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# Perspectives

Oregon Daily  
**Emerald**

The owners of your apartment complex — or any other place you might live — probably want you to think you live in a community. But a colony of monotypic buildings does not a “community” make. A true community can only be formed where a “place of living” intersects the places of others and you are consequently forced to interact. Together, we form something greater than ourselves alone.

That is not terribly confusing. What seems to be confusing is what a sign that says either ALUMINUM or CARDBOARD ONLY might mean. To many of my neighbors, they translate to PLEASE RANDOMLY DUMP YOUR TRASH HERE. That is the current state of affairs at the brand new, gigantic apartment complex where I reside.



Jonathan Gruber

I can only conclude that, unless my apartment complex has a disproportionately high fraction of illiterate college students, the dumpers simply have no regard for how they are inconveniencing the residents who actually want to recycle.

They understand where they live, but they don't realize that others live there too. It appears that college students are not very good at coming together to make a difference for their own common lifestyles.

Why don't they care? Didn't they see the brochures about how this is an ideal campus COMMUNITY?

Maybe I'm wrong about this. There are many aspects of apartment life in which there is more of a community spirit, right? Like the pool, the computer lab or the billiard tables? Not exactly. At the pool, whoever is the first to arrive turns on his or her favorite music as loud as possible; the computer lab is only open during business hours (how useful!) because of possible theft; and so much has been stolen from the rec room that it is nearly useless.

I am willing to draw the conclusion that college students, or at least the type who would live in the newest settlement near Autzen stadium, are wholly incapable of forming a cohesive community. Or, at least, we certainly do not put much priority on it. It's unfortunate, but there are three obvious reasons for this.

First, we are simply too transient. Many of us move twice a year, and nearly all of us move after four years or so. Being an active part of a community is something of an investment for the future, and many of us simply do not have much of a future here.

Second, those of us in gigantic complexes can't possibly meet everyone else. It's

# The POWERLESS college community

easier to throw trash or play loud music or steal pool cues when there are no names or faces in your conscience.

Third, and I have a sinking feeling that this is the most relevant, we are simply too immature to understand or appreciate the dynamics and rewards of a community spirit with our neighbors. How many of us have regretted having a particular roommate? If we can't all get along in the confines of our own residences, can we expect that we are capable of successfully interacting with “outsiders”?

Our lack of cohesion is an important issue because communities have power. Or, at least, more power than individuals do. In the River Road area of North Eugene, the community is fighting a plan to put in a gravel mine. Would a household or two stand a chance? Certainly not. Does the community stand a chance? With the mining laws in Oregon, the outlook is not good, but at least they have made enough of a racket that you could hear about it everywhere from the newspapers to the alternative rock station.

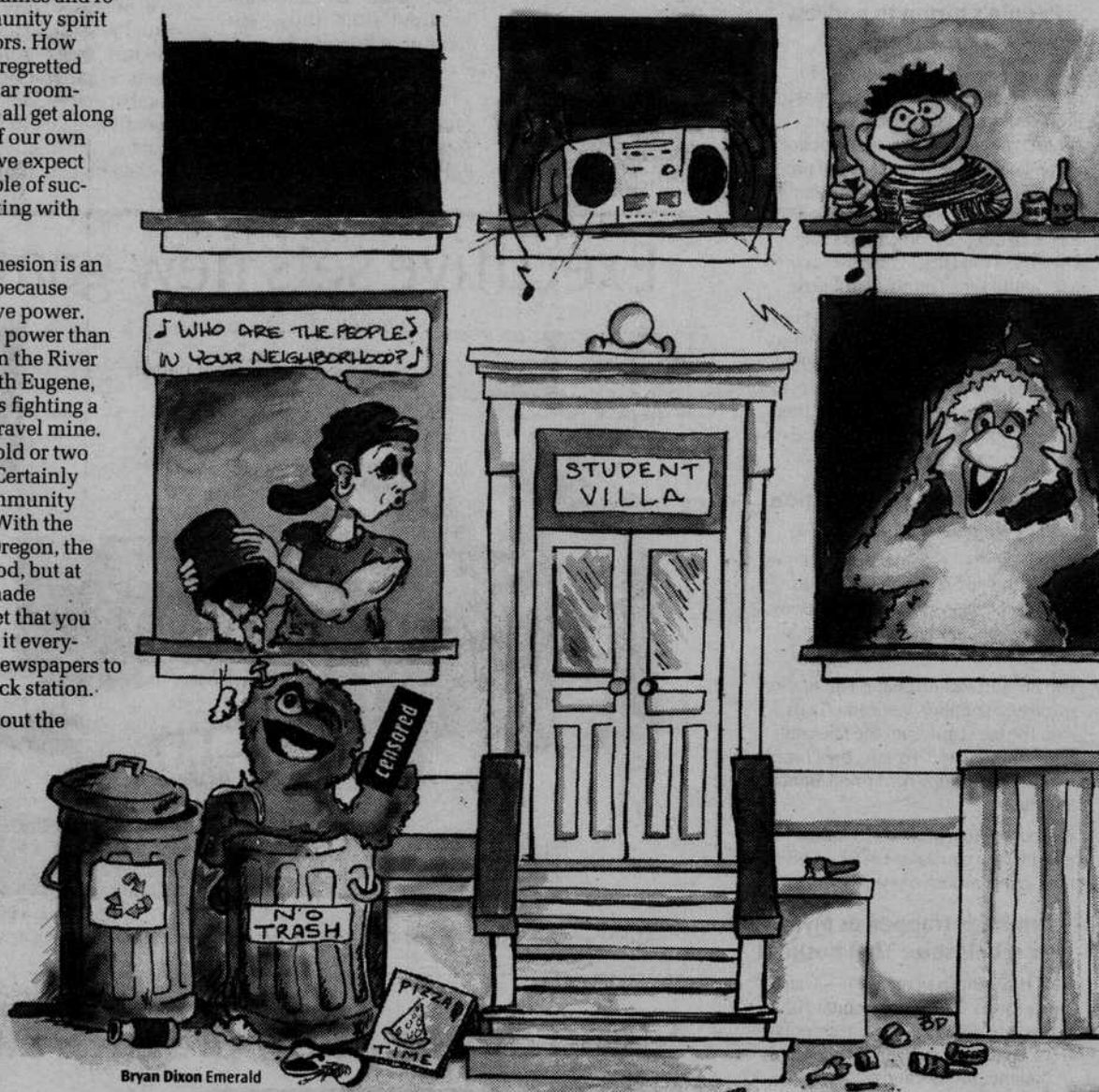
Who knows about the plight of the spoiled residents where I live? OK, so the promised Ethernet that hasn't arrived hardly affects our “lifestyle” to the degree that gravel trucks and dust clouds do, but the fact remains that if we had some sort of

meaningful and enthusiastic residents' association, we might not get jerked around so much by the management.

As I look into the future of my life, I can only expect that I will eventually live in a place with some sort of community spirit. Until then, unless I can organize something through ucsa@hotmail.com, I'll en-

sure my remaining months of blank looks from my neighbors, and my old Ethernet card will continue to gather dust.

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

### Saferide has a clear mission: rape prevention

I just wanted to point out a few errors that I observed in your article (ODE, Jan. 19) about the Programs Finance Committee and Project Saferide. First of all, Saferide does not hire drivers; they are volunteers. It probably would have been helpful for your reporters to check with the ASUO or Saferide itself. If it did hire women drivers, it would be breaking the law, but it does not. In this case, a quick check with the ASUO or Saferide itself would have cleared things up. Secondly, Saferide is no more a service that shuttles women from place to place at night than the Emerald is a bunch of words on paper. Saferide has a mission statement that very clearly states its purpose, and that purpose is not to be a taxi service. The article addressed PFC member Aaron Weck's issues with Saferide's policy of using only women volunteer drivers, so it should have been mentioned that the reason behind this is that Saferide is a rape prevention shuttle.

Alexandra Kerl  
Education Outreach Coordinator, ASUO Women's Center

### Financial aid drug rule aides no one

I am writing in regards to the article about a recent rule enacted by the U.S. Department of Education (ODE, Jan. 7), effectively disqualifying students with prior drug convictions from receiving federal financial aid. I don't feel your article went far enough to illustrate the complete lunacy of this new rule. The joke of a “war on drugs” seems to have allowed any measure or idea that pertains to punishing drug users/abusers to be accepted regardless of its legitimacy.

There is simply no way to defend this new “rule,” which benefits no one. Rather, it serves only to punish people who are poor and trying to improve their lives through education.

The argument that the government should not “reward people convicted of possession or sale of illegal drugs” is completely invalid. Financial aid should not be seen as a “reward” for people coming from less than the hearty economic background today's universities require. Our government's view that education is a privilege, not a right, for the economically insecure is very puzzling.

Is it not also curious that this same section of our society

is being punished for their past, that which they have no power to change? And at the same time denying them any assistance toward the improvement of their future, the one thing people have direct control to change?

At best, this new rule is hypocritical, and at worst it is a dangerous measure targeting a specific group of people, essentially keeping the poor poor and the rich ... well, they can buy an education if need be.

William James Moglia  
University student

### 'Guide' story misses the real scoop

It was a long way to go for a weak joke. Sara Lieberth's article “Men in Red” (ODE, Jan. 18) treats us to a list of quasi-cutesy references in her description of the West University Guides but at the cost of accuracy. Are women not allowed to be guides? This would be newsworthy. Are women allowed but uninterested? This would be worth a mention. Or are, as I suspect, women fully a part of this program? In that case, Lieberth's careless reporting does a disservice to them and to her readers.

Ruth Bennett  
psychology and journalism