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PERSPECTIVES

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All talk

It's time for the University to realize that its influence on student behavior is limited

It's not spring just yet, but it's close enough that we can see it from beneath the piles of textbooks and term papers that makes dead week so special.

Spring, as you all know, means we get to go outside and play. For some people, it also means that they get to go outside and party.

And that's what has some people worried.

Last week, the Campus Community Relations Task Force met to outline riot prevention strategies for next year. Also discussed were ways to keep local parties, which are traditionally more plentiful when the weather is warmer, in check.

Ever since Halloween 1998, there have been a number of high-profile meetings, press releases and brainstorming sessions about how to stop off-campus parties from getting out of hand.

Each of these meetings has yielded pretty much the same crop of solutions: provide more alternative activities, educate students about responsible drinking and improve student-police relations.

There is also talk of "de-glamorizing" the riots. But how much less glamorous can a face full of tear gas and a \$150 minor in possession citation be? Often when people speak of "de-glamorizing" something, what they actually mean is that we should simply not talk about it at all and hope like hell that it goes away.

Yet despite all the good intentions, parties continue to spill out onto the streets and people continue to have run-ins with the Eugene police that are decidedly less than smooth.

Unfortunately, the tactics employed thus far to make Eugene a riot-free college town smack of uselessness.

The Office of Student Life recently conducted a survey asking students how they felt about the way the police

handled the Halloween situation and how they would respond to police commands in a similar situation.

This survey, while it might seem like a good idea on paper, is just another example of the University administration spinning its wheels and trying to look busy.

What possible influence could this survey have on the way students will conduct themselves this spring, next Halloween or any other time of the year? Oddly, the survey queried only first-year students residing in the residence halls, a group that made up a miniscule portion — if any — of the people involved in the Halloween incident.

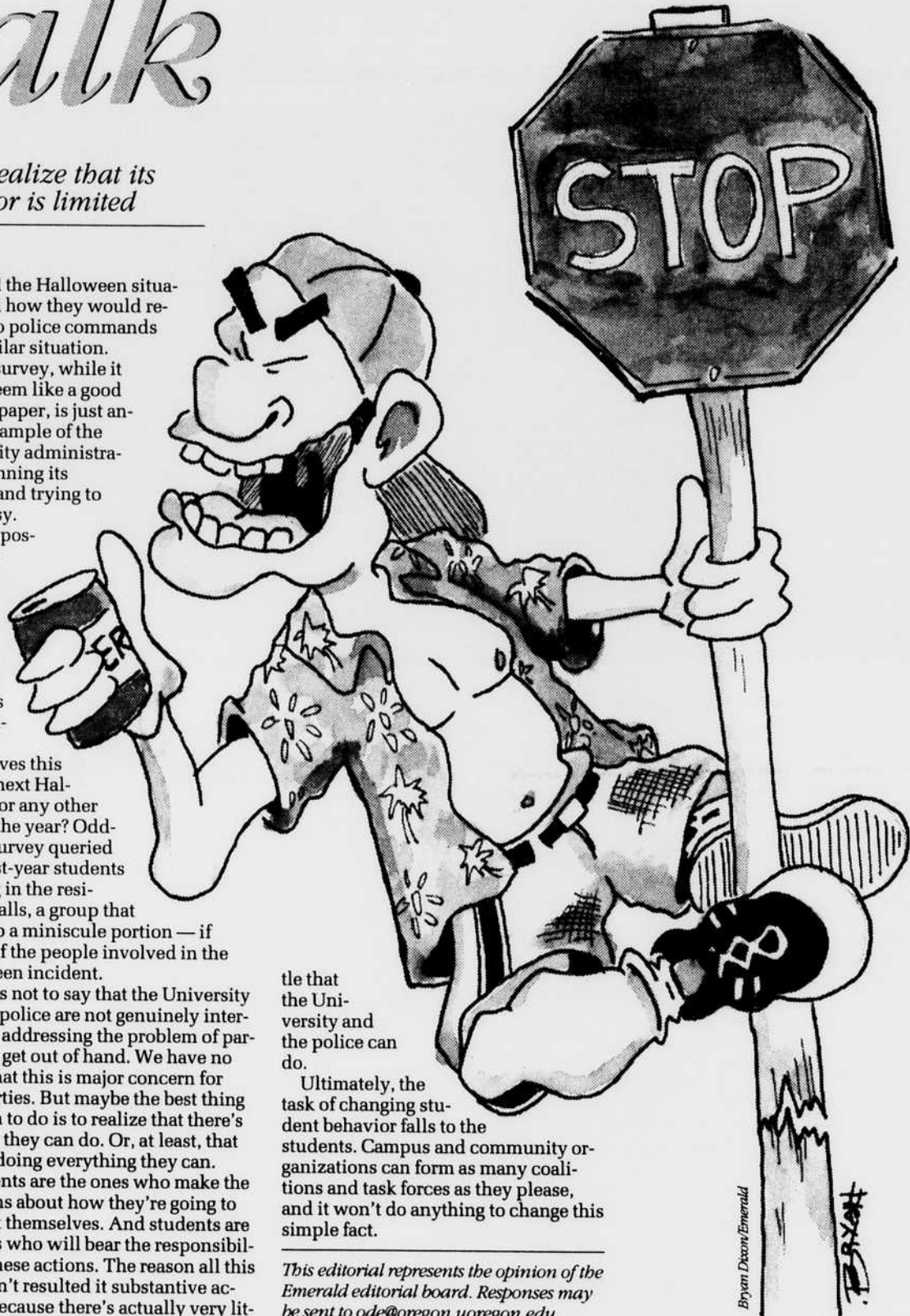
This is not to say that the University and the police are not genuinely interested in addressing the problem of parties that get out of hand. We have no doubt that this is major concern for both parties. But maybe the best thing for them to do is to realize that there's not a lot they can do. Or, at least, that they're doing everything they can.

Students are the ones who make the decisions about how they're going to conduct themselves. And students are the ones who will bear the responsibility for these actions. The reason all this talk hasn't resulted in substantive action is because there's actually very lit-

tle that the University and the police can do.

Ultimately, the task of changing student behavior falls to the students. Campus and community organizations can form as many coalitions and task forces as they please, and it won't do anything to change this simple fact.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.



QUOTED

"I have no doubt that when future generations look back at the best of America in the 20th century, they will think of the 'Yankee Clipper' and all that he achieved."

— President Clinton on Joe DiMaggio. DiMaggio passed away Monday morning.

"Anyone who goes up against Kenneth Starr ought to be worried."

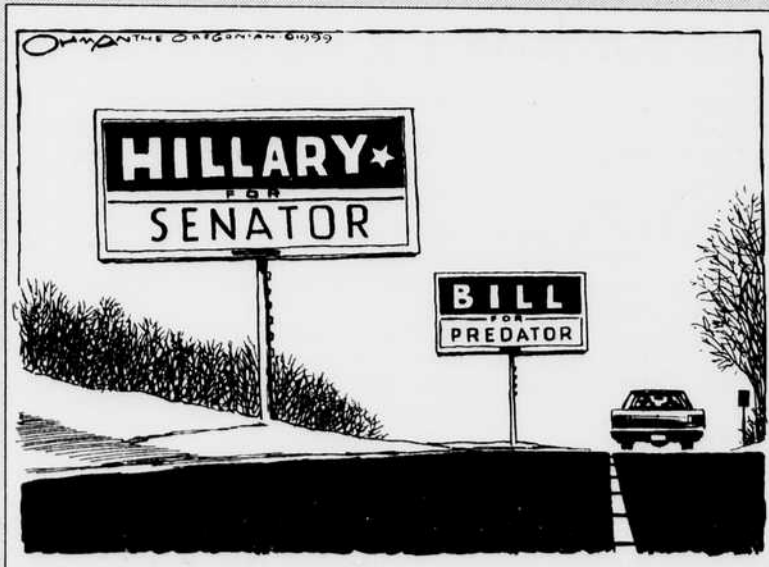
— Susan MacDougal, whose trial for obstruction of justice in Starr's Whitewater investigation began Monday.

"I see it as fiction. I see it as fable, fantasy, farce and fairy tale. I see almost no bearing on reality."

— Linda Tripp on the depiction of her conversations with Monica Lewinsky as presented in Lewinsky's book.

"When Hillary was angry, you didn't always know it right away — a calculated chill would descend over time."

— Former White House aide George Stepenopoulos in his new book about his years with Clinton.



LETTERS POLICY

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