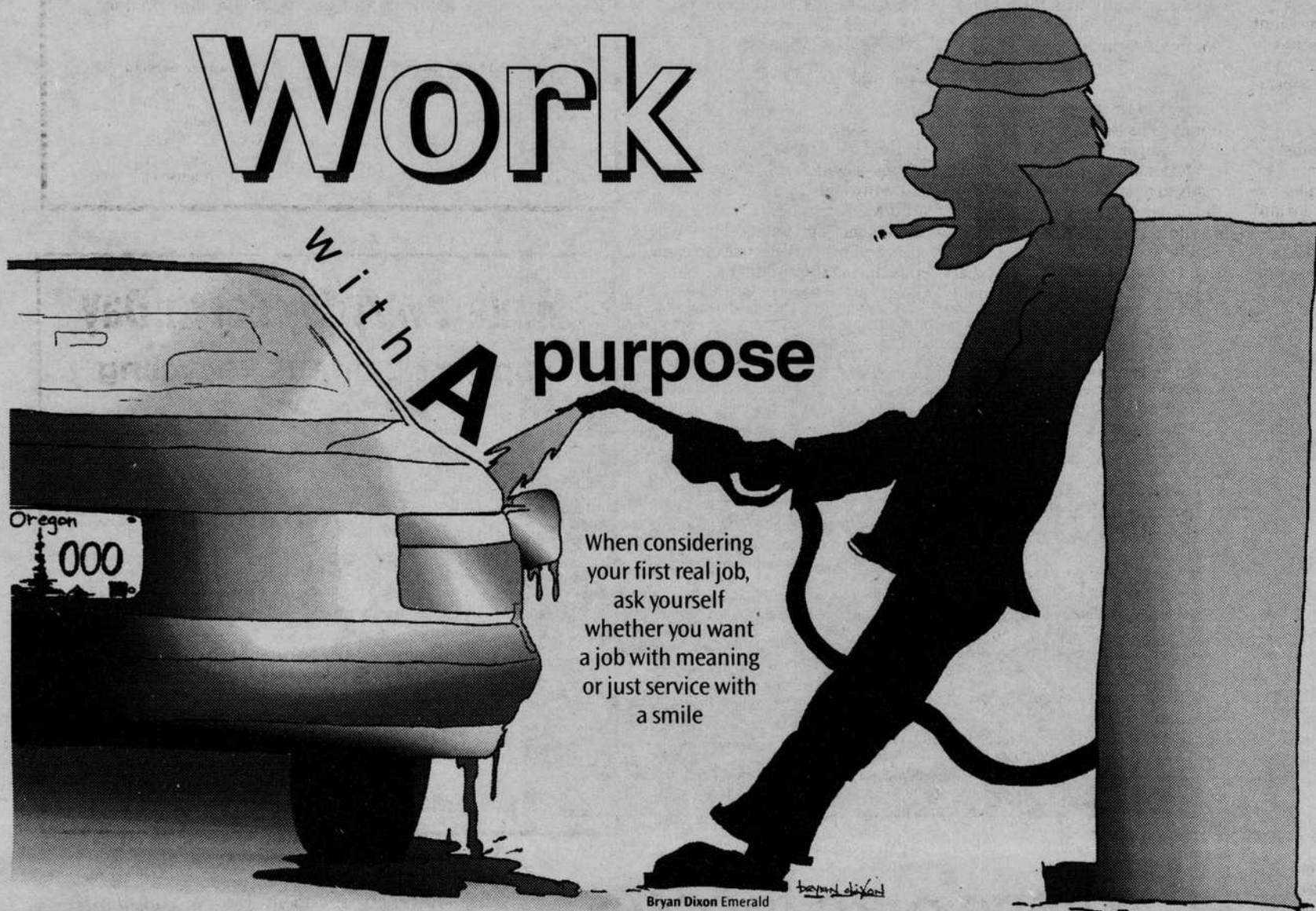


Editor in chief: Laura Cadiz
Editorial Editors: Bret Jacobson, Laura Lucas
Newsroom: (541) 346-5511
Room 300, Erb Memorial Union
P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
E-mail: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

Perspectives

Work



As many of us face the ominous prospect of finding real jobs come June, we have to deal with the fact that there are many criteria to consider. There are obvious ones, such as where you want to live or how much money you would like to make. But there are also more subtle distinctions that we should be looking at. For instance, does your job involve actually DOING anything? By this I mean does it actually serve an interest other than perpetuating its own existence?

I expect that most of the University's class of 2000 graduates are not considering gas station jobs, at least not the smelly ones (jobs, not students). But if your criterion were "I need a job that keeps me in Oregon," that would definitely be one way to go. (Since 1951, self-service gasoline stations have been illegal here.) This is an example of how a job really exists solely for its own sake, but gas jobs enjoy a security that many other jobs do not.

I admit that gas station attendants serve the public by pumping gas. So, some of them do actually DO something. From another perspective, though, many of us who have driven a fair amount in other states

believe that the existence of mandatory gas station attendants simply undermines our desire to have gas pumped to our own satisfaction.

Full service gasoline does have an economic niche in other states: it's smaller, but it's there. Oregon's higher number of per-capita gas station attendants simply reflects jobs that exist solely to perpetuate themselves.

Now consider the way in which we have preserved these extra jobs. Clearly the excess would be eliminated if the ban were repealed. But all

in all, this is not a gigantic burden on Oregon's economy because the full-service gas industry is not the basis for any sort of economic revolution. Unfortunately, more and more segments of our society and economy have begun to center around occupations that do not actually accomplish anything tangible.



Jonathan Gruber

The Internet age has revolutionized the job market and the economy. And surely the technology will continue to enable our society to conduct business more efficiently. The world of the Internet is one in which you only occasionally encounter a job that actually affects people's lives in any manner at all.

It is when we create multiple steps between a given job and its actual, useful action that people at one end lose sight of people at the other end. This is when are livelihoods are going to be in trouble. For instance, now investors can shorten the time they invest in a company to mere hours. But is "day-trading" accomplishing anything? Not really, unless you argue that by investing in companies for several hours, the day-traders are stimulating economic development. In any case, that is certainly not a day-trader's motivation or concern.

In 1997, Albania collapsed to near anarchy because approximately half of its Gross Domestic Product was composed of liabilities in pyramid schemes, according to the World Bank. Certainly our economy is in less danger than that. But it's not impenetrable. Why did the stock market

crash in 1929 do so much damage to the economy? Too many people relied on the stocks as a reasonable way to make money and they stopped using their time to accomplish something that affects other people.

As University students seek jobs, the appealing ones are going to be in hot new markets with hot new tasks that our parents would have never dreamed existed. But if those tasks do not have a basis in tangible service to society, the lack of job security is just the beginning of potential problems.

This is not just an issue of self-preservation for each University student. It is an issue of personal satisfaction, and ultimately it's an issue of the quality of society. Would you rather live in a world where children aspire to become firefighters, doctors or mechanics, or in a world in which children dream of their retirement at age 24 because they fortuitously sold their dot-com stock before the crash?

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.

Letters to the editor

Police waste mass funds

In response to the Emerald's irresponsible endorsement of Ballot Measure 20-31 and to anyone who believes the Eugene Police Department needs more funding: Maybe you guys should ride in Critical Mass on the last Friday of the month. Critical Mass bike rides are attended by police officers wasting tax dollars. The riders in Critical Mass have First Amendment rights of freedom of association,

freedom of expression and freedom to assemble. If EPD funding can be allocated to watch riders exercise these rights, how can these fascists claim they are underfunded? Maybe the people of Eugene, rather than give the EPD more money to squander on the oppression of the community, should demand that they use the funding they have to fight crime. I refuse to contribute one more red cent to fascism. Critical Mass occurs the last Friday of every month at 5:30 p.m. and begins at 13th Avenue and Kincaid Street. I highly recommend that those interested

ride with us and see for themselves how the EPD spends its money.

Randy Newnham
co-coordinator,
University Survival Center

Bettman will get the job done

As a longtime downtown business owner and resident since 1970, I am writing this letter in support of Bonny Bettman for Eugene City Council in Ward 3.

I have known Bettman for several years and found her to be dedi-

cated, thoughtful and easy to work with. She has labored tirelessly in pursuit of a better Eugene community with her longtime participation on many civic committees and boards, including serving as the chairwoman of Eugene's Citizen Involvement Committee and the co-chairwoman for the Friendly Area Neighborhood Association.

I share Bettman's vision for downtown revitalization and land use transportation codes that encourage all modes of transportation in and around the city core extending to the entire metropoli-

tan area. Creating walkable neighborhoods, bicycle lanes and better bus service are a part of future planning needs.

As a mother of two, Bettman believes in strong school support and a safe environment for all our children. She helped initiate the installation of traffic calming safety devices in her residential neighborhood. Bettman gets things done.

I believe that Bettman would be a strong addition to the Eugene City Council.

Cary D. Thompson
Eugene resident