

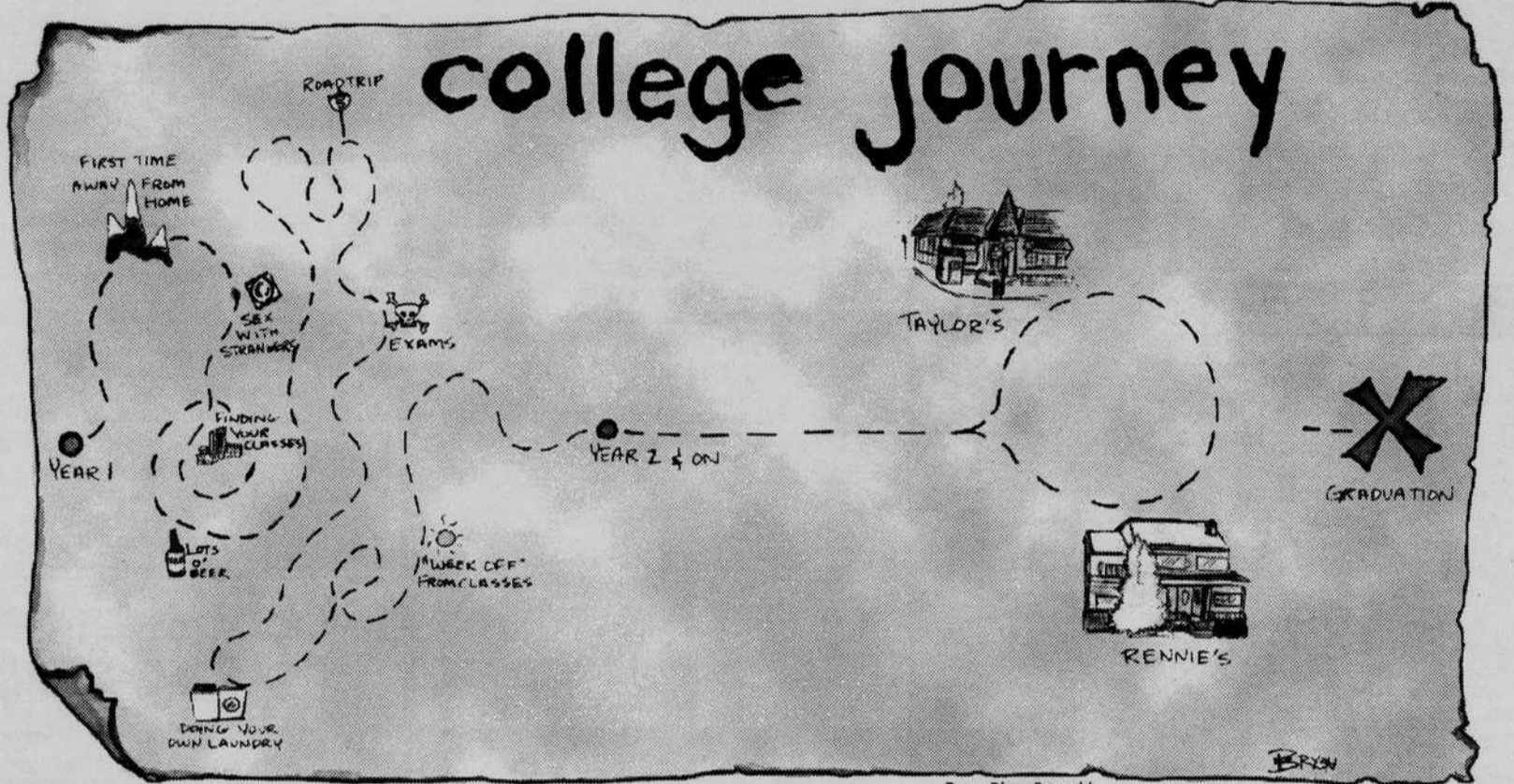
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Perspectives

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College is *no longer fresh*

The first year of college winds down for one freshman, and he wonders if normalcy will overtake the excitement of college life



Bryan Dixon Emerald

As the end of my freshman year of college is coming to a close, I am astounded at how fast it went. I hope some of you are thinking the same. What puzzles me the most, though, is the fact that I will be returning here this fall.

As crazy as it sounds, it never clicked in my head that I would be at college for more than one year. I mean, I was going to get a degree, but that was just going to magically appear one day in my mental schedule.

The real cause of my shortsightedness was that I couldn't see college becoming mundane, routine. The whole K-12 educational system points you straight to college. With all the emphasis put on it, college becomes an institution of mythic proportions. Your grandparents tell you, "It'll be the best time of your life." Your parents finally acknowledge your independence ... at least, mine kind of did. Do any of you have parents stopping by your room to see if you've cleaned up? That's

normal, right? So you finally get to college, and it is the coolest thing ever.

You are surrounded by people your age. You can set your own schedule (we all have had those days that don't start until noon). You get credit for taking classes such as trampoline or mountain biking, and you can't walk five blocks without passing a coffee shop. This is heaven.

So everyone indulges — big partying, on weekdays no less, staying up late and skipping class for the sole reason that you don't have to be there. This was the point of all that previous education, right? So that I can pay money directly to do everything non-

academic? Indeed it is. C's get degrees, man.

I'm just kidding. But college is all about fun and wonder when you first get there. The first time I found out about Cinemark Movies 12, I thought that Eugene was the greatest place on earth. When I got pie and coffee for two bucks at Marie Callender's, I swore I would never leave.

Since then I have rethought that statement. The campus, beautiful as it is, has become familiar. I know how to get from PLC to Columbia to Gerlinger. Had I attempted such a feat at the beginning of the year, I would have been reported missing after three days, and an extensive search party would have found me in the fetal position somewhere near the EMU.

The incoherent jargon that once left me in tears of frustration is now perfectly distinguishable. I know what it means if someone is taking a "J" class or "CIS." If someone says "121" or "122," I know instinctually that it is Writing 121 or 122, and I sigh sympa-

thetically and talk about how much the class sucks.

I am no longer impressed by people who can grow beards. The chief male accomplishment in high school, one I failed to reach, is now just as common as seeing bleached hair. Just walk into any physics class and look at the professor. I swear beards are required to teach college physics.

I am now used to living independently. I vacuum. I VACUUM! Wow, that still impresses me.

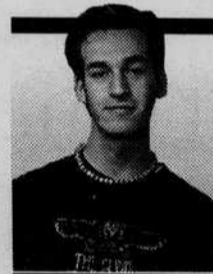
This year has been great. But what is going to happen next year? I mean, I'll have to venture into the uncharted regions of cooking (expect to hear more about that next year) but what else? There will be different classes in a building that I might not have been in, new teachers and if I'm lucky, some new video games in the break. But the magic will be gone. Sniffle.

I'm wondering what the upperclassmen are thinking. I'm wondering if any of them have read this far. But I'm interested in their perspectives about how college

progresses. Maybe there should be a seminar. We could call it "When College Gets Commonplace." People would talk about how they coped with the college routine. Everyone would hug and cry, and there would be free coffee and cookies. It would be great.

Well, I'll be back next year like most of you. To the graduating seniors and grad students, I am in awe of you. I hope to one day be in your shoes. As for the rest of us, we'll just sit around laughing at the new freshman. Maybe that's what keeps college exciting. When they come to us asking if we know where the University Health Center is because they are having an allergic reaction, we'll say, "Ha ha ha, silly freshman." But inside we'll ache for the days when the world contained so much wonder.

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.



Mason West

Letters to the editor

Support student parents

Child Care Block Grants are awarded on the basis of need to help low-income Oregonians attend Oregon's non-profit institutions of higher education. Although the additional funding requested for the Child Care Block Grant will not assist all of the eligible low-income students, it is estimated that the waiting list (now more than one year) would drop to half of that or more with \$3.9 million.

The Oregon Student Association has launched a statewide letter-writing campaign to let Oregon

legislators know that we care about the needs of student parents and that we are going to fight our hardest to secure funding for the Child Care Block Grant this legislative session. The ASUO is part of this letter-writing campaign, and I encourage all of you to get involved. On May 25 at 6 p.m. the ASUO will sponsor a dinner with legislators to discuss funding for the Child Care Block Grant. This will be a great opportunity to voice concerns to our legislators. For more information on the event you can contact Kathleen Workman at 346-0632 or stop by the ASUO office.

Parents seeking a higher education or attending our fine commu-

nity colleges, public and private colleges and universities are absolutely key to Oregon's future economic vitality and growth. The Child Care Block Grant program is critically important in assuring that low-income Oregonians in all sectors are able to play a role in shaping our future.

Melissa Unger
history

A hypocritical institution

Nike CEO Phil Knight argued that the University was hypocritical to join the Worker Rights Consortium while not treating its own employees fairly. He should have noted that the University cannot comply with basic labor law.

The University is withholding

vital employment information from the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF). University counsel claims that it cannot share this information without the individual GTF's consent under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Is the University committed to FERPA? Well, how many students have received mail and telephone solicitations for a Discover Card? The chorus of "yeses" is attributed to the University providing Discover Card with some students' information. According to University officials, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires the release of this information. At the same time, the University does not

fulfill its legal obligation to release employee information to the GTFF.

So, to sum up: the University is the ideal forum of free inquiry and critical thinking. The University provides information to an organization whose goal is to get students hooked on consumer debt. The University fails to provide information to an organization whose aim is to get students hooked on free inquiry and critical thinking. If the University is not concerned about the latter values — and, consistent with labor law, dealing fairly with employees who promote these values — then what is this University about?

Max Brown
GTF, political science