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Experiences leave senior enraged

How to summarize three years of University education? Three long, painful years. Most of the defining moments are best not shared with a reading public that includes parents and officers of the law.

The burning sore at the center of the festering wound that has been college has to be this cursed job, however. Nothing — not Info Hell, not my thesis, not even watching the sun rise too many times — defines the masochistic joy I've extracted from Eugene better than my year as editorial editor.

By far, the worst part of this job — or any job — is the people. The editorial page acts as a lightning rod for every crackpot, lunatic and right-wing hack in the Lane County area, and I have to sit back and take their abuse. After all, the Emerald editorial board doesn't believe in launching broadsided attacks at the idiots of the world.

So I've saved it up and drank a lot of beer. Beer and bitterness. Slowly fermenting as my stomach and liver race to see which will give out first. Until now.

Now I fire back. The following are the people who have left me seething with rage over the last year:

Officer Jed Keever: My year started off on a wonderful note, with an angry police officer storming into the Emerald office, railing against my stressed-out boss and blaming the student paper for every incoming freshman girl who refused to report a rape because she was afraid of the Eugene police. All because we had the gall to suggest the police should tell their side of the June 1 story. I learned something valuable from this incident: big men with guns know how to shout, but they aren't capable of writing a letter to the editor.

Mark Hemingway: Speaking of

big men storming into the office. Hemingway was upset we had the gall to suggest he might have been wrong about something. For all his brilliant rhetoric, the only thing he managed to convince me or anyone else is that big men without guns are also incapable of writing letters to the editor. Hemingway got his revenge for our daring to challenge his ego; he printed excerpts from my web journal. Oh no! Something I left on the web for the world to read, and he wasted Commentator paper and ink to reprint it. Then he dropped his pants during the ASUO debate, which I understand is the most coherent argument he's made in his time at the University.

Jonathan Collegio: Yet another angry Commentator hack. This one was peeved that we suggested free trade without labor or environmental restrictions might lead to exploitation of unprotected labor in the Third World and loss of jobs at home. Of course, studies have demonstrated both to be true, but Collegio, in a letter that started a storm of free-trade correspondence, insisted the opinion meant no one at the Emerald had ever taken an economics class. Well, I've taken two, and that rotted my brain quite enough, thank you.

OSPIRG: Lest you think only Republicans annoy me. I voted for OSPIRG and have no problem with their program. But I also wasn't surprised when their ballot measure went down in flames. OSPIRG was irritating. As near as I could tell, a big chunk of their elusive budget went into toner and paper for letters to the editor; do they offer credit in Letter Writing 101 down there? A person can only type so many letters about pesticides and hunger before his head starts to spin. Too many fliers and street corner volunteers and too little visible campus activism added up to victory for the questionably named "Honesty" campaign, a group that should also make this list.

Barry Williams: Every time I get a letter from Williams, Lane County

Oregon Citizens Alliance leader, he reminds me that I shouldn't print his phone number or address because he gets nasty threats from liberals. Perhaps if Williams would stop spouting bigoted hatred in which he uses religious propaganda to justify discriminating against 10 percent of the population, he wouldn't get so many nasty threats. Hate breeds hate, Barry.

Luis Verano: I have no problem with Verano himself; I'm sure he's a nice, well-meaning guy. But Verano's concern with the potential squirrel starvation on campus, which came at the same time as we decided to have a little fun and run an edit on blue M&M's, drew a barrage of criticism about Emerald coverage. In particular, people lamented that the opinion page wasn't dedicated to a more substantive matter. Where were these people when we wrote about free trade, the International Monetary Fund, media ownership, a range of Supreme Court decisions, welfare, timber, corporate mergers and the high-tech takeover of public education? Our editorial on arms sales won eighth place in the nationwide Hearst competition for opinion writing. But squirrels and candy will be what people remember. Oh well. I get paid either way.

On the other hand, there were a few people who managed to salvage the year. I had the help of four talented columnists, a very skilled illustrator, two dedicated (if cynical) page designers and an extremely supportive editor in chief, Sarah Kickler. Poor Sarah had to sit through every tedious editorial board meeting, read every leftist diatribe and handle a sizable percentage of the feedback from angry readers (some of whom probably had a very hard time with the bigger words).

I've tried to buy Sarah a beer, but she has some aversion to the stuff. So I think I'll head home, pull two pints out of one of the taps on my fridge and enjoy forgetting about my time in Eugene.

ODE SENIOR



Mike Schmierbach

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