

Memo to: History

Re: The quality of my education

The UO was not my first choice. I am a lower-class Oregonian, and attending this school was more a matter of convenience than of opportunity.

If I were from a wealthier background, I might not have gone to school in the U.S. This school, like many others in America today, does not appear to hold academia as its top priority. The UO has a reputation for being a party school, more connected to California than rural Oregon. My impression of earning a degree was akin to the system of Papal indulgences of 500 years ago: If I spend enough money for a piece of paper, I avoid going to hell – working minimum wage and thinking that is all that is available to rural Oregonians. Getting out of hell meant getting an education. My only other reasonable option was to join the military.



Perhaps there's some truth to this prejudice about education. But I was grievously wrong. My experience has surpassed my expectations. I owe an immense debt of gratitude to certain professors for doing their job right. The history department in particular has an exceptional professionalism. I may not have been the best student towards my teachers, but my teachers have never let me down. Their work is commendable; they are the reason I kept going here instead of someplace else. That someplace else may have been Iraq, Afghanistan or South Korea.

When these professors feel they are neglected by the university system, I find myself sympathizing with them. They are an invaluable intellectual elite – yet it is clear to anyone who pays attention that they aren't high up on the list of priorities. It isn't just a matter of paying them what they're worth. It is a matter of status, and it is above all a matter of preserving academic integrity in an era where integrity elsewhere is being sapped. When my heroes at this school say that the athletic and business departments are getting more focus than the history department, I listen to them. And I believe them.

This is how I see it in a larger context: I do not care one bit about Ducks vs. Beavers. They are both products of Nike. What I care about is the U.S. vs. Terrorists, and I also care that we are losing ground in the war on terror. As history shows us, those who choose to remain ignorant about the *sans culottes* of the world occasionally get mauled by them. I owe a special thanks to professors Alan Kimball, Ken DeBevoise, Charles Hunt and Arif Dirlik for providing instruction on this key issue.

To paraphrase something professor Glenn May told me recently, we cannot think of college as merely four years of drinking followed by a piece of paper. When schools become like this, we get people like George W. Bush. It is embarrassing to me that this inept president has a degree in history but little understanding of the subject. The mission of my history professors is to remove ignorance of this kind from my mind, and for doing this I thank them.

For anyone who still doesn't believe we are entering a crisis of ignorance, I simply ask you to ask the students at the UO who Ken Kesey was. Everyone knows who our official patron is: Phil Knight. What gets me is that kids today are forgetting our unofficial patron-hero, the King of the Merry Pranksters ... and his emblem was the peace symbol. Go ahead. Shake your head at those who have forgotten the precious history of the previous generation. Yet don't feel too jaded by these kids who play with MySpace and texting during class; some of us still value the work of our teachers. We still revere you as heroes.

Ian Epstein is working on a degree in history at UO and working for the UO Housing Department.

ance has touched off such controversy with underlying homophobia and whiffs of misogyny. The people complaining are the same people who cringed from picking up a copy of the recent *EW* same-sex adoption issue (12/21/06).

The Loveline radio show (syndicated out of KNRQ 97.9 FM in Eugene) deals with the same issues. It has been on the air for more than 20 years with a TV stint in the late '90s and is syndicated all over the country. These middle schoolers could very easily have been talking about something they overheard on this program rather than something they read in Savage's column.

*Ryan Thompson
Corvallis*

NO PRUDES

I love all the recent comments regarding "Savage Love." The part I love most is seeing people write "I am no prude" in the same letter in which they go on to prudishly state they will never read your paper again. Or worse, threaten to call the attorney general! What a laugh.

So I say let the prudes spend money to buy whatever they consider clean enough; *EW* is pretty good considering it costs nothing. If the objectors find Savage offensive, I fear to imagine what they would think if they were to go to Seattle and read the back pages of *The Stranger*.

I'd never actually read Dan Savage, but because of all the hubbub, I decided to check it out. And, to be fair, I read the past two months of back issues as well. Sure, some of the questions and revelations were shocking, and sure, Savage usually confronted those with overboard humor. But Savage's advice is pretty levelheaded and not likely to be found elsewhere. For instance, the advice he gave TAC about Craigslist (1/4) was brilliant mostly because of how abrasively he confronted the situation. Savage is not offensive or in need of censorship (unless you're a prude).

I don't plan on continuing to read the column because the issues he deals with don't speak to me. I can do that — simply not pay attention to what I don't like or need. However, the letters may be invaluable to someone else. Please don't remove "Savage Love" from *EW*.

*Daniel Porter
Corvallis*

PUBLIC RADIO HERE

In response to John Galloway's letter, "Public Radio Needed," in the Feb. 22 *EW*, I would like to direct him towards a few radio

drawing as therapy by harvey dickson



stations which carry some of the shows he mentioned, as well as a few more. KWVA 88.1 FM carries the following news shows: "Democracy Now!" Monday through Friday, 7 to 8am; "Free Speech Radio News," Monday through Friday, 6 to 6:30 pm; and "Counterspin" every Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Additionally, "Alternative Radio" is broadcast from KLCC 89.7 FM every Tuesday at 6:30 pm.

I direct him and anyone else to the above radio shows as a source of quality, informative news, as the caliber of NPR news programming is lacking in comparison. Listen to the shows above and see for yourself if you doubt me.

*Jonathan O. Bellg
Eugene*

NOT ENOUGH JACK

I find it hard to believe that a JB [Jack Black] fan would include *Nacho Libre* in your list of Best Movies of 2006 (2/22) but completely ignore *Tenacious D in The Pick of Destiny*. Did I read the article too quickly? Did I miss it? Did 2006 end before Thanksgiving?

*Glenn Leonard
Eugene*

PERMANENT WAR?

I am greatly encouraged by what presidential candidate Barack Obama has said about the war in Iraq. He speaks plainly and courageously about the issue uppermost in the minds of most Americans today. We need leadership like that now more than ever if we are to avoid a dark descent into a state of permanent war. Every day Bush's saber-rattling against Iran continues, we step closer to the edge of that descent.

I am truly sickened by congressional Republicans who talk of "encouraging the terrorists" and "lowering troop morale" as a consequence of national debate and legitimate discussions to end our involvement in Iraq, clearly now embroiled in a brutal civil war. The Republicans have missed the point

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Eugene Weekly • 1251 Lincoln Street • Eugene, OR 97401 • 541.484.0519 • fax 541-484-4044