



**When 'The Animal' won't do**  
Emerald staff members pick their favorite movies for a lazy summer day. **PAGE 5**

**The best words and guitar**  
Mr. Lang celebrates Time Magazine's choice for 'best American rock band.' **PAGE 6**

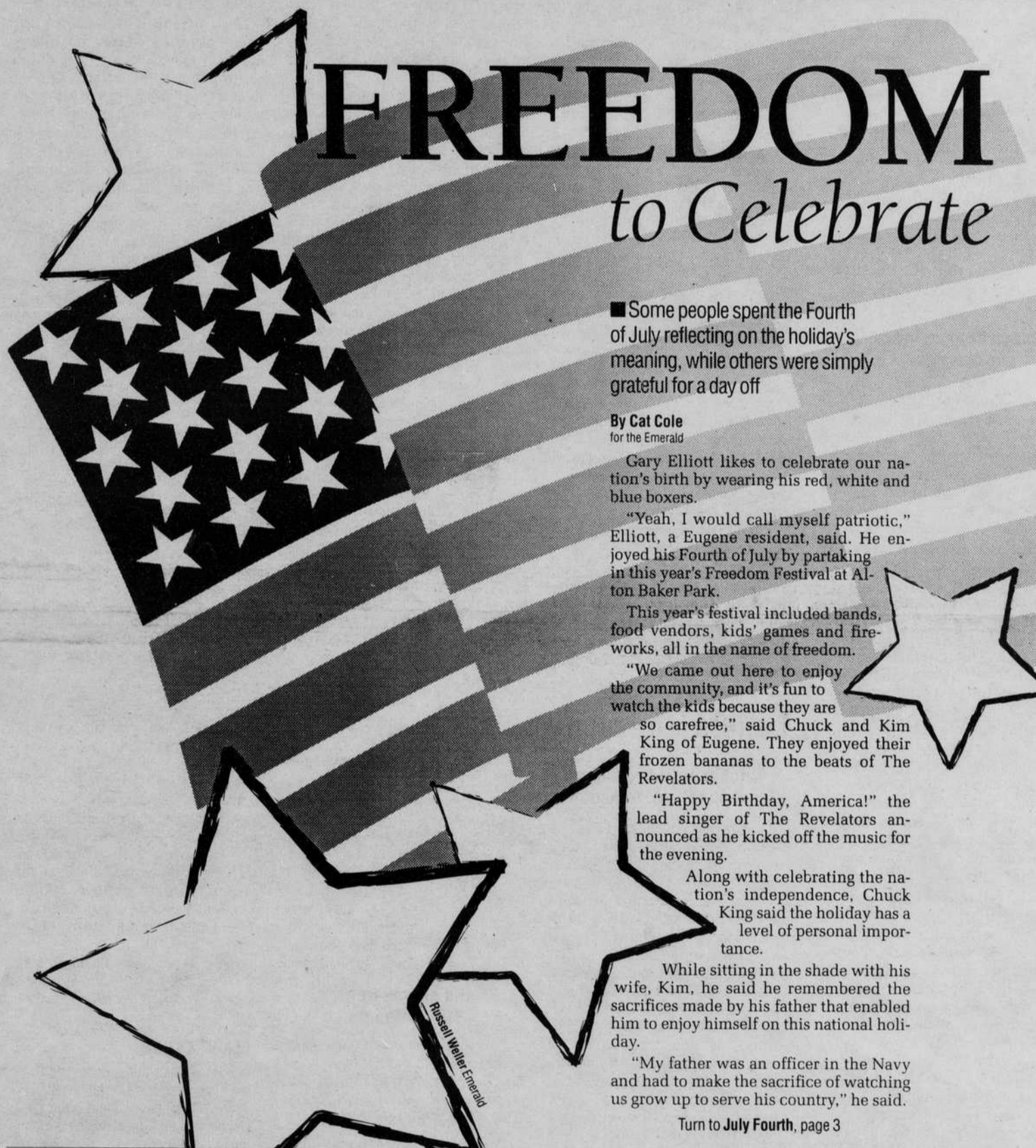


An independent newspaper

# Oregon Daily Emerald

http://www.dailyemerald.com

Thursday, July 5, 2001      SINCE 1900      UNIVERSITY OF OREGON      EUGENE, OREGON      Volume 103, Issue 4



## FREEDOM to Celebrate

■ Some people spent the Fourth of July reflecting on the holiday's meaning, while others were simply grateful for a day off

By **Cat Cole**  
for the Emerald

Gary Elliott likes to celebrate our nation's birth by wearing his red, white and blue boxers.

"Yeah, I would call myself patriotic," Elliott, a Eugene resident, said. He enjoyed his Fourth of July by partaking in this year's Freedom Festival at Alton Baker Park.

This year's festival included bands, food vendors, kids' games and fireworks, all in the name of freedom.

"We came out here to enjoy the community, and it's fun to watch the kids because they are so carefree," said Chuck and Kim King of Eugene. They enjoyed their frozen bananas to the beats of The Revelators.

"Happy Birthday, America!" the lead singer of The Revelators announced as he kicked off the music for the evening.

Along with celebrating the nation's independence, Chuck King said the holiday has a level of personal importance.

While sitting in the shade with his wife, Kim, he said he remembered the sacrifices made by his father that enabled him to enjoy himself on this national holiday.

"My father was an officer in the Navy and had to make the sacrifice of watching us grow up to serve his country," he said.

Turn to **July Fourth**, page 3

## Student loan rates plummet

■ The interest rate on federally funded student loans has fallen to its lowest point since the 1960s

By **Kara Cogswell**  
Oregon Daily Emerald

For students looking for a way to finance their college education, now may be the time to consider borrowing money from the federal government.

On July 1, the interest rate on federally funded student loans dropped from 8.19 percent to 5.99 percent. That's the lowest interest rate to be offered since the student loan program began in the 1960s, said Joe Aiello, spokesman for the United States Department of Education.

Students who are still in school will receive a slightly lower interest rate of 5.39 percent.

The new rates apply to all loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 1998. But students who took out loans out before then may also be able to benefit from the new rate through a process of consolidation, which locks in the interest rate of all loans at one rate.

The lower student loan rate this year is a result of low interest levels on 91-day treasury bills, which are used as a benchmark for determining interest on student loans. The Federal Reserve lowered interest rates on the treasury bills as part of a plan to speed up the economy.

This option of converting interest rates on previous loans to one permanent fixed rate has many people encouraging students to consolidate their loans this year.

"It's basically an opportunity for students to consolidate their loans and lock in at the lowest rate we've seen in a long time," said Joelle Lester, the interim executive director for the Oregon Student Association.

About 7,000 University students received student loans during the 2000-01 school year, Student Financial Aid Director Elizabeth Bickford said.

The new rates are a good opportunity for students, she said, as long as they understand the terms of the loan repayment plan.

Typically, students began making loan payments six months after they graduate and have ten years to finish repayment. If they consolidate their loans, they can spread out the payments over a greater number of years, Bickford said.

This can have both positive and negative consequences for students, she said. Students who consolidate now would benefit from being able to fix the interest rates on their loans at the new low rate.

But even with the lower interest, they could end up paying more if their payments are spread out over a longer period of time, she said.

Turn to **Loans**, page 4

## Eugene tops list of worst places for allergy sufferers

■ The Willamette Valley is a tough place for allergy sufferers to live this week, even as grass season winds down

By **Darren Freeman**  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Eugene is the worst city in America for allergy sufferers to live this week, according to Surveillance Data, Inc., a research company that tracks airborne pollen concentrations across the nation.

Salem and Portland placed second and third, respectively, in the survey, which ranks cities based on the percentage of people likely

to be affected by airborne pollen.

This is probably no surprise to those who sneezed and coughed their way through Fourth of July outdoor celebrations.

Still, it's not common for Eugene to top that list, said Peter Jensen, Surveillance Data's vice president.

"Other places that would be worse aren't as bad," he said. Allergy season — or more accurately, allergy seasons — comes in three waves. In the spring, tree pollen constitutes the major allergen, in the early summer months grass pollen is most prominent and from late summer to early fall weed and mold pollen take over.

Now, grass season is giving way to weed season throughout most of the country. But in the Willamette Valley — home to Linn County, called "the grass seed capital of the world" — the end of grass season still means wheezing for allergy sufferers.

"It's bad, but we're in grass season now, while other things are dipping down," Jensen said.

Though area allergists say this year's grass season was no more severe than most, the University Health Center was so flooded with allergy sufferers in early June that it ran out of Opcon-A, an over-the-counter eye drop.

Demand "was strong through

the end of the term," Health Center pharmacist Julie Boffing said.

Judy Moran, a registered nurse at Allergy and Asthma Associates, said her clinic, like most in the area, has seen more business in recent weeks.

However, she expects wheezing to decline as grass season gives way to the more moderate weed season.

"We usually tell people who come in here with symptoms that the worst time for pollen is between Memorial Day and the Fourth of July," she said. "Usually people are feeling better by the first week of July."

Turn to **Pollen**, page 4