

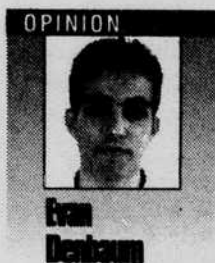
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# OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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## Dazed & Confused



Recent events, including the ASUO elections, have this columnist reaching for some meaning in the universe

I have a little problem with honesty: I tell the truth too much of the time. So when a friend of mine asked how I was doing the other day, instead of just saying, "Fine," I told him this story:

I was up late, writing a paper at the last minute as I too often do, when I heard a loud "Thump!" from above, then another "Thump!" accompanied by a high-pitched wail from outside my dorm room window. Morbid fascination coupled with an acute case of procrastination soon pushed me out my door and toward the cry.

Barefoot, I stepped outside onto cold, blood-stained concrete. Before me lay a thoroughly battered college-age kid, sprawled on his stomach. He was still conscious, shrieking like a wounded animal and writhing on the pavement. My eyes darted about, looking for the attacker, but I saw only the familiar faces of appalled dormmates.

The hall R.A. was deep in conversation with a pair of kids whom I recognized as the inhabitants of the third floor's corner room. I inched closer to listen, and could not believe what I overheard.

The truth was, no one had beaten the boy. He had taken seven hits of acid, and then in a state of delirium, dove head-first out the third floor window. The first "thump" was him landing on the overhead rain porch between the first and second floors. The second "thump" was him getting up and diving again to the concrete below.

The retelling of events was interrupted by the flashing lights of an OPS vehicle arriving on the scene. To my total amazement, as soon as the officers began to approach the battered boy, he staggered to his feet and ran from them as best he could. The officers, at a brisk walk, followed him through the propped-open Schafer Hall door and into the lounge.

Now, if you walk into the Schafer Hall lounge, you'll undoubtedly notice a long, foreboding hallway that extends out from

the rear of the room. It's well-lit with strangely symmetrical banks of fluorescents on the ceiling — one after another — leading toward another corridor that snakes off to the right.

The thing is, if you move closer to get a better look, you will realize that it is only a painting of a hallway on the room's rear wall, one that would make M.C. Escher proud.

Unfortunately, the thoroughly drugged boy was in no condition to come to this realization. He did take a cock-eyed glance at the corridor, recognizing that it looked a little too out of place — a little too geometric.

The OPS officers, however, were bearing down on him, so he ran full speed toward the illusory hallway and tried to take the road less traveled. Of course, he didn't defy reality, and slammed head-first into the painted wall.

OPS ushered him away, and I went back to finish my homework. The end.

Remember the question my friend asked me? It was: "How am I doing?" Well, I suppose the truncated answer is that right now I feel like I just took seven hits of acid and ran into a wall, or at least witnessed it happening. Totally out of it, totally desensitized, totally apathetic.

Maybe I feel out of it because of the gorgeous weather this time of year. I've been rained on so much that the wetness has soaked into my layered clothes, through my skin and into my soul, warping my very identity. Now, I'm high on seven hits of sunlight.

Maybe I feel desensitized because students are playing Superman out of my hall's third-floor window, while others, some Oregonians, have recently attempted to fly, hailing a comet as their source of salvation.

Maybe I feel apathetic because I took the ASUO elections very seriously — researching the candidates, weighing the issues and promptly voting, only to find it

had been made into a mockery through the Miner/Unger controversy.

Obviously, others share my apathy, because only eight percent of the student body voted in the election when a 20 percent turnout was expected. Let's not lose sight of the fact that 20 percent is also a remarkably small number. It only appears large when framed with alarmingly small statistics.

It's also impossible to look beyond the parallels between the apathy toward the ASUO elections and the last presidential election, which was also marred with campaign violations. Still, I must say that I feel an absolute responsibility to vote, and it's not because MTV is making voting trendy.

The twist is that I no longer vote for the candidate I believe will accomplish his or her goals, but for the candidate who is at least talking about issues that matter most to me. The same thing held true in the ASUO elections last year. I voted Scotten/Banfield, not because I expected them to actually succeed in freezing tuition, but because their number one priority was mine as well.

But I'm just answering a friend's question a little too honestly and doing a lot of complaining in the process. Others, like OSPIRG, by cleaning our rivers; and Saferide, by helping keep young women out of harm's way, are acting instead of complaining — making a difference.

Then again, pending legislation is attempting to take away our right to choose to fund those incidental fee programs. It's just another reason to bang your head against the wall (or slam face-first into one), and slip into a state of delirious, desensitized apathy.

*Evan Denbaum, a sophomore majoring in journalism, is a columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper. E-mail: squire@gladstone.uoregon.edu*

All thumbs



**U2 Tickets**  
Eight thousand tickets remain unsold for the group's concert next week at Autzen Stadium. Maybe this will serve as a lesson that paying more than \$30 for a concert ticket is more than most people can afford, even for a megaband like U2.

**The Oregon House**  
In somewhat of a surprise move, the Oregon House voted 40-20 in favor of a bill that would ban job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. It is almost embarrassing that this bill isn't already a law.



**The Republic of Texas**  
The Texas separatist movement is trying to establish a sovereign nation by taking two people hostage. They've even been talking about another Waco. The last thing we need right now is another senseless bloodbath.

**Walport Middle School**  
An over-zealous middle school teacher told her class they could no longer refer to their fellow classmate Abby Phillips by her nickname "Boo" because it was a slang term for marijuana. While few have ever heard the word "boo" used to describe any drug, Abby now faces constant taunting from her classmates.

The Drawing Board



### LETTERS

#### Award unearned

The last thing I expected to see while flipping through the *ODE*'s special edition on Earth Day was the word Hyundai. Much less that they might have received an "environmental award" for anything, like combatting erosion (*ODE*, April 22). They only investigated erosion more thoroughly after they were fined, as if it is not a crime to build on a sensitive wetlands area in the first place.

However, this is almost beside the main horror being committed here. The crime is that we the taxpayers had little say in this back room

political/business venture. The city of Eugene has kindly given a gift of close to \$25 million to the plant's costs (while making cuts in social services and education due to Measure 47) and a virtual open door to local resources (including this region's cheap, fresh water).

This deal is thought to bring big business revenue and employment to the Willamette Valley, but along with that comes heavier traffic and, inevitably, more development sprawling out West 11th Avenue. The real kicker is that this proposed site will house a semi-conductor manufacturing plant, which is the most toxic factory known to hu-

mankind.

Eugene taxpayers will pay for Hyundai's corporate subsidies, and we will also pay for the cost of environmental contamination and wetlands destruction.

Will we have to wait until Hyundai is fined for pollution before they fully investigate their ecological impact? I, for one, am not willing to wait for their chemicals to be proven guilty; I want to prevent them from even having a chance. That would be a worthy cause for an environmental award.

Rachel Knudson  
Alumna