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Perspectives

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DORM DEFENDERS

For most college students, there are two priorities: 1. Graduate 2. Get out of the dorms. (Not to be completed in that order.) For the minority, number two isn't as important. Some people love the dorms so much that they decide to make it their living.

I'm talking about resident assistants. Applications are due Feb. 15 for people who are relinquishing their next year to the dorms. This begs the question, why? Kids waking you up because they locked themselves out of their rooms, whining about how they miss their mommies and all the other annoying things that you did to your RAs. Why subject yourself to that?

The most common reason is the free room and board. Even Carson Dining Hall food can't seem that bad if you aren't paying for it. And though you're still in the dorms, you have a single room. On top of that, RAs get a \$600 stipend for the year and a refrigerator. As an RA you meet lots of new people — not just your students, but your fellow RAs.

So being an RA has plenty of perks. Now, I know that you are all saying to yourself, "Wow! I'd be a fool not to be an RA." Hold your horses there. Not just any Joe Slummer can be an RA. You must have completed at least 45 credits (sophomore standing), have a 2.5 cumulative GPA and have rosy cheeks and a cheery disposition.

OK, I got that last line from "Mary Poppins." But you do have to work well in groups and help build the hall community.

I spoke with my RA, Leah Rosin, a sophomore biology major, about her experience as an RA. Leah tries to organize trips for us, she will always help out and every now and again, she bakes us cookies. Sure, sometimes they are a little burnt on the bottom, but she has been a great RA. She said she chose to be an RA because she "hadn't thought of outside housing options" and "wanted a big single." In retrospect, she is still positive about her decision.

"It's better than I thought it was going to

be," Rosin said. "They try to scare you in the training."

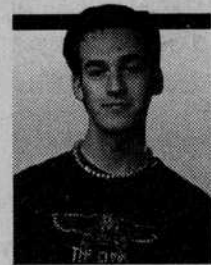
Training, you say? Yes, potential RAs take a class once a week during spring term and come to school a week and a half early for more training.

Eric Banister, a freshman music education major, is planning on being an RA next year. He said he wants to be an RA because he wants "the chance to live with my peers and have the ability to help them out, too." Banister likes the idea of being a leader and sharing his experiences with next year's dorm dwellers. He said that his RA played a part in his decision to apply for the job and also inspired him to join both residence complex government and the Residence Hall Association.

Anybody who chooses to be an RA will have a rewarding experience, but be sure that you're up to snuff. I'll use myself as an example: RAs must organize programs for the students to participate in. My activities would be "Let's clean the RA's room" or "Let's do the RA's laundry." RAs must also go patrolling around their building a few nights a month. I know

that it is their job to ask if they can shut my door when I have it open after 10 p.m., but that really irks me. I would never shut anyone's door. The children would run wild and the building would decay into a state similar to "Lord of the Flies." When some British kid gets squished by a rock, I'll be in a heap of trouble.

Dealing with trouble is a concern heavy on every potential RA's mind, but there really isn't anything to worry about. When doing rounds, RAs are never



Mason West

alone, and there are always other people that can be contacted should a situation get out of control. Make those Office of Public Safety people earn their keep.

The assistant director of residence life, Katie Bryant, is the person at the head of the RA organization. She works hard to ensure that all students living in dorms are having a valuable experience. The residence halls have organized such campus-wide activities this year as a cosmic bowling night, a Hamilton Hall basement dance and the food drive against Oregon State University, which raised 15,000 pounds of food. These are just the major activities, and each hall has organized many others.

"We want the residence halls to feel like home," Bryant said. She also added, "Basically, if you have any questions, call me." Bryant can be reached at 346-5393.

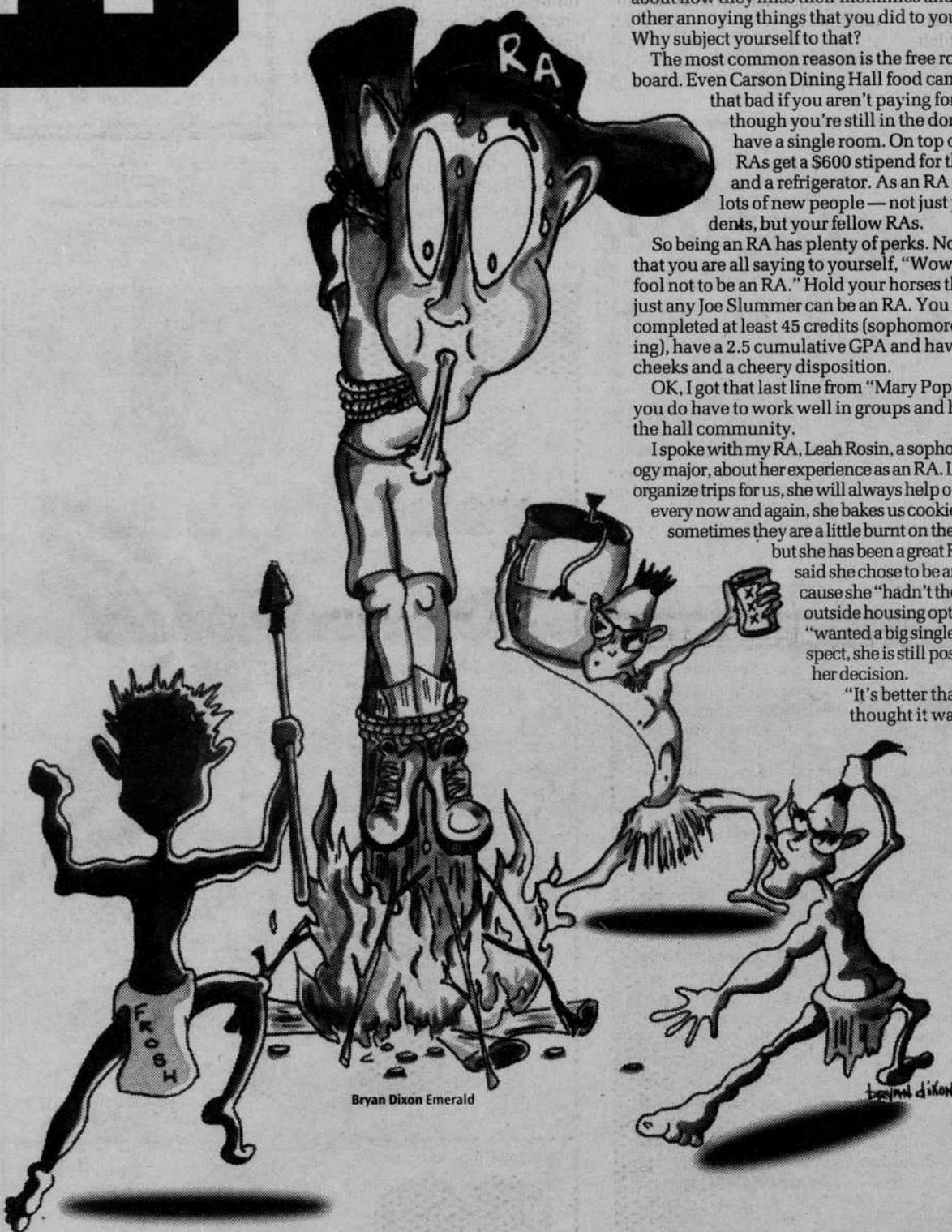
So are you ready to be one of the few and the proud? Well if you are, then you're shipping out with the Marines. But if you're ready to be one of the caring, the helpful, the influential, the eternally patient ... go be an RA.

Mason West 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 mwest1@gladstone.uoregon.edu

CORRECTION

The story "In a world of diversity, the University falters" should have read: Jay Breslow, the new coordinating diversity intern, said he isn't sure what needs to happen to improve diverse faculty retention.

The Emerald regrets the error.



Bryan Dixon Emerald

Bryan Dixon

WORLD WIDE WHAT

Should University students be required to have health insurance?

on the web
www.dailymerald.com



"No. It should be the choice of the students, and it is important."

Beth Allen
exercise and movement science



"No. It's something that is an inherited right to choose whether you want it or not."

Alexandra Kerl
journalism



"Yes, they should [require it] because it is in everyone's best interest to be covered."

Lance Miller
visual design



"Health insurance is hard to get; it shouldn't be required."

Alex Kristy
biology