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Perspectives

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Big head, small goals

If you believe Al Gore, do not pass go, do not collect \$200, and oil and pharmaceutical companies should go straight to jail. Gore's disturbingly populist rants in his bid for the highest office in the world should frighten any well-reasoned individual.

To believe Gore's campaign on all its points is to find one's self in a logical quandary. First, he's the most important veep of all time and claims, among other wild fancies, to have been at the heart of the economic success that the U.S. deregulation and entrepreneurial attitude has wrought.

Yet all the while he is campaigning full time, if not overtime, for the Oval Office. So shouldn't our country be falling apart at the seams in his absence? Obviously it's doing just fine, save higher oil prices borne of an appallingly inept Department of Energy.

How is the rational person to make sense of the success during Gore's absence? The simple answer is, of course, that it's American ingenuity and spirit that drive this country's success and not, as Gore asserts through policy initiatives, the federal government gracing the people

with its wisdom.

To believe Gore's campaign would also entail the idea that Gore cares about the average, poor citizen. During his alpha-male phase he shouted to any sycophantic crowd that would listen that he would fight for them, as if he were Rocky taking on the seven-foot Russian oaf. But Gore wouldn't even take care of the poor tenants living in squalor on his property less than 500 yards away from his own mansion in Washington, D.C.

He has parlayed this fight-for-the-common-man attitude into his recent attacks on successful American industries that lie outside his vision of a socialistic, ecologically-driven agrarian state.

Gore's recent populism is sickening. The leech of U.S. politics has of late been blaming high gas prices on "Big Oil," which he claims are due to collusion, and he points at high prescription drug costs as the collusion that is at the heart of senior suffering in America. Of course the problems lie somewhere with the lack of a cohesive U.S. energy policy and the already existing intrusions

into the marketplace by Medicare.

If those logical problems weren't bad enough, the final straw must be his assertion, in concert with President Clinton and others, that a country as prosperous as the United States doesn't hand away free health coverage to all its citizens. Of course the answer is that our country wouldn't be nearly so prosperous if it followed in the example of our economically-shaky socialist European counterparts.

When a country devotes a seventh of its economy to free health care,

that money is lost to the pioneering spirit that caused this great growth in the first place.

To believe Al Gore is to buy into populist propaganda, which can do nothing but degrade the United States in nearly every facet of life.

That may sound a bit over the top, but higher taxes and inept leadership aren't on the menu for national advancement.

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Know the consequences of drinking before you swig

Where's the party at? IntroDUCKtion is in full swing, and it seems this is the greatest question on everyone's mind.

One person who works on trying to get new students interested and involved in various academic organizations told me this weekend that the freshmen she has worked with in the past weekends could care less about the great scholastic pursuits that lay before them on a college campus. They all want to know where the best parties are.

As "Animal House," which was filmed on this college campus, would indicate, going to parties in college — where alcohol is a main theme — has become a way of life. Some people even get excited about the prospect of finally leaving their parents and not having to hide their party lifestyle when they get home.

Aside from the obvious fact that

alcohol should not be a way of life, there are a few things about the real world that we all should understand.

If you're under 21 years old, here's a reality check for you: Underage drinking is still not something that the police will tolerate, and the growing number of MIPs that the Eugene Police Department is giving out should be proof enough that they mean business.

If you're over 21 years old and you're thinking that you can finally drink all you want without the fear of Big Brother watching you, step back for a minute and remember why you are here in the first place.

First and foremost, no questions asked, the word "college" should evoke a sense of education, not intoxication. College should be a place where we all eagerly come to learn. Take those scholastic opportunities

seriously because this may be the only place in your life that you will be in the kind of environment where learning is not only encouraged, it thrives.

Now, this is not to say that you should isolate yourself entirely, cram your head in your books, get a pocket protector and completely miss out on the college experience. You will learn more about life in the years you spend here than five minutes in class could ever shake a stick at.

But remember to learn these lessons. Learn how to learn. Learn how to make friends who really care about you. Learn when to do what the administration tells you to do even if you don't feel like doing it, and learn when to stand up to the system when you truly feel that things aren't going in the right direction.

And, learn how to be responsible and know when you don't have time to go to the party.

If you're coming from a high school scene that you think was only

the preseason to the college party playoffs — or you've already been drinking away the first two or three years of your college career — remember that there are consequences for your actions. Whether EPD fines you a couple hundred dollars or you don't make it through college because classes and studying cramp your style, remember that there is a little thing in life called consequence. It will catch up to you.

Possibly one of the greatest lessons that can be learned in college is knowing when and how to make the right decision, not because you'll get in trouble with Big Brother if you don't but because we are all gifted people — blessed with the gift of a college education, which a vast majority of people in this country never receive — and we can make a difference if we just keep our acts together.

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QUOTED

"Nowadays, you have the situation where one inmate went to court to sue me to get all his teeth replaced."

— Harold Taylor, chief jailer in Daviess County, in response to why the state of Kentucky ruled that inmates will be charged for their room, board and medical costs. The Register-Guard, July 10.

"What we want to do is make it so it's not an either-or choice. You can learn while you serve."

— Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera, in response to the Army's announcement of a new educational program that will help millions of soldiers earn their college degrees through a global system of on-line learning. The Oregonian, July 10.

"I was like, 'you mean I can walk into an Armani store, pick up a suit and walk out?' This is a dream come true!"

— Ruth Carter, referring to her job as costume designer for the recent summer release "Shaft." The Oregonian, July 10.

"I'm dynamic. I'm a very different player from the regular champion. I'm a powerhouse. Plus I'm black."

— Venus Williams, after becoming the second African-American woman to win Wimbledon. The Oregonian, July 10.

CORRECTION

The front page photo with the story "Infusing the future" (ODE, July 6) misidentified the two Summer Enrichment Program students, Esther Kim and Olivia Brown.

The Emerald regrets the error.



Photo illustration by the Emerald



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