

Graduation from college requires sense of closure

Where are the balloons? Where are the teachers with plates of cookies? Why don't I get to leave school a week early?

When I graduated from high school five years ago, graduation preparations took over the school. The seniors would always be late to class and they would bring food to class, and the teachers brought us cookies or doughnuts.

The juniors were in awe and couldn't wait to be in our shoes. Our parents let us come home past curfew and didn't complain, attributing our behavior to senioritis. I still remember the big poster in the hallway counting down the days to graduation. It was as celebrated as a Christmas advent calendar.

In other words, teachers, parents, friends, students and faculty of Union High School all recognized and honored our graduation. But college commencement is different, toned down, individual.

No teachers have congratulated me on my work here at the University. No juniors have come up to me saying, "I can't wait 'till we rule the campus next year!" As for my parents, I haven't lived with them since high school graduation, so curfews aren't fun to break anymore.

Instead, my stomach and heart are telling me I am graduating from college.

I'm anxious about starting an



Sherry Rainey

internship at *The Oregonian*, but I'm excited about living in Portland. I'm thrilled about not having to take any more tests, but I'm going to miss the teachers

who have touched my life.

I can't wait to get my first job, but I'm sad about moving away from my life-long friends I've met at the University.

As the days get closer and closer to June 15, I eat more Tums and wipe away more tears. Don't get me wrong. I can't wait to graduate. I'm just not sure I'm ready to leave an institution I have been a part of for 18 years of my life.

Part of me wishes there was some final multiple-choice test, or each student had to give a presentation in front of the other graduating seniors proving that he or she can make it in the "real world." Then I would know without a doubt that I have learned all I am supposed to in college.

For many, getting that first job is proof they have succeeded in college. For me, walking across the stage in my graduation cap and gown will be my ceremony demonstrating my success to myself, my family, my friends and my teachers.

Sherry Rainey is community editor for the Emerald.

Womack writes final column before venturing into world

I know for some of you it's been nice not seeing my column in the paper this year.

And, to a very small extent, I have to admit it's been nice not seeing angry letters stuffed in my box every time I walk into the office. But you'll find this column a little lighter than in the past.

So I hope I don't cause any of you liberals on campus to make a jog up to the Emerald, but you might want to just for old times' sake.

After all, I'm graduating.

After two years that flew by faster than most of those annoying skate boarders, I'm off to a town yet to be determined. I admit that I'm going to miss the place a little bit. And, if nothing else, for the Ducks.

Growing up in Portland, I had about as much respect for the Ducks as Rick Neuheisel has for class. But I was forced to change my mind. With two consecutive bowl births by the football team and a trip to the Big Dance by Green's Gang, no one could not love the teams.

I'll never forget the way Jerry Allen's voice cleared the stratosphere as Kenny Wheaton scored. I'll never forget the excitement I had when I made that first step into the open air of the Rose Bowl.

I'll never forget the rush I felt as Washington choked on its second field goal try, and I rushed the field last November in Seattle.

But I'll remember more than



Brian Womack

just sports at the University.

I'll never forget those study groups, during which we would argue as though the plight of the free world

was in our hands.

I'll never forget the food at Taco Time, where I developed a dislike for tacos and burritos.

And I'll never forget those late nights in the library when that woman would come on over the P.A. system and deafen two-thirds of the people on the third floor.

But I think there is room for improvement anywhere, and this campus is no exception. So before I leave, here's my little point for the day.

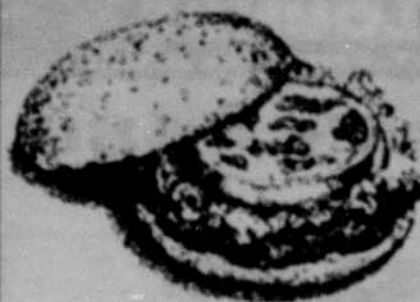
You knew I had to have one.

Remember that people may disagree with you. Oftentimes, on this campus, that means they're on the intellectual right.

If you perceive what they say as disgusting, bigoted or laughable, it does not matter. They have the right to believe it. Never take it away — be they Republicans, conservatives or Christians. That is the very essence of a university, and it's something we can never forget. God bless and take care.

Brian Womack is a community reporter for the Emerald.

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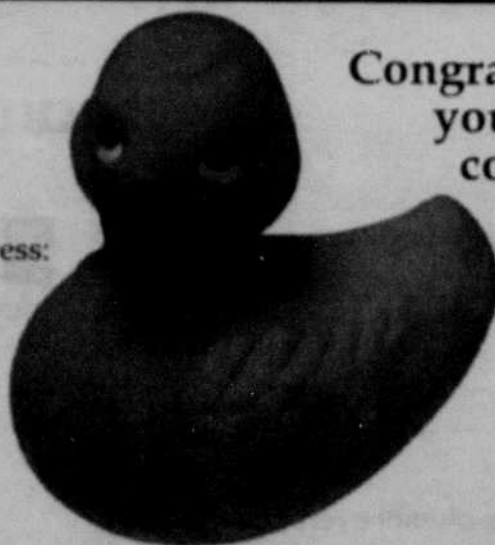
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