

# emerald

## A Shoe-in for laughter

By Brent Walth  
Of the Emerald

"I can't discuss ethics. I have none." Jeff MacNelly opened with that disclaimer Tuesday night, speaking at the Ruhl Lecture on journalistic ethics.

"I'm doing my job if I libel, misquote, and make a shambles of the truth," said the Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist. "When the smoke clears, I'm usually closer to the truth than my colleagues who write the news."

MacNelly, entertaining 400 people with his dry, calculating humor, is the creator of the comic strip "Shoe."

The strip, featuring birds who publish the Treetop Tattler-Tribune, creates for MacNelly a "schizophrenic life as a comic strip artist and cartoonist."

He said he chose the characters for "Shoe" because of the "close relationship between domesticated birds and the newspaper industry."

He won a Pulitzer for his editorial cartoons in 1972 at the age of 24, and another in 1978.

In 1981 he quit the editorial side to concentrate on "Shoe," only to return to cartooning for the Chicago Tribune six months later.

While he feels the characters in "Shoe" represent all his emotions, editorial cartooning is easier for him.

"Americans always elect funny people to high political office," MacNelly said. "That makes my job a lot easier."

"When trying to draw your favorite politician," he advised the audience, "and you can't think of a reptile he reminds you of, draw him as a small child."

"Reality is a hell of a lot funnier and sillier than we could ever make up," he said. "I get an idea from a news story, and then take it to the Nth degree only to find two weeks later that the politicians have taken it a step further."

Economic issues remain his favorite topic, simply because he knows very little about them.

"That makes me feel pretty much on the same level as the Council of Economic Advisers," MacNelly added.

With complete freedom from his syndicate to handle any subject as he pleases, all opinions are his own. MacNelly stays away from very little and regrets even less.

"I get a soft spot every once in a while," he said of his barb's victims, "but I work on it and it goes away."

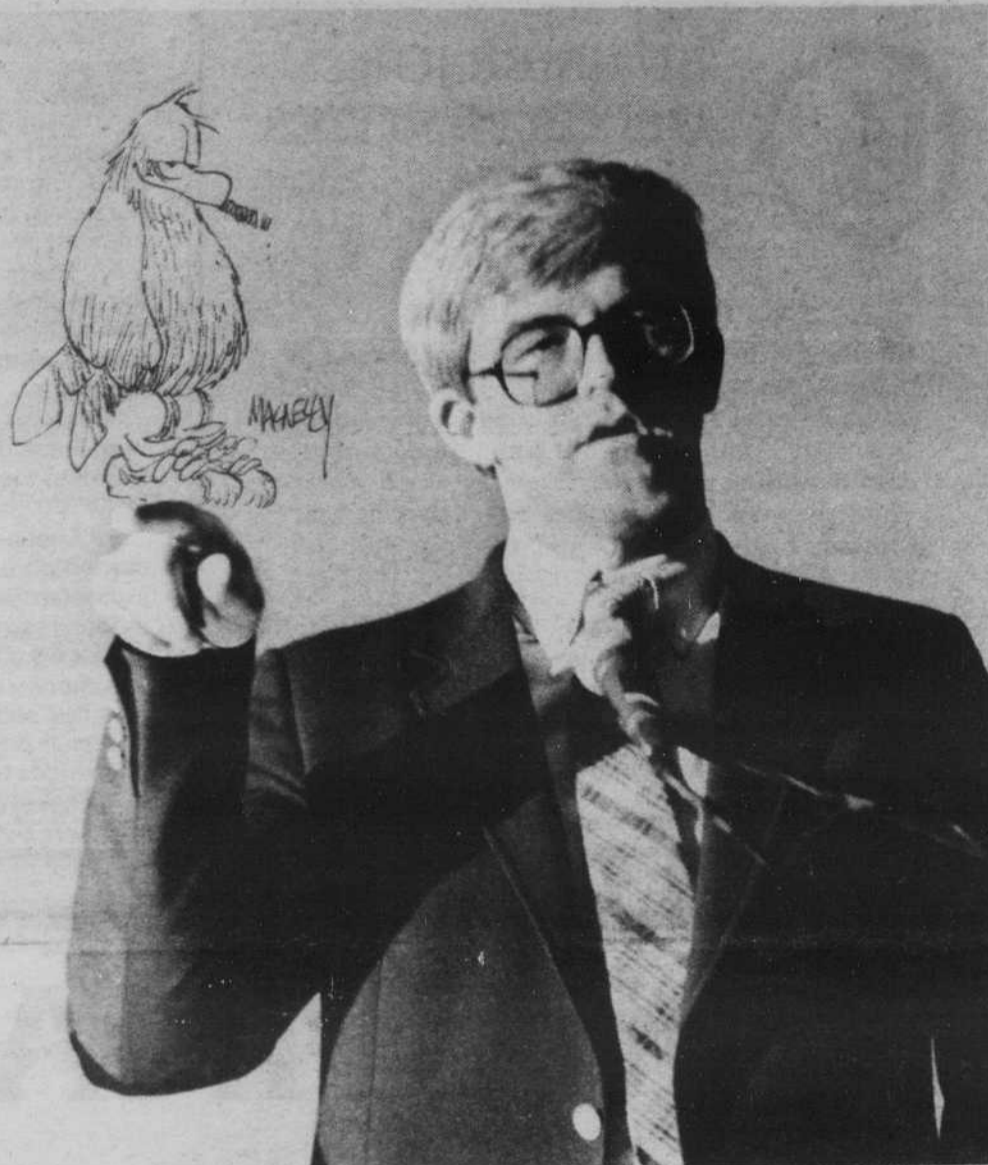
MacNelly noted he never feared that any of his subjects — which are public figures anyway — would bring legal retaliation against him.

"To be sued for libel, someone would have to show malicious intent on my part," he said wryly. "They'd have to go into the courtroom and hold up the cartoon to the jury. And the people in the jury would just laugh."

"That would be the end of the suit. . . I think."

MacNelly pioneered the "gag first, message second" approach to editorial cartoons and has witnessed his style copied ever since.

"I was influenced a lot by (Pat) Olyphant," MacNelly said after his speech. "I hear now that a lot of people are influenced by me. It's a cycle, a chain-letter approach to breaking new ground."



Jeff MacNelly

Photo by Mark Pynes

## University image needs polish, mayor says

By Ann Portal  
Of the Emerald

The University still seems to need an "image builder" to sell the fact that it is one of the top 100 public universities in the country, Eugene Mayor Gus Keller said Tuesday.

Keller told an EMU forum audience that the University is a great asset to the livability of Eugene, but he said more must be done to convey that to city residents. "You do have a communications gap and you have not dealt with it well," he said.

Earlier in the meeting, Keller said that "the Beavers can sell their basketball team more effectively than you can sell your research departments."

Keller spoke at a discussion on University-community relations sponsored by the American Association of University Professors. About 40 people — mostly University faculty — attended the afternoon talk.

Otto t'Hooft, Lane County commissioner, said that part of the University's image problem is that people in the community still have a perception of the University as a liberal, long-haired institution — a "head-in-the-sky and unrealistic-view-of-life" kind of place.

That's where the University's credibility problem begins, t'Hooft said.

Keller disagreed. "It's been a long time since those activities went on which in fact turned off the majority of the people," he said.

However, there may be a gulf between the supposedly "liberal" University community and "middle America" — the majority of the state's citizens, Keller said.

Another speaker, University History Prof. Stan Pierson, said he was concerned that the true mission of the University not be overlooked. The new emphasis on services offered by the University and the economic



Photo by Bob Baker

impact it has on the community are fine, but the state needs to realize scholarly inquiry is the school's foundation, he said.

The real challenge is for the community to understand activities that take place in small laboratories and research libraries — the "very lonely type" activities,

Pierson said.

Other forum participants detailed what has been done to extend the University into the community, efforts that drew praise at the meeting from University and community leaders alike.

Springfield Mayor John Lively applauded the interns and data available to his city from the University. Next year's Springfield budget depends to an even greater extent on utilizing the University's resources, he said.

In past years, Springfield became too dependent on outside consultants, losing a local perspective and contact with the University, Lively said.

t'Hooft said that in the future Lane County also will rely more heavily on University interns. Yet other forms of county/University cooperation will decline next year, he said, pointing to the cooperative museum mission and athletic event law enforcement as areas hurt by county budget problems.

The challenge now is to encourage the growth of University and community interrelations, said University Pres. Paul Olum. "What's surprising is that a few years ago we didn't do it at all," Olum said.

The new importance placed on cooperation is the result of a period in which universities existed in isolation in their communities, he said. Those "ivory tower" days of financially secure universities are over, Olum said.

He admitted the University "clearly has not succeeded" in its recent lobbying efforts. State legislators agree on the importance of the University, but when they have to cut, they cut higher education, Olum said.

"We have told them eloquently, brilliantly — many times over — the importance of a research university to the state," he said.

"We have not yet gotten them to respond when the chips are down."

### Olum to speak

University Pres. Paul Olum meets with students today during his spring term convocation at 3:30 p.m. in 150 Geology.

The meeting is an opportunity for students to discuss University issues that concern them before the end of the academic year. Questions from the audience will set the agenda for the meeting.