

Thursday, May 29, 2003

A final word

All good things must come to an end, or so the saying goes. College is no different, and in the blink of an eye, I will graduate next month and move on.

I've gone through all the rites of passage during my four years here. I've read enough Adrienne Rich essays to give me a lifetime of therapy bills.

I've had enough Luke(s), "JK" and Mike Bellotti sightings to be relatively unimpressed with Oregon sports idolatry.

And I've learned, with the help of many self-interested professors, if you can't dazzle 'em with brilliance, baffle 'em with bullshit. A nugget of wisdom for the ages, really.

I'm ready to move on into the big, scary working world.

Well, not quite yet.

As any self-respecting college student with little debt would do, I'm procrastinating my real world entrée by going on vacation for a few months, seeing the world and convincing people in countries like France and Germany that I'm Canadian.

But before I say bon voyage to the University and faithful Emerald readers, I'd like to clarify some issues that have been milling around all year from readers:

- Merci to all of those who prayed for me after I wrote a diatribe against the media for sensationalizing child kidnappings last October. I didn't realize I actually needed God's help for being pessimistic.

After all of the praying though, I don't really see any difference in my bad attitude on this subject. But of course, I wouldn't...

- I do not hate citizens of Eritrea. In a March 10 column, I wrote the government was requiring special registration for "truly evil countries such as Eritrea." You cannot imagine the e-mail traffic this statement caused.



Julie Lauderbaugh
 Judge Julie



Steve Baggs Emerald

For the record, I do not believe Eritrea is an evil country. The remark was made sarcastically. I am now well aware of the trials and tribulations this little country has endured, and I know terrorism is a far cry from its daily struggle for survival — which is exactly why it shouldn't be on the special registration hit list. Ergo, my original statement stands (rolls eyes).

- A lot of flak was caught on the subject of Peter Arnett in April. I still stand behind the idea that Arnett was fired for talking behind enemy lines, when he wasn't supposed to be on anyone's side as an objective journalist to begin with.

Unfortunately, once I ran to Arnett's defense after his termination two months ago, he made a fool out of us both by signing on with London's Daily Mirror — a rag about as credible as the god-awful Oregon Commentator.

For the record, being a columnist is all it's cracked up to be: short hours, fun topics and a hint of celebrity — if you're Wason Mest. For every "you must've been born in a barn" comment in the past year came civil and constructive arguments that spurred discussions on the Commentary page.

That's what columnists are supposed to do; it's in the job description. So, gracias to all of the ballsy readers who took time to send letters to the editor and to me this year: Pissed off readers are a columnist's rite of passage. Your voice has been important in the continuation of democracy's "marketplace of ideas" — even when you're wrong.

Ciao, baby.

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

Voters should check candidates' histories on budget priorities

I would like to respond to the editorial "Legislators should fix Oregon's budget!" (ODE, May 23). I agree with much of what was said. The Legislature is not doing its job. Some of the issues brought up should be addressed, but the paramount issue should be the budget.

I hate to say, "I told you so," but I did. If you remember, this is exactly what I brought up when I ran for an Oregon House District 8 seat last fall. Legislators talk, but nothing is ever done. History shows this. But part of the problem is that the voters don't listen enough and don't check into candidates' histories.

In my campaign, I said that the budget was the most important thing. I said that we need to put our party aside and fix the budget. That means that Republicans may need to accept higher taxes and Democrats may need to cut some things. What we have is politicians avoiding the budget, where they may find controversy.

In addition to these stupid bills that are coming up, I feel like I should let you know what your representative, the man that beat me for the job, Floyd Prozanski, is doing for us. While not addressing the budget with other legislators, he has proposed that bicyclists should not have to obey traffic laws. This is clearly a paramount issue. As if lessening safety is better than fixing our budget problems.

I remember debating Prozanski on a radio station, as well as other places, where he said that the budget was on the top of his list of issues. And that though he is regarded as one of the most partisan people in Salem, putting party aside is exactly what we need to do — and he commended me for bringing it up. I guess putting party aside means putting hot issues aside.

I would just like to remind people that voting is a gamble. You can't really know how people will do. But look at their past and their issues and what they care about. Don't just vote for the candidate who is the incumbent or has the same letter next to his/her name that you like. Otherwise you may get talks of baseball and self-pumping gas, and nothing is really solved.

Greg McNeill is a junior political science major.

Letters to the editor

Historic districts can save neighborhoods

Historic districts protect neighborhoods from quick zoning changes and reckless development.

Please educate yourself about the extra control residents can have over their neighborhood by establishing a district and studying its significant landmarks. Pristine neighborhoods like Fairmount will face increasing threats from unnecessary basketball stadiums, dormitories and poorly placed LTD and city zoning schemes. Checking into this historic designation now could save you or your neighborhood thousands in lawyer fees or worse later.

A historic district could provide at-risk neighborhoods with extra security and regulation against predatory zone changes. The volunteers who have worked towards establishing districts in Eugene deserve great thanks. Could the local media please track down these people to educate a wider audience about historic preservation and land use laws?

The recycle Eugene scheme could tear up some good spots soon. I hope you will get involved.

Zachary Vishanoff
 Eugene

Nudists deserve understanding

Kudos to Ryan Bornheimer for his article on nudists ("Naturists pursue active nude pastimes, locales," ODE, May 20). His calm, informative writing showed that people like Daniel Johnson who wish to be nude outdoors are not flashers, streakers or warped kooks.

As implied, some nudists may live nude almost full-time because they inhabit a private club in a hospitable climate. There are many nudists who would gladly emulate them but don't have the opportunity.

Oregon's physical climate isn't exactly warm, nor is the political climate, when it comes to understanding or accepting harmless public nudity. Consider Terri Sue Webb's confinement in a psychiatric institution last year for riding her bicycle nude in Bend.

There are nonetheless areas in Oregon where one may be nude outdoors. The Naturist Society (visit www.naturistsociety.com) has details. And this fall in Seattle, a trilogy of short plays will be publicly performed in which the actors are nude along with ushers, stage crew and others.

Who would think that one of Oregon's virtues was its proximity to Washington?

Dr. Paul Rapoport
 School of the Arts
 McMaster University
 Ontario, Canada

Contact the FCC about media ownership rules

There is an interesting news story going on in Washington, D.C., that I've heard very little about in any of the news media. I am referring to an upcoming meeting of the Federal Communications Commission, where it will be decided if huge media moguls will be allowed to become even bigger. Most of us don't even realize that a free press is very dependent on autonomy, and a democracy is dependent on a free press.

If a large concentration of newspapers, TV stations, radio stations, publishers and Internet providers are allowed to be controlled by just a few corporations, then all we'll ever hear or see will be based on the dictates of those corporations.

What an undesirable circumstance that will be for all of us! There is a bright spot though; this behind the scenes vote of the FCC over who'll control what America sees and hears won't happen until June 2.

The FCC is still allowing public input until May 30, so now is the time to act. Contact the FCC at <http://www.fcc.gov/contacts.html>, call them toll-free at (888) 225-5322 or write them at Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th St. SW, Washington, D.C., 20554. Make your voice heard.

Scott Zorc
 Georgia

CLARIFICATIONS

Wednesday's article "Suicide spurs LGBT support" should have stated that Elise Self of PFLAG pointed to an anti-homosexual guest commentary published by the Emerald as the type of thing that contributes to a climate where LGBT students feel fearful or unwelcome. She did not mean to draw a direct link between the guest commentary and Kyle Richmond's death.

Also, the article did not mean to imply that Kyle Richmond's sexual orientation, whatever it was, was the cause of his suicide. The intent was to show that recent campus events had engaged the LGBT community to show a welcoming climate on campus and to offer support.

The Emerald regrets any confusion.