

Monday, June 9, 2003

A time for heartfelt, loving reflection

Editorial

The year has come to a close, and the editorial board can now leisurely stretch out and examine its good work. We thought about the things we were right about and the things others were wrong about. These two categories often matched up.

Knowing how right we were, we decided to grace you once again with our wisdom. For your pleasure then, we present, in order of importance, the top-10 campus events:

10. Glass blowers

On Feb. 24, federal agents, under the direction of Attorney General John Ashcroft, raided glass shops across the country in a hardcore, incredibly effective anti-drug paraphernalia exercise dubbed "Operation Pipe Dreams."

Claiming, essentially, that if a glass pipe *can* be used to smoke marijuana, it *can only* be used to smoke marijuana, the feds hit the major local glass artists, but for some reason they left The Briar Shoppe's wood pipes alone.

Damn, don't they know? It's puff, puff, pass — not bust, bust, glass! Leave it to Ashcroft to fuck up the rotation. You just know that in college, he was that anal-retentive RA no one liked.

9. Ridnour leaves early

Men's basketball star Luke Ridnour announced May 13 that he would sign with an agent and leave the University for the NBA Draft. Much mourning occurred among segments of the student population that enjoyed Rid for his athletic prowess or his extra-cute appearance.

And then there was that poster. That amazingly homoerotic poster. "Luke Both Ways"? As an Emerald alum once said, that gives "crossover dribble" a whole new meaning.

8. Fall term riot

Caitlyn (on a cell phone): "Hey, Alexis, you have got to get over here! This is sooo much fun! We're out in the street by Skyler's house, and we're, like, rioting!!"

"Huh? Oh, I don't know. There was, like, a party or something? And now, we're taking back the streets! Isn't this just like what those hippie people did in Seattle?"

"Oh... my... god. That guy pulling the stop sign out of the ground is sooo hot! Alexis, get over here!"

7. Free speech issues

An anti-homosexual guest commentary and an anti-abortion group's photos brought out a lot of "anti" feelings among segments of the campus population who disagreed with the anti-people's anti-stances.

We can't handle the negativity! Here's the solution: Everybody — and we mean everybody — can shut their traps, and three times a week, the editorial board will tell you what to think. There. Problem solved.

6. "O"-logo controversy

First the administration, working through University President Dave Frohnmayer and Vice President of something Harry Battson, said all student groups must proudly carry the "O" on all printed materials. Students were upset. Then officials said they would also need to approve the student groups' own logos. Students were more upset.

Finally, the administration dropped the whole thing. And we are proud of that decision. Because frankly, when students think about their big "O," it's unlikely that they have Frohnmayer or Battson in mind.

5. Conflict over KUGN

Speaking of sticky situations: Radio station KUGN pays the University money for the right to use its name and image, and to broadcast Duck sports events.

Given that the station licenses the University's good reputation, students were upset when they listened to Michael Savage's opinionated diatribes against minorities, gays and anyone else not exactly like Savage. Students were even more upset



Peter Utsey Emerald

when they heard the radio station repeatedly proclaiming itself the "Voice of the Ducks."

One straightforward suggestion was that in contract negotiations, the University should disallow the station to use the tagline "Voice of the Ducks."

The way the whole thing shook out, though, who knows what will happen with the contract. Maybe they should just change the tagline to "Voice of the Schmucks."

4. Tuition increases

Legislators hoisted this one on students in a big way. They filled the budget hole last year by including money from a tax increase that voters would have to approve in a January election. Right, and we all know how much voters love tax increases.

So when Measure 28 didn't pass, budgets were cut and tuition had to go up, the University imposed a surcharge — but enrollment keeps going up. It's like squeezing juice from... an orange.

Why don't we just keep the poor people out of education entirely? Then they wouldn't be a burden in elementary school, they wouldn't need financial aid in college, and they wouldn't stink up the place while we're waiting in line at The Bon.

3. International student visas

They've come to this country as guests, to get an education from 'Merica — the finest free nation in the world — and not only do they have to pay exorbitant tuition, but now we're subjecting them to reams of paperwork, repeated interviews and a tracking system any bounty hunter would be envious of.

But 'Mericans are much safer now — after all, those dangerous English lit majors from Korea and computer science majors from Italy now are safely accounted for. That's giving them a taste of freedom!

2. War with Iraq

Speaking of freedom, now that the Iraqis have it (and be sure to sign us up for some of that no-water, no-electricity, total-chaos, soldiers-with-guns kind of freedom!), we can look back at the war effort with a clear mind.

On campus, students protested. Some protesters were for the war, but most were against it, and the peace protesters suffered the usual patriotic name-calling that happens whenever people disagree with Republicans in power.

The thought-police pressure was so strong that the University faculty couldn't even drum up the gumption to meekly announce that they, um, sort of disagreed with the war, um, because it kind of sucked money the government needs to, um, run the country. No, no, that might send the wrong message to students!

Gee whiz, this freedom sure is cool!

1. Get a sense of humor

One thing we have seen time and again on the Commentary page is that some people just don't get it. Sarcasm isn't that hard, folks. Take another English class or something, and ask your professor 'bout it.

Yes, social issues are pressing, and yes, cultural controversies are sometimes serious. But life need not be sober all the time. Actually, treating life as super-serious is an unattractive personality trait. Stop it.

Sure, some people need to learn to sharpen their sarcasm so it's more obvious. But learning how to take, as well as give, is a requirement for entry into the marketplace of ideas.

So lighten up. This is college, after all.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.

Good evening, my name's Mike — I'll be your waiter tonight

So this is our final issue of the year, and I'm graduating. Aah. After six years, that feels good to say. Some people might be expecting a real blazer of a final column, but I feel more like a waiter, introducing you to the meal of the Emerald's last issue.

The delicately braised tofu (meat is also available) in this issue is profiles of top students from each official school on campus. We have a hearty, home-cooked side dish about commencement, and may I suggest you start the meal with a few deep-fried end-of-the-year stories?

Perhaps my favorite part of this issue, though, is the sweet, savory and spicy sauces: the "senior" columns. It is a time-honored tradition at the Emerald to allow graduating seniors a bit of space to reflect on their experience and tell readers about it. Some

of them have a hot bite, others are a sweet, piquant demi-glaze and a few provide a nutty, savory topping on the final issue.

The soft, soppy dessert (maybe it's bread pudding) is a warm helping of thanks.

Thanks to the campus community for being involved, supportive and angry with me and the paper this year. Journalism should exist to serve the community, and the community must get involved.

Read the paper, find out what's happening in your world, and then get an-

gry or happy. Write a letter to the editor, or better yet, call the editor. I know I have enjoyed those calls this year. Just remember that we're learning, and that the paper and the community will survive — even if you disagree with the current staff's approach.

Thanks to this year's staff members, of whom I am terribly proud, and thanks especially to Jess, without whom I never would have survived.

Thanks also go to the full-time "adult" staff who work at the Emerald. They work tirelessly to teach journalism students how a newspaper runs. They do it with skill, patience and smiles, and I will always love them for it.

And huge bonus thanks to my parents, who always offer good advice, boundless love — and money when it's necessary. I'm watching "Every-

body Loves Raymond" for you right now, Mom and Dad.

No dinner would be complete without a small snifter of something that makes you feel warm and wise. So to close, I have just an ounce or two of things I've learned.

I've learned that a small, close-knit community can be wonderfully supportive, even of the weirdos and the freaks (like me) and the others who give a community character and love and meaning and fun. Eugene excels at this, and more communities should follow its example.

I've learned that even if you're cocky and obnoxious because you think you know everything, the older, wiser people will generally put up with you and even help you to turn that conceit into skills and knowledge. The University is really good at

this, actually.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly to me, I've learned that no one has a corner on the truth market. Nothing is greater than arguing ideas, taking nothing for granted and believing almost nothing of what you're told.

Check the facts, question the assumptions and fight for your opinion. The University would have failed if it hadn't taught me that.

Peace and Joy,
 Mike

Contact the 2002-03 editor in chief at michaelkleckner@email.com if you want to talk about something cool, like Taoism or anarchy. I'm not the editor anymore, so I probably don't want to talk shop a whole lot, and my opinions definitely no longer represent those of the Emerald.



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