

Friday, November 21, 2003

Civil War showdown

Burritos and feces: Life at Oregon State

Well, well. It's Civil War time again.

That magical part of the year when athletes affiliated with this University (through allegiance, or more likely, chance) will square off against athletes likewise affiliated with that vastly inferior school some 37 miles to the north.

Vastly inferior, you say? How do you mean?

For one, the Beavers are not nearly as busy as their namesakes: While academics here were hard at work, trying to outdo last year's figure of



Travis Willse
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\$78 million in research grants to the University of Oregon, 766 people found the time Sunday to converge in front of OSU's Memorial Union and — in an act of unbridled intellectual achievement — stage the largest pillow fight in history.

The Beavers' time management skills aside, maybe measuring academic success in dollars is unfair. In recent years, after all, funding for neurology has largely been more lucrative than that for studying, say, llama-breeding or lentil-growing.

Fine, OSU is a cow college. So what, you say? Who cares if it's geared less toward petty educational details like "reason" or "literacy," and more toward preparing each of its fine attendees for a proud life straight out of a Faulkner novel, trespassing on his neighbor's Corvallis-area farmland and sleeping underneath rusting farm equipment like an imbecilic man-child?

Certainly not students at this fine institution, who opted instead to attend a real school, which

boasts not only finer programs but indoor heat and running water. (And I like burritos as much as the next time-strapped student, but I don't like them enough to name a stadium after a company that sells frozen ones.)

Even our city is a better place to live. While Eugene offers plenty of concert halls, art museums and the Hult Center, Corvallis' cultural experience reaches heights no greater than the meat-fisted boxing matches at the Peacock, thirsty Thursdays and maybe the Memorial Union's Panda Express.

Not that Eugene is an ideal, peaceful municipality; after all, this town's fine residents have started a few riots in the last several years. But before you denounce Eugeneans for being pyromaniacal primitives for burning golf carts, remember that Eugene at least has motorized vehicles.

Well, certainly I can say something good about the Beavers? After all, their mud-munching mascot — the second-largest rodent in the world — is one of nature's finest engineers, and makes for some of its most prolific roadkills. Even better, when these mouth-breathing vermin do snack, lunch is all too often their own nutrient-rich feces.

Ducks, by contrast, are the majestic eagles of the deciduous wetlands biome, monarchs among the lesser woodland creatures (including the very lesser bushy-tailed, biologically botched, buck-toothed, boneheaded beavers). Certainly, the athletes affiliated with a school that uses these amazing avians as a mascot will defeat their inferiors in the battle of the talented and the troglodytic.

But, for the intellectually meager Beavers reading this who are confused by polysyllabic punnery, I'll translate: If you're going to drop money on tomorrow's game, don't leave it to Beaver. Fowl play will win out.

Contact the editorial editor at traviswillse@dailyemerald.com. His opinions completely represent those of the Emerald.

How much do I hate Eugene? Let me count the ways ...

If Lewis and Clark knew when they were blazing the Oregon Trail that a city the likes of Eugene would eventually come into existence, they probably would have stopped in Tulsa. I hate to say it, but Eugene makes Salem look like the freakin' Garden of Eden.

Fitting that it is a town of ducks; I mean, I sure as hell couldn't stay there for more than a few months at a time without wanting to head north, south or anywhere not called Eugene. I feel the need to migrate even before I notice the transient with the lazy eye and four teeth staring at me, cackling and talking to his acid-flashback-induced imaginary friend.



Brian Gjurjevich

Not that Eugene doesn't have its positives — after all, it did get mentioned in a Sublime song! So there you go ... way to riot!

But seriously folks, I have nothing against Oregon's third-largest city. It's a fine place to go and win a football game. In fact, I'd say that for opposing football teams and fans alike, Eugene is a great place to score — be it on the multi-colored turf, with a hippie chick whom you told you were Jerry Garcia's nephew, or from a seventh-year burnout peddling meth out of his foster mom's Acura.

Sorry, but no matter how much blood money Phil Knight pumps into the town, he'll never be able to purchase class. Though he did purchase one fancy-schmancy stadium. The plasma screens in the locker rooms are a nice touch, 'cause after all, you wouldn't want to miss your cousin's appearance on "COPS" because you had football practice.

Then again, Corvallis might have a few more bucks for our stadium expansion if the Reser family had impoverished Malaysian toddlers making \$150 burritos for six cents a day. And even with all that immorally earned income, they still haven't installed a mirror big enough to truly capture the immaculate conception of facial hair that is Mike Bellotti's mustache. That thing puts Ron Jeremy to shame.

I don't know if I'm watching a football game or "Magnum P.I." half the time.

It is then I realize I am incurring retinal damage from the hideous upchuck of a uni-

form that seems to be coming out of my screen like the dead chick from "The Ring." What color were you going for there? Base-of-a-frat-house-toilet yellow? Or just vomit? You know your uniforms are bad when the crew at Hot Dog on a Stick is pointing at you laughing.

But I don't want to focus on the jerseys too much — for fear of blindness, of course. There are more pressing issues to discuss.

Like how everyone thinks Corvallis is nothing but a cow town that's full of cow pies and smells of cow dung. So, we may have a few more dirty, smelly animals running around the general vicinity than Eugene does. But at least they don't ask me for spare change or if I have a spare cigarette.

All I want to do when I venture south is to get into one of Eugene's many fine watering holes to check out some scenery I'm not used to — not see firsthand what happened to all the Deadheads after Jerry died.

Folks, I don't mean to rag on Eugene too much. I always enjoy going down there — it's just that I enjoy leaving even more.

Seriously though, the Civil War is all in good fun. It's a time when we all can appreciate what each town has to offer.

Be it hippies, rednecks, cows or cannabis — we all share in the experience of living in either the poor man's Seattle or the smart man's Albany. At least in the spirit of Thanksgiving, we should be coming together, bringing our finest gifts to the table — like how the Indians brought fish and the pilgrims brought smallpox. After all, Eugene's fine horticultural products and a big glass of Corvallis chocolate milk should be sampled and celebrated together, shouldn't they?

So, in that spirit, I make one simple request to you Duck fans this weekend: Don't get too bent when you see a Beaver on the street this weekend celebrating an Oregon State University victory with a PBR tall-boy raised oh-so-gloriously above his hunting cap.

Instead of getting pissed and starting a riot, go ahead and accept the fact that Corvallis, OSU and the Beavers have solidified their place on the food chain — standing on top of a pile of feathers that once resembled a duck.

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Steve Baggs Illustration

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'Rubaiyat' no longer reflects Islam

A recent editorial ("Knowledge is best hope for lessening cultural gaps," ODE, Nov. 5) is right on in saying that our understanding of Mideast cultures, and their understanding of ours, would help promote peace. I totally agree with the editor's theme.

But the writer used my favorite poem as an example of reading we might do to learn about Muslim culture. The "Rubaiyat" of Omar Khayyam was of great comfort to me when I was

17 and thought I was the only one in the world who concluded that man created God in his own image, rather than vice versa. I quote verse 63: "Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise! / One thing at least is certain — This life flies; / One thing is certain and the rest is Lies; / The Flower that once has blown for ever dies."

In parts of the Islamic world today, Khayyam would be executed for blasphemy. While this is a beautiful and thought-provoking poem, it would give little insight into the very religious culture we seek to understand.

Vic Favier
 Eugene

Lessons from a veteran

Your editorial article titled, "Veterans' Day should honor young soldiers" (ODE, Nov. 11) missed a couple of basic points. The first is, "For soldiers involved in ... reconstruction of Iraq, a bad day means dodging bullets." As

a veteran, I know what a bad day for a soldier consists of, and it surely isn't dodging bullets. A bad day is failing to dodge a bullet. A day of successful dodging is a good day. A great day is sitting in rainy Eugene writing this correction. By the way, a really bad day is administering first aid to a friend and colleague who's having a bad day. I understand this seems counterintuitive to many. If you desire an explanation, I suggest you try a novel journalistic approach and actually interview a veteran before placing a pen to paper.

The second is, "... hailed from Orangeburg, a South Carolina town of about 13,000 — became the third graduate of the town's only high school to die ... in Iraq since August," and the next sentence, "At Orangeburg-Wilkinson High, 85 percent of the students

qualify for discounted or free lunches, making the military a more realistic immediate option for many students than a four-year college program." Your inference seems clear. Poor people go into the military because they can't go to college. While this is certainly true in some cases, this is the exception and not the rule. Most young people join the military for altruistic reasons, love of country and a sense of patriotic duty to name a couple. Again, I understand that some of your readers and perhaps your editorial staff cannot or will not understand. Again I offer my previous advice.

At a minimum, your column should have focused on the accomplishments and sacrifices of our young veterans as its title suggested. I would also liked to have seen something about how much each of us benefits from those sacrifices regardless of our political leanings. Instead, your column was full of backhanded compliments. As a veteran, thanks for nothing.

Retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Bons is a law student.