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YOUR GUIDE TO FINALS WEEK



■ In my opinion

YEAR in REVIEW

As fall term draws to a close, so does 2004. For those suffering from short memories and, more indulgently, to relieve feelings of whatever you call nostalgia for events too recent to fit in the category, I present a brief history of 2004:

January 4: (Hopefully) outgoing pop princess Britney Spears spontaneously marries childhood friend Jason Allen Alexander. Sound bytes about the well-considered nuptials (which were soon annulled anyway) somehow turn into an argument about the legalization of gay marriage. (The reader should be warned here that this column is less a briefing of important social, scientific or political events, but rather a manifest of journalistic flotsam of a year gone off awry.)

January 19: Former middle-of-the-pack candidate John Kerry, D-Mass., wins the Iowa Democratic caucuses, presaging a heated primary season and a divisive general election campaign. Ignoring Kerry's electoral fait accompli, Oregon holds its cash-burning primary four months later ("Pointless primaries," ODE, Mar. 5).

February 3: The Dukes of Hazzard updates to the post-Cold War era as the U.S. Coast Guard intercepts nine Cuban migrants trying to reach Florida in a seafaring 1959 Buick.

February 25: The year's most controversial film, "The Passion of the Christ," opens in the United States. Despite some fears, the film sparks little or no anti-Semitism. However, a Wichita, Kan., woman meets her



TRAVIS WILLSE
RIVALLESS WIT

maker, maybe prematurely, during the climatic crucifixion scene, when she collapses and dies of a heart attack.

March 9: The spirit of youthful indiscretion folds in on itself as a judge in spring break hot spot Panama City, Fla., ruled that film of women under 18 voluntarily exposing their breasts for "Girls Gone Wild" — a film series depicting young women removing clothing — does not constitute child pornography.

April 14: The Saint Petersburg Democratic Club tops the later Swift Boat ads to claim the title of the least sensible campaign ad of the season, when they place an ad in area paper the Gabber (Gulfport, Fla.) saying of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, "We should put this S.O.B. up against a wall and say, 'This is one of our bad days,' and pull the trigger."

June 21: Privately funded SpaceShipOne successfully hits the (somewhat arbitrarily designated) 62-mile boundary of space. Meanwhile, non-sense on earth continues unabated.

June 24: History reminds us of its kinship to irony when the gun used by Gavrilo Princip to assassinate Austria's

Archduke Franz Ferdinand is found in, of all places, a monastery.

August 20: Asa Hutchinson, under secretary for Border & Transportation Security, apologizes for a mix-up that delays Sen. Ted Kennedy, the other D-Mass., at airline gates three times on suspicion that he was a terrorist.

August 24: Japan issues a deportation order for chess great Bobby Fischer. The U.S. has sought Fischer since 1992, when he threatened the potency of American interests: Fischer violated economic sanctions by visiting Yugoslavia and winning \$3 million by playing a board game well.

September 10: Bloggers pick apart memos "obtained" by CBS that negatively portrayed President Bush's embattled Vietnam-era National Guard service. The nation spends some time mulling the trustworthiness of media, but eventually settles on a three-week conversation about the minutiae of 1970s typesetting technology.

October 21: University of Florida scientist Thomas DeMarse reveals that he has grown a network of rat neurons and trained it to fly an airplane simulator. No word from the pilots' unions so far.

November 19: NBA 2003-04 Defensive Player of Year Ron Artest gets defensive, attacking a fan he believed threw a cup at him. That and a related on-court brawl, the biggest in recent memory in the league, land players suspensions varying from one to 73 games.

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INBOX

University needs better student ticket system

When some of my fellow students and I went to get basketball tickets a few days ago for the basketball games during winter break we were turned away. They were all gone. The lady at the ticket office told us that there were only 300 student tickets released for the games.

I am a senior and have always been able to get tickets for the winter break games until this year. The lack of tickets was caused by the ASUO, according to the ticket office. This is horrible. Only giving out 300

tickets is not acceptable, especially when there are 2,300 tickets available to other games. I know that there is a disclaimer that at least 305 tickets will be given out during winter break games, but it says "at least." Where are the rest? Why not give out a few more to students who go to every game and have for four years?

I think there could be a better method to the way things are handled. Why not make all the student tickets available until Wednesday and then after that sell the rest? We pay a fee that allows us to go to the game and now we aren't

allowed to go during winter break because the tickets are sold to the public instead of the students. That makes no sense and needs to be changed. The team needs the students there; they play better when their crowd is loud, and the students make it loud.

We don't know what you can do this year but if there is any way to make extra tickets available, that needs to be done. Do something, because giving tickets to the public instead of students is not respectable or acceptable.

Isaac Price
Undergraduate

■ Editorial

PFC budget hold a good move, albeit a late one

The U.S. Congress could learn a thing or two about fiscal responsibility from the Programs Finance Committee.

PFC Chairwoman Persis Pohowalla pushed for delaying the approval of any student group budget that includes stipends until January, when a new model for determining stipends will be finalized.

The delay was sparked by a letter from University President Dave Frohnmayer, which pointed out that some student groups spend as much as 70 percent of their budgets on stipends, leaving only 30 percent for programs.

Holding up the budget process was no doubt a difficult decision, but it was a fair one. We know many groups will be inconvenienced, unable to plan for next year until after winter break, and we sympathize. But it is a small price to pay in order to ensure that student money is not being thrown around carelessly, at least not in this particular instance. No budgets with stipends should be approved until the stipend model has been reworked across the board.

Unfortunately, this matter could have been dealt with long ago. Frohnmayer's letter was sent to ASUO President Adam Petkun, ASUO Vice President Mena Ravassipour, and summer Senate President Rodrigo Moreno-Villamar over the summer. It went virtually ignored for months as the job of reworking the stipend model was passed from person to person with little progress.

Apart from passing the buck, we commend the student government for finally making the tough call and looking out for our money. We hope the ethic of fiscal responsibility continues to drive the PFC process.

High Court hallucinating about tea crack down

It is all drugs all the time at the U.S. Supreme Court. As justices are pondering the constitutionality of Oregon's medical marijuana law, the Bush Administration has asked the High Court to crack down on a drug even more dangerous than herb. Tobacco? No. Meth? No.

Hallucinogenic tea, of course.

According to a CNN report, the U.S. government and the O Centro Espirita Beneficiente Uniao do Vegetal church in New Mexico have been embroiled in a long-running legal battle about a special tea made from plants in the Amazon River Basin. The tea contains the controlled substance DMT.

Finally, an administration that is willing to take on the powerful hallucinogenic tea trade that is ravishing the inner city. Apparently the president's Faith-Based Initiative only applies to churches getting high on God.

Federalism, religious freedom — they should use whatever excuse they want, but the court should pass on this case.

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