

A letter about the better days



PEZ SEZ
SCOTT PESZNECKER

Dear Mirjam:
If only you could see me now.
I graduated winter term, and stayed with my mom in Portland for a couple months. Last Monday, I started interning for The Bend Bulletin, and soon I'll mail out my first job applications.
But, on the brink of my adult life, here I am, back at the ODE newsroom.
I'm sitting in the production office on Sunday afternoon, where I can't hear the newsroom chatter, or other keyboards clicking, or phones ringing, or play-by-play from the Mariners' game.
Back here, it's just me, my thoughts and this column. This "Pez Sez."

My last one.
I still can't believe that it's over. In my three years at the Emerald, I wrote hundreds of stories and conducted approximately one thousand interviews. Not to mention all the Game Day supplements, sports events and near-disasters on deadline. Unbelievable.
And then there were all the hardships I faced. Like that last-chance interview I had with The Oregonian — the internship I'd sought all through college — only to be turned down, because I wasn't "focused" enough.
Since handing over that scantron sheet in my last final exam, I did what I could to keep writing. I wrote freelance stories for a couple of newspapers around Portland, and now I've got my summer internship going. Unlike my college days, I've had plenty of time to run, work out and sleep. Heck, I even have enough money for three meals a day.
Mirjam, you graduated a couple years ago. Tell me, will life ever hold as

much discovery as the last four years did? Will any home be as confiding as the off-white walls of this newsroom?
I hope life does, and I hope some place will.
For now, though, it's on to the great wide open. College made me strong, but the Emerald made me stronger. Whatever comes my way, I know I'm ready to handle it.
It's like Register-Guard sports columnist Ron Bellamy once wrote: "It's a funny thing about destiny. Sometimes it taps you on the shoulder, ready or not, and says: 'Now's the time. Now's your chance. Take your best shot.'"
Wish me luck, 'cause here I go.
-Pez
Editor's note: Mirjam Swanson was sports editor at the Oregon Daily Emerald in the winter and spring of 2000. She graduated in June 2000 and now works for the Glendale News-Press in Glendale, Calif. Scott Pesznecker is the former assistant sports editor of the Emerald. He can be reached at pezsez1@hotmail.com.

Thanking all those little people

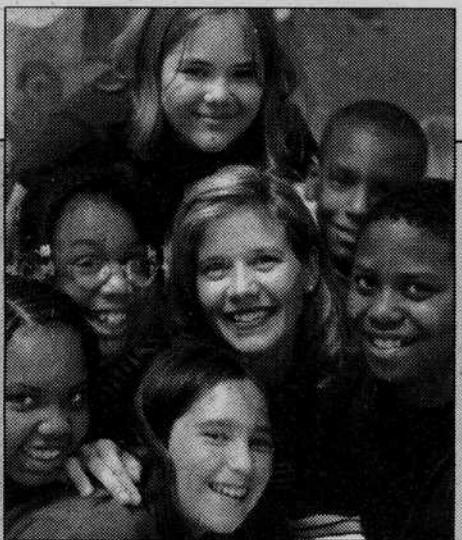


THE HOME STRETCH
ROBBIE MCCALLUM

As I look back upon my brief career on the Oregon Daily Emerald sports staff, I am reminded of the many underrated sports at this school.
As the Oregon Commentator pointed out in its final issue of the year, we at the sports desk cover sports that "nobody gives a damn about" and we "pretend readers actually care about that crap." Many of the sports they mentioned were my beats.

Yes, I covered all forms of track and field, wrestling, cross country, men's and women's tennis, and even soccer, golf and women's basketball.
While our friends at the OC laugh it up, I would like to give some credit to all of the under-appreciated people in the small-time sports at Oregon.
Men's and women's tennis coaches Chris Russell and Jack Griffin have two of the toughest jobs in the athletic department. They are given meager funding and continue on even without a Chris Russell Show on 4:30 p.m. Sunday on KEZI. Even though they are busy guys, Russell and Griffin always made time for an interview.
Oregon tennis players put in just as much work as the football and basketball players, but they never get the credit.

Some even more underrated people in the biz are sports information directors. Not only do SIDs travel to and write a story about every single competition of the sport they are assigned to, but they never get any credit for it. They do a great job of compiling statistics and figures that reporters just eat up. Thanks for everything SIDs... even Geoff Thurner.
So the next time the football team is out of town, and the basketball teams are playing Australian touring teams, head on out to the Student Tennis Center and think about all the people that go into bringing you college athletics and, of course, the Oregon Daily Emerald.
Robbie McCallum is a sports reporter for the Emerald. He can be reached at coach_robby@lycos.com.



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