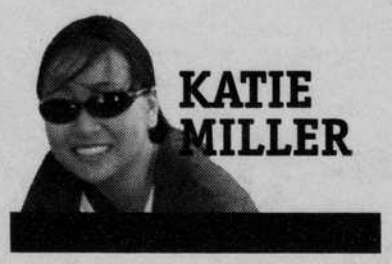
College makes life look like total cake, dude



KATIE MILLER

Swift like the flying bald eagle — that's what college was.

College was bits of incongruent smells and feelings that I can't even wrap my brain around to make a concrete memory. A faint feeling of afternoon bliss under a Eugene sun, heartaches in winter, the relief of spring, the endless drizzle from inside the walls of Allen Hall and the search for a light at the end of four years of hard work. In less than a week, the West Coast will be behind me and my new life as an intern with The Associated Press in New York City will begin.

Looking back on four years, there are friends that I know will be with me forever and others that I'll never see again. Love never requited and gratitude never expressed. Tear-induced laughter from nights on the front porches of 13th Street, and conversations that I could never forget from late nights at the Oregon Daily Emerald. I hope somewhere in the alleys and subways of New York City, I can find as much meaning and friendship as I have at the University of Oregon.

But college wasn't all warm, fuzzy memories. It's taken 21 years of heartache and sweat for me to begin to find the precious balance between sad and happy, work and play, and laughter and tears. Everyone has their own approach to life and mine has taken me to where I stand now, ready to suck it up and live life. Constant feedback from professionals and professors in journalism has made me realize that words are just words. It's how you use them that makes the difference.

Travels through the South Pacific and summers in sailboats on Puget Sound sought to shape me into a humble, curious person. There's nothing I would change about my experience at college — not even a hazy freshman year at the University of Hawaii filled with beer, sun, surf and occasionally a lecture or two. I took every failure and rejection and made it into a challenge to myself, and I made sure that each new task felt harder and more inspiring than the last.

And if it weren't for a strange indescribable obsession with newspapers, I wouldn't be able to move so easily forward through my mistakes every day without looming failure on my back. The pursuit of perfection every day on the pages of newspapers has made me realize that one mistake is not the end of the world. There is a new day behind each sunset, and in the grand scheme of the world, my job to inspire the uninspired first glances of eyes across words on newsprint means nothing.

It has been through working at the Oregon Daily Emerald that I've seen the University and the world change before my eyes. I've felt the bitterness of student accusations of misogyny and racism towards the paper. I've felt the unwelcome glances and words from other students of color because of my job at the Emerald. I've felt the frustration of trying to defend myself to students who vastly misunderstand and take for granted the role of a college newspaper. And I've turned my back to the idea of promoting diversity. Diversity is a word and concept that goes far beyond skin color and enrollment numbers. Diversity is an understanding of others' lives and embracing each person and their individuality.

At the back of everyone's mind, there are those prickly regrets that won't go away. Trivial regrets like my D- in Communication Ethics, friends I never kept in touch with, my choice of roommates my junior year and too many beer-soaked nights of fun to ever stay awake through any of my fall term classes. And there are bigger regrets that I will remember for the rest of my life, but it is in those regrets that mistakes are marked forever and, I hope, never repeated.

So while I un-twine myself from my identity of student, I'm thankful for the experience of college life and ready for a life free from term papers, roommates, textbooks, and begin to prepare for the easy stuff in life, because anything should be easier than graduating from college.

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Senior's last term paper makes her remember the joy

CAROL RINK

It happened two weeks ago. I was sitting at my computer during the wee hours of the night, attempting to write a paper based on some book I had barely skimmed through. With a freshly brewed cup of coffee in hand, a Moby CD blaring through my headphones and less than seven hours to both start and finish something worthy of a passing grade, I realized something great.

This was the last paper I had to write during my college career.

I was actually going to graduate, and the thought caught me totally off guard. I couldn't help but remember all the other times I had been sitting at my desk doing this same thing — procrastinating until the last minute and finding anything else to occupy my time instead of just buckling down and getting my work done. I was thinking of the hundred other things I'd rather be doing at 2 a.m. on a Wednesday night — pounding beers at Max's, catching a late-night flick at the Bijou, playing guitar until my fingers hurt. Hey, at that point I would have even settled for cleaning my room or watching the Juiceman Juicer infomercial again.

But instead of becoming immediately overjoyed with happiness, these thoughts made me nostalgic. All of you seniors out there know what I'm talking about, right? It's the feeling you get when you realize everything about the past four years of your life is going to change. It's the feeling you get when you watch everyone pick up the fall 2001 class schedule at the bookstore and realize you can spend your quarters on parking meters instead. It's the feeling you get when you discover you'll actually have to pay to see Duck football and basketball games next season.

Don't get me wrong. This doesn't mean I don't want to graduate. I'm counting down the days like a 6-year-old the week before Christmas. I get jittery just thinking about walking across the stage at the commencement ceremony. But graduating from college means more to me than just receiving a diploma for all the work I've done (or maybe I should say should have done). I'm graduating with many great memories, too.

I'll always remember meeting

Turn to **Rink**, page 7B

Where do we go after the Oregon Daily Emerald?

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