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COMMENTARY

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Wednesday, October 31, 2001

Editorial

Americans should turn to community this Halloween

With the threat of international terrorism on home turf, Americans should certainly take extra safety precautions this Halloween. But even though there are reports from the government of possible terrorist threats in the United States within the next week, citizens should not empower terrorists by letting threats instill fear in them. Local mall owners have claimed they will not open their doors to trick-or-treaters this season because they want to support neighborhood celebrations. Whether this is the real reason for the closure, or whether recent bogus e-mail threats about Halloween were the true cause of mall owners' reticence, we should all take our cue from the mall owners and focus our Halloween efforts on more community-oriented celebrations.

Community-based Halloween events have been on the decline in the last decade, mainly because of Americans' tendency to leave their own neighborhoods in search of safer, more controlled areas for children to trick-or-treat. It is time to change that trend. We need to return to our roots as a community-based society. America could choose to use the terrorist attacks to improve society — and getting to know one's neighbors is a good place to start. Neighborhood parties where revelers can safely enjoy the holiday are the most practical options for parents who have safety concerns for their children.

A community-minded Halloween is the best way for Americans to celebrate this time around. Just because the malls are closed doesn't mean the party has to stop. During this season, we should all be spooked by vampires and goblins — not by the specter of terrorism.

Editorial Policy

These editorials represent the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

Correction

In Tuesday's article on American Sign Language, "University student speaks out for sign language," University Academic Requirements Committee chairman Gail Unruh was incorrectly identified.

The Emerald regrets the error.

A whole new Halloween

It's been several years since I last wore a costume on Halloween, and it has been even longer since I've carved a pumpkin. Like most holidays, Halloween has gradually changed for me as I've grown older.

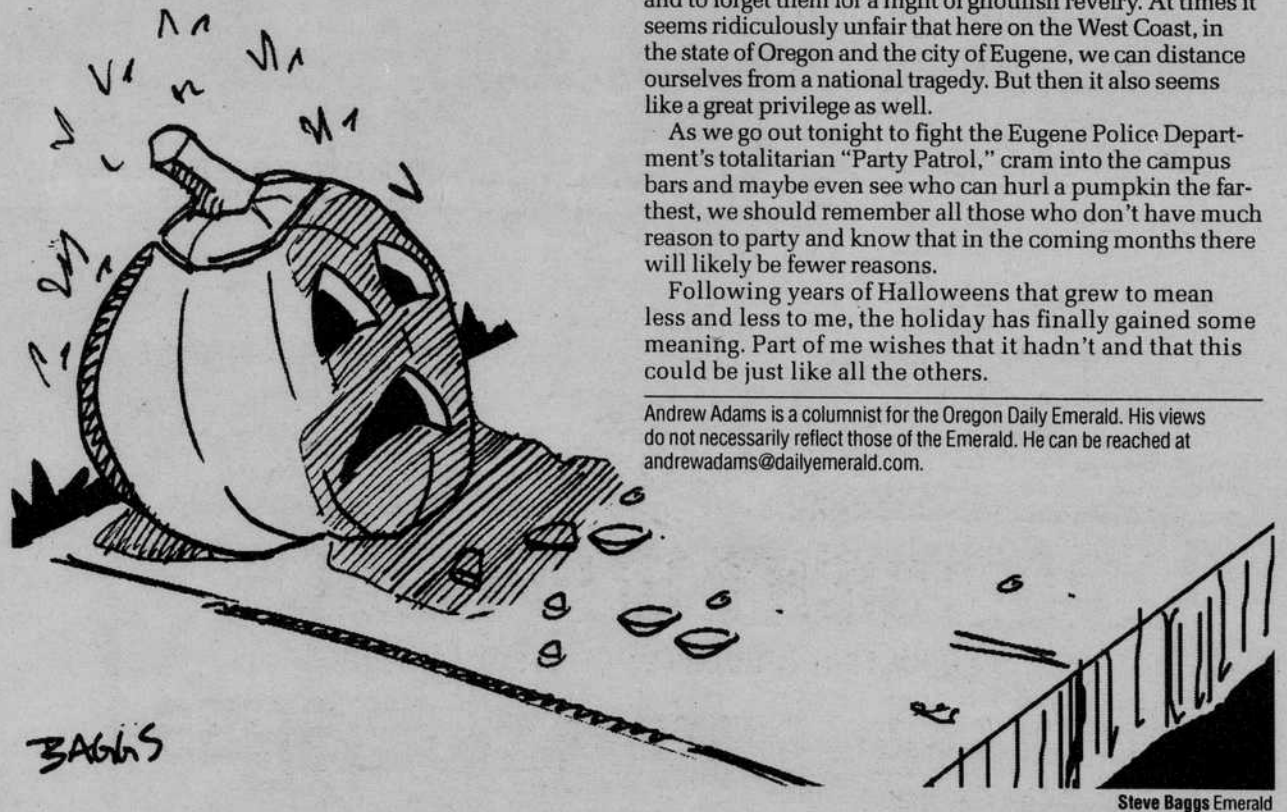
But even if my enthusiasm has waned during the years, this particular Halloween will likely be one I won't soon forget.

My first Halloweens were a time to get dressed up and score some candy. Then during adolescence and even the teenage years, it was about going out to smash pumpkins, throw eggs and cause other general mischief. Now that I'm in college, the Halloween night is usually spent drinking and partying, with some occasional mischief.

I don't look forward to Halloween like I used to either. The privilege of staying out late at night doesn't hold the same appeal as it did when I was younger. Now that I'm almost 22, Halloween is starting to feel like just another Friday night.



Andrew Adams
 Columnist



Steve Baggs Emerald

Except this Halloween. This one feels much different. All the others have gone by in a consistent pattern that has slowly evolved as I have grown. But now with a little more than a year left in my college experience, I'm struck with the fact that the next Halloween will be a new experience altogether. I wonder what I'll do then, when I'm out of Eugene and hopefully gainfully employed. I'll bet I probably won't be smashing many pumpkins.

Added to that is a prevalent sense of dread that has descended on everything these days. Perhaps "dread" is too strong of word, but as we move forward with our war against terrorism, we have some real things to be afraid of this Halloween. Anthrax, suicide bombings and maybe World War III are all things that I and the rest of this generation are going to have to deal with now and likely for some time in the future. It seems even more superficial to get drunk and wild when American servicemen are risking their lives to defend our national security — and when the threat of determined, concentrated anthrax attacks could likely hit a major subway system or large shopping mall in this country sometime soon.

But we in Eugene, myself included, will probably all do some sort of partying tonight. We have the luxury of being young and considerably removed from the probable horrors and to forget them for a night of ghoulish revelry. At times it seems ridiculously unfair that here on the West Coast, in the state of Oregon and the city of Eugene, we can distance ourselves from a national tragedy. But then it also seems like a great privilege as well.

As we go out tonight to fight the Eugene Police Department's totalitarian "Party Patrol," cram into the campus bars and maybe even see who can hurl a pumpkin the farthest, we should remember all those who don't have much reason to party and know that in the coming months there will likely be fewer reasons.

Following years of Halloweens that grew to mean less and less to me, the holiday has finally gained some meaning. Part of me wishes that it hadn't and that this could be just like all the others.

Andrew Adams is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald. He can be reached at andrewadams@dailyemerald.com.

Letters to the editor

U.S. government is hypocritical

Sean Walston generalizes about "peace activists," including calling them hypocrites ("Peace activists are hypocrites," ODE, 10/22). I don't categorize myself as a peace activist, but I'm against our government's action in Afghanistan. I agree there's no justification for committing terrorist acts. But hypocrisy arises when government leaders say they're waging war on terrorism. They should look in the mirror.

Our government has been responsible for more terrorist acts since WWII than any other government. Freedom and democracy aren't principles our leaders uphold. Our government has helped destroy popularly elected governments in Third World countries and supports Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine.

I don't blame people for being unaware of U.S.-sponsored terrorism. It receives no coverage in the U.S. media. People don't hear about things like the 1986 World Court indictment for unlawful aggression against Nicaragua (which our leaders ignored). They see no hypocrisy when our leaders condemn others' aggression.

Many people who had nothing to do with oppression perpetrated by our government died Sept. 11. They were innocents who didn't deserve this fate. It's also true for the people of Afghanistan. The majority don't like the Taliban and aren't terrorists. They're seeing their country bombed. They've done nothing to warrant it.

The attacks were committed by a group of individuals, not an entire country. It's hypocritical to claim to target a covert international group by bombing a country, especially when, according to the CIA, most of Osama bin Laden's operatives reside in Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Mason Gummer
 junior
 sociology

Energy conservation will send message

Did everyone forget about the shady energy fee that taxed students \$30 per term for energy use in instructional areas? Well, I didn't. I was reminded of the surcharge when I visited Portland State University and discovered that students were not taxed an energy surcharge.

I was shocked because PSU's energy cost increased by 52 percent, but students were not

taxed. How so, you ask? PSU administration involved students in an energy conservation plan aimed to alter the University's behavior when they anticipated rising energy costs.

It is now the time for University of Oregon students to show our administration that we can collectively save energy, thus saving \$1.5 million for students. We need to make the administration aware of our power and that we value our money. By conserving energy, we will demonstrate that involving students in the process in the first place would have been the best decision.

Joy Nair
 ASUO vice president

Government should invest in energy conservation

The energy problems in the Northwest and in California were caused by the coming together of several forces last winter. The solutions presented by the Bush administration are unacceptable. In a time when the country should be moving toward renewable energy sources, the Bush administration is moving toward unreliable, dirty, limited, unsustainable sources of energy.

More than 96 percent of U.S. energy comes

from harmful sources. Only 2 percent comes from clean, renewable sources. Air pollution causes smog, acid rain and is linked to millions of people afflicted with asthma. The 10 energy companies that control 42 percent of the energy production in our country reap big profits by limiting supply. In the 2000 election campaign, oil and gas companies gave more than \$32 million, and coal companies gave more than three million to campaigns. Of all federal energy subsidies, 80 percent go to oil, coal and nuclear energy. We, as individuals, need to take control of our energy future.

Our government should be investing in energy conservation and clean, renewable energy. Conservation is the quickest and cheapest way to reduce demand and save money. Each of us should be looking to conserve on campus and in our homes to lessen our environmental footprint. It's estimated that by 2020, one third of our energy could come from renewable sources. We should support this cause by signing up for programs such as EWEB windpower and voting for representatives who take this course. E-mail me or write your representative or senator.

Jacob Meyer
 senior
 biology