtime discussions in courtyards and crowded cafes all over the city. Within the confines of this campus, that hum becomes a din.

Through the years, University students have earned a reputation for being politically active. Last year more University students were registered to vote than at any other col-

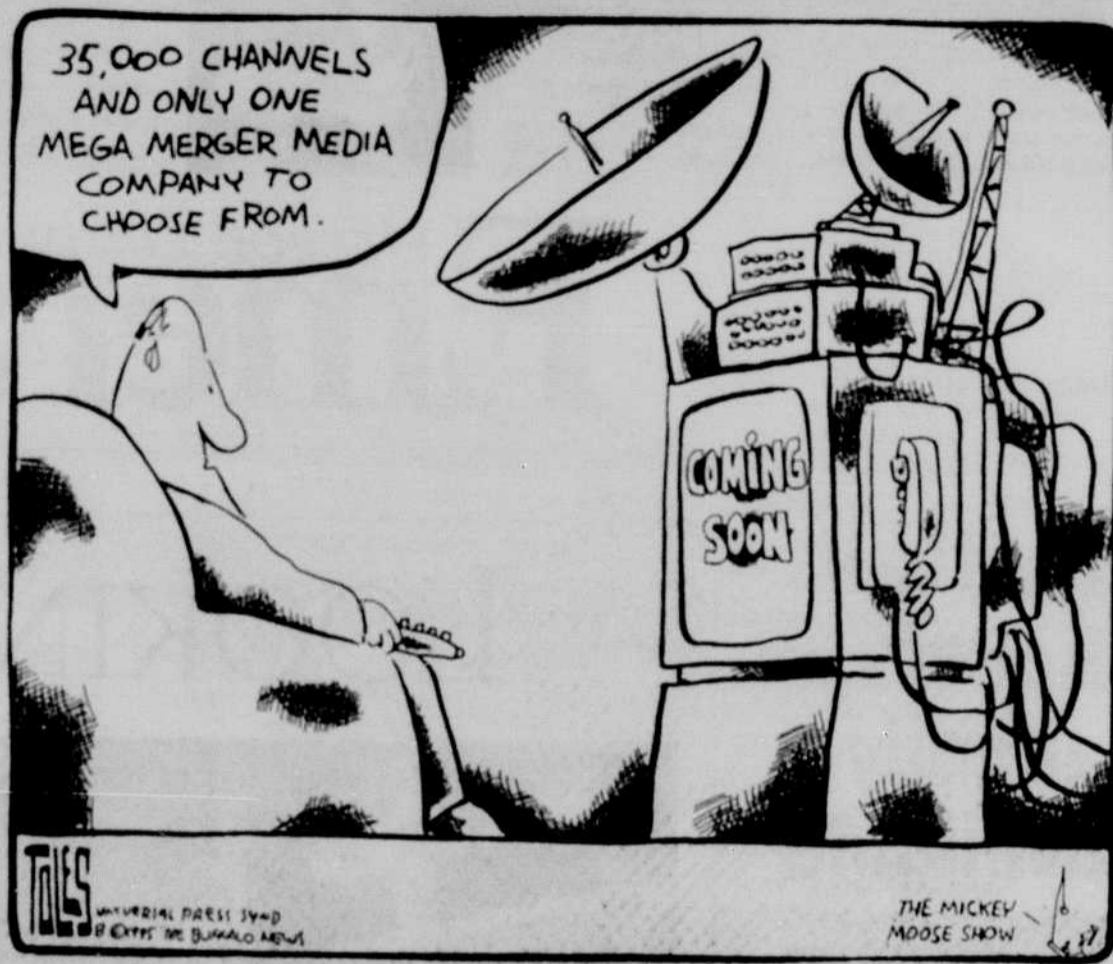
lege or university in the country. We protest, we petition, and we vote. We have been called pinko-liberal commie lovers, pot-smoking hippies and anti-establishment yahoos — naive and idealistic, cynical and pessimistic. They say we are political-correctness evangelists, atheists and agnostics, thumping our thesauri rather than our Bibles.

All true. All false. Each year thousands of new students arrive here from around the country and the world. Each arrives with his or her own history, culture and belief system. The University environment encourages them to interact, to clash and to coalesce. Students are challenged to think critically about others and about themselves. They are forced to look at their inner and outer worlds with fresh eyes and open minds. That experience unites these thousands of individuals into a community. It is the tie that binds us.

Each fall new students set foot on this campus secure in their ideas and perceptions. Each spring new graduates step into the world secure in themselves.

This cycle of discovery speaks to the nature of this campus, this city and this state. Oregonians are explorers. We seek the unknown to understand and expand it. Whether we have lived here all of our lives or all of two years, we are engaged in a battle against ignorance and the status quo. Here, we climb mountains and walk along vast shores everyday. It is that quality, above all others, that stays with us long after we have donned our black robes and tassels and moved on.

Welcome and welcome back.



The success of the 'ODE' depends on you

Welcome to the new *Oregon Daily Emerald*. Over the summer, we've been making changes, and the process will continue throughout the coming year. We hope and believe these changes will make the *Emerald* more useful and easy to read.

If you were here over the summer, you may have already noticed one new development. The *Emerald* has a new visual design, with a bolder headline style, more attractive inside pages and a new logo for the front page.

But we're changing on the inside, too.

A new staff full of new faces returns this fall to take on the challenge of producing a daily newspaper for a campus-area readership of more than 20,000 students, staff, faculty and others, and they join a crew of more experienced writers and editors who've worked for us before.

Together I think the staff represents one of the paper's greatest potential assets, because it's never been quite this way before. We've never had this combination of people — and honestly, no one knows exactly what to expect.

But to me, that's good. If you've been happy with the *Emerald* in the past, great. I have been, too — sometimes. At other times I know we could've done better. I hope our staff strives for more than in past years, and I have great confidence that they will try.

But I don't expect you to share that confidence — at least, not yet. I realize that no cheesy welcoming commentary like this one is going to magically erase all the criticisms that the *Emerald* has received in the past (both fair and not-so-fair). So I intend to let our staff prove to you how we're not just the same old *ODE*.

So the next time you pick up an *Emerald*, take a look and

see how we're doing.

If everything seems to be in order, we'd be happy to hear it. But if there's something you don't like — if we've made a mistake, or missed the point, or misspelled a name — call us on it. Literally. The number here is 346-5511; we can be e-mailed at ode@oregon.uoregon.edu, and our offices are on

the third floor of the EMU. I'm serious. We can't get better without your help. There aren't any textbooks to tell us how to run a campus newspaper, and the Magic 8-Ball only gets so specific. I can promise that we're going to try to do our best, but we still need your criticism — and your praise, if we deserve it — in order to become the kind of newspaper you want to read.

We also need you to tell us when news is happening. I'd like to say that our reporters are all intimately connected to every event everywhere, but that's just impossible. We'll try to keep in touch, but we'll still need a tip now and then. Visit, call or e-mail us. Tell us what we should be telling you.

Beginning a week from tomorrow, the *Emerald* resumes regular fall publication. We've added a few new features, some of which appear in this special "Back to the Books" edition, and some of which will make their debuts Sept. 26:

- A new "billboard" across the top of a revised *Emerald* logo on Page 1, including the day's weather forecast, notice of deadlines and events, an index of regular features, and "teasers" describing some of the stories and commentaries contained in that day's issue.

- A redesigned editorial and opinion page called "Viewpoints." As always, we want

this page to be a forum for the debates that take place every day on this campus, so we'll try to print all the letters we receive, as well as provide commentaries from a crop of seven staff columnists. Guest columns may also be accepted, if they are well-written and relevant to our readers.

- A new "Stranger than Fiction" section, near the front of the paper each day, will include short stories with an unusual twist from around the world.

- A new "News in Brief" department will summarize the day's events off-campus, both internationally, nationally and regionally.

- A daily horoscope will appear in the classified section.

- An online editor, who also produces the electronic version of the *Emerald* on the World Wide Web (<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~ode/>), will write a column on issues of technology that affect students and others at the University.

- A new typeface will allow us to fit more information into our headlines, and we've added "summary decks" to the front of most of our stories as well, so you'll have a more immediate idea of what each story is about, and whether you want to read it.

And for those of you who simply won't be satisfied with just reading the paper, I invite you to come up and start work as a freelance reporter. We need writers for entertainment, sports and straight news, and you even get paid for your efforts. Don't think you're not qualified to work for us — we'll help you get better.

Because that's what this paper, I hope, is all about: getting better. Whether we succeed or not, only time — and you — will tell.

David Thorn is the editor-in-chief of the *Emerald*.

Oregon Daily Emerald

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BACK TO THE BOOKS EDITION

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