



PHOTO BY MENDHAK

GOODBYE, GREEN-PILLARED ROAD

Smoking on campus goes up in smoke

As a fifth-year university student and smoker, I wandered onto campus last week with a lit cigarette in hand, puffing away as normal. I turned a corner, expecting to find one of the many green, designated-smoking-area pillars (whose locations I have memorized), but instead found a stern-looking woman who pointed me toward a large sign at campus edge. That's when I remembered the smoking ban. For students like me, who have smoking on campus ingrained in them, it is a task simply *remembering* that we are no longer allowed to light up. Countless times throughout the last two weeks I have spied folks bringing a lighter to the tip of their cigarette only to snap their arms away again as they pass a large sign, declaring: "For a healthier community and cleaner environment, the University of Oregon is smoke and tobacco-free."

That's right, UO is now the first Pac-12 school to become a tobacco-free facility, and this means no smoking, chewing or (if that's your thing) snuffing anywhere on campus. Northwest Christian University is already tobac-

co-free, and Lane Community College went tobacco-free in 2010 (though it has smoking shelters in the parking lots), and Oregon State is smoke-free, but not tobacco free as of Sept. 1. In other words, Beavers can still chew and spit. The UO ban is part of an initiative to help reduce second-hand smoke exposure, as well as damage to the environment.

I know, man, it's tough at first, but tobacco use is often incredibly routine-based. If we start the year off without smoking at the same exact times every day, the urges will die away, the experts tell us. For those finding this particularly arduous, the health center offers free, one-on-one tobacco cessation sessions at which you become eligible for free nicotine gum and patches after your second visit. They also still have those "quit kits" that you've ended up saddled with at least once, I'm sure.

As much as I love smoking on various benches about that beautiful campus (especially under the cherry blossom on the south side of 13th Avenue), admiring the scenery as I do so, I have found that being forced to hold off for an

extra class period has me smoking less, walking farther in order to smoke — therefore snagging a little extra exercise — getting far fewer chagrined looks as I sit down beside people in class. This ban holds the air, paths and smellways of campus to a much higher standard of cleanliness, including, but not limited to, a dearth of second-hand smoke and sidewalks free of cigarette butts. And here's a little extra incentive: You get charged \$30 if you get caught. That's the equivalent of five or six packs of average-priced cigarettes, so keep that in mind next time you decide to risk lighting up.

And if you really *must* smoke, it seems some folks have found a loophole. The divider that runs down the center of Agate Street is officially not part of campus, and so, according to Nita Tanner, a health center nurse, people have begun taking their breaks there; no doubt with exhaust fumes and the cacophony of traffic entering their body along with the smoke.

"We'll just see what they do when it rains," Tanner says. — *Andy Valentine*

For more information on tobacco cessation and nicotine replacement therapy, students can contact Paula Staight, Director, Health Promotion, 541-346-2728 and everyone else contact Marci Torres, Director, Healthy Campus Initiative, 541-346-8817 or tobaccofree@uoregon.edu or call the Oregon Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT NOW (784-8669) www.quitnow.net/oregon/



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