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Ryan Nyburg
Budget rack

The art of great monster cinema

I'm a culture junkie. Books, films, music, art and theater. Hell, I even admire good architectural design. How many people do you know who would go stare at a building for a few hours because nothing good was showing at the local multiplex? It's all the same to me.

If you live with this constant cultural input like I do, you'll begin seeing parallels between different art forms. What is the musical equivalent of "The Battleship Potemkin"? Who is the literary counterpart to the De Stijl movement? Which director is most like Faulkner? Is there a musical movement that parallels the Bauhaus school? And so on and so forth.

A few things stand out in this mess. Horror cinema for example. I have a deep-rooted love for horror movies that goes back to the first time I saw "Godzilla: King of the Monsters" at the tender age of nine. I grew up on Universal monsters: Boris Karloff, Vincent Price, Bela Lugosi, giant insects, space invaders and indestructible mass murderers. It taught me that the world is full of unstoppable entities that will eventually destroy you.

This turned out to be a valuable lesson.

Because of all of this, my perception of certain areas of cinematic quality tends to be a bit skewed. I often rank films on how they compare to "Psycho." I would be bored to tears by a superbly acted and well-produced four-hour melodrama, yet would be entertained to no end by a shoddy, low-budget film about vampires from outer space.

And no matter how many times I see undeniably excellent films, such as "Citizen Kane" or "The Seventh Seal," I will still contend that a movie about giant ants attacking Los Angeles ("Them!", 1954) is one of the greatest in the history of cinema.

Why this obsession with horror? Why this fixation on one aspect of the vast array of cinematic styles? To an extent it's a budgetary matter. Crappy horror movies are cheap. A DVD of "Sorority Babes in the Slimeball Bowl-O-Rama" — yes, that is a real movie, and yes, I do own it — will run you about ten bucks, compared to \$20 to \$25 for a decent Oscar winner.

But that makes the whole thing sound like a merely financial matter, and the truth is it goes much deeper. Catharsis plays a part, I'm sure. There is a certain visceral joy in watching total idiots be slaughtered in highly imaginative ways. What better way to release some built up frustration than to see a character you truly dislike killed with a belt?

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Destination: Vacation inspiration

Oregon's diverse environments offer countless adventures, from the urban to the coastal

By **Ryan Nyburg**
Freelance Reporter

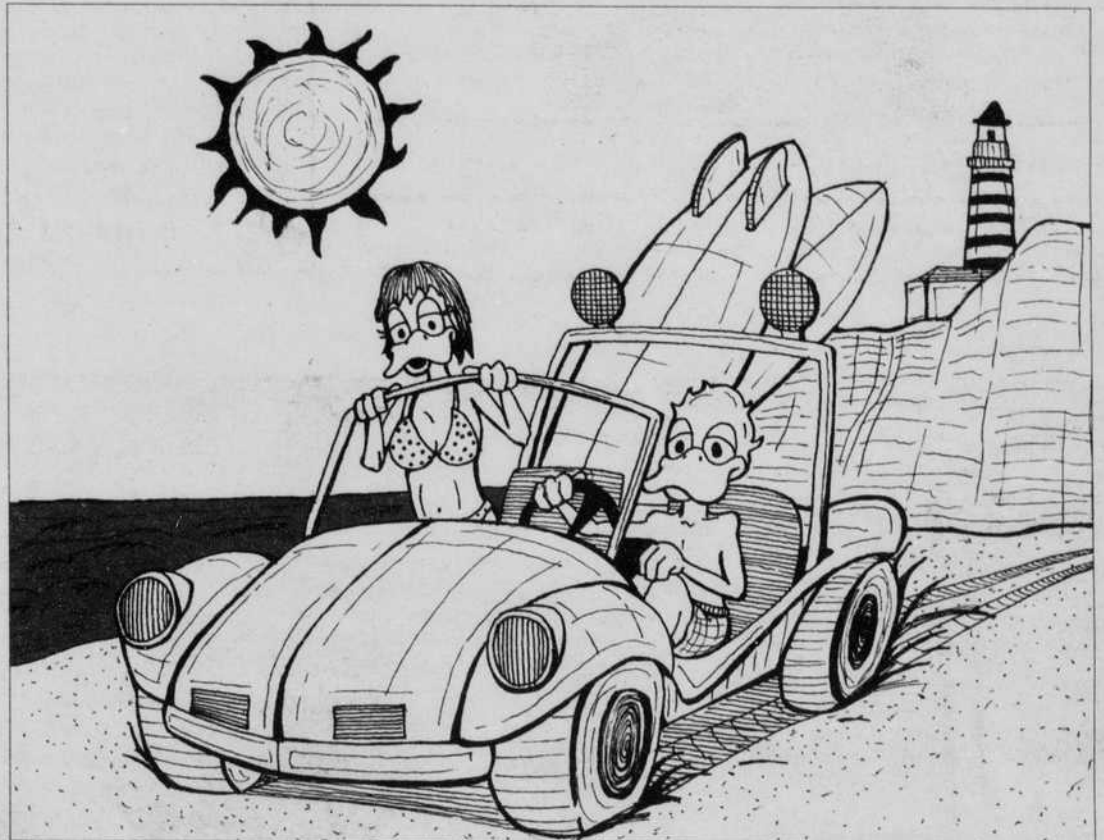
With summer comes an abundance of free time and a nearly compulsive need to travel. Many traditional summer getaways are too far or too expensive, however, for the average student to afford. Here are a few nearby destinations where students can go and escape the tedium of home.

One possible escape is to the Oregon coast. With an almost constant ocean breeze coming off the Pacific and temperatures averaging 10 to 20 degrees cooler than in the Willamette Valley, the coast is one of the best locations to escape the heat. A few of the highlights can also be found along Highway 101, which hugs the coastline.

Florence, on the central Oregon coast, is home to Sea Lion Caves, the Old Town shopping district and, of course, the dunes. Dune buggy riding is a highlight in the area, as are camping, crabbing and golfing. Travel time from Eugene to Florence is about an hour.

Newport, one of the coast's largest cities, is home to the Oregon Coast Aquarium, a Ripley's Believe It or Not, the Yaquina Head Lighthouse and a large commercial fishing fleet. It also is home to Nye Beach, one of the most popular stretches of sand on the coast. With its historic bayfront, the city is a good place for shopping, dining or watching sea lions bask in the sun. Traveling to Newport takes a little less than two hours.

Other coastal towns to visit include Bandon, with its beautiful beaches; Depoe Bay, the whale-watching capital of the coast, according to its chamber of commerce; and Cannon Beach, long considered one of the most beautiful patches of oceanfront in America. Traveling to Depoe Bay takes about two-and-a-half



Peter Utsey for the Emerald

hours, while trips to Bandon and Cannon Beach are viable for those planning to spend the night.

An alternative to sand and surf can be found in Portland, Oregon's largest city. With more theaters and restaurants per capita than any other place in the country, Portland is a great town for visitors. It's also just a two-hour drive on Interstate 5 northbound. Portland highlights include:

- Powell's Books, one of the largest and most successful independent bookstores in the world, has seven locations in the Portland metropolitan area. The central store, Powell's City of Books, is on West Burnside Street, takes up a full city block and has over a million titles. It is, according to the Web site, the largest new and used bookstore in the world.

- The Portland Art Museum has a wide variety of exhibitions, including The Oregon Biennial, which features Oregon art; "The

Shape of Color," an exhibition of painted sculpture by the late Joan Miro and a collection of works by Norman Rockwell.

Other Portland cultural destinations are The Portland Center for the Performing Arts, The Portland Center Stage and the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall — "The Schnitz" — which is home to the Oregon Symphony.

Also up north are The Dalles and the Columbia Gorge. This part of the Columbia River is widely considered to be one of the best wind surfing spots in the country.

If you are looking for a smaller community to visit, Jacksonville might be the place. Laying in the foothills of the Siskiyou Mountains, Jacksonville is one of Oregon's oldest cities. One of the highlights in the town during the summer is the Britt Music Festival, which runs through September. Jacksonville is just

west of Medford, putting travel time at more than two-and-a-half hours.

Other places of interest in that area include: The Oregon Vortex, a weird little spot that hosts a variety of interesting natural phenomena; and Crater Lake, one of America's first national parks and one of the purest lakes in the world.

Ashland, a beautiful town in the Rogue Valley, is another destination down south worth checking out. Home of Southern Oregon University, the city hosts the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, which runs until Nov. 2. The town offers plenty of restaurants and shopping opportunities, too.

These are only a few of the choices available within the state, and plenty more are out there awaiting visitors. Happy traveling.

Ryan Nyburg is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

Buñuel's 'Phantom' boldly rejects values

By **Ryan Nyburg**
Freelance Reporter

There has never been a filmmaker like Luis Buñuel. That is a simple, irrefutable fact. He is the father of cinematic surrealism and one of the most iconoclastic artists of the 20th century. If you truly love the art of cinema, you will eventually come across his wide body of work.

All of that said, his films are pretty damn funny. One of the funniest, "Le Fantôme de la Liberté" ("The Phantom of Liberty"), is also one of the most thought-provoking. It contains no plot

and only a slim thread connecting the characters as the film meanders along an ill-defined path full of repression, self-loathing, hypocrisy and cynicism.

The film begins by following one character, then follows a seemingly minor character, then another and so on into oblivion. If this sounds familiar, Richard Linklater used the same technique in his "Slacker."

On a whole, the film is a difficult pill to swallow. Buñuel was just coming from the success of "Le Charme Discret de la Bourgeoisie" ("The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie"), which had won international success and an Oscar for Best Foreign Film. Buñuel, always the anarchist, found the success morally repugnant and apparently decided to make a broader

attack. Where "Charm" was an attack on bourgeois values, "Phantom" goes after basic cultural assumptions.

Without any story to hold the narrative together, the film exists entirely on its individual sequences. Buñuel seems to use the film as a way to employ all the spare ideas he couldn't fit into other films, and screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière weaves them together in such a way that common themes begin to appear.

One of the most famous sequences involves a group of people arriving to a dinner party where people speak of excrement and use toilets in the open, but slink off with embarrassment into private rooms to eat. The reversal of roles is a classic surrealist tactic, and Buñuel seems to take some delight in

suggesting that these two activities are merely different sides of the same coin. Hence, the absurdity of being embarrassed over one and flaunting the other is clearly shown.

Another scene involves a sniper who kills dozens of people at random from a high-rise office building. He is eventually captured, tried and sentenced to capital punishment. After being convicted, his handcuffs are removed and he is allowed to walk out of the courtroom, where an excited crowd asks him for autographs.

André Breton, founder of the surrealist movement, once said that the ultimate surrealist act would be to fire a pistol randomly into a crowd.

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FORGOTTEN FILMS