

# PERSPECTIVES

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## A new baby BOOM!

**B**y six o'clock Easter Sunday, I was in dire need of a nap. My muscles ached, my eyelids felt heavy and my bed seemed like an oasis. What had caused this state of exhaustion? A late night finishing up homework? No. Working a 13-hour shift waiting tables at the restaurant where I'm employed? No. The source of my physical and mental exhaustion was the afternoon spent with my family and, specifically, a small mass of children with a seemingly endless supply of energy.

My 8-year-old brother and four little cousins (ages 6, 7, 8 and 9) bounded from one activity to the other while my older cousins and I supervised and tried to catch up on the progression of our lives since the last family get-together. Overseeing the placement of candy and nickels and dimes into the plastic Easter eggs was a short-lived activity, as the kids' attention spans waned quickly and the giant trampoline beckoned to them.

Outside, I held my breath as the young'uns bounced crazily, and I hoped none of the flying little bodies would collide or fly right off the trampoline. Their jumping soon turned into a game of dog pile, and it seemed time for me to interrupt before someone got hurt. Of course, my presence on the trampoline failed miserably in terminating the game; instead, I turned into the subject of the dog pile. Pinned underneath five little kids, all laughing and pinching me, I seriously wondered how I was going to make it through the Easter-egg hunt with both eyes open.

Somehow I survived, and after my nap, I reflected on the day, wondering how parents find the energy to raise young children. I find that my own life takes all my energy, and I still never seem to have the time I would like to do everything I need. Put a few toddlers into the equation, and it spells mass insanity to me. Not to say that I don't love

kids and plan on having a few (in about a decade), but how do young people cope with having children?

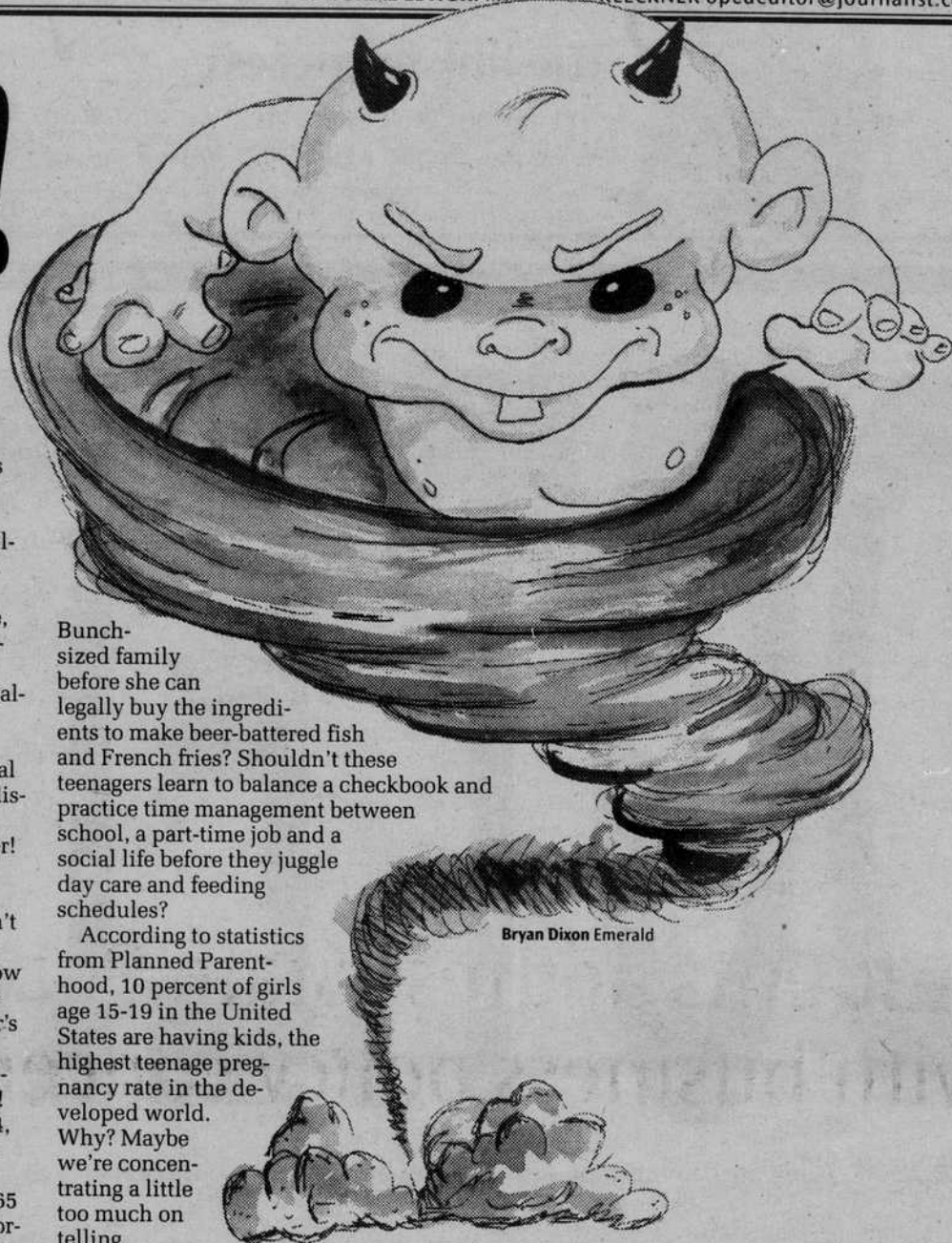
When I graduated from high school, roughly 20 girls out of my graduating class of 200 had kids — yes, at 17 or 18 years of age, I think they are still girls. Our school had its own day care center just for the children of students. Needless to say, the term "kids having kids" seemed to fit. These young adults, few even old enough to vote, were responsible for the life of another human being when most of them still relied upon their own parents. Most couldn't legally buy a cigar to smoke in celebration of their child's birth.

When discussing the subject with several friends, the tales I heard were even more disturbing. One friend knew a 31-year-old woman with a two-year-old granddaughter! Apparently, the "grandmother" had a daughter at age 14 or 15, and in turn, her daughter had a child at the same age. I don't buy the excuse that kids are more mature these days — if they were, they would know better than to have unprotected sex before they are old enough to drive with a learner's permit.

Another friend of mine has a niece, a 20-year-old girl, pregnant with her *fifth* child! Yes, at 20, she already has four kids, ages 4, 3, 2 and 1. To my understanding, she isn't trying to break the world record for child-bearing (currently held by a woman with 65 children), but practices a religion which forbids the use of birth control. I guess that the idea that premarital sex is also forbidden was forgotten.

Don't misinterpret my puzzling to be a message for abortion or adoption, because it's not. I'm asking a question. Why are these children (now parents) forfeiting their childhood and young adulthood?

Where have we, as a society, gone wrong when a young mother is raising a Brady



Bunch-sized family before she can legally buy the ingredients to make beer-battered fish and French fries? Shouldn't these teenagers learn to balance a checkbook and practice time management between school, a part-time job and a social life before they juggle day care and feeding schedules?

According to statistics from Planned Parenthood, 10 percent of girls age 15-19 in the United States are having kids, the highest teenage pregnancy rate in the developed world. Why? Maybe we're concentrating a little too much on telling teenagers not to have sex, not to have sex, not to have sex. It's pretty repetitious and obviously ineffective. Instead, we need to concentrate on promoting responsible sex.

After all, organizations such as the Student Health Center and Planned Parenthood don't distribute condoms just for freshman boys to blow up and pin to the walls of their residence halls.

Bryan Dixon Emerald

*Editor's note: As trampoline Professor Lani Loken-Dahle would attest, for no reason should there ever be more than one person on a trampoline, as this may result in severe injury or death.*

Rebecca Newell is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. She can be reached at rnewell@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

## Letters to the editor

### Despite change, things are the same

A gentleman doesn't read another gentleman's mail, no more than a solid citizen incarcerates an innocent person, yet civilized nations routinely spy on others for military security just as they once made slaves for economic reasons.

The best rationale is that our spy plane was over international waters, and the Atlantic slave trade was done on the open market.

Chinese fighter pilots, not liking the arrangement, harass American planes by flying under them and then suddenly popping up right in front. Americans of African descent similarly show their disapproval by getting riled up. This in-your-face attitude inevitably leads to clashes. Now it seems the Chinese want an apology and blacks want reparations.

Mechanization obviated the need for slaves. We now have the internal combustion engine, not to mention the jet engine. You know, the French have a saying which translates, "The more things change, the more they remain the same," but President Eisenhower just said, "There should be no hyphenated Americans."

Earl Gosnell  
Eugene

### CONTACT US!

The Oregon Daily Emerald welcomes and will attempt to print all letters on topics of interest to the University community. Letters are limited to 250 words. The Emerald may edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar, style and li-

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## Academia slowly crushed by athletics

### GUEST COMMENTARY

Richard Sundt

**T**he increasing tendency to place athletics over academics is distressing and evident on this campus. It may be true that scheduling athletic events during important academic times cannot always be avoided. But it is also true that when the University can avoid schedule conflicts, it doesn't. This is why the University Senate "scolded" the Athletic Department for setting the Civil War football game during Dead Week.

Avoidable too was the recent decision to institute post-season Pacific-10 Conference basketball play. Our University voted for it even though it interferes with finals. These actions are motivated by the relentless quest for dollars in order to meet rapidly escalating costs in everything from coaches' salaries to fielding 100-member football squads.

I was under the impression that the \$2 million annual subsidy given to athletics was needed to keep Oregon in Division I, but I was recently informed that this is not the case. So why does athletics need this revenue after having

signed generous TV contracts? According to the president, a competitive sports program is necessary in order to provide a "window" into the University, one that will draw students and donations to Oregon. This is a common administration refrain, but the amounts raised for academics since our last bowl game have yet to be announced.

It is evident that the Athletic Department can boast state-of-the-art facilities, but academics cannot make a similar claim. Disability access, space, staffing, etc., are ever in short supply, thus making it hard to be creative. University presidents must therefore summon courage and change strategies.

We should aim at making athletics unnecessary as a funding tool for higher education (if it is really that). This can be done if institutions cooperate to create a level playing field, one that allows each participant to focus on academics. The administration seems adept at finding ways to promote athletics, but the same entrepreneurial spirit does not spill into academics. The \$2 million subsidy for athletics could be making the University academically competitive. Academic departments can make each dollar stretch into 10!

The football coach's projected million-dollar salary, at my current pay, can fund

21.2 new professors. In my department we sorely need more faculty, as "performance indicators" comparing art history to the rest of the University demonstrate. For example, the average faculty-to-student ratio (in non-GTF-assisted courses) for the University is 19.3, but in our department it is 28.6.

In light of art history's performance, it is discouraging when a football coach who makes more than 20 times my salary can also get a \$98,000 bonus, twice my paycheck, for filling Autzen Stadium. I regularly fill the seats in my classroom, but don't receive or expect a bonus. Coaches say they are educators, but where is their educational ethos? In academics, we also don't get a \$10,000 bonus for graduating our students, but the football coach does if his players finish school.

I thought that whatever side of the Millrace one happens to occupy, graduating students was part of everyone's mission and therefore not subject to rewards beyond the satisfaction of knowing that we have met our responsibilities. Let us begin by narrowing the gaps between academics and athletics and aim for academic competitiveness.

Richard A. Sundt is an associate professor of art history at the University.