

Tuesday, May 6, 2003

Editorial

For shame: Why did it take 10 years to get VINE?

In late April, Lane County gave crime victims a new tool for staying safe. The VINE system, or Victim Information and Notification Everyday, is a phone network that connects victims in communities throughout the United States to vital inmate information, such as charges, bail, location, transfers, release dates, court dates and more.

VINE was created in 1993, in response to the murder of Mary F. Byron, a Louisville, Ky., woman who was killed by her ex-boyfriend. He had been arrested a month earlier for kidnapping and raping Byron, but she wasn't told when he was released. A few days after his release, he shot and killed her.

The VINE system is a fantastic tool for survivors of domestic violence, and all crime victims, to stay informed and safe during the adjudication process. Many victims can reap the benefits of VINE, but none more so than survivors of domestic violence, who regularly are re-assaulted by their attackers. VINE was brought to Oregon in February 1992, and we applaud Lane County for putting the system in action to protect people locally.

The only question is, what took so long?

According to the Lane County Sheriff's Office, VINE took longer to implement here because it operates through the county's jail management system, which was being upgraded at the time VINE first came on board.

Our problem isn't with Lane County, though. It's completely rational that a new system without centralized direction would be implemented in a haphazard fashion across the country.

And currently, it is haphazard: Some 40 states and 900 communities across the United States and Canada are using VINE. That leaves a lot of communities — and a lot of victims of domestic violence — without any notification system.

How many women have to be murdered by their partners or ex-partners before America takes this issue seriously? Are women's lives really just not that important to politicians?

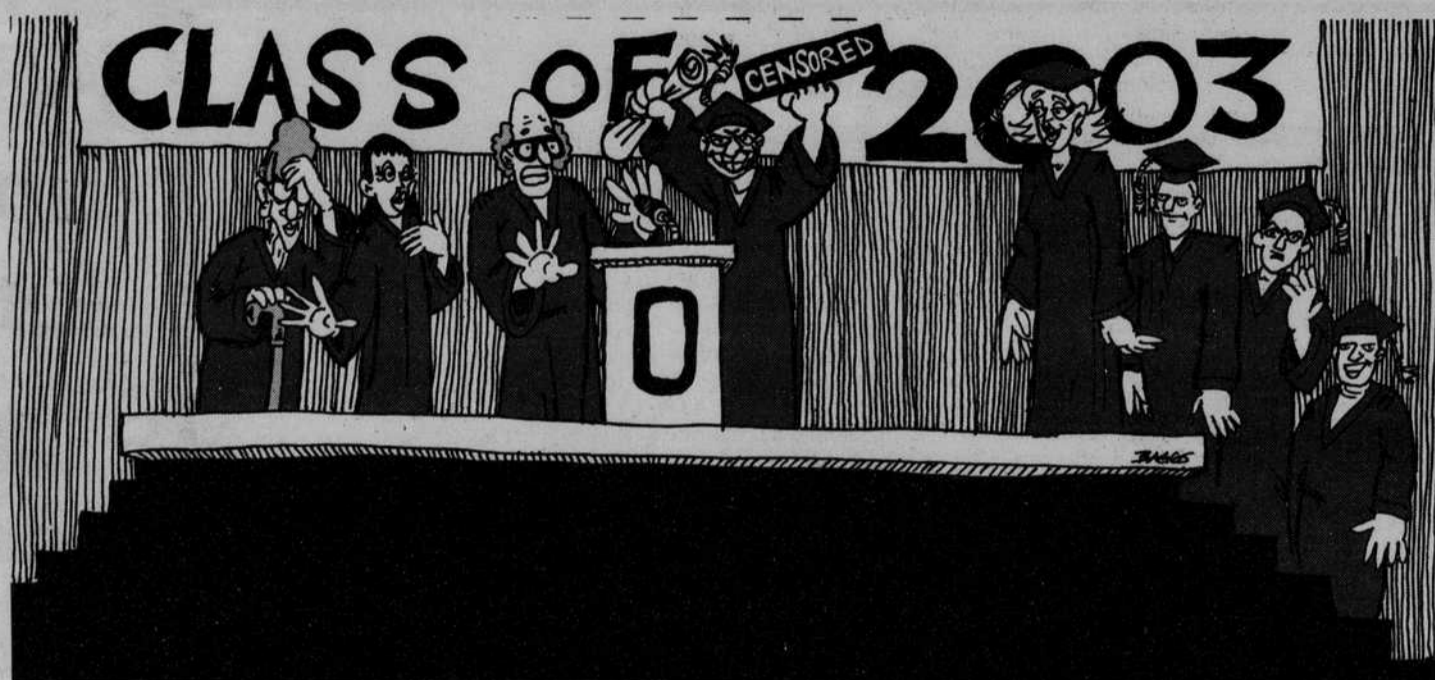
It's interesting to note that in late February, the Transportation Security Administration awarded its first contract, worth \$12.8 million, to begin implementing the Computer-Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening System II. This system, which supposedly will magically screen out terrorists as they attempt to enter airports, was authorized by Congress after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

In other words, it only takes two years to implement a program that Congress cares about. It could have implemented VINE that quickly, but instead, it has taken 10 years and everyone still isn't hooked up.

In those 10 years, according to Department of Justice statistics, approximately 13,000 women have been killed by their intimate partners. For shame.

Editorial policy

This editorial represents 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.



Steve Baggs Emerald

Countdown to graduation

By the grace of God, I graduate in June. Although I am ecstatic about finally having a degree and having had some excellent experiences along the way, I find myself practically jumping out of my skin to get out of here. Now that the glorious day of commencement is only a few weeks away, I thought it might be therapeutic to compile my gripes into one comprehensive, efficient, invective instead of assailing my friends with intermittent tirades for the next 39 days. I hope you find it cathartic, too.

10. Nontraditional students.

By "nontraditional," I mean old. Hey — just because you've been treading the earth longer than the rest of us combined doesn't mean you have the right to commandeer the class with your relentless stupid questions. I know you haven't been in school for a while, but try to shake off the rust before you get here, capiche? And please, no more anecdotal wisdom! You remember when you thought old people were wet blankets? Guess what — now you're the wet blanket!

9. People who park incorrectly.

Yes, there is a wrong way to park. And that would be to leave half a car-length behind you and half a car-length in front. If

there are tickets for parking in the wrong place, why aren't there tickets for this?

8. People who say "like."

Like, we're in college now, so, like, learn how to talk, 'kay?

7. Bicyclists.

In a way, I'm sort of grateful that because of these people, my children will have slightly less carbon monoxide to choke on until the mass extinction we're causing takes out all complex life. But that doesn't mean they're so high and mighty that they can ignore the rules of the road.

6. The textbook scam.

New editions every year, vacuum-sealed editions that can't be returned if opened, course packets that cost \$4 to produce but \$54 to buy because of copyrights — blah, blah, blah. It all makes me want to puke.

5. Homeless people.

Don't get squeamish now, because this is an equal opportunity diatribe. I know that I am supposed to feel sorry for the downtrodden, but when I can't go three hours without someone asking me for money, my patience wears thin.

Yeah, they could be victims of the system — but they could also be entitled, no-good punks who had their chances but opted to pilfer from their mothers' purses to get drunk under an overpass instead and are now merely suffering the consequences of their decisions. Not everyone who is in a tight spot doesn't deserve it.

4. Salespeople.

Why is it considered appropriate for a bunch of charlatans to clog campus with their booths

full of second-rate shit? Does anybody actually apply for credit cards to get those chintzy, insulting T-shirts and generic sunglasses? "Hey, look at me, I'm wearing a shirt that promotes smoking weed — I'm subversive! Never mind that a mega-corporation used it to lure me into perpetual financial slavery!"

3. Stupid people.

Don't get me wrong — I don't question stupid people's right to exist; without them, the world would be much less interesting. But why do they have to go to college? I read somewhere not too long ago that some legal firms now have to teach recent law school graduates how to write things like simple internal memos. Damn it, if you can't write a memo, how did you graduate high school, let alone law school?

2. Girls who wear makeup at the rec center.

Need I elaborate?

1. Jerk professors.

What else could be No. 1? Any rant about college has to end here. I'd have thought that the stereotype of the pompous, didactic, self-obsessed professor was prevalent enough that aspiring academics would avoid falling into it at all costs. Not so. This one is for every student who has been ignored, shut down, openly derided or otherwise frustrated for not bending over backward to congratulate a professor for his or her inestimable genius — in other words, all of us.

Contact the columnist at djfuller@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.



DJ Fuller
No holds barred

Letter to the editor

'Pro-life' pictures show 'crimes' of abortion

Many people's responses to the Survivor's pro-life demonstration on April 30 that depicted with pictures of aborted fetuses were, "Eww," "gross" and "I don't want to look at that."

It was gross and disgusting — because abortion is a gross, disgusting, horrible thing. The abortion debate comes down to this — is the fetus a baby? No pro-life activist denies a woman's control over her body, and no pro-choice activist contends that said control trumps a human life.

The solution is not the pro-choice activists' answer — reduce those millions of babies to statistics and scientific, impersonal words. The solution is not to hide the pictures. The solution is to end the crimes.

Not a baby? Take a good, long look at those pictures, and then come back and tell me they are not babies. The emotional response to those pictures is a deep instinctual recognition of those babies' humanity. The moment you lose that response is the moment you lose your own humanity.

And women, please look at those pictures before you choose to have an abortion. Too many don't, and then see them after it is done. The Survivors are full of these women, who have been deceived by the impersonal portrayal of a growing baby. That, my friends, is a tragedy. Both to the mother, who realizes too late the humanity of her baby, and to the baby, who deserves the shot at life that is taken from him or her.

Dan Johnson
sophomore
philosophy

Abortion language policy

In our quest to provide as much opportunity as possible for fair and equitable discourse, the Emerald has chosen the following policy in regard to the terms used in the abortion debate:

In Emerald news stories, editorials and columns, we will abide by The Associated Press standards, which use the adjectives "anti-abortion" instead of "pro-life" and "abortion rights" instead of "pro-choice."

The Emerald regrets that these terms were not used correctly in the May 1 article "Anti-abortion group repulses students," but they will be adhered to in the future.

However, in the interest of open dialogue, letter to the editor and guest commentary writers may use the terms they wish for their arguments. As with any language, if it is libelous or a personal attack, the Emerald reserves the right to edit the submission.