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On the trail again with Clark Bar

The fall after I graduated from high school, my dad and I set out on a journey across America, which we coined "Oregon Trail '99." There were a few technical glitches, like the original Oregon Trail didn't start in Marietta, Ga., and, oh yeah, the majority of the original trail isn't located next to a major freeway.

But hey, that didn't stop the Joneses. It might have been the longest route we

could have taken, but there's nothing like the joy of seeing real wagon ruts. Of course, you can only truly appreciate things like this after previous family vacations have failed to locate what you were looking for off the beaten path, but that's beside the point.

I was quick to assign my dad the nickname "Clark Bar," while he struggled to find a pun with the word Lewis in it. We called home from a pay phone after a long day of driving and announced to my mother that she could be Sacajawea, but she didn't seem too keen on joining the fun.

anybody? (The answer to that question has long been under debate, but the humor of the fighting duck mascot might have played a larger role than many think.)

It's not really fun eating by yourself, and it's definitely not fun to be on the outside of every inside joke. You try really hard to remember that Beaverton is outside of Portland, but you just think it sounds like the perfect place for Oregon State, so you confuse it with Corvallis. You pronounce the cities' names wrong, such as Tigard, which you seemed to think was the British spelling of Tigger. Yeah, that pretty much sums up my first week at the University, along with answering constant questions such as "Do you know OutKast?," "Where is your accent?," and "Did you grow up in a trailer?"

It's been five quick years, and right when I think I have a handle on everything, it's time to go again. I've got friends, an Oregon atlas and hundreds of pictures to remember everything that has happened. Unfortunately, I'm crying again, but not for the same reasons. (Allergies mostly.) But in truth, because it really is time to go.

My mom says college is the best time of your life. Is it true? Sure, feels like it right now, but I suppose that remains to be seen. In the meantime, Clark Bar and Sacajawea will help me load up the wagon and find a new campsite. But, Dad, this time we're sticking to the freeways.



Marissa Jones
 Cry me a river

And fun it was — the pure excitement of going to college, especially in a far-away land. I mean, some of my friends didn't even know where Oregon was on the map, which is really just a sad comment on our educational systems, but once again is beside the point.

My dad dropped me off, bought me some tools and a combination lock, patted me on my head and left town. I was free. I was on my own. I sat on my bed and cried, and we're not talking tears of joy.

What in the world was I thinking? What ever had inspired me to move to a state on the other side of the country where I didn't know

Contact the columnist at marissajones@dailyemerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

SHAKRA

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live in tall trees and spend days with the purple-haired girl. I wish to take time to be with all those whom I had to pass along the way and pluck each a tune on my mandolin.

Perhaps these words will linger a while longer, as ashen sage smoke swimming amongst the places where I once existed, leaving traces of who I once was. Perhaps some will remember. Once a writer. Once

a student. Once a journalist. Once a friend.

Thich Nhat Hanh wrote, "Tomorrow I will continue to be. But you will have to be very attentive to see me. I will be a flower, or a leaf. I will be in these forms and I will say hello to you. If you are attentive enough, you will recognize me, and you may greet me. I will be very happy."

Contact the Pulse editor at aaronshakra@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

HOCKADAY

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positive they're going to take me with the 18th-overall pick. I hope you know where you're going, and I hope that all your hard work paid off.

Good luck on draft day. I now ride off into the sunset, headed east to go to the West.

Happy trails, y'all.

Contact the columnist at peterhockaday@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

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