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**In my opinion**

## The upside of shattered dreams

Greg Schindler was once a star offensive lineman for the Stanford football team; a four-year starter, heavily recruited out of high school by, among others, the University of Oregon. He was named a second-team All-Pacific-10 Conference player in 2001 after his third season, and he was a potential third- or fourth-round pick had he chosen to enter the 2002 NFL draft.

Instead, he chose to stay for his final year of eligibility at Stanford, even though he had already earned his degree. Injuries caught up with him, and his dream of playing in the NFL gradually went down the tubes.

Now, he studies journalism as a graduate student at the UO. How he arrived here after coming so close to playing in the NFL illustrates that things don't always work out, dreams do get shattered, and life does go on.

Schindler's life changed forever in March 2000, when he was hustling through spring conditioning drills at a Stanford practice facility. In one drill, the players had to run one direction, then turn and run back. When Schindler tried to pivot, his body turned. His foot didn't budge.

"Honestly, it sounded like a shotgun blast," Schindler said. "Everybody in the room could hear."

That "shotgun blast" was the sound of Schindler's ankle suffering a severe sprain. Though he went on to play two more seasons on that ankle, he would never be the same.

"I had almost no function in that ankle," Schindler said. "It was like



**CHUCK SLOTHOWER**  
TAKING ISSUE

playing on a peg leg."

Schindler, 24, has experienced things no other current University student has. Despite his injuries, the San Francisco 49ers gambled on him, signing the free agent to a \$535,000, two-year contract on the second day of the 2003 NFL draft.

He practiced with the 49ers. He listened to the coaches and ran plays through pain that necessitated injections into his spine to keep him going.

Schindler got the impression that his injuries were far worse than the 49ers trainers were letting on, but he agreed to do his best to get into playing shape. Then, before he could play in a game and hear the cheering crowds at Monster Park, the 49ers unceremoniously dumped him, despite NFL rules that Schindler says prohibit releasing injured players.

"They don't have a lot of patience for guys who get injured right away," Schindler explained.

Luckily, he had an excellent agent who helped him through the difficult time after the 49ers released him. And, unlike most athletes with dreams that have torn like ankle cartilage, Schindler had a Stanford

degree to fall back on.

"One thing I knew is I didn't want to spend the next few years getting surgery after surgery trying to get back into football just so I could say I played in the NFL," he said.

So after considering his options, it was on to Eugene, a town he first visited in high school when he participated in camps run by University football coaches. The town where, as a Stanford player, he twice challenged the Ducks. The town where his Cardinal delivered one of the most heartbreaking defeats in UO football history: the 2001 game in which Stanford roared back to beat Joey Harrington and arguably the finest football team in Ducks history, breaking a 23-game Autzen Stadium win streak and proving "Joey Heisman" fallible.

"I just remember how quiet the stadium was," Schindler said of the game.

Now, he's learning the techniques of the reporters who used to pester him. He sometimes watches football games in the stadium he once helped silence.

Schindler isn't sure if reporting is for him. He may want to edit instead or teach and coach football at a high school or small college, where he could shape the lives of young men.

He could tell them about his NFL dream shot, his stellar career at Stanford and how a courageous young man refused to let life get the better of him.

chuckslothower@dailyemerald.com

**Editorial**

## Gas prices give chance to improve life quality

When it comes to ever increasing prices at the gas pump, one sentiment echoes across the board. Regardless of location, class or even political party, the resounding question of the U.S. citizen cruising by the fuel station is simply this: When's the price gonna come down?

Nobody likes the idea of forking out more than \$2.50 per gallon. But the rising gas prices provide an opportunity to search for something better. If having to pay \$50 every week to fuel up the family Land Cruiser is what it takes to finally convince our nation that we need to find better energy sources, then so be it.

Already, car dealerships have reported a serious trend toward consumers who are willing to pay more money for a "less" car: Less in size, less reliant on gasoline, less money from the pocketbook later on. Of course the problem with introducing smaller, more efficient cars into the United States (such as the European "Smart Car") is that these vehicles are at high risk of being clobbered in the event of a tiff with any "normal" (read: school bus-sized) sport utility vehicle.

Another possible benefit of high gas prices and money-conscious Americans is the likelihood that the mass transit system will thrive under such conditions. Communities relying on public transportation will produce and maintain better buses, trains, etc. Mass transportation, as well as carpooling, is easy on the wallet and will become even more convenient and modernized if disgruntled motorists decide to utilize these public services.

Besides an increase in public vehicles, fewer cars on the road could mean an upswing in pedestrians as well. In America's weight-conscious society, it seems that unmanageable fuel prices could be just the ticket to overcoming obesity. A walk down to the corner market cuts both consumer spending as well as inches off the waistline.

President Bush has recognized the problem of sky-high gas prices just like the rest of us. Although widespread concern over fuel cost would be the perfect opportunity to introduce national conversation and legislation on conserving energy, reducing oil dependence and finding more efficient and clean sources of power, Capitol Hill has taken a drastically different approach. Bush has called for a decrease in foreign oil dependence but still insists that drilling into Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a good idea. The newest brilliant Bush plan in overcoming pricey gas is to build more nuclear power plants.

Doesn't it sound fun to spend the next billion years deciding what to do with the resulting nuclear waste? It will probably be something along the lines of trafficking dangerous, radioactive material across crowded state highways, then shoving it under a culturally significant land mass, if the Yucca Mountain fiasco is any indication of where our country's nuclear politics are headed.

Nationally, our energy crisis is being dealt with in all the wrong ways. U.S. citizens should not be encouraged to rely on wildlife refuge oil fields and questionable nuclear technology. Instead, we should be encouraged to rely on the values of efficiency, cooperation and our own two feet.

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### ROTC produces educated military decision-makers

History repeats itself. In asserting that the military should not be present in colleges ("Professor criticizes University's links to U.S. military," ODE, April 27), professor of peace studies Simona Sharoni reminds me of the Vietnam War debates and the response that my father, a 1937 University graduate, gave to my assertion in 1969 that ROTC should be thrown off campus.

My father suggested that our choice is simple: Do we want our entire military leadership trained at military academies, or do we want some University graduates making recommendations and decisions? The answer, to me, was clear. At the University, future officers take classes with a diverse student body and are taught by professors with a variety of political and cultural viewpoints. (Let us hope some take classes from Dr. Sharoni. I mean that seriously).

A number of my father's life-long friends were officers who graduated from the University. One was a general. These were family men who served with honor. Let us not confuse anger and frustration (mine included) toward President Bush and his cronies with our need to keep a military comprised of

well-educated private citizens.  
**Alice Kaseberg**  
Eugene

### Filibuster nuclear option will stifle needed dialogue

America is about freedom of speech and debate, especially in the halls of Congress. The Republican majority is seeking to limit debate on important legislative and judicial topics by pursuing the "nuclear option" to end the filibuster.

The filibuster is an important method to extend debate on controversial legislative topics and judicial nominations. Throughout American history, the Senate filibuster has served as an important element of the checks and balances system, preventing a partisan majority from ruling through tyranny while promoting bipartisan compromise and moderation. It has served as a particularly important check when all three branches of government are controlled by one party.

Republicans and Democrats should freely debate topics and judicial nominations that will greatly affect our country. The nuclear option will stifle that spirit of dialogue and debate. In an increasingly polarized country, it is crucial to encourage a wide range of dialogue in a government dominated by one party.

Sen. Gordon Smith is an important

voice in his party and he needs to hear from his constituents that oppose the elimination of the filibuster. Urge him to join other prominent Republicans who have spoken out against Bill Frist's push to eliminate the filibuster.  
**Jonathan Evans**  
Eugene

### If you really care about the Web rabbit, go vegan

I think AnneMarie Knepper's column two weeks ago ("Bunny Money," ODE, April 14) misses the point when she commends the Web hoax guys for holding a rabbit hostage to play off people's sympathies, earn money and sell stuff. The real point to be made is about justice and compassion. Why pay anyone money not to eat a rabbit in June when these careless Web pranksters are likely stuffing their faces with other animals' flesh every day at McDonald's? What does it matter whether it is their pet rabbit or a factory-farmed chicken or an ocean fish they are eating? If you care about the rabbit (whether the animal exists or not), the main way you can channel your compassionate sympathies is to stop eating any animals yourself and go vegan. You'll save thousands of lives and not have to give the Web jerks any money.

**Carrie Packwood Freeman**  
Doctoral Student and GTF

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