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If mom could only see them now...

Free from mom's rules, too many college students celebrate freedom with substance abuse and rebellion

Mother's Day passes on a college campus. It is celebrated by students blasting music that reaches its loudest levels late at night, abusing substances silly and staying out until dawn. What is the cause of this orgiastic rebellion?

The answer is that this year, Mommy is far, far away — at least far enough to have had to let go. Now without a leash, all the sons and daughters can rebel against every rule ever imposed upon them. Now that they are "adults," they can make their own decisions.

Many undergraduates, especially as freshmen, are freedom virgins, having leaped into college straight from their mothers' laps. And as each weekend approaches, they begin to squirm with anticipation, eager to do everything they were never allowed to do before. Even this far into the school year the feelings don't fade — for this is not typically a phase that wears off, but a way of life honed on fraternity training grounds.

Now please do not misunderstand; I know not everyone fits this mold. As the days grow longer and hotter, a weekend binge can be a way to cut loose; blasting music and partying all night can be a release from the minutiae of everyday, academic life. But if you did any "celebrating"

over the Mother's Day weekend, ask yourself if beneath the motivations for your actions there wasn't a certain sense of liberation.

I ask you, because I cannot answer myself. You see, I was never shielded or sheltered growing up as a child. By my teenage years I had near-complete independence. If there was somewhere I wanted to go, I went there, regardless of the



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

time of night. I stayed out until I got bored or tired, then I happily returned home. Because of this freedom to choose, I never felt the uncontrollable urge to stay out until three in the morning, just because of a midnight curfew.

Even Daddy's liquor cabinet wasn't ever locked to me. Once, I did decide to get drunk out of curiosity. I ended up hating the taste of alcohol and hating losing control of myself even more. I must admit, though, if the whiskey I took from that cabinet had been off-limits, the rebellious act itself would have probably been enough to substantially sweeten that bottle's bitter taste.

You have to understand that my problem with this rebellion, and alcohol especially, stems from seeing too many wonderful people, whom I care about deeply drown in a drink; good-hearted, smart, witty people who through a shot of 90-proof may lose their inhibitions, but also their identity.

Not too long ago, I received a phone call. It was from a guy whom I met at a birthday party the week before. At that party, I spent a good deal of time talk-

ing with him and found him to be a bright, genuine and sympathetic person. Now, on the phone he told me a few friends and himself were getting together that afternoon, and he wanted to know if I cared to join them.

I asked where his house was, and because it was a mere couple of blocks away, I agreed wholeheartedly. When I arrived, I was greeted by a group of guys, diversified in ethnicity and appearances, ranging from one stout, crew-cut individual to a pierced, tattooed hippy.

The peoples' personalities seemed equally diverse, and I thoroughly enjoyed trying to get to know them better. Humorously, I bonded best with one of the larger, more intimidating individuals, through a common love for Star Trek.

We continued talking for some time, then, six people I hadn't yet seen descended from the second story of the house. They walked very proudly, and had an air of authority about them. One carried a banner of some sort in his hand.

When he reached the base of the stairs, he unfurled the ban-

ner, revealing Greek lettering! He raised it above his head, and everyone began to clap in unison, first slowly, then faster and faster. They proceeded to do a number of different rituals. When the rituals ceased, those I had been talking to had undergone a distinct transformation. In the presence of these new figures, mannerisms changed from that of endearing Star Trek fans to beer-guzzling, "frat-boy" stereotypes.

I tried for a while to stick it out, but with each drink, the individuals whom I enjoyed getting to know earlier slowly slipped away. I left the fraternity ambush, a little disgusted and a lot disappointed.

So, in honor of last Sunday's significance, some, with music blaring in the background, may chug one for Mom. I, instead, will raise an empty glass, and propose a toast: "Thanks Mom, for freedom then, and perspective now."

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

OPINION



Evan A. Denbaum

LETTERS

Misrepresented group

We, the All Women's Book Group, feel that we were not adequately represented in the May 2 article in the *Emerald* entitled "Student initiated discussion course raises racial concerns."

First, our main focus is gender, not race. We address the issues raised by authors about the challenges of being a woman and how those issues are compounded by race, class, sexuality, religion and any "other" as defined by mainstream society. This group was spawned out of the desire to end

the complacency that was found in the classroom.

The distortion of the group's purpose has been caused by bad journalism and untrue facts. The overall portrayal of the group in the article was a monstrous misrepresentation of our goals: to unite as women to further our knowledge, increase our understanding and better our expression on issues concerning women in society.

The issue of whether we are ten "white women from the suburbs" or any other class, race, sexuality or religion is irrelevant. This per-

petuates the labeling that plagues our society and causes women to be divided.

If the point of the article was to highlight the improbability of anything emerging from the discussions of a group of white women from the suburbs, it succeeded. However, the reality is, every week we get together to discuss literature by women that is focused on combatting the pervasive gender stereotypes that structure our lives.

Amy Williams
English

Timely problem

Something is wrong on campus all right, as your April 25 editorial on dry fraternities suggests. But alcohol in houses is only one issue. Going dry as a campus is the right thing to do. The people who feel they must drink themselves into another galaxy are the same people who feel Steve Prefontaine is a modern hero. He's dead because he abused drugs and alcohol. How difficult is it to understand that concept?

Alcohol is a problem. Men who join fraternities for the "social as-

pect" of drinking themselves to oblivion are not intelligent enough to know they have any options. These "men" belong in first grade, not a university. And the decision to go dry by the year 2000 is ridiculous. The problem is now. If we wait three years, another generation of alcoholics might develop, and society will pay for their mistakes. Go dry now. Why wait three years? This campus can be part of a solution or continue to be part of the problem.

Judy Harper
Accountant
Education

Quoted

"Whatever their motivation, the fact that they pursued vigorous trade with the Third Reich had the clear effect of supporting and prolonging Nazi Germany's capacity to wage war."

Stuart Eizenstat, the author of a U.S. report on Switzerland's behavior during World War II

"The way I see it, when your car is stolen, you repossess it."

Former U.S. congressman Robert Dornan (R-Cal.), on his ongoing protest over his election loss to a Hispanic woman last fall. He believes Mexican immigrants, who were not yet citizens, voted against him

"They're probably wondering what the next step is for them. I'm concerned about them."

Former Heaven's Gate member Dick Joslyn, on the fate of the few remaining members of the cult

"Right now, it's probably not worth it — considering the flack and all. It's gotten too personal."

Talk-show host Jerry Springer, on quitting a new job at a Chicago TV station after widespread protest

"I had all the windows shut tight, and I realized that I could actually hear the lyrics. It felt like I was being forced to attend the concert."

Eugene resident Cindy Manning, on the far reach of the May 6 U2 concert in Autzen Stadium, as quoted in the May 8 Register-Guard

"We look to be a United States of Africa."

Rebel leader Laurent Desire Kabila, on his possible new government in Zaire

"It's really a wonderful house. I definitely think it will sell rather quickly."

Real estate agent Bob Bennion, on the Seattle home owned by Courtney Love, which is currently on the market. Her husband Kurt Cobain killed himself there

"I'm like, 'Argh! I just can't decide!'"

18-year-old Portland resident Jon Cowan, on choosing between enrollment at two prestigious liberal arts colleges, as quoted in the May 1 Oregonian

"I never used to run, and I started running to train for it like two months before it. So I just wanted to not embarrass myself and to run the whole way."

Supermodel Cindy Crawford on participating in the 5-kilometer Revlon Run/Walk for Women in Los Angeles