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Perspectives

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Emerald

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

Sometimes things just go right. And it's even sweeter that it happens when they might have gone wrong.

For years, months, weeks, days and even minutes up until New Year's Eve 1999, the pundits, the experts, the police, the president and the news media stood ready for the worst. Whether it be the pesky computer bug or threats of terrorism worldwide, the night was going to hold suspense and trepidation along with euphoria and excitement. Would utilities and government computers think it was 1900? Would cancellations of major celebrations prove that terrorist threats have weight? Would Times Square fill up as it had in every other year to welcome the new year with forever teen-ager Dick Clark?

With these questions to answer, TV media responded in full force. Twenty-four-hour coverage. Cameras pointed at virtually every major spot in the developed world. All-star talent to keep people interested. But of all places to be on this historic and ultimately incredible occasion, sitting in front of the TV sounded about the lamest.

It turned out to be one of the best. Being glued to the tube might not sound like an enlightening experience, but nothing that night was greater than seeing through those camera lenses that most of the world was partying in peace. The more cameras that pointed toward each successive spot on Earth celebrating the "new millennium" — why spoil the fun with math? — the more viewers saw that the triumph over fear about the new year was twofold: we conquered the Y2K bug and terrorist threats.

Early indications that this would be the case

were mixed. Seattle canceled its party at the Space Needle due to general threats. U.S. and Canadian officials arrested a few suspected terrorists at the border days before Christmas. But on Christmas Day, Muslims and Christians prayed together in Bethlehem, a holy city for both religions.

It turned out the spirit of the latter outweighed the fear of those former. Terrorist threats didn't materialize into real situations, and the celebrations from Auckland, New Zealand to Sydney to Egypt to Paris to New York to Nigeria to Mexico City all indicated that for one night, the world seemed united in peace. About 8,000 New York City police officers lined the gathering in Times Square, but nary a violent crime occurred. The Eiffel Tower, site of some of the century's worst battles in World War I and World War II, bathed the Paris sky in a beautiful shower of sparks.

Sappy as it sounds, the TV coverage showed viewers that although the year, the 20th century and the millennium had brought strife, the future might be brighter. It was lovely.

As for the other one thing besides terrorism that could disrupt this scene of goodwill, the Y2K bug was conspicuously absent. As the clocks switched over in each successive time zone, the lights stayed on and were even more brilliant than usual with breathtaking fireworks displays in such places as China. Computer glitches were few and far between, though the media did seem a little disappointed.

In Eugene, this same spirit of celebration and triumph prevailed. The First Night celebration went off well, with the city getting its own fair share of fireworks and music. And with school not starting for the University until today, the vacation seemed sweeter than usual.

A true optimist would take this occasion to say the world is maturing, becoming more tolerant. Realists might say it's just one night. But it was one night when everything seemed to go right.

Rap artist Will Smith best stated the spirit of this New Year in one of his songs this year: "Tonight we're gonna party like it's Hold up, it is."

Happy New Year.

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

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"I just don't feel I can lead the Jets in the year 2000. I just know what I need to do. I just don't feel I can do it right now."

— NFL coach **Bill Belichick**, on resigning as NY Jets head coach just one day after being promoted to the job when legendary head coach **Bill Parcells** retired on Monday. ESPN.com, Jan. 4.

"At this time of year, the contrasts [in mental health] are so great. If you aren't on board the joy train, you are going to feel a sense of isolation and blues. And this year you may get some additional numbers of people who look back at the past century and say, 'Wow, I could have done a lot better.'"

— **Scott Matthews**, a psychologist at Marquette General Hospital in Michigan. CNN.com, Jan. 4.

"We had one fax machine that didn't roll over [to the year 2000] correctly, and that was easily fixed. That was really it."

— **Les Moore**, director of computing and information services for the Eugene School District, on their lone Y2K problem. The Register-Guard, Jan. 4.

Emerald adopts a new design for the new millennium



Laura Cadiz

Well, we made it. Here we are in the year 2000, and the world didn't come to an end.

We welcome this new era with a redesign of the Emerald. We do this with the hope that the paper's new look will help bring you, the readers, the news that's important to you in a timely, easier to read fashion. Design director Katie Nesse has been working diligently throughout fall term and winter break on the new design.

On the front page of the news section, you will see "The Flash," a list of news briefs and news teasers, which will bring some of the more important news out on the front page. We've also added more graphics and art elements to our pages to help illustrate and tell the stories more effectively. Our flag and "The Flash" will also be green every day, to make the front page more colorful and reader-friendly.

We know that it's our job to report the news, to

write the stories that matter to you. And this new design is just one small effort that plays into that larger goal. The University has relied on us for the past 100 years as its paper of record, and we will continue that role into this new millennium. We approach this goal both as students and journalists with some uncertainty — unsure of what the future holds for both our personal future and society's future.

The staff of The Oregon Weekly (before it was the Oregon Daily Emerald) perhaps approached the dawning of their new millennium with the same uncertainty. On Feb. 26, 1900, the paper's editorial board, upon looking forward to the first term of 1900, wrote, "With the new regime came new thoughts, new ideas, new aspirations It is with uplifted heads and buoyant spirits that we as students begin the work of the new semester. Well may we be proud of the college where so much has happened and whose prospects are so bright. Already

we are building up glorious hopes for the future, but we must not be to sanguine. The University will grow; its sphere of influence will broaden, but we should hope and pray for a steady, lasting growth upon the steady foundation now being laid, rather than the sudden upheaval that reaches the zenith and then sinks into insignificance."

So maybe we, as University students, haven't changed that much in 1,000 years. Despite the centuries that separate us, the students facing 1900 weren't so different than those of us now facing the year 2000.

But the staff of the Emerald will be there, hopefully throughout this entire millennium, to report whatever happens. And you, as readers, can be sure to count on the paper to be there for all the news that's important to you.

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