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Adam Amato Emerald

Sophomore Brett Shelby packs a full load of safety gear in his Jeep in case of emergency, including a radio and cans of chili.

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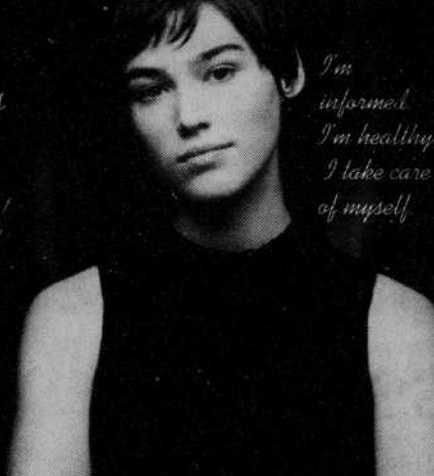
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Safety

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Travel safety

Some students will seek a change of scenery abroad. Bonaventure travel agent Demer Merrill said students must make sure all their documentation is in order before they travel. Merrill said it is vital to make copies of all travel papers, identification cards and credit cards in case they get lost. In addition, leave a copy of flight itineraries and contact numbers with family or friends, so they can contact you should the need arise.

Travelers must also remember new airport security rules enacted since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

"Don't take anything that can be portrayed as a weapon," Merrill said.

Only carry necessities in carry-on luggage, she said. People must also be prepared for random screenings and searches by airport personnel.

While abroad, Merrill advises students to be careful about their surroundings.

"Be alert," she said. "Don't make yourself stand out as an American overseas." She added even in countries like England where anti-American sentiments are not prominent, there may still be some people who may not be "friendly."

The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs also advises students to familiarize themselves with local laws and customs before

they travel, and to avoid reckless behavior that may endanger them or get them into trouble.

Road safety

While road trips can be fun and adventurous, they can also be disastrous if drivers are not well prepared.

AAA Eugene Office Supervisor Susan Hemmer said people must check to see that everything in the car is working, from the lights to the tires, before they set off. Emergency equipment is also necessary. Hemmer suggests road flares, traction mats, jumper cables, blankets and extra food and water. Other items include cell phones, flashlights, batteries, duct tape, tools, extra hoses and belts, and a first aid kit, according to the American Red Cross.

Sophomore Brett Shelby, who often goes camping and four-wheeling, has all of these items and more in his car. He also carries rope and a tow cable in case he needs to pull another car, a tarp, cans of chili and a radio because cell phones may not work in remote areas.

"I am always prepared so in case I get stuck by myself, I can take care of myself."

Shelby also suggests having a spare key, should you lock yourself out of the car.

Drivers are reminded to take breaks often so they don't fall asleep at the wheel, and the American Red Cross warns drivers not to pick up hitchhikers.

Outdoor safety

Spring break may be the perfect time to go outdoors. However, according to Outdoor Programs Trip Facility Manager Ed Fredette, it is important to prepare for varying weather patterns.

"Spring break is kind of a misnomer," he said. "It's not really spring." Fredette said students should always take rain gear with them, even if the sun is shining. You should also carry extra food and a first aid kit.

When hiking or camping in far-off places, always let people know when you intend to be back so they can look for you if you are delayed, lost or hurt.

"If you don't tell anyone that you are gone and you don't show up, no one will know you're missing," he said.

Fredette said since it's early in the season, people are not in their best physical shape and need to be aware of their limitations when hiking or doing other strenuous outdoor activities.

"Don't be overly ambitious with your goals," he said. "Be realistic about your game plan."

Fredette said Outdoor Programs has several brochures that can help students plan their trips and inform them on what they may need.

Whatever the destination, a little caution and preparation can go a long way to ensuring a safe return.

Contact the freelance editor at ayishayahya@dailymerald.com.

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