

Tuesday, June 1, 2004

EDITORIAL

Quacks to the students and community members searching for missing Brigham Young University student Brooke Wilberger, who disappeared in Corvallis last week. Though it's unfortunate that the community isn't unified under better circumstances, its dedication is an admirable expression of human altruism.

Smacks to some of the students in the audience at the recent Smoker event. Leave it to the greek community to put on a well-intentioned fund-raiser where students can pay to watch other students duke it out — in the ring and in the crowd. That's right. At a charity boxing event, students — presumably from rival fraternities, those ruffians — couldn't keep their hands to themselves. Children, behave!

Quacks to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for ruling that the Bush administration cannot interfere with Oregon's assisted suicide law: No matter how you feel about doctor-assisted suicide, it's an important victory for states' rights and self-government. (Oregon voters affirmed the state's 1994 Death with Dignity Act by a wide margin three years after its initial approval.)

Smacks to the Saudi Arabian gunmen who killed 22 people in the city of Khobar. As if that wasn't bad enough, they threatened to kill 242 more people they were using as human shields.

Quacks to graduating seniors. After four years (or three or five or six or ...) of hard work, you've finally made it.

Smacks to the flagging (but admittedly improving), 5.6 percent-unemployment-rate economy that those seniors now have to try to find a job in.

Quacks to state Gov. Ted Kulongoski asking President Bush for help relieving Oregon gas prices. Paying \$2.399 per gallon for regular unleaded gas is a poor fiscal arrangement for poor college students. (Oh, and the rest of the drivers in the state might benefit, too.)

Smacks to professors who assign a lot of work this week — it's called "Dead Week" for a reason. It isn't to leave your students emaciated husks of underslept, overcaffeinated humans before their biggest tests of the term.

Quacks to all those who traveled to cemeteries or otherwise recognized Memorial Day. Citizens ought to remember, too, that there are 364 other days in the year to remember the contributions of those that have given their lives for their country.

Smacks to President Bush for keeping Saddam Hussein's personal pistol in a small study at the White House. The timing is ill for showboating, and the piece belongs in the Smithsonian, and, eventually, an Iraqi museum.

Quacks to the opening of the promenade by the art museum. Students can now travel between classes with greater ease, and it's nice to see that the art museum is nearing its reopening.

Smacks, though, to the art museum taking four years to be completed. The open house aside, students in the class of '04 who took four years to graduate will never have had the chance to visit the art museum while taking classes here.

Quacks & smacks

ONLINE POLL

Each week, the Emerald runs an online poll and publishes the results, along with next week's question, in this space.

Visit <http://www.dailyemerald.com> to vote.

Last question: This week the greek community is sponsoring their annual boxing fund-raiser. Do you feel that boxing is an acceptable fund-raiser for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America?

Results: 42 votes.

- Yes — Boxing is fun entertainment: 30.9 percent or 13 votes
- No — Surely the greek community could come up with something more interesting and entertaining: 28.6 percent or 12 votes.
- Yes — Any fund-raiser for a worthy cause is worthwhile: 28.6 percent or 12 votes.
- No — It's promoting violence: 11.9 percent or five votes.

This week: Need help getting through the term? What's your Dead Week drug of choice?

Choices: Booze; Caffeine; Exercise; Food; Illegal drugs; Nicotine; Prescription drugs.



Emerald columnists aim to answer the age-old question of collegiate athletics: Which sport is better, basketball or football?

AUTZEN POWER

The outlook was grim. We had no food and barely any protection from the driving rain. Our communication lines were broken. We were forced to stay on our feet for 12 hours straight.

A camping trip gone wrong? A kidnapping?

Nope.

Civil War tickets.

From the first day of freshman year to my last few steps as a college student in, wow, a week and a half, football has been the thing. I know Marissa Jones is going to come in here with her thrilling finishes and her March Madness, but football is Oregon's game. And football will always be the sport of students.

After all, is there anything that defines the college experience more than a beer, a barbecue, a flask and a football game? Is there anything that screams college more than getting to Autzen one hour before kickoff and still, somehow, getting seats halfway up the student section? And so close to a drunk guy that you can smell his brand of bourbon?

I don't know the longest I ever stood in line for basketball tickets, but I can tell you the exact amount of time it took to get Civil War tickets in 2001. It took 12 hours and 35 minutes. It took me that long to get a four-inch by one-inch piece of paper. But that was the golden ticket to Willy Wonka's: Ducks and Beavers, two weeks later.

There is no rivalry like the Civil War in football. In basketball? Please. Oregon State couldn't mop Oregon's lockers. But in football, the teams clash like titans. In 2000 and 2001, Civil War wins by the Beavers and Ducks, respectively, put the teams in the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl.

Ahhh, the Fiesta Bowl. Remember? Everybody in the universe, and that includes the sports writers on Jupiter, were pounding the NCAA for the BCS computer system, which put far-inferior Nebraska into the national title game against Miami. Everybody thought Oregon should've been in that Rose Bowl game instead of snacking on chips in Arizona.

They were right.

Oregon drubbed Colorado. Samie Parker caught a touchdown right in front of us in the student section. Maurice Morris spun like a top right over a defender in the most outlandish football play I've ever seen. But the best part was when they gave out free Tostitos and dip to everyone in the stadium. No joke.

The year before it was the Holiday Bowl. In all, the Ducks went to five bowls in the five seasons I watched.

But take away that success, and football is still the game of champions. The bowls were just a bonus.

Football is an initiation for most students. I went to a game at Autzen Stadium before I ever set foot in a classroom. It was Oregon's triple-overtime thriller against USC, the one where A.J. Feeley threw a bomb for a touchdown in the dying seconds to send the game into overtime. I hugged the guy I went to the game with, somebody from



Peter Hockaday
 Today is Hockaday

MAC ATTACK

Which is better? Duck football or basketball? Tough call. Or is it?

Oh yes, as a freshman I thought there was no sports arena better than Autzen Stadium, a large mound of dirt with a football stadium inside. Of course that all changed when they started

landscaping the side of the mound, building skyboxes and pushing student pre-season seats toward the end zone. Those first years I could storm the field, but now there's a "moat" separating the students from the field, just to make sure they keep their distance.

Now compare that to Mac Court. Sure, the basket doesn't shake as much as it used to, but at least they didn't add a wall between the court and the students. Nope. In fact, you're so close to the action that you can still get hit in the face with the peanuts Phil Knight throws at the students. You and Phil are practically sitting in the same seat, and you know your student incidental fees aren't costing you as much as Phil's courtside seat is costing him.

It's the common man's arena. The second-oldest in the country. You take your life in your hands just being there, and if you want to get a seat in the front, you only have to be smashed and pummeled for about 30 feet; at Autzen you have to trek up some inclines, only to have to race down the steps back to field level.

But basketball isn't superior to football just because of the arena. No, what about the overall fan experience, including the half-time show? While I'm sure the OMB's rendition of "Earth, Wind and Fire" moved many of us to tears, they've got nothing on those unicycle kids. That is some pure talent. Or what about the juggling kids? Any time we can label a child playing with sharp knives as entertainment is pretty exciting.

And what about the marketing games for fans? I seem to remember at the football game something about trying to throw a Frisbee so that it lands inside the "O." Whatever the object of the game was, it doesn't matter. It was lame. Compare that with the Pepsi Shootout. This year not only did two girls win — maybe with a granny shot or two — but there were the two guys, each with a broken arm, who managed to hit more threes than the team with four able arms. That's good stuff. And let's not forget Bingo.

And what about the marketing slogans for each team? I can stomach "Luke Both Ways" a little easier than "Big Fun." I'm not even sure what that means. I guess it sort of summarizes the year for Duck football, since a felon joined the team and Junior Siavii was arrested for allegedly committing battery assault. Oh yes, that is some "Big Fun!"

Of course the basketball team has always been a lot tamer, speaking at Young Life events and whatnot. Sure, Donald attacked another mascot one time, but hey, that's what happens



Marissa Jones
 Cry me a river