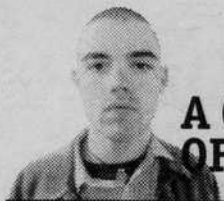


# PERSPECTIVES

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## May the **FORCE** be with you



### A CAULDRON OF IDIOCY

AARON MCKENZIE

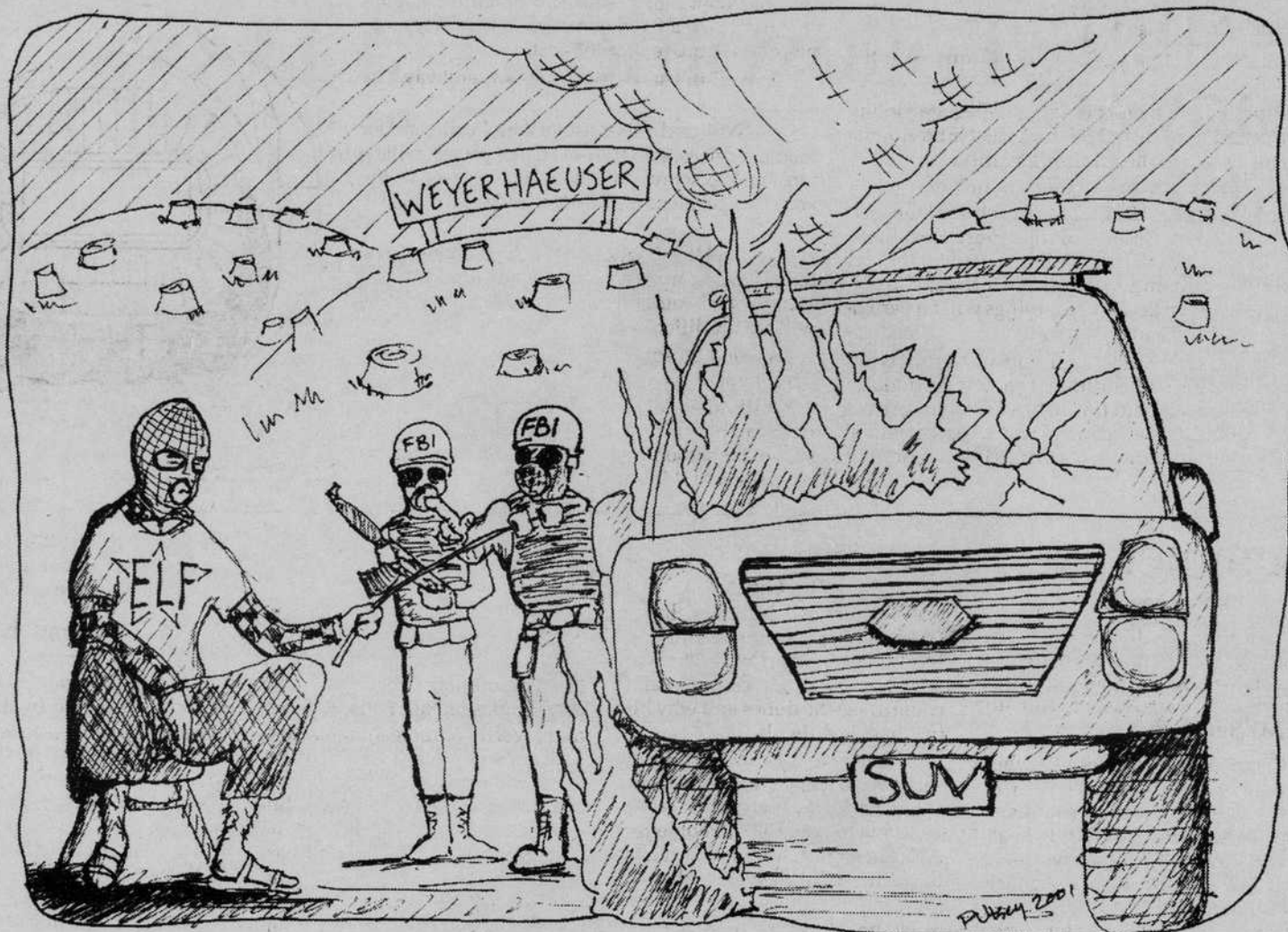
Well, goodness. The phantom Earth Liberation Front strikes again. Universities, Eugene car dealerships, hybrid tree farms — and now logging trucks. The Register-Guard noted on Saturday that no one has been hurt in ELF's four-year "spree." Maybe they've been up to some "zany antics," but our trusty Federal Bureau of Investigation has seen fit to label this group a terrorist organization, when really, each word fits neither of those labels.

ELF has no official membership roles, nor is it directed by a centralized leadership. It consists, rather, of small, independent groups; it's hardly an "organization" as students of the King's English would define it. As to the "terrorist" moniker, let's face it: Terrorism, as it is defined by our government and media, is merely something that hurts your stock options. Calling Ezra Pound an "elitist" would have flattered the man, and based on society's view of "terrorism," ELF may with gratitude receive the "terrorist" label (although the citizenry of our grand Commonwealth of Morons is surely swayed by such ignorant rhetoric to a negative view of the group).

OK, my bag's empty and the cat is nowhere to be seen. Insofar as the ELF exists on any tangible level, I applaud what they're doing. And why not? These folks have gumption, and they've saved a lot more trees and made our water that much better to drink in a mere four years than most futile, letter-writing souls could hope to salvage in a decade, or maybe two.

Remember that no one has been hurt over the course of this dastardly "spree" — and I refer, of course, only to physical wounds. A few wallets have been battered to be sure, but then, nothing hits the front pages like a lost dollar. To achieve political change — and I don't mean petty legislative concessions — a person or group must target some infrastructure, and if they do their job right, no one will be hurt or killed.

Terrorism, as Webster defines it, is simply



Peter Utsey for the Emerald

the use of violence to coerce a particular political outcome. Sounds like most military operations to me, but somehow the United States' bombings of foreign embassies, for example, always seems to escape the "terrorist" classification. Quite simply, the ELF isn't doing anything wrong. Rather, the problem is that we — you, me, all of us — have been led to believe that such acts are bad or, heaven forbid, illegal.

Come to think of it, Saturday was a news day of the first order. Directly above the ELF story was the main headline: "Timber firm lays off 235." Seems Weyerhaeuser didn't make quite enough profit last year, so it was compelled to distribute the infamous pink

slip to, among others, 140 Springfield workers, who only recently returned from an 18-day strike.

All of which has question marks dancing in my head. Weyerhaeuser can wreck our forests and then proceed to wreck the lives of its workers, and yet, the ELF is suddenly the villain because someone destroyed one logging truck? Here's to "free enterprise" and its meat-grinder realities, I suppose, but I don't claim to understand such abject idiocy.

Granted, I'm not out there with the ELF — inasmuch as that's possible for anyone — leveling poplar farms or bombing logging trucks, but may the force nevertheless be with them. That someone was recently able to do \$1 mil-

lion worth of damage to those beastly SUVs at a local dealership deserves a hearty round of applause and drinks on the house. That was no "terrorist story"; that was a wonderfully heartwarming human-interest issue.

After all, it is you, me and our prospective progeny for whom groups like the ELF are working. May we all be able to drink clean water and visit a pristine wilderness area fifty years from now. If we are able to do so, make no mistake about it, we'll have the ELF and similar "organizations" to thank for it.

Aaron McKenzie is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached at awmckenzie@yahoo.com.

## Stop alcohol problems at the source

GUEST COMMENTARY

Mason Gummer

I am writing in response to the Beginning Underage Success Through Educational Diversion (BUSTED) program, which was featured in the Emerald ("BUSTED proves successful," ODE, June 5). While I think it's great that BUSTED is offered for \$35 as an alternative to a ridiculous \$250 minor-in-possession ticket, it isn't going to be telling us minors anything we don't know already.

Most kids have already been educated about the effects and dangers of alcohol in high school health classes or simply by virtue of living in a society of alcohol drinkers. We know drinking and driving causes accidents and is unsafe, we know alcohol loosens inhibitions, we know a person can die of alcohol poisoning if he or she drinks too much ... and yet we still drink.

The thing is, nothing is going to convince us minors that waiting another year or two will make any difference in our ability to drink responsibly, especially considering that the government/society deems those of us ages 18-20 responsible enough to vote and live on our own, not to

mention join the armed forces and learn to kill people, but yet we can't have a beer. It makes no sense.

It's simply human psychology that if you tell young people they can't have something, they're going to want it, particularly when they see older people using it. In much of Europe they have no minimum drinking age, and they also have fewer cases of alcoholism than the United States does. It's simple: If you take the forbidden mystique out of alcohol, then kids can no longer use it as a tool of rebellion and therefore won't be so apt to binge drink. Kids should be educated so they know how alcohol will affect them and how it can be dangerous, but forbidding it will only make them idolize alcohol more.

Did anyone have much of a problem getting alcohol when they were in high school? Does any minor in college now have any problem getting it? Half of my friends are 21. Am I supposed to watch them drink and wait a year and a half before I join them because then I'll be responsible enough? Please people, let's stop making a big deal over drinking laws. They are pointless.

If you really want to stop kids from drinking, then change our culture to one where adults don't drink and kids have no example to follow. Otherwise, let it be.

Mason Gummer is a sophomore sociology major.

## Letter to the editor

### Harrington billboard shows backward priorities

If the University's Athletic Department can raise \$250,000 in private money from "six or eight key guys" to buy a huge billboard in New York City for three months touting Joey Harrington for the Heisman Trophy, then they clearly don't need a \$2 million annual subsidy from the University's general fund. (The Register-Guard, May 31 and June 4.)

To heck with phasing out this subsidy across four years, as the department reluctantly agreed to do recently. Cut them off right now! Then spend that \$2 million on faculty salaries, which are among the lowest among universities of comparable size and stature.

Don't get me wrong. I attend Duck sporting events and want to

see our teams do well, but the University should be investing its limited revenues in its core mission, not athletics. If the Athletic Department wants to buy frivolous billboards in New York City with donated money, that's fine, but then it shouldn't expect any University money for its programs.

Mike Bellotti may be a great football coach, but he's got it all backward when it comes to University priorities. In describing the importance of the 100-foot-tall billboard, he said, "We want to make a statement that if you come to Oregon and are an outstanding player for four years, we'll promote you equally or better than what anybody else would do."

Excuse me. Shouldn't the University be striving to make this kind of statement about its teachers, staff and students, not its "players"?

Kurt Willcox  
Eugene