

PERSPECTIVES

Editor in chief: Jack Clifford
 Managing Editor: Jessica Blanchard
 Newsroom: (541) 346-5511
 Room 300, Erb Memorial Union
 P.O. box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
 E-mail: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

EDITORIAL EDITOR: MICHAEL J. KLECKNER opededitor@journalist.com

COLLEGE: enjoy it or get out



**DIARY OF A
MALCONTENT**
MICHAEL J. KLECKNER

I have to say, all occasional whining aside, I'm really pretty happy with my education at the University so far. I've found my major courses, in journalism and philosophy, to be generally on target and rewarding. In the places where I felt the curriculum wasn't what I expected or wanted, I was often able to do extra work or tailor an assignment to fit my academic desires. In the extracurricular sphere, the University has offered plenty of opportunities, even if I haven't participated a lot.

There's really only one thing that continues to make me all puffed up with indignation. Or maybe it continues to depress me. The least satisfying aspect of my college career has been the remarkable sense of ennui I've seen in my fellow students. Ennui (pronounced ON-WEE), for those of you who have never been inspired to learn the word, comes from the French circa 1732, and it means "a feeling of weariness and dissatisfaction," according to my Webster's Dictionary.

Perhaps it's a little dramatic to use "ennui" to describe today's college students. It would certainly be a generalization to say that all students are bored and dissatisfied. There are some high achievers out there, and they can read this column and sympathize with me. But a healthy percentage of the stu-

dents I sit in classes with seem as if they would really rather not be bothered.

I have to ask, what's up with this crap? This is an institution of higher learning. Yes, it's imperfect, but it is attempting to follow a fine tradition of creating the mentally elite. I'm perhaps a little old-fashioned about this, but I believe there is a difference between having job skills (god forbid that's all college is for) and being a civic-minded, well-rounded citizen.

Unfortunately, it seems like many of the kids I have to put up with in classes couldn't care less about being a citizen or thinking about or interacting with the social discourse. The attitude instead is, "Well, I can slog through this class and the next, and then I'll have my degree and I can get a good



job, and the worthwhile part of life will come later." This attitude doesn't work, and it's pathetic.

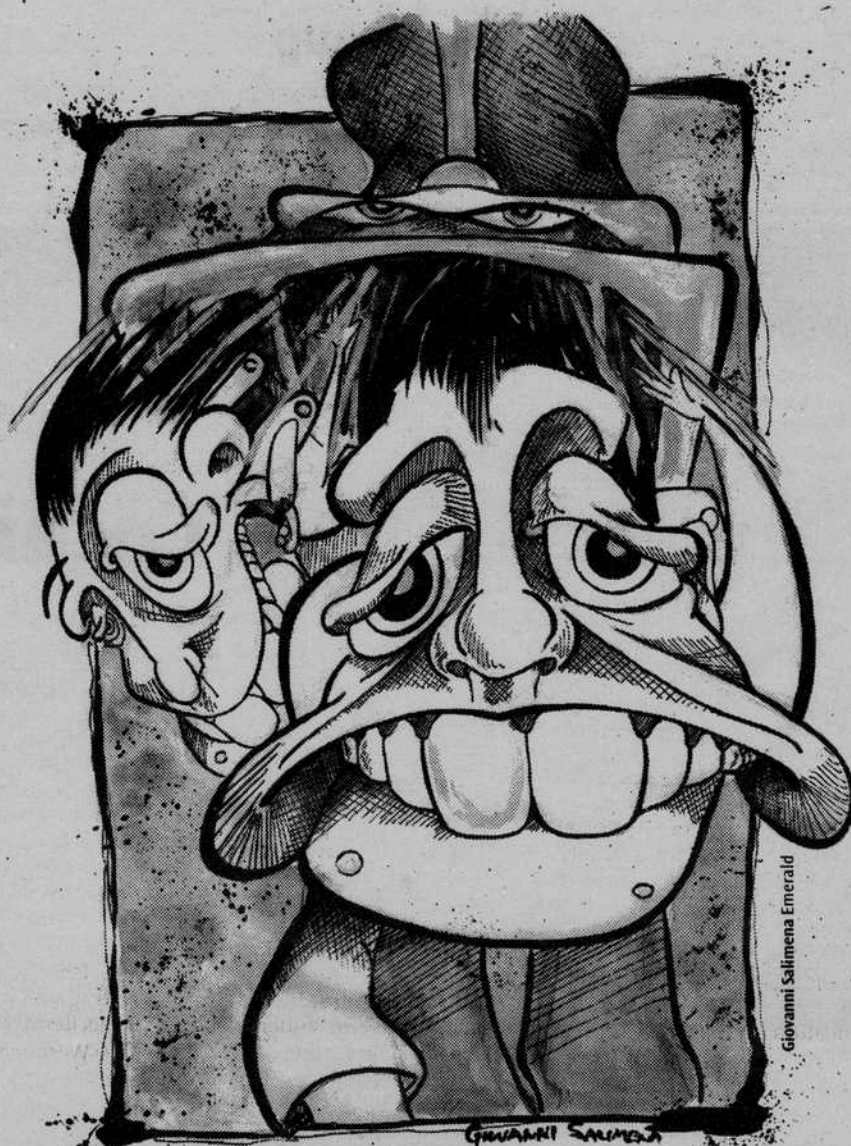
Years ago, when I graduated from high school and was living in the Big Apple, all eager and excited to begin studying acting at New York University, I had an epiphany, of sorts. My high school friends and I were miserable. New York was unpleasant, the daily grind of city life was more like a high-powered, industrial-strength food processor, and we desperately wanted to feel like something we were doing was fulfilling.

After a long weekend of drinking

coffee and talking and yelling and crying, we decided to get out. College in New York wasn't for us at that time. We didn't want to spend years of our lives hoping the fulfillment would come someday. What a waste, we thought. Shouldn't people be doing things that make them feel fulfilled today, right now?

I realized that if I put off a sense of contentment in my life until after college, it wouldn't end there. I would get an entry-level job and have to put off contentment even longer. Once I moved up the ladder and had more responsibility, I would still be waiting for that excitement, that joie de vivre (another contribution from the French, this time from 1889, meaning a "buoyant enjoyment of life"). Ultimately, satisfaction would never come, because we would always be living in anticipation of it and never working to make it happen now.

I hate to sound like the old man who scolds the youngsters for living poorly, but guess what? I'm older than you and I know better. If you spend every day thinking your classes are drudgery, you will have a job that feels like drudgery. You will have a life that feels like drudg-



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

ery. Maybe when you're old and retired, you'll finally find life fulfilling. That's not too likely, actually. My guess is you'll end up middle-aged and pathetic, like the guy in "American Beauty." What a waste.

My motives for writing this are not to get everyone to drop out. The University needs its tuition dollars. But for students who mope and whine their way through classes, I have this to say: Get out! Stop wasting my time and money. Stop holding back the learning by asking stupid questions because you were too lazy to read the assignment. Stop acting like spoiled brats who think they deserve a cakewalk through college and a cakewalk through their careers and a cakewalk through life. You don't deserve it. You have to earn it.

I'm sure the above rant doesn't apply to most of the students on campus. Really. And the soft side of the rant is that it would be in the

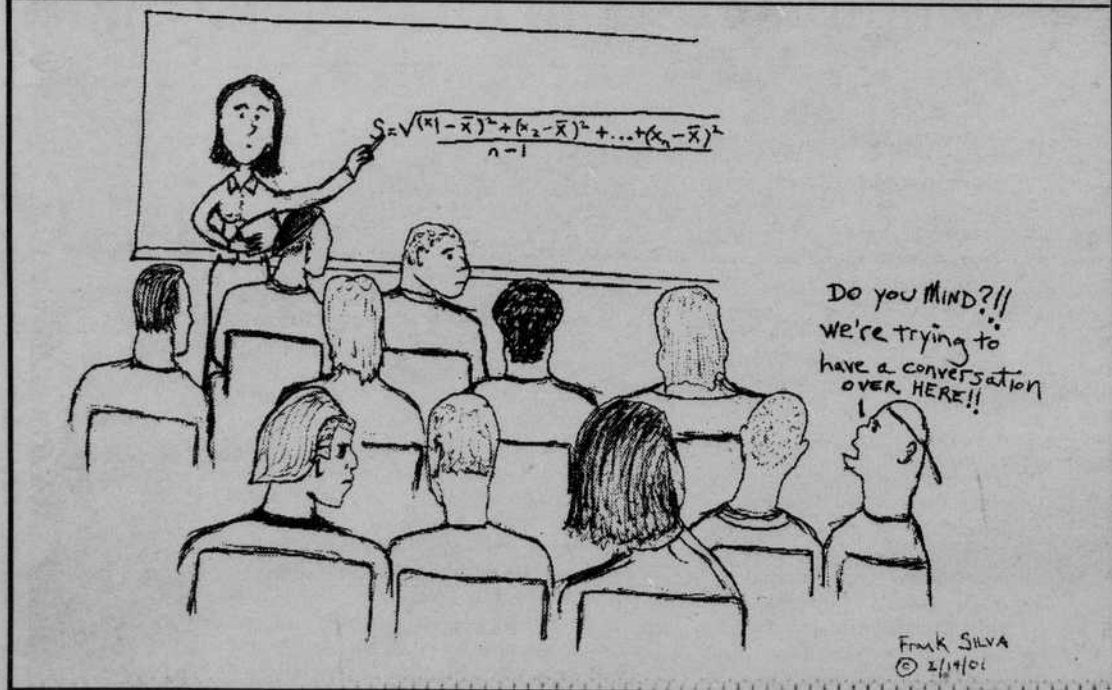
best interests of the dissatisfied students to get out. Go play and party and live life for a while. Come back when you're interested in something.

Because the funny part is, if one does live in the moment, and expects fulfillment now, and actually works to realize that fulfillment, things are easier and more rewarding at the same time. Life doesn't have to be drudgery. Thinking and being engaged in the world around us are fun, if one has the knowledge to understand the world and critically evaluate it. And then ennui can be simply a fun affectation to put on. Combined with an education, a sense of elitism and a black turtleneck, ennui can actually be a satisfying part of life.

Michael J. Kleckner is the editorial editor for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached at opededitor@journalist.com.

Leftfield

Frank Silva



Letters to the editor

Candidates with the right stuff

I am writing in an effort to share my opinion about the upcoming ASUO elections. I cannot tell you how pleased I was to learn that Nilda Brooklyn and Joy Nair are running for ASUO Executive. These two women provide the insight and experience that are necessary for a successful governing student body. They will create an environment in which all students can excel by working with the surrounding community, as well as with state legislators and campus administration

to make higher education accessible to all. Nilda and Joy will also work to protect student control of student fees so that all programs continue to be regulated by and for the students.

I'd like to thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I hope that by the time the election rolls around, everyone remembers that Nilda and Joy are the candidates with the experience and leadership to establish a student government that works for the good of all students.

Megan Hughes
freshman
pre-journalism