

# PERSPECTIVES

## Bittersweet memories

As graduation approaches, columnist remembers his time at the University



I am about to get nostalgic again. When you get this close to the end, you begin to realize the inevitable. After today, I'll have only three columns left before I graduate. Some of you probably can't wait to get rid of me. After all, it's tough to handle a voice of reason in a city so set on being weird, irrational and completely void of common sense.

Eugene, as beautiful as she may be during the late spring, summer and early fall, is a city like no other. And while my experiences at the University are treasures, I will be damn happy to escape Eugene unscathed after a five-year tour of duty.

I've had friends and relatives who have returned from wars in Germany, the South Pacific, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf. And those veterans would be hard-pressed to look more haggard than I do when I return to my parents home after too much wintertime in Eugene.

Comments about my lack of sleep, dark circles under my eyes, lack of general coloring and expanding gut fly from my mom's mouth. I try to explain the lifestyle down here to her, but to an outsider it makes little sense.

So now I present to you, the readers, the things that I will probably never see, experience, or be forced to deal with after I graduate from college. By the time you reach the end of this column, you will have a published record you can show future spouses, employers and your kids when they wonder why you're just a little bit different than the average person.

Once I graduate from the University, I will never be forced to share the road with the local Eugene drivers who are the slowest (especially in the left lane on the freeway), most careless, non-signaling and non-aggressive drivers on the West Coast.

I will never have to hear about some "cause-heads" holding a rally to hinder the necessary downing of a campus oak tree so it doesn't fall on a group of students. I can't wait to live in a city where human life is more important than a single tree or some remote species of insect.

When I graduate, I can finally leave the dark dol-drum of radio station inadequacy. No longer will visions of primed hair, tight acid-washed jeans and the 25th anniversary edition of the Ford Mustang come to mind when I tune in to local radio. Hey KDUK, if you are going to have a popular music station, find out what music is popular today, not in 1990.

Never again will I have to avoid the parking cops and their little three-wheeled boot machines. It's nice to know that student parking needs are exploited to subsidize a city government whose taxation barely keeps pace with its spending habits.

The parking crisis, of course, will never get any better. The only thing more controversial to Eugeniens than building a student parking garage would be the banishment of tofu and other vegan food substitutes from the local markets.

Finally, we are left with the people. We, as Northwesterners, often pride ourselves on being friendly. We are not. Just ask somebody who has moved here from the South or Midwest. We are not always outwardly rude like the stereotypical Eastcoaster. Instead, it's not what we say, it's what we don't say. An example is what I call the campus head-down walk.

The campus head-down walk usually occurs between people of the opposite sex and calls for the man and woman to make eye contact with each other from about 20 yards away. As the two come closer, they scan the horizon for something to look at to avoid making eye contact at the point of passing. I've seen people stare at cracks in the sidewalk, someone across the street and even their own pair of shoes.

So Chewy, fix the hyperdrive and lock in some new coordinates — any coordinates. It is time to get in my Millennium Falcon and escape the Death Star and its powerful tractor beam before I am forced to love this town.

Because Eugene, even with her faults, is still a pretty fun college town. It is like pizza and it's like sex. Even when it's bad it is still pretty good.

Aaron Artman is an columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

### Opinion



Aaron Artman

### Letters to the Editor

#### Incidentally OSPIRG

OSPIRG is a valuable force on campus that cannot be compromised. Incidental fees supporting OSPIRG are critical to the campus community. Since when do you choose where your tax dollars are spent?

I am vehemently opposed to stealth bombers, as I oppose certain groups on campus, but I do not complain. I support the ones that interest me but don't begrudge others. This campus mirrors our society, as does diversity of student groups. Incidental fees also support my job: campus recycling — an organization backed by OSPIRG, which was instrumental in establishing the University as an environmental leader on campuses.

I don't necessarily agree with all OSPIRG issues, but it brings issues to the table and inspires you to think.

It is educating you by involving students in critical societal issues, which is well worth a couple of dollars a term. OSPIRG is on your side. I urge students to support OS-

PIRG and support incidental fees.

Ryan Kauffman  
Environmental Studies

#### Principle of the matter

Throughout the past few weeks, I've read numerous letters printed in the Emerald that suggest students should vote in favor of using incidental fees to fund OSPIRG.

However, they completely overlook the primary reason for voting no on this initiative.

The authors of these pro-OSPIRG letters write extensively on how OSPIRG's political activities are necessary for the preservation of a world worth living in.

Although I disagree with these claims, I'm not going to debate their truth here because my opposition to the OSPIRG initiative does not depend upon them being false.

I oppose the OSPIRG initiative because, if approved, it would require every student to contribute to a political agenda that they may not advocate, much less be willing to fund.

If the members of OSPIRG believe that their cause is worth pursuing, then they should attempt to persuade people to make contributions on an individual basis.

However, it's unethical to attempt to deny students the choice to refrain from contributing if they reach the conclusion that OSPIRG is not as valuable as its supporters claim it is.

Those who support OSPIRG's political goals should pay for it themselves rather than expect those who don't support the group to pick up the slack. I find it offensive in every possible sense of the word. OSPIRG is attempting to force us to be the servants of a cause that we may not support voluntarily. It matters not that the cost per student is only \$3 per term.

I'm not as turned off by the cost as I am by the notion that I, or anybody else, can be rightfully treated as a mere means to the ends of another.

I will not have to pay the OSPIRG fee next year, as I am graduating in June. Nonetheless, I will help vote down this fee upon the

basis of general principle. Anybody who values the autonomy of individual choice should do the same.

Chris Wilson  
Philosophy

#### CORRECTION

The April 21 article, "Chen team regains ASUO Executive" should have said Elections Rule 6.10 "bars individuals and organizations from distributing anonymous written materials related to elections." The Emerald regrets the error.

#### LETTERS POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Letters must be limited to 250 words. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar, style and libel. Letters may be dropped off at EMU Suite 300.