

Oh, those college days

OPINION



Brian Diamond

If college is the best time of a person's life, the pressure is on to live it up while it lasts

"Son, your college years will be the best ones of your life, so enjoy them." No, my father never said this to me — but he could have. There seems to be a general consensus in our society that the best times you will ever have will be in college.

Ten, twenty, even fifty years from now we will still be talking about those "crazy college days." It's nice to think that we are now living the best days of our lives, but at the same time, it's also a little disturbing.

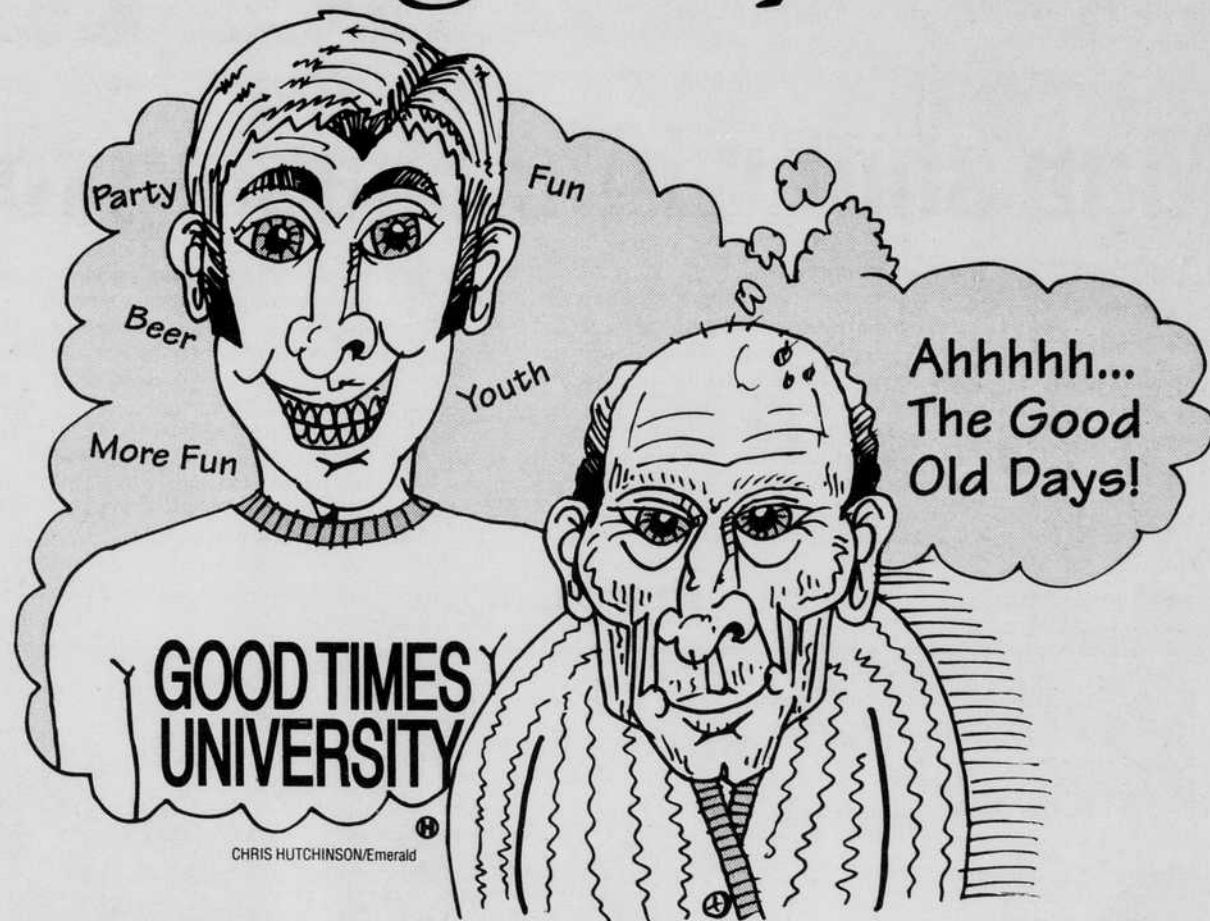
Just think about it for a second. Eighteen years of your life are dedicated to getting ready for college. You suffer through the cruelty of elementary school, the confusion of middle school and the monotony of high school all so one day you can reach the golden college years.

But college itself is only a four-year experience, five or six if you're really lucky. And just ask anyone who has been at college a while; those years fly by fast. If there wasn't life after college, there wouldn't be much of a problem. Our whole life would be one big build up for our college years — the reward of our labors.

However, there is life after college, and this raises some problems. Because if a person's college years are the best years that person ever will have, the implication is that it's all down hill from there.

With the average life span at about 75 years, that leaves 50 years of post-college let down. Eighteen years of build up, four short years of happiness and then 50 years to reflect on the "good old days." With only four years of our lives designated as "the best years," the way we spend our college days is a matter of great importance.

For example, when I first entered the University, I was baffled by the fact that students in lecture classes could never sit through the last five minutes of a professor's lecture. As soon as there was any sign the lecture was winding down, the sound of a hundred students shutting



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

binders, stashing away papers and zipping up backpacks overpowered the professor's voice.

I was confused at first, but I soon figured out what was going on. These students know all too well that they are supposed to be experiencing the best times of their lives. How can the best times of someone's life be spent in an overcrowded lecture hall? Every minute not spent on zany college fun is a wasted minute.

That puts a lot of pressure on the average college student. It shouldn't be surprising that many college students suffer from stress-related ailments. With only four years to collect enough stories to tell for the next 50 years, who wouldn't be stressed out?

You can well imagine the chagrin

of the poor soul who graduates from college only to realize that it wasn't the best time of his or her life. It would be like... sex without an orgasm. All that build up for nothing, and when it's over, you're left with the sinking feeling that you just wasted a whole lot of money.

I remember one time a professor of mine canceled Friday's class. Most of the class was elated with the news, but the person next to me was noticeably disturbed.

"What a gyp! We're paying money for these classes," he complained.

He was wrong. We're paying money for a promise. A promise that these will be the years we forever cherish, and if we miss out now, we'll have the rest of our lives to regret it.

Making these years the best of our lives won't be easy. There are plenty of obstacles: classes, exams and thesis projects just to name a few. But it is our responsibility to get through these setbacks and live up to society's expectations.

As for myself, I'm doing my part every day to try and live up to the standard that has been set — to fulfill the vision that these days be the best of my life. The only question I have is, if I can't remember where I was last night, how will I remember my college days ten years from now?

Brian Diamond, a sophomore majoring in Journalism, is an editorial editor for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the paper.

LETTERS

For education's sake

Why would the EMU Board of Directors want to eliminate Footnotes? Footnotes is a self-supporting (meaning no student fees are needed) non-profit organization that serves a wide spectrum of the student body. I can think of several organizations which do need student fees to survive and which only reach a narrow section of the student body.

It does not make sense to eliminate an organization which helps one gain an education and serves the general student body as opposed to an organization which causes student fees to rise and only serves a select few.

I used Footnotes throughout my undergraduate studies. Footnotes helped me to organize my own notes and allowed me to compare what I understood a professor stated to what a note taker understood the professor to mean. Footnotes is a good example of an educational resource that benefits a student's understanding of the often complex lectures professors give.

Lately, the University of Oregon has done an increasingly good job of hiring a

diverse faculty. However, with the diversity often comes professors where English is their second language. It is difficult enough to understand economics, but to understand economics taught by a teacher who doesn't speak perfect English is impossible.

And what about the 10 percent of the student body who have English as their second language. Imagine how difficult it is for them to understand physics in a language they still don't completely understand.

Footnotes is run by a student board of directors and employs 25 to 30 students to run its office. I worked at Footnotes while an undergraduate earning a needed supplemental income. Further, as a law student I sat on the board of directors for Footnotes and gained immeasurable business experience learning how to run a business.

Footnotes still provides learning and employment opportunities to the University student body. In the past years, Footnotes has also provided community services such as care baskets and offering \$1,000 scholarships to worthy students.

Most students come to the University

with a goal to gain an education. It would be a great travesty to eliminate an organization which actually benefits one's education.

Jason M. Anderson
Medford

Protect wages

Once again Oregon's lowest paid workers are under attack. In direct defiance of voters who overwhelmingly supported the increase in Oregon's minimum wage, anti-Labor Commissioner Jack Roberts and the Oregon Restaurant Association (ORA), are seeking legislation that will subvert the gains made by minimum wage workers.

One of the greediest attacks is proposed legislation that would allow "tip credit" for waiters and waitress. Simply put, "tip credit" allows restaurant owners to count some of their workers tips toward their hourly wage. This means that the restaurant owners would be allowed to pay less than minimum wage, claiming tips make up the difference.

Contrary to claims by the ORA, waiting tables is not a high paying job. Even at the present minimum wage of \$5.50 an hour

plus tips, many workers find themselves in poverty-level jobs, usually without benefits. Secondly, tips are arbitrary on the part of the restaurant patron and can vary for a multitude of reasons.

Even financial institutions do not consider tips a reliable source of income and will afford credit to tipped workers based only on their minimum wage income. "Tip credit" will mean a pay cut for restaurant workers who deserve a living wage just like any one else.

The food and beverage industry should not be exempt from paying Oregon's minimum wage. Likewise, you the restaurant patron should not be expected to subsidize the restaurant owner's payroll with your tips.

When the voters of Oregon passed Measure 36, we did so with the intent to improve the quality of life for our state's lowest paid workers. Let your state representative and state senator know that you are opposed to greedy, self-serving schemes like "tip credit." Protect minimum wage for all workers.

Lee D. Lasse
Springfield