

Editor in chief: Jack Clifford  
Associate Editors: Jonathan Allen, Jeff Smith  
Newsroom: (541) 346-5511  
Room 300, Erb Memorial Union  
P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403  
E-mail: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

# Perspectives

Oregon Daily  
**Emerald**

## KEN'T take him away

Funny how one move begets another. On June 30, University of North Carolina men's basketball coach Bill Guthridge announced he was stepping down after three years as head coach and 33 years with the Tar Heel program. It is doubtful that the move caused much stir in Eugene. Then on July 6, University of Kansas men's basketball coach Roy Williams ended week long speculation that he would coach at North Carolina by announcing that he will stay at Kansas, where he has led the Jayhawks to 12 straight winning seasons. Again, the city of Eugene hardly said a word. Five days later, however, a final move would be made that would

eventually get this town talking. On July 11, North Carolina named former Tar Heel player Matt Doherty as its coach. Doherty left behind a team at the University of Notre Dame that went 22-15 last year and reached the championship game of the National Invitational Tournament. Notre Dame athletic director Kevin White wanted to act fast on hiring a replacement and tried to pursue one of the best college coaches in the game today. So he went after our coach, Oregon men's basketball coach Ernie Kent. This time, when the news about Kent went public on July 12, Eugene was abuzzing. Take, for example, a few select quotes from Oregon message boards on the Internet last Wednesday night.

"How could he leave us?"  
"That trader! He said this was his dream job."  
"He's probably after the fame and money."  
Well guess what folks? You thought wrong. Kent proved his love and loyalty for his alma mater by turning down the opportunity of more national exposure and a higher salary to stay in Eugene. "I look at this as a tremendous honor for our program and the University of Oregon to attract attention from a school of this magnitude," Kent said. Kent made it clear that Notre Dame contacted him, and said that when Notre Dame calls you have to listen. But when will it be seen as an "honor" to be attracted by Oregon? The reason Kent is here in the first place was the decision by former Oregon coach Jerry Green to bolt out of town in 1997 to take over the program at Tennessee. Green used the school as a steppingstone to bigger and better things.

When will Oregon stop being a steppingstone and finally be a destination? Perhaps that time is approaching in the next five to 10 years. If Kent were to commit to Oregon and continue coaching and recruiting at the pace that he has, odds are his name would become synonymous with Duck hoops ala the way Williams is to Kansas. But as he alluded to on Friday, Kent will continue to listen to other offers from "big-time" schools when they come calling. That's too bad, because with Kent's help the Oregon basketball program could very well be considered "big-time" in the next few years. So coach, when that phone rings and there's some athletic director from another school on the other end wishing to speak to you, do what your heart tells you to do: Hang up. This editorial represents the view of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

### QUOTED

"This is my dream, and it's actually coming true."  
— Marla Runyan, who finished third in the U.S. Olympic Field Trials. Runyan is the first legally blind athlete to ever make a U.S. Olympic Team. The Register-Guard, July 17.

"Welcome America."  
— a front page headline in the July 13 Philadelphia Daily News, in reaction to the beating of a African-American man by a dozen Philadelphia police officers after a car chase and shoot-out. The incident occurred after civic leaders have spent months preparing for the GOP convention during July 31-Aug. 3. The Oregonian, July 14.

"I have always gone and picked out clothes for him or dragged him to the store and tried to get him to do (something) a little different. I personally get tired of the blue pinstriped suit."  
— Tipper Gore, explaining that she was the one who persuaded Al Gore to wear more browns and tans this year. USA Today, July 17.

**CORRECTION**  
The front page story "Taylored for success" (ODE, July 13) misidentified City Councilor Betty Taylor's ward. She is the Ward 2 City Councilor. The story also implied that Taylor was actively involved in the protest on June 1, 1997. Although she did call and e-mail people in the days prior to the event — and several people thought she was organizing — she did nothing but observe the gathering on the actual day. The Emerald regrets the error.

## She has nothing and everything to do with you

Fifteen-year-old Stacie Lyons should be enjoying summertime the way most teenagers usually do: swimming in cool, clear lakes; enjoying the few months of real sunshine; sleeping until noon or even later; or just hanging out and being, well, a teenager. Instead, Stacie and her tight-knit group of about 20 friends spend a lot of their waking hours putting up yellow ribbons — signifying a safe return — for one friend who isn't with them. Leah Freeman, also 15, has been missing from her Coquille home since June 28. Coquille is located in southwest Oregon, about 15 minutes from Coos Bay.

Leah disappeared while walking home from a friend's house and law enforcement agencies across the state have been searching for the high school sophomore.

A pair of shoes believed to be Leah's have been found in two separate Coos County spots, 13 miles apart, but positive identification of who owned the shoes has not been made.

Before you ask yourself, "What does a story about Leah Freeman have to do with me, with Eugene or the University of Oregon?" think for a minute. Maybe you have a sister, a niece, a daughter or even a friend that age. When a 15-year-old — or any person who is loved by many — is missing, the story affects us all.

Stacie first contacted the Emerald about two weeks ago with information about Leah, with calls already made to The Register-Guard and lo-

### COMMENTARY Jack Clifford

cal TV stations. She didn't know where this newspaper is delivered or how many people might actually read it. That didn't matter to her, she said, because Stacie just wants people to know who Leah is and that she could be out there somewhere.

Stacie moved to Junction City almost four weeks ago, and Leah, her best friend since grade school, was the last person Stacie saw in Coquille before she left town.

"I always encourage everyone to not give up hope until the very end," Stacie said Friday, while sifting through photos of Leah at a Junction City restaurant.

While going over traits she wanted to highlight about Leah, Stacie's demeanor didn't change much. The gravity of the situation is evident while she talks, but at the same time, there are glimmers of optimism because Stacie speaks about Leah in present tense.

"Daisies are her favorite flower," Stacie said at first, then listed about 30 other personal characteristics about Leah. "She loves kids ... Leah cries whenever she read my poems ... She hates her toes and whenever she wears sandals, she curls her toes ... She loves to stuff as much food as possible into her mouth ... She has a great sense of humor ... She always has good comebacks."

It's when Stacie is talking about the possibility of a worst-case scenario that she strays from the optimistic outlook.

"I don't even know how to explain this, but I always knew that I was going to lose a friend, but I thought it would be in a car wreck," Stacie said. "Ever since she's been gone, I keep thinking of the things that we've done. If I see her again, I'm going to tell her that I love her."

Sometimes those of us who made it through our teens relatively unscathed when it comes to dealing with trauma forget exactly how much perception we were actually capable of back then.

These days, in regards to teens, it's so simple on occasion to dismiss what they may be experiencing as passing emotions.

"Older people don't doubt that there are deep emotions with teens, but they doubt that we learn from it," Stacie said.

Leah's mother, Cory, has seen the outpouring of feelings and emotions from her daughter's friends. While Cory can barely talk about the situation without crying, she senses the impact that this case has had on not just the Freeman family, but on Stacie and her friends as well.

"Everybody loves Leah; it's impossible not to," Cory said Monday in a phone interview from her home in Coquille. "Everybody misses her."

Police in Coquille immediately called this case an abduction, Stacie said. Leah has never run away from home before, and she wouldn't let

### Description of Leah Freeman and contact information

Leah is 5-foot-2, 105 pounds, she has blonde hair, with green eyes and she wears braces. She was last seen wearing a white tank top and blue jeans.

Anybody with information can call the Coquille Police Department at 541-396-2106 or 396-2114 after 4 p.m. Cory Freeman can be reached at 541-396-4027.

SOURCE: The Freeman family

people worry like this. Stacie even speculates that Leah knows her abductors, but then again, in a town the size of Coquille — approximately 4,200 residents — everyone usually knows everyone else.

That sense of small towns being safe slips away each time that a Leah Freeman turns up missing. And the reality of what awaits Stacie and her friends in adulthood is just made all that much clearer.

"I've been a lot more careful about what I do," Stacie said. But not all innocence is lost in these circumstances. "I've also learned to tell people how I feel about them because it is really important."

The Freeman family is offering a \$10,000 award for information that leads to Leah's safe return.

Jack Clifford is the Emerald's editor in chief. He can be reached at ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

### Letters to the editor

**Candidates offer little hope**  
At the risk of sounding sycophantic toward Bret Jacobson [ODE, July 11], I agree that Al Gore should not be president. My policy radar, however, is not tracking Jacobson's logic when he claims that Gore advocates a "socialistic, ecologically-driven agrarian state." Perhaps I'm suspicious of decoys lately ... straw man arguments. Both major candidates are easy targets for criticism; Jacobson busily salutes the flag of private enterprise, remaining silent about our dismal options.

He claims that a socialized health care system would undermine "the pioneering spirit" and doom our "prosperous" nation to the fate of our "European counterparts." I can assure him that life in rich, western European countries (our "counterparts"?) is just fine — despite 11 percent unemployment. Citizens there live longer (78 years to our 76), and more literate (99 percent to our 97) and work fewer hours than U.S. citizens. Tuition at most German universities consists of a flat fee per semester: 160 DM (about \$80).

To quote George W. Bush: "America must close the gap of hope between communities of prosperity and communities of poverty ... You see, instead of helping cope with their need, we will help them move beyond it."  
[Ralph] Nader, anyone?

Todd Blevins  
Eugene

**Baseball binds generations**  
I, too, remember playing catch with my son in the backyard on a September day in 1998 ["Memories and baseball are the fields of dreams," ODE, July 13]. But it seemed more like an

hour — as there was a lot of "catching up" and "letting go" to do for each of us that day. And like the ball that passed between us, the past was held onto and then let go, forever linked to baseball. I just didn't know that the flight of the ball would find home plate 110 miles down the road. Thanks for remembering and catching me up again on why I like this timeless game of baseball.

Kyle Smith  
Beaverton

EDITOR'S NOTE: Kyle Smith is the father of Emerald associate editor Jeff Smith, who wrote the mentioned commentary.