

# COMMENTARY

Friday, April 16, 2004

## Harding touts Guinness, food from Glenwood

"Quick Quacks" is the newest Emerald feature, a spontaneous Q&A session aimed at giving readers an expedient look at campus and community members' thoughts. "Quick Quacks" will run every Friday this spring. Please send suggestions about possible interviewees to letters@dailyemerald.com.

University fifth-year senior Jesse Harding, a journalism major, sits down for our questions this week. Harding is an ASUO student senator, co-chairman of the Student Conduct Code Committee, executive producer of "Duck U" and an active member of the greek community.

**Emerald:** What's the most rewarding thing you've done as a member of the greek community?

**Jesse Harding:** I would say that working with other greek leaders, even though we weren't successful, at developing some sort of conversation around the issues of when fraternities were forced to go dry, and maybe some of the issues we tried to bring up regarding (Project) Saferide.

**Emerald:** Who's your favorite Duck athlete?

**JH:** I'd say in the past it'd definitely have to be Michael Fletcher. He was, yeah, definitely my favorite. And then, presently, I'd have to say Aaron Brooks just because he's a floor leader.

**Emerald:** More likely to be seen at Taylor's or Rennie's?

**JH:** Rennie's

**Emerald:** Drinking a ... ?

**JH:** Guinness.

**Emerald:** As a senator, what do you hope to accomplish before your term is over?

**JH:** I hope to accomplish the fact that Senate comes to a realization that we don't have to spend all of the money just because it's there.

**Emerald:** Quickly tell us why students' off-campus activities should be punishable by the University.

**JH:** Because if one student hurts another student and they miss class or they're not able to finish out school for whatever reasons, then you've taken a piece of that person's future and it makes only sense to me that they be punished. Plus, I think there's a bigger idea of the fact that the University is a community and we look out for one another.

**Emerald:** Name the best restaurant in Eugene.

**JH:** For me, I'd say it's The Glenwood because of the prices.

**Emerald:** Sex, drugs or rock 'n' roll?

**JH:** All three. At once. While having a Guinness at Rennie's.

**Emerald:** What's been your most stressful extracurricular activity?

**JH:** I think when I was president of Pikes that was definitely the most difficult, the most stressful. Just because I couldn't get away from it. I mean, you live there. So, it's not like you can go someplace else and not be president — you always are.

**Emerald:** Name the best season of the Real World.

**JH:** The San Francisco Real World because you have the classics. You have, you know, Puck and Pedro. I mean, all the other ones kind of modeled after that one, I think.

**Emerald:** Which ticket will receive your vote for ASUO Executive?

**JH:** Adam and Mena will.

**Emerald:** What happens after graduation?

**JH:** I head off to the Peace Corps and some French-speaking African country and I teach junior highers how to speak English.

**Emerald:** Finally, where can we find Jesse Harding on a Friday night?

**JH:** Hopefully at Rennie's.

**Emerald:** Jesse Harding, you are done with "Quick Quacks."

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Strawn and Aguilar committed to change

We need an ASUO Executive that is dedicated to creating changes right here on campus. I give my endorsement to Ben Strawn and Diana Aguilar for ASUO Executive because they are committed to this principle.

General apathy on campus for student government has been driven by previous ASUO Executive administrations that have focused too much on off-campus issues. It is time for a change! Ben and Diana will bring tangible results to students by increasing the availability of campus resources, improving community relations with students and demanding not only affordable, but also quality education.

Good intentions are not enough — the Executive must truly understand and represent the interests of their fellow students. Ben and Diana will use their experience to do this for you. I urge you to vote for Ben and Diana.

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Eric Layton Illustration

## Independent influence

"What experience and history teach is this — that people and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it."

— Georg Hegel

Hegel would no doubt be little surprised to read that longtime consumer advocate and Washington gadfly supreme Ralph Nader announced in late February that he'll run in this year's presidential election as an Independent.

With few exceptions, third-party candidates are doomed to be the dust bunnies behind the rococo armoire of the American presidency — Ross Perot has all but dropped out of the American political consciousness. Heard of John Anderson? Not unless you're a poli-sci wonk. He scraped together 6.6 percent of the popular vote in 1980's Ronald Reagan-Jimmy Carter contest. Even Strom Thurmond's 1948 bid remained a long-forgotten footnote until Trent Lott's 2002 endorsement of the campaign landed him in hot water with Republican and Democratic politicians alike.

But, as even casual political observers know, 2000 was different. After officials tallied results, the current presidency hinged on Florida's 25 electoral votes. After the Supreme Court settled the recount challenges, Texas Gov. George W. Bush bested Vice President Al Gore by a margin of 537 votes in a state where nearly six million had visited the polls. The left-leaning Nader had drawn over 97,000 votes in the state.

Mainstream leftists were up in arms. In a futile challenge to the political duopoly that critics have lambasted as "self-righteous" and "egomaniacal," this outsider — who had culled only 0.7 percent of the 1996 popular vote — managed to draw enough votes away from their just-left-of-center candidate, returning the White House to the Republicans for the first time since 1993.

In a November 2000 letter to Salon.com, reader Stephanie Richmond wrote, "I hope all you Naderites are satisfied now. While I admired Ralph Nader's work in the past, now I only have contempt for him for handing over the

presidency to George W. Bush. I hope Nader never gets funding to run in 2004 or ever again after this irresponsible, unthinking, self-serving campaign which has set our country back more than he could ever imagine."

Nader naturally rejects the responsibility for Bush's victory that many Dem pundits readily assigned him. Properly speaking, he's not responsible. The electorates in key swing states are. Florida is a case in point; in New Hampshire, Bush defeated Gore by a margin of 7,211 votes; there were 22,198 Nader votes.



**Travis Willse**  
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Left voters played a dangerous game in other states, too. In Iowa, Gore topped Bush by 4,144 votes, and there were 29,374 Nader votes; in Wisconsin, Gore won by margin of 5,708, and there were 94,070 Nader votes; in New Mexico, he won by the paper-thin margin of 366 votes in a state with 21,251 Nader votes. And yes, Gore took Oregon by a margin of 6,765 votes, in a state where 77,357 turned out for Nader.

But Nader dismisses responsibility, too, in the more general sense in which he is very much culpable: That if he hadn't run in 2000, Gore certainly would have won the election. Nader appeals instead, even today, to the tired claim that a politicized Supreme Court ruled in favor of its favorite candidate, staining democratic integrity in the process.

"After careful thought and desire to retire our supremely elected president," he began his announcement on NBC, "I've decided to run as an Independent candidate for president."

While grumblings of philosophically mangled Supreme jurisprudence will no

doubt linger on college campuses for years, Nader's appeal misses the point, instead offering a non sequitur that could prove costly for the left-of-center. At best, his bid will make the presidency marginally more difficult for the Dems to grab; at worst, Democrats fear they'll see a repeat of 2000.

Even Terry McAuliffe, the usually sunny Democratic National Committee chairman, lamented Nader's bid as "very unfortunate" on CBS' "Face the Nation," but added that Nader's 2004 candidacy will be "very different" from his last go-round.

As if Nader's electoral myopia wasn't troubling enough, he doesn't worry about wooing left votes away, arguing in interviews that he'll instead mostly appeal to disillusioned Republicans. But this fantasy is about as likely as the 2000 proposition that Democrats disenchanted by Clintonian sexual improprieties would vote en masse for the socially super-conservative Pat Buchanan. Indeed, according to a poll in Newsweek conducted April 8-9, if voters had to choose between Bush and Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., 50 percent would vote for Kerry and 43 would vote for Bush. If Nader joins the fray, Kerry's lead drops to 46-42, a margin equal to the survey's 4 percent margin of error.

The Dems might have some reason for optimism, though. In 1992, Perot won 18.9 percent of the popular vote; in 1996, major candidates mined the no-chance votes and Perot managed less than half that. But Nader isn't just a fading improbability like Perot was — in some circles, he's openly resented.

Still, Nader altered the outcome of the 2000 election by winning only 2.7 percent of the popular vote; and this year's election is shaping up to be so close, half that figure might just tip the scales again. If you're a Nader fan and live in a swing state like Oregon, consider your vote this fall carefully — it counts.

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