

MODERN BEASTS of the great outdoors

The moose, weary from its journey, lazes in a grove of aspen trees, eating the few winter shoots it sees. Its calf, just weaned onto real moose food, nudges close to its mother in the dry December cold of the Wasatch mountains.

Mother moose stiffens suddenly. What did she hear? A coyote? A hunter? She relaxes, it's only a family of deer. The night's snow covers some tracks and scat, but it's clear from the ground that woodland creatures frequent this spot, a few yards from a large, open snowfield.



Jonathan Gruber

Vaaaaa-ROOM! My brother, Todd, and I tear onto the field on snowmobiles. Vroom! He aims for every snowbank at top speed. I am content to follow far behind, so that I'll be able to brake just quickly enough to avoid running over his mangled body when he wipes out at 40 or 50 mph. Nonetheless, my trip is far from serene: Every rev of the engine causes the machine to spit out copious quantities of blue smoke.

Well, it turned out that no one died. Todd will live to deflower the virgin wilderness again next year, and the woodland creatures took off for the safety of denser flora, although the baby moose was knocked senseless from accidentally running into a tree.

I still don't like snowmobiling the Utah mountains too much, but I do it anyway, to be social. But as guilty as I feel about burning fossil fuels inefficiently simply so that we can feel the serenity of the wilderness at 40 mph, it's not nearly as maddening as driving around Salt Lake City from the lowly depths of an actual car.

I specify "actual car," not in reference to the snowmobiles, but rather in reference to the gigantic sport utility vehicles that every

person and most household pets use to drive themselves around the gigantic traffic jam that is sunny Salt Lake City. While SUVs may not be the biggest problem for our environment, reducing the spread of these monsters presents a prime opportunity for normal people to do their part in preventing pollution.

Yes, we're spoiled in Eugene as so many people ride the bus and bicycle for their major forms of transportation. But even here, an occasional smoggy haze can be seen.

How can we prevent Salt Lake City's fate from becoming our own? It's not like the SUV bug hasn't come to Oregon, or has spared anywhere else in the country, for that matter. And things hardly appear to be getting better. NBC news reported last week that 73 percent of current SUV owners intend to buy another as their next vehicle.

As an anti-SUV Web site (<http://poseur.4x4.org>) points out, the problem is not people who actually use their SUVs for going off-road. It's the "lemmings" who use their trendy SUVs just like every normal car they've ever owned: to get from point A to point B.

People do need to get between points. And, they can maybe use the massive cargo hold and quasi-off-road capabilities of an SUV a couple times a month. The problem is, most people only want to have one vehicle (per person, maybe) to finance and insure. So when they could just as soon be driving a little car, they're stopping at the grocery store in a gas-guzzling, visibility-restricting, pollutant-emitting SUV.

To a young person like myself, one who drives only because of the generosity of my family, several idealistic solutions come to mind. Because so few of us in the student community have the opportunity to drive SUVs anyway, they can wait.

If I were writing for all of you when we're out in the real world, and we were actually faced with the choice of buying SUVs versus something else, convincing you to choose a car (with frequent use of a bike and bus) would be a lot more difficult.

I know that lobbying Pani, my stepmother (a University alumna and genuine former hippie), not to purchase the family's second (!) SUV was an exercise in futility. OK, so she drives around in the mountains a lot. What happened to the loving-of-the-Earth mentality? Are we doomed to enter suburbia behind the wheels of SUVs so large they have to be registered in all surrounding states and span their own time zones? Nothing personal against Pani, whom I love dearly, but what is it about the real world

that makes people think that they are somehow owed the lifestyle they choose, regardless of its impact on other people and future generations?

She laughs at my quasi-idealism, pointing out how many nice things I have that are either bad for the environment or otherwise a result of the capitalist crusades of her generation. I don't have a good response to that ... presumably, she must know something I don't.

Perhaps all we can do now is remember, when we are older,

to consider the young idealists who we are now. I have the feeling that selfish middle age, synthesized with our current feelings, could be really great. Unfortunately, the older we get, the lower we regard our former opinions. Life will indeed be different for us when we are older, but I am going to try to listen to my youthful conscience. And I promise to snowmobile just once a year.

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Bryan Dixon Emerald

WORLD WIDE WHAT

Should financial aid be suspended for a student's drug conviction?

on the web
www.dailyemerald.com



“Suspending financial aid would be a good idea.”

Justin Hyland
freshman



“It depends on what drug they're getting busted for.”

Dan Ma
senior, fine and applied arts



“First offences should require a probationary period, but for more serious offences financial aid should be revoked.”

Sherrie Brunell-Neuleib
graduate, psychology



“Because education is most important you'd think it should be [revoked for] a probationary period.”

Chris Buckley
sophomore, french