

Emerald gives students 'Top Ten' hopes for '96

■ **OUR OPINION:** Students get a nifty list of goodies from the editorial board

Instead of the usual love and hugs, syrupy and tearful goodbyes and attempts at chronicling a mountain of melodramatic memories, we want to put forth something tangible for students to look forward to next year — before summer sweeps away all of this year's graduating seniors.

So, here it is, the *Emerald's* "Top Ten Things We'd Like to See On Campus Next Year."

10 A "new and improved" Mac Court. The new roof is going to be great, but without further renovation, the building will continue to hinder recruiting and even contribute to the involvement in post-season tournament play (can you say NIT?). With the successes of both basketball programs, the school can't afford to leave The Pit in its current condition.

9 More food choices in the EMU. We know the EMU has some major plans in the works for an upgraded Fish-bowl and food court (scheduled unveiling is fall of 1998), but it would be great to make some other type of temporary food offerings available (breakfast anyone?) in the interim.

8 A library and computer-training course offered in conjunction with Writing 121. Getting through college takes more than just being able to sit through classes.

7 An end to the stupid mascot controversy! Donald is this University's beloved mascot thanks to a special agreement between the school and Walt Disney

himself back in the '50s, and Disney should get off the school's case over the trademark stink. If they won't, then the University should export logos without a duck. No Donald, no deal.

6 A kinder, gentler and more helpful financial aid department. Students need better notification of financial status and a bigger room where they can wait shorter periods of time to get information on school financing.

5 More lighting on campus. This would solve many safety issues and probably cut down on the number of bike thefts as well.

4 A Dead Week that is an actual Dead Week — as in no term projects or tests held so students can spend the majority of their time studying for their tests. What a concept!

3 A tuition freeze that uses grant money to offset the sky-high cost of tuition.

2 Instead of just talking about racism on campus, the different ethnicities should continue to look for creative ways to actually get together and communicate with each other.

1 A FRIGGIN' PLACE TO PARK! The University needs to come up with more parking places for STUDENTS who need to commute to campus. Examples could include getting rid of those damn parking meters and making everyone buy a parking permit. The school could also work out an arrangement with the city to allow students to park in those ridiculous two-hour zones without getting a blasted \$10 parking citation every time they pull to the curb and run to class for the day.



Graduation is a season for memories

Writing the *Emerald's* last column of the school year seems to call for something ... momentous.

This is a time of change, of endings and beginnings. A time to reflect on what has been and to plan for what may be.

It would be usual to sum up rather than recap the school year, make a few observations and give thanks or go-to-hells; I'll offer two simple ideas that have not only stood me in good stead, but also played a major role in shaping my life.

The first idea comes from a book I read while still in high school more years ago than I am willing to admit here.

The book was written by Leonardo da Vinci and was a collection of his observations on a myriad of subjects. Of all that he wrote, only one sentence jumped out of the pages and lingers in my mind to this day. He wrote, "The wealth of old age is the memories of youth."

Material things can be acquired and lost, and the wealth of today can become the poverty of tomorrow (or vice versa). Relationships come and go no matter how hard we try to make them last.

People die, move away or simply grow apart. Even faith and beliefs are not always constant. But the one thing that seems to stay with us is our memories. Oh sure, we lose a few now and then, but for every one we lose, others come to take its place.

After reading that sentence, I made up my mind to die a wealthy man, at least by Leonardo's measurement, and consciously set out to collect the most vivid memories I could.

It is still not unusual for me to make seemingly irrational trades of material things and time for experiences, but then I've learned that time will move on no matter what I do, and material things will eventually slip away while others come to replace them. Meanwhile, the memories remain.

The value of memories lies in their use. At times, they can be a comfort in adversity or simply a heartwarming remembrance.

At other times, they can provide us with the information we need to make better decisions or to accomplish more than we thought possible. They are also the foundation from which we view ourselves and the world around us.

The University provides ample opportunities to collect memories, both good and bad, and whether we collect a handful or a bunch, most of them will remain with us until the day we die.

They will become part of the foundation upon which we build our lives. But they are just one tip of a very large iceberg.

Da Vinci was only partly right. He should have said, "The wealth of old age is the memories of a lifetime."

As we get older, the memories don't stop coming. If anything, they have the potential to become even more intense. Graduation, to use Winston Churchill's words, "Is not the begin-

ning of the end, it is the end of a beginning." Opportunities to collect experience, resulting in memories, will continue to surround us. It is up to us to seize them or pass them by.

I've learned that if you seize the moment and it blows up in your face, the long-term damage is usually infinitesimal compared to a lifetime of regretting that you let the opportunity pass you by.

You can learn something from even the worst experiences, but you can't learn a thing if there are no experiences to begin with. I don't regret any of the bad experiences, but I do regret letting a few choice opportunities slip through my fingers.

The second idea is a bit more philosophical. I believe in reincarnation. I won't go into the how or why of how I've come to that belief.

What I want to point out is the view of existence that comes from such a belief and how it ties into the idea of collecting memories.

If you know you have lived before and that you will live in the future, it makes this life part of a continuum, not a one-shot crap shoot where everything depends on getting it right the first time.

The here and now becomes a series of opportunities, not a once-in-a-lifetime proposition. Part of the human psyche is the need to improve, to grow and to "get it right."

Having this longer view of existence gives the freedom to live with the mistakes as well as the triumphs, because they are not the final word. They are simply opportunities to learn and to improve. They provide the experience needed to make better decisions in the future.

Whether we learn from those experiences, whether we make those better decisions, varies from individual to individual. Like classes, some people catch on quickly, others more slowly and some not at all.

As you end this school year consider the possibility that life is a series of memories collected from experiences that came from seizing (or being seized by) opportunities.

The opportunities don't stop with graduation or the end of a school year, and it is up to each of us as individuals to recognize and use them. The experiences will continue to happen to us no matter what we do.

The memories will come and remain. What lessons we learn from them, what use we put those lessons to, is up to us.

May your future hold countless memories, may you use them to make yourself and the world around you a little better, and may you all die wealthy beyond your wildest imaginations.

Larry Haft, a senior majoring in journalism, is a columnist for the *Emerald*. E-mail: lhaft1@gladstone.uoregon.edu

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 1158 EUGENE, OREGON 97402

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. A member of the Associated Press, the Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union.

Unsigned editorials represent the opinion of the Emerald editorial board; signed editorials represent the opinion of the columnist. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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Newspaper: (541) 348-5511; Display Advertising: (541) 348-3712

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