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College fades into present



AARON K. BRENNIMAN

June 16, 2001: A date that will be remembered forever by everyone in the University of Oregon class of 2001. Will it resemble the joyous, sunny scene played out in movie after movie? And how will I find my cap after I throw it?

Inside or outside? I remember reading in last year's Emerald about Mary Hudzikiewicz, the woman who has planned and organized University graduation ceremonies for the past 28 years, standing out in her bright red dress, starkly contrasting the sea of green caps and gowns worn by the graduates. The ceremonies have almost always been held outside, mostly without rain — until that article. This year's ceremony will be held at McArthur Court, indoors for just the third time in the last three decades — and I guarantee it'll be 85 degrees and sunny.

I can still remember the day I set off to college. Everything I owned was packed into my Volkswagen GTI as I drove west in the direction of the rising sun. Alone, I set off for a new town, a new life and new friends on the other side of the Cascades. Central Oregon offered a perfect reprieve from the soggy and dark Willamette Valley.

I can clearly recall the first person I met and the conversation we had as we sat on the top of one of the cabins at one of those get-to-know-everybody-weekends on the grounds of a summer camp nestled near the base of Black Butte and smoked joints, silently and fearfully waiting for the four

girls who had returned for their forgotten jackets to leave the cabin so we could get down from the roof.

But now, nearly five years later, it's ending and I can't remember much of it. Sure, I can remember some things. Bend is close to the mountain, less than 20 minutes if you drive fast enough. Five nights a week of Deschutes Brewery kegs and drinking Jenga™ is not good for your GPA or your relationships. Eugene has too many hippies, too many hairy armpits, too much political correctness. I remember my first semester here I received a 1.65 GPA; the next one I earned a 4.1 — three As and an A+. I will always remember that people in Eugene — especially on this campus — will come out in droves to protest causes affecting oppressed people thousands of miles away, but fail to care at all about issues that directly affect them day in, day out.

Don't get me wrong, I've certainly learned a lot in college. Central Oregon Community College and the University have etched knowledge into my brain — knowledge I won't remember learning, but will retain forever.

The friends I've made and the lives I've touched, as well as those who have touched mine, will never be forgotten. But there are so many more people I've known, people I'll forget. Their memories are left only to surface with some random trigger, or a passing face, when for I moment I'll think "I know that person."

And now, nearly five years later, there's not a shot in hell all my stuff will fit into my car. Oh, how the shit collects. Each time I've moved, I've been forced to rent a larger truck and a larger storage unit. Books, memories, free furniture and other treasures that were merely someone's trash, couches handed down from moving

friends. Stuff is fun to have. Now, I wish someone would take it all, leaving me free to wander and discover who I want to be and where I want to be without the burden of physical possessions.

For now, however, I am forced to focus on the present. Eight days and counting until I am no longer able to mark the full-time student box (unless I can get my parents to keep investing money in me for graduate school — muchos gracias, madre y padre!). What memories I have had, here and in Bend, will fade into the past while I determine where my career path will take me.

I know I'll make it there; let's just hope it's sunny.

There's some advice I'd like to give to those of you so much less fortunate than myself that you'll be back here next year:

- Decide early on what you want to do; it'll save you time, money, 22-credit semesters, last-minute seminars and headaches.

- Attend weekend seminars. Easy credits, free drinks, long lunches.

- Register for classes as soon as Duck Call will allow. It's amazing how much better the semester will go when you choose the classes you want to take instead of settling for open classes.

- Don't live in a big house; you'll hate it when you have to move.

- Don't be that person who's always asking argumentative smart-ass questions of instructors. Everyone hates you even though you think you're smart and funny — you're not.

- Think about your future, because before you know it, it will be the present.

Aaron K. Breniman is the community editor for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached at aaronkyle72@hotmail.com.

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