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COMMENTARY

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Friday, March 15, 2002

Yesteryear's Editorial

As They March Away

As the March sun's feeble rays attempt to warm the chill wind left over from winter, discerning coeds, ever quick to observe new fashion trends, have noticed an abrupt shift in "the" color indicated by style as "what is being worn this season."

The pastel hues of coed sweaters have replaced khaki as the dominant, most popular shade.

Yes, the soldiers have gone, most of them, and the rest will be on their way. At first it seemed strange to walk across a campus that was a cross between an army camp and a military school. It seemed strange to scurry out of the way of oncoming platoons, and to leap off the path and onto the grass when an unexpected

"To the left flank, HARCH" caught us unaware. The blare of bugles and the shouted commands of platoon sergeants and corporals disturbed the slumbering air of our quiet campus. The way our soldier classmates suddenly exploded from the ivy-sheltered halls at each 10-to bell was rather startling. Shoving our way into the Co-op for a between-class Coke and smoke

was almost impossible.

The whole campus was different and strange. We weren't sure if we were in a dream or a nightmare, but we knew our familiar campus as utterly changed as a dream world seems to someone who is sleeping. The camp has become a campus again. To be sure, there are a few engineers and area and language students around, and the air corps will be with us till May, but it's predominantly a civilian campus, just the same.

But — we're just never satisfied — the campus seems just as strange without the soldiers as it did at first with them. We miss them, our khaki-clad friends. Because after we got used to seeing so many uniforms, we began to look at the faces, and they were the same sorts of faces we had seen on our own former students. Then we realized that these soldier students were not very different from any other college students, and so they were our friends.

We'll remember lots of things about them. The personal things about the ones we knew, of course, but we'll also remember things about living in a soldier campus. We'll remember the sergeant who said "Hup hot HIT har, hup hot HIT har," and the little southerner who called out, "Lai-uft, raht, lai-uhft; lai-uft, raht, lai-uhft." We'll remember the way the columns, from a distance, looked like a giant, khaki-colored centipede. We'll remember the disconcerting "Eyes right" when a platoon passed a couple of coeds. We'll remember the Brooklyn, Bronx and Jersey accents. We'll remember the friendly grins and greetings which came from the ranks.

The ASTU men wrote their final grousings and farewell comments in the last edition of their paper. The air corps men waved bed sheets as a parting salute as the engineers marched through campus, down Willamette Street, and left Eugene and the University of Oregon. And the campus settled back into its familiar routine and quiet serenity, but somehow the old serenity seems rather empty. For they made a place for themselves here, our soldier-friends, and they will be missed.

This editorial was taken from the March 15, 1944, edition of the Oregon Daily Emerald.

Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries Policy

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

The headline for Thursday's story about an armed robbery on campus, "Student reports robbery attempt" (ODE, March 14, 2002), should have identified the victim as a Eugene resident.

Abstinence makes for better sex

GUEST COMMENTARY

Sara
Stewart

There are many errors in Dr. Sol Gordon's message, ("Love Doctor," ODE 3/4) but I would like to address two of them in particular. One is his idea that the abstinence philosophy has made sex dirty. That is simply not the case.

Waiting until you're married to have sex acknowledges the power, love and responsibility inherent in sex. It doesn't diminish the beauty and pleasure in sex. That is done by the casual sex philosophy that is so prevalent today. It reduces sex to a biological urge that has some pleasant emotional side effects and can be engaged in by anyone with no responsibility or commit-

ment required. And it does seem true that waiting does have positive effects on a marriage, despite his statement that "people say wait until you're married and you'll be happy, but that is not the case."

Statistics show that you are less likely to get divorced, have health problems or have problems in your marriage if you wait until you are married to engage in sexual intercourse. The support for this is literally too numerous to list here.

Secondly, his statement that the majority of marriages before the age of 22 end in divorce is misleading. It is true that the divorce rate is higher among young marrieds, but considering the divorce rate is roughly one in two, it doesn't take too much of a raise to say that the "majority" of marriages end in divorce.

This rate increase can be explained by, among other things, the "forced marriages" due to pregnancy or parental pressure, marrying to get out of an abusive family situation, and the complete lack of support that faces young married couples in particular and married couples as a whole.

How often have you heard

"Well, I got divorced, but I was young," as if young adults are incapable of making a marriage work, or as if age is an excuse for divorce?

Considering a couple "high risk" isn't the best foundation for their marriage. When troubles come, the younger couple is often told "Well, you were young and you made a mistake, so move on," instead of being encouraged to work through their problems.

In short, if you are looking for healthy relationship advice, and the truth about sex and marriage, you should probably look elsewhere.

Sara Stewart is a junior majoring in philosophy.

'Christian Morality' open to interpretation

GUEST COMMENTARY

Andy
Kohnen

Tara Carleton and Scott Britt read differently into the values upon which this country was founded because the opinions of historical figures, like the stories contained within any holy text such as the Bible, may be interpreted in a multiplicity of ways.

Carleton is able to infer that America was founded on Christian values because many of our "founding fathers" were indeed Christian and their ideas reflect their Christian values ("Welcome to the land of forgotten purpose," ODE, 3/11). Britt, on the other hand, is able to determine that our country is founded on values of religious freedom because this freedom, too, was an ideal valued by the founders of our country ("Bush's crusade is anti-American," ODE, 02/20). One's conclusion here is ultimately decided by the quotes one chooses to cite.

Regardless of the light in which one chooses to view the founding fathers, Carleton's call for our government to align with Christian morality is wholly inappropriate. First, there is no such singular entity as "Christian Morality." The Bible offers to its devotees a religion of kindness, peace, brotherhood and charity to those less fortunate, and righteous self-sacrifice. At the same time, depending on one's interpretation, the Bible advocates a culture of misogyny, patriarchy, homophobia, harmful subordination to authority and exaltation of man above the rest of nature, leading to destruction of the environment. In fact, many a racist has used the Bible to justify his or her ideology, declaring dark skin the mark of Cain. The essence of "Christian Morality" is in the interpretation one chooses, not the text itself.

Additionally, the views of the founding fathers and

that those principles are still useful or just today. This begs the question, "What values are appropriate for contemporary American society?"

America is a liberal democracy, meaning that our government enacts the rule of the majority through electoral representation while at the same time establishing rights for significant minorities (the question as to whether this form of government is appropriate is beyond the scope of this letter).

Furthermore, current American society is religiously pluralistic.

Thus, to protect the rights of all Americans, a distinct separation between church and state is wholly appropriate. This leads one to conclude that President Bush's Christian moralization of the state is not in the best interests of America, and is therefore un-American.

Andy Kohnen is a sophomore majoring in psychology.

Peter Utsey Emerald

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