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Perspectives

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Everybody's free to be a DUCK



Jonathan Gruber

The song "Everybody's Free (to wear sunscreen)" dispensed, over and over, the advice of the middle-aged to a graduating class. I know that I could have used similar college-survival parcels of wisdom in my earlier years. So I have dared to revise/parody the song.

Women and men of the class of 2003...perhaps that's overly optimistic.

Women and men of the classes of — if you're lucky — 2003, but more likely — 2004 or 2005:

Do not wear sunscreen.

If I could stress the truth of one Oregon cliché, rain would be it. A Duck with sunscreen is like a nun in the Condom of the Month Club. Instead, wear those rubber duck shoes (the ones your mother could never get you to wear in middle school). The benefits of such shoes may not be proved by scientists, but you will find many scientists wearing them here.

Enjoy the innocence of being frosh. Those of you who think that the misery of building your résumé ended once you got to college are wrong, but it is a reality that will not likely strike you until sometime junior year.

Right now, you are not as fat as you imagine. Dorm food, however, exists solely for the purpose of plumping up reality to your expectations. Those 15 pounds are real!

Do not try to pass any math course by chewing bubble gum. The gum of those who tried this method and failed is lovingly maintained in memorium on the bottoms of desks and chairs. However, those of you who wish to go to medical school, stop using your calculator. You will not be permitted to use it on the MCAT and you better start practicing now.

Take one class every year that makes your relatives laugh when you tell them. This is college, and you might like Women's Studies (I definitely did). Broaden your knowledge.

Solicit letters of recommendation. Now. Start a letter file. Don't throw away your old bank statements — your parents probably want to see them. On second thought, what better reason is there? But don't throw them away — recycle them.

I suppose you ought not feel guilty if you are an undeclared major. However, the financial reality of being interesting yet undirected in college will settle in sooner or later.

While a student, if you marry, if you have chil-

dren, you will undoubtedly have a better chance to get into University Family Housing. However, if you have children (and I speak to both sexes equally), you will cease to be a student first, and life becomes a juggling act. Some choices are half chance, but that one you can skew in your favor.

Feel free to enjoy your body any way you can. Work out a code with your roommate first.

Take a PE class. I recommend ballroom dance. If you don't take it now, you will want to later.

Read your credit-card applications and recycle some even if they don't have an annual fee. You don't need that kind of temptation.

Do not read teacher evaluations. They will only make you expect too much or too little from your teachers.

Stay in touch with your parents. Living away from your parents is truly a miracle cure for well-intentioned but rocky familial relationships. It's also easier to be nice to your brothers and sisters, once you get the CD collection split fairly.

The friends you had in high school are still worth contacting, even if it's once or twice a year.

Live in the dorms once, but leave before you forget that real people have to hunt, gather and cook their own food. Be homeless once, but find an apartment before your good friends take pity on their sofas and physically kill you.

Face the facts: you are not yet an adult. Roommates are never perfect. You will have strange travel-mates on the bus. When you are a real adult, you can decide whether a romantic partner does make a perfect roommate, and you may never have to ride the bus.

Ride the bus. Even when you finally get a car, the (free!) bus rides in Eugene can accommodate many more transportation needs than many people give them credit for.

Don't have too complex of a hairstyle or everyone will always know when you came to class with a hangover.

Listen to anyone and everyone who loves college. Their enthusiasm is not fake; this could easily be the best four or five or six years of your life.

But believe me about the rain.

Jonathan Gruber is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached via e-mail at jgruber@gladstone.uoregon.edu.



Bryan Dixon Emerald

Letters to the editor

Re-assignment of disabled parking contested

I just watched a KVAL news report detailing the selling out of disabled Beaver fans in favor of coddling donors to OSU's Athletic Department. I'm referring to the "reassignment" of state-designated disabled parking at Parker Stadium for the convenience of those who have made substantial monetary contributions to the school. This policy "alteration" may have minimal impact for the majority of Beaver fans — but for those who must deal with the difficult ramifications of living with physical limitations, the potential for this disgrace to spread to other academic institutions — including the University — is truly abhorrent.

Since when does OSU — or any other academic entity for that matter — have the right to supplant state and federal regulations on a whim? In the meantime, costs to students skyrocket — and their rights disappear.

It's ironic that the August 18th issue of the Emerald espouses the headline, "UO arenas are not for sale." The immediate question for me: What about the parking? Am I going to face future competition — as a student with multiple sclerosis — for that small

patch of asphalt closer to the classroom? You know — the one that enables me to reach my education?

Sounds to me like the fat cats could use a little more exercise. I say "Let 'em WALK!"

Michele Rutheiser
Journalism

Call a penalty on new Duck uniforms, please!

While kicking back Saturday night to watch the Duck/USC game, I almost lost my cookies when I got a load of the new Duck uniforms.

Living here in the Bay Area since graduating from Oregon 23 years ago, I often take flack for this and that from Cal or Stanford grads, but THIS got my phone ringing, and it hasn't stopped!

What were the "powers that be" thinking or smoking when they approved these uniforms? They make the Beavers look like fashion icons! For God's sake, if for no other reason, go back to the old uniforms before I'm laughed out of the Bay Area!

Dwight Schwab
Journalism, class of 1976
Belmont, Calif.

U.S. response in East Timor criticized

When an estimated 2,000 people had been killed

in Kosovo, the United States called it ethnic cleansing, then threatened military force and finally bombed Yugoslavia for over two months. When 100 times that number of people have been killed in East Timor, the United States' response is much more muted. There are no threats to bomb Jakarta or invade Indonesia.

Yugoslavia was bombed because it was the last socialist state in Europe and was failing to implement the International Monetary Fund austerity measures and privatize and deregulate all state-owned enterprises, including their media system. Indonesia is not bombed because it is a capitalist country and has invited in many American-based multinational corporations like Nike, which take advantage of the very cheap labor. Also, Suharto destroyed the Indonesian Communists Party in 1965 in one of the greatest slaughters of the 20th century, killing an estimated 1 million people. These things have made Indonesia a very valued ally of the United States and very unlikely to be bombed.

Of course, this explanation can never be given to the American people in the major media. It is too logical and consistent with history and might actually influence a few people.

Gary Sudborough
Bellflower, Calif.

QUOTED

"We wanted two things. We wanted to be safe. And we wanted our liberation, our freedom."

— Eugenio Salvador Pires, E. Timorese civil servant now hiding in the mountains. The Washington Post Sept. 26, 1999

"I'm living my life, which is private. I haven't asked for the public trust. I haven't asked for anyone to vote for me. I'm an actor"

— Kevin Spacey, Oct. 1999 Playboy

"I'm saddened by what appears to be an attack not only on our blessed mother... but one must ask if it is not an attack on religion itself and in a special way on the Catholic Church"

— Cardinal John O'Connor, on the painting of animal dung splattered on the holy symbol. ABCNEWS.com, Sept. 27

"There's a time to stay, and there's a time to fold," Former Vice President — Dan Quayle on ending his presidential campaign. ABCNEWS.com, Sept. 27

"Typing. I always play secretaries and I can't type! I had to flirt my way through that class — that's probably where I got Elaine's flirtatious quality."

— Jane Krakowski (Ally McBeal) on what she hated about school, Sept. 27. Entertainment Weekly Online

CORRECTION

The "University and GTFs come to terms on new contract," story (ODE, Sept. 27), should have said the University originally offered to pay 84 percent of the insurance premium increase. The Emerald regrets the error.