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OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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End-of-the-year crunch

The last few weeks of the term may be a challenge, but they are also an opportunity for students to push themselves to the limit

Exercises 17-20 in the green packet. An 8-10 page Communication History paper. A 15-20 page Creative Writing short story. This column. Not to mention upcoming finals.

I'm sure every student reading this has his or her own version of the list above, some far worse than mine. Oh yes, that time of year is here again, time to be tossed about in an academic tornado that was but a breeze during the first week of classes.

And if you're like me, you look forward to the stress and strain in some twisted way. You put on a plastic smile, as the third professor of the day assigns so much work he must think his class is the only one you're taking. You just grin that masochistic grin and bear the brunt of the term's load.



Evan A. Denbaum

Maybe I enjoy this time of year because it acknowledges that the end is near — that soon "crunch time" will conclude — grinding out final grades and spitting me into summer's sun. Then all those facts and figures crammed in my brain can seep away with the sweat from the heat.

Maybe I enjoy this time of year because of its little rituals — 22-hour dorm quiet hours during Dead Week, being broken only by the sound of the 10 p.m. screamers.

Maybe I enjoy this time of year because it pushes my limits — the workload and exams testing not just my intelligence, but my character. I look back laughingly at the 61 straight hours I spent in front of a computer screen, on four mugs of espresso, in order to meet my final paper deadline for a class aptly nicknamed "Info Hell." When that paper was done, it was 104 pages long and quality work I could be proud of.

And while I only got a B on that mammoth assignment, it's a B I'll take over all the As that I've ever received. I'll take that B because I worked harder for it than I had ever worked before, and after that experience — after pumping out 104 pages — I knew no assignment would ever feel insurmountable again.

And even now, as new massive projects threaten to crush my will under their

weight, I look forward to having new little stories to tell and laugh about. But until then, while I'm still feeling so much pressure that it's anything but funny, I try to take solace in the little things.

Now, I don't mean "stop and smell the roses." Roses are obvious — bold and beautiful. No, I mean the truly little things, like the rasp in your best friend's voice, which only you'd notice, or that one light in the hallway that requires flipping the switch up to turn off.

Those things, unlike the wave of work, are life's constants, and that's where comfort from the confusion hides. I realize that idea may make sense to some, and simply sound like a fortune cookie to others. To me, it means that when the assignments add up, and deadlines begin to loom large, the sound or sight of something that transcends the term's temporary woes can make all the difference. Sometimes a 10-minute trip to the river is enough to give me a better sense of balance.

So as that academic noose tightens this term, try to see it as an opportunity to push yourself a little harder. And if you find yourself folding under the weight of the work and exams, think about a quote by poet Guillaume Apollinaire that's always stuck with me:

"Come to the edge, he said.

They said: We are afraid.

Come to the edge, he said.

They came.

He pushed them... and they flew."

Or, if that doesn't do it for you, try this little ditty that's been passed down in my family for generations:

"Today is the tomorrow that worried you yesterday, and all is well."

Evan A. Denbaum is a columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper. E-mail: squire@gladstone.uoregon.edu



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

Quoted

"I had no idea it was Alcohol Awareness Week on campus."

Tony Sustare, owner of Taylor's bar, when asked about last week's event, as quoted in the Emerald

"We have at last put the brakes on the downward spiral of higher education in this state."

State Rep. Cynthia Wooten (D-Eugene), after the Oregon House passed a \$1.9 billion higher education bill

"I'm going to try to get the most out of my life. Thanks for giving it back to me."

Seventeen-year-old Dylan Burke, in a message to firefighters who rescued him from a Portland warehouse fire May 23

"We used to have one of the most famous and well-respected parks systems in the United States. We were the envy of the country."

Lane County Commissioner Peter Sorenson, on the decline of Oregon state parks, in the May 25 Register-Guard

"Journalists like to portray me as a madman.... It's not that. It's just hard work."

Actor Michael Richards, who plays Kramer on "Seinfeld," on his work ethic

"No class has missed more school, but perhaps no class has learned more this spring."

Mark Sanford, superintendent of Grand Forks, N.D., schools, in his address to the graduating classes of the flood-ravaged area

"He's not the kind of person you would picture jumping off a cliff, but I can see where he could rise to the occasion to help someone."

Ted Lopuszynski, friend of John Gray, after he discovered his friend was severely injured trying to rescue a boy trapped on a Cannon Beach cliff.

LETTERS

Misplaced anger

I am writing in response to Amie Corbin's letter in the May 22 Emerald regarding the Take Back the Night march. I can appreciate her frustration and hurt about men being "segregated" from the march. In fact, every year the planning committee deals with the same issue that Ms. Corbin addresses. Every year, the committee decides by consensus that men should show their support by marching separately for women.

The march is not about "segregation." The march, instead, is about women coming together to empower themselves. The "Take Back the Night" march began in Europe in 1976 when 100,000 women wanted to reclaim the night for all women, which was taken away due to violence against women. The movement then came to the U.S. in 1978 when 5,000

women marched in San Francisco.

The march symbolizes solidarity among women claiming to end violence against women. In order to do this effectively, women need to march on their own for themselves. Ms. Corbin has a point in that ending violence against women takes the commitment of both men and women.

There are many ways for men and women to demonstrate this commitment. The "Take Back the Night" march is not and should not be the only way to address issues of violence against women.

I respect Ms. Corbin's decision about not participating in the march, however I hope that she will explore different ways to address her concerns rather than misplacing her anger onto the march.

Sho Shigeoka
ASUO Women's Center
Director

Women's night

The ASUO Women's Center annually sponsors the Take Back the Night March to protest violence against women. The goals of the march are to empower women and give everyone a chance to speak out against violence and oppression.

As this year's co-coordinator, I was dismayed to read Amie Corbin's letter (May 22, ODE) complaining about men marching behind the women during the event. The decision was made by a committee of students, both men and women, and it was not an easy decision. The group felt it was the correct one.

We all agree that we need the support of both men and women. Men are asked to march in the back to demonstrate that women should be able to walk at night unescorted and unafraid.

We realize that this is not a reality for many women in our community, but this is the one night of the year when women can march together, strong and unified, without men protecting them and without fear.

We hope that men will participate and show their support because violence against women is a universal problem that men and women have to combat together. Men should be furious about violence perpetrated on their wives, mothers, girlfriends, daughters and friends.

If you would like to learn more about ways men can stop the violence, I invite you to attend "Football, Feminism, and Other Contemporary Contradictions," tonight at 7 p.m., 150 Columbia.

Jessica Frahs
ASUO Women's Center
Events Coordinator