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PERSPECTIVES

Love, VINCE

Columnist reflects on his bittersweet Eugene years

My days as a columnist for this paper are over. I'm packing up my gear and pissing off. Yep, you've heard it right. I'm getting the hell out of here (a scornful sigh of both relief and pleasure can be heard as the smirking reader finishes the sentence). Yes, it's a done deal: Got the tix right here in my hand. It is with hazy eyes that I sit here at the computer to write my very last piece for this paper. Departure: June 15. No turning back now. I'm heading back to the Third Worldish squalor of my primitive life south of the equator. Now, it's back to the filth of the great southern land. No more high-voltage drives on multilaned freeways or pleasant afternoons enjoying the endless crap TV medley of digital cable. It's over. Now, back to the squalor — from where some say I should never have left.

Opinion



Vince Medeiros

But whatever they say, I certainly don't regret having had a stab at life in the much-publicized America. Overall, I'd rate the whole thing as pretty valuable. Not only did it help eradicate a few misconceptions I had about the States (a weird, crazed and gun-obsessed pit populated by TV-brainwashed people who believe the planet ends at Alaska or the Florida Keys), but it also made it possible for me to cop a pretty tops education, write my fortnightly bull in the school rag, get up to my waist in some classic Cascade powder and suck down loads at the local boozier with a few cool mates. But despite my enthusiastic letters and e-mails, people back home never hesitated to point out: "This Eugene place is freezing cold and too far from the surf. Before you know it, you'll be an Eskimo farmer." But they didn't know what they were missing. Life in Eugene is quite rich, diverse and fun. And the wave-soaked (though frigid) Pacific waters are a mere 60 minutes away, anyway. Of course, it's no big metropolis or anything. It has none of the glitter, glamour and traffic jams of New York City. Its clubs are not set on a Studio 54-type mold, and the tallest building in town is probably the Hilton, which is neither tall nor a proper Hilton.

The bizarre eclecticism of this big small town is what gives it its charm, I think. Here, despite the condensed population, one can find a zoological variety of human species.

Honest.

Just take a walk down 13th and you'll see all kinds of freaks — from neo-hippie pot heads to meth heads, from latte-cup-wielding pseudointellectual brainiacs to flighty beer-drinking college yobbos, from yuppies to beggars, from green, ecofeminist activists to bourgeois snobs — you've got the lot here!

Plus, the nightlife is not that bad either. The pubs serve the finest in beer — Oregon ales — and the crowd generally knows how to have a good time.

I myself have had some legendary nights out, nights that have rendered me short of brain cells to write a proper column, I admit it. But I try.

So, the nightlife too is good, and if it were not for those rowdy, fight-seeking bouncers, it would probably be even better.

As for the States, I can say that the general overseas impression that calumniously portrays America as a land of frivolous, futile people who go about mindlessly purchasing everything they see couldn't be further from the truth. At least around here, where active and politicized citizens abound.

Of course, kids are still shooting each other at school cafeterias across the land. We know the number of people living under the poverty level is higher than ever. It is a fact that there is still a long struggle ahead before racial segregation can be eliminated in this country, and the women have yet to take back the night.

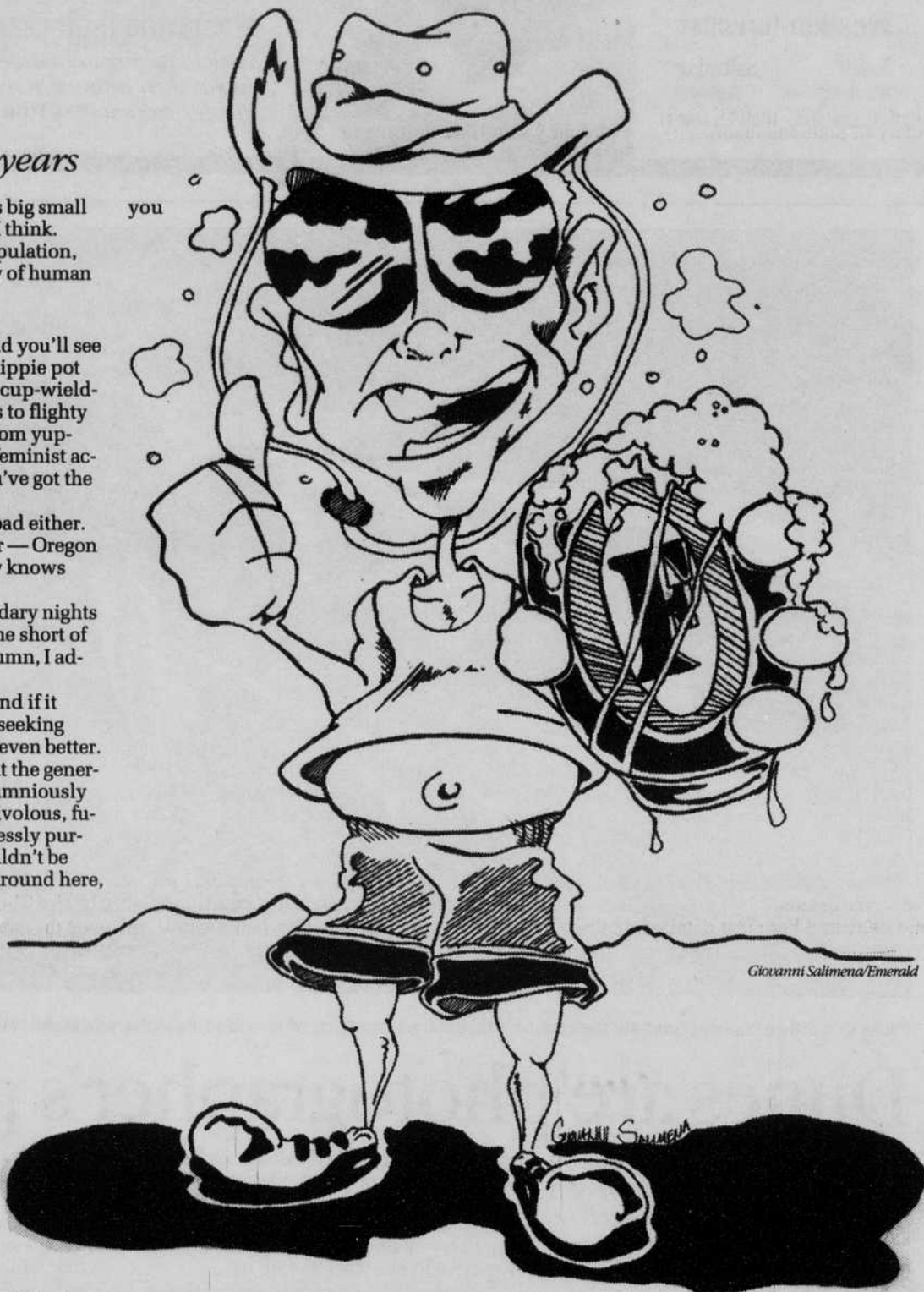
That's all true. But overall, you've got it pretty good here. And thankfully, everything gets sorted these days.

So don't forget to use those expensive degrees to help solve all that stuff above.

So, as I was saying, I'm out of here. Battle-scarred, but alive. And I'm definitely going to miss you guys, all your letters bashing the bejesus out of me and the occasional fan mail that'd brighten up those wistful Monday mornings.

I'm signing off, folks. And if that makes

you



Giovanni Salimena/Emerald

happy, go on, crack that coldie and celebrate. If not, hang in there, wipe those teary eyes, and, why not, crack a cold one, too.

Vince Medeiros is a columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

CORRECTION
In the May 27 article, "Senate to revisit diversity resolution," Senator Andrew Schneider was misidentified. The Emerald regrets the error.

