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Civility NOW: two sides of the culture war

On Saturday, the Oregon Ducks will hit the gridiron in Corvallis to take on the Beavers of the school formerly known as Oregon Agricultural College in the 108th Civil War.

While every true Duck cares about the outcome of the game, I imagine the Civil War is a bit more personal for me than it is for most Ducks. I grew up in Corvallis, having lived there from age 3 until I left for college. I went through its entire K-12 school system. My sister graduated from Oregon State University with a degree in forestry, and my best friend from high school is a senior there. I grew up on OSU baseball's Saturday doubleheaders, the perennially successful OSU gymnastics team (my mom was a season ticket holder) and orange and black adorning my hometown.

I've become further entangled in Beaver influences since I began hanging out with one of that school's more intriguing young women. As an added twist, she's the vice president of their sailing team and I'm a longtime member of ours. So we'll have our own little Civil War battle this weekend in Bellingham, Wash. While our football teams duke it out at Reser Stadium, we'll be competing for bragging rights on Lake Whatcom.

Despite all the nefarious Beaver influences in my life, I never seriously considered attending OSU. I knew from a young age that I wanted to study journalism, knowing that the University of Oregon's program was nationally known and that OSU's, well, didn't exist. That and I wanted to get the heck out of Dodge.

Much Civil War bickering comes down to discussing the relative merits of Corvallis and Eugene. I've heard many people bash Corvallis — whose Latin name means "heart of the valley" — without having a clue what they were talking about. Corvallis is, above all, a nice, quiet, safe town.

This makes it attractive for families and retirees. In fact, during a recent visit to Corvallis, I saw so many geriatrics out and about that I felt like I was in an alternate, wrinkled universe.

However, the qualities that make Corvallis attractive to the old make it boring for the young. While things have improved somewhat in recent years, Corvallis can be a boring place to spend a Friday night, especially if you're younger than 21 or not plugged into the greek scene. I can't say the same about Eugene. In my four years here, I've seldom found myself bored on a weekend. There's simply too much going on, from a solid bar scene to good house parties to Duck sports.

Eugene also has a lot of good entertainment for a city its size. Many Eugene-sized cities don't have an awesome art cinema like the Bijou, and few cities of Eugene's size can pull in musical acts like Spearhead, George Clinton, De La Soul, KMFDM and Del Tha Funky Homosapien in a three-week span, a feat Eugene will soon accomplish.

Additionally, Eugene has cooler people. They're more laid-back. The omnipresence of a hippie element in Eugene means more people have a live-and-let-live attitude, which means they're more fun to hang out with. Eugene also has the benefit of a fairly diverse employment base, which leads to a fairly diverse population.

Corvallis, on the other hand, is home to an enormous Hewlett-Packard facility. The second-largest employer in town is the technologically minded university. These two employers combine to attract a lot of nerds to Corvallis. These nerds influence Corvallis in countless ways. Its residents have a very high median income, and the town has excellent schools, though they're filled with the annoying children of professional nerds. Personally, I'd rather hang out with hippies any day.

It's too bad that the nerds who grew up in Corvallis don't make OSU a better school. The UO consistently outscores OSU in college rankings, and our freshmen had higher average high-school GPAs and SAT scores, according to the College Board. Besides, beavers are rodents.

So while Civil War fever grips the Willamette Valley, walk into the weekend with your head held high. Take it from someone who knows: Eugene is a better city than Corvallis, and the UO a better school than OSU. Go Ducks!



CHUCK SLOTHOWER
TAKING ISSUE



BRIAN GJURJEVICH
DAILY BAROMETER EDITOR IN CHIEF

Editor's Note: The following column by Brian Gjurjevich is part of the annual Civil War column exchange with the Daily Barometer.

Fifty-one weeks a year I will refuse to cut the plastic things that hold six packs together. In other words, I will be anti-Duck. Well, maybe for this week, at least. I can't say I'm a Duck-hater year-round. But for this glorious, victorious week, I must once again lay the gospel gently upon the good people of Eugene from deep within the heart of Corvallis.

And if you were wondering, Eugeneans, the answer is no — the cow shit only smells during the summer months, when the warm sun releases our local bovine's collective stench upon our fair town. It happens every beautiful Oregon summer, right about the same week the smell of hippie BO matriculates through Eugene's collective nostril. But despite the incense-filled atmosphere, I love Eugene and its wonderful mix of people. I mean, come on, Corvallis, we can all recognize the true positives of our neighbors to the south. Like the tomato cheese soup at The Glenwood. Or ... Or ... Seriously, though — have you had that soup? It's some damn good soup.

And wait — I thought of another one. Eugene has more (and therefore better) culture than Hard-Corvallis, right? The demographics in Eugene are larger, which makes for a "pseudo-big city" vibe that almost makes you feel alive. The concert venues are numerous, the alternative medicine specialists abundant, the watering holes plentiful. Eugene even has a mall (though I'd rather have a \$20 gift certificate to a Stoker's Vita World or Radio Shack).

Oh, and Eugene has history: Prefontaine, "Animal House," that Sublime song ... it's all here folks. In fact, hot damn, I might just have a little bit of a crush on Eugene. Seriously. But no matter how much now-outlawed man-love I may feel for this place south of us on the maps and the PAC-10 standings, Corvallis will always be my numero uno. Maybe it's because I like that small-town feel. Or that streak of conservatism (I love The Liberty). Or that occasional big-city crime (kidding).

I can see, however, how Eugene and its University may have certain "advantages" over Corvallis and OSU. The University of Oregon enrollment (gene pool) is 20,000. OSU enrollment is 19,000. UO has a really sleek school logo. OSU has ... hey, what's our logo again? UO has a sexy football stadium and a functional journalism program. OSU has a dangerous construction zone and ... the Barometer. Their track program is legendary, their historic gym deafening (think of the noise the wrecking ball will make!) and their football team, well, loaded.

But you can't blame the football team for their vast riches. Blame cheap, overseas labor for that. And while Phil Knight swims in his vault of gold coins and the players sit in their climate-controlled, plasma-filled locker rooms, I humbly eat a Reser burrito and wait for our stadium to rise from "bean and cheese" to "seven-en layer." Now don't get me wrong — Oregon has a heck of a football team. Another "decade of dominance" looks probable with every Nike sold and Silver Dollar "recruiting field trip" attended.

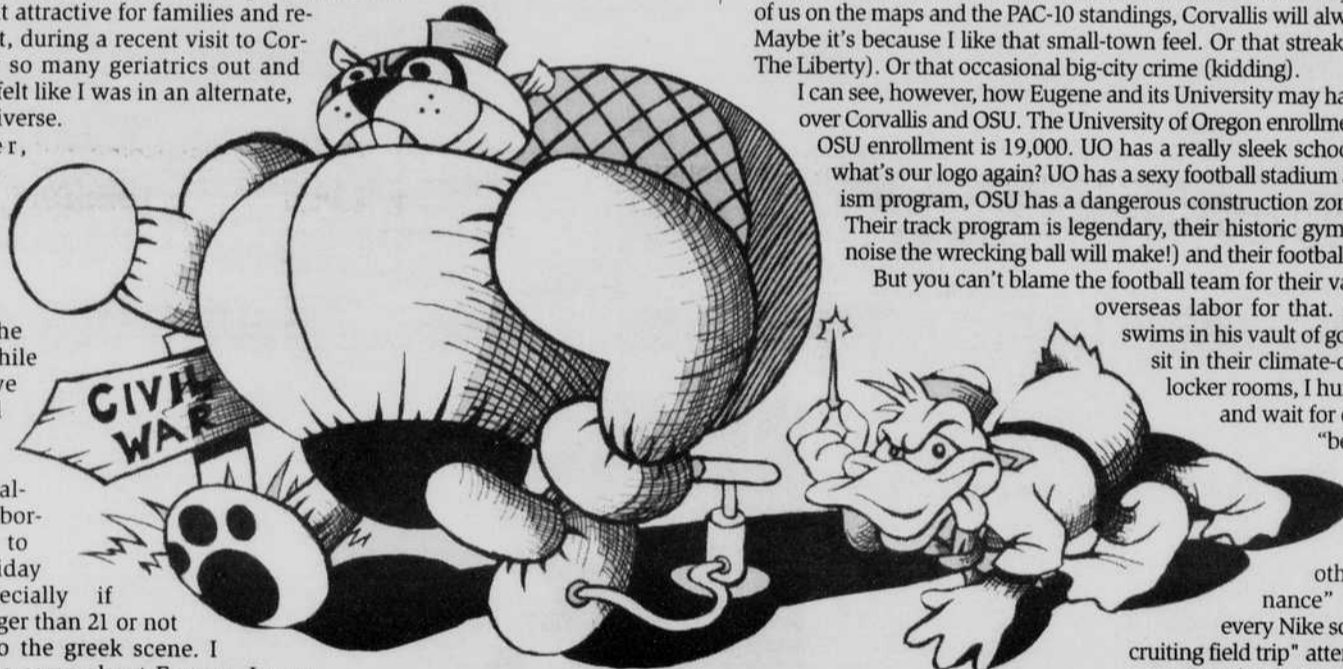
FURTWANGLER

BRET FURTWANGLER | GRAPHIC ARTIST

But the future is now, for both rather evenly matched football programs. This year's showdown features two squads on the brink of national prominence — two teams with the talent to take big leads over some of the best in the nation, but without the gusto needed to "step on the throat" and pull out the W. With a Bowl berth on the line, this winner-take-all throwdown could be decided by one dropped pass or one botched extra point.

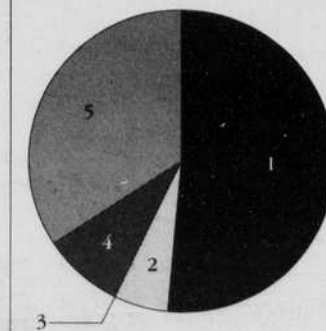
Either way, rain or rain, the 108th Civil War is shaping up to be some of the best Oregon-on-Oregon action ever. So if you're a Ducks fan, go ahead — buy me a drink at the bar because Phil Knight can't buy you a bowl game. And if you're a Beavers fan, please be careful when rushing on to the Reser Stadium turf — and don't push. Everyone will get a chance to touch Doug Neinhuis. Now I just need to find a way to sneak into the stadium.

Brian Gjurjevich is the editor in chief of the Daily Barometer. When he is not working the soup line or sponsoring poor, impoverished foreign children, he is doing his part to rid the world of terrorism. Everything he says is always right.



ONLINE POLL

THIS WEEK'S POLL RESULTS



What would be the outcome of a brawl between the University of Oregon Duck and the Oregon State Beaver? (35 votes)

1. Buck the Feavers. Donald would win for sure in a one-on-one match — 51.4 percent
2. Roast duck. Angry Benny Beaver would chew up any poultry opponent — 5.7 percent
3. A tie. Both teams have mascots that could kick some butt — 0.0 percent
4. Waterfowl and oversized rodents? These mascots don't deserve rivalry — 8.6 percent
5. Who cares. I can find something better to do with my time than worry about fictional matchups of over-sized stuffed animals — 34.3 percent

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OREGON DAILY EMERALD LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged, and should be sent to letters@dailymerald.com or submitted at the Oregon Daily Emerald office, EMU Suite 300. Electronic submissions are preferred. Letters are limited to 250 words, and guest commentaries to 550 words. Authors are limited to one submission per calendar month. Submissions should include phone number and address for verification. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style. Guest submissions are published at the discretion of the Emerald.

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