

Life and Art

ENTERTAINMENT • LIFESTYLES • TRENDS

Cartoonist pokes fun at PC world

By KRISTI MCDOWELL

The Lumberjack, Northern Arizona U.

Superheroes used to leap tall buildings in a single bound and drive cool cars out of caves.

But Jeff Shesol's modern-day superhero, Politically Correct Person, is more likely to combat ethnic slurs and chauvanistic catcalls than to fly an invisible jet or match wits with a penguin.

P.C. Person is one of the characters in "Thatch," a comic strip written by Shesol, a 1991 graduate of Brown U. The strip, which features J. "Thatch" Thatcher, chronicles the trials and tribulations of students at Wayland U.

"Thatch" broke into the national spotlight when a friend of Shesol's wrote an article about political correctness for the *New York Times* and submitted some P.C. Person cartoons with it. Shesol said he never expected to see them in the *Times*.

"They ran it, and they ran it big," Shesol said. "The media spin started rolling, and surprisingly it still hasn't stopped."

Shesol's PC works also were featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Boston Globe* and *Newsweek*. He has since released "Thatch...Featuring Politically Correct Person," a compilation of strips from his work at the *Brown Daily Herald*, and has been a guest on several local television shows.

Shesol believes political correctness is an important issue, but said the actions of the politically correct are ridiculous.

"Tactics of the PC are divisive, counterproductive and usually pretty silly," he said.

Shesol featured P.C. Person in nonsensical situations, frequently pitting

him against archenemy Insensitive Man.

One strip shows P.C. Person trying to persuade a student to choose Amazon Crunch ice cream instead of chocolate chip because it is the environmentally sound choice.

Later, P.C. Person is troubled when he discovers Insensitive Man telling a boy to call females "chicks."

"We don't call them 'chicks!' Or 'girls!' They're women!" P.C. Person says. When the boy points out that females are only 9 years old, P.C. Person replies, "Well, they're pre-women."

Shesol said the issue has reached its peak in terms of media attention.

"I think PC has been overhyped — it's not as oppressive a problem as more conservative journalists have made it out to be," he said. "I do think it's been overblown, but I don't think it should go the other way."

Margaret Smith, a Brown senior, said she agrees with Shesol.

"(Political correctness) definitely can be taken to an extent where it can be damaging by threatening cultural heritage, being insensitive or saying something that could be misinterpreted," she said.

Although Smith said she is unsure of her own view of the movement, she said Shesol's P.C. Person strips were an effective way to characterize PC.

Shesol recognizes the political incorrectness on campus as well.

"It exists," Shesol said. "It's a problem, and people need to change their behavior. It's not as if you can't discuss anything, but there are limits. There really are things you can't talk about." He listed affirmative action and a father's role in an abortion as two taboo discussion topics.

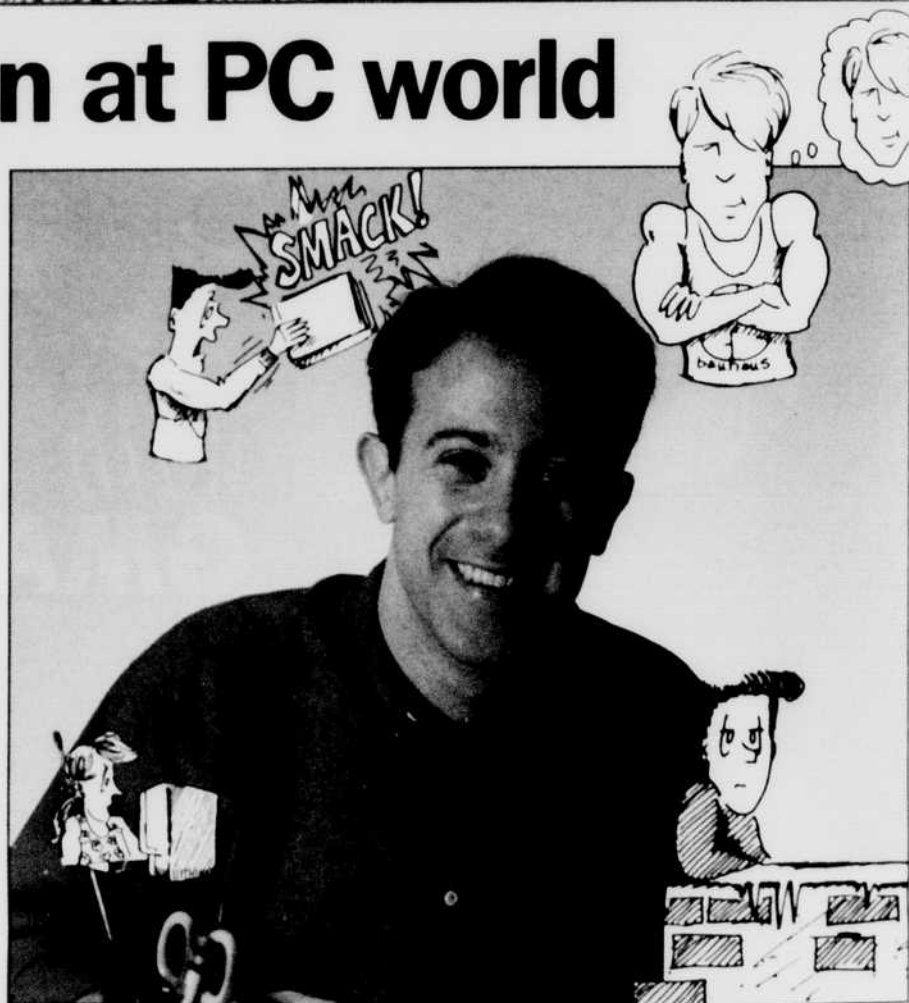


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE DENVER POST. ALL CARTOONS BY SHESOL. COPYRIGHT BY JEFF SHESOL. (FROM "THATCH...FEATURING POLITICALLY CORRECT PERSON.") VINTAGE BOOKS, 1991

Jeff Shesol gives a tongue-in-cheek look at the PC movement in his book "Thatch...Featuring Politically Correct Person."

The heightened awareness of the political correctness issue combined with the P.C. Person cartoons have brought a wave of publicity for "Thatch."

The cartoons dealing with political correctness in his book make up less than 10

percent of the book but account for 99 percent of the publicity, Shesol said.

"It's good and bad to be typed as the PC cartoonist," he said. "I know my strip wouldn't have been noticed without P.C."

See CARTOONIST, Page 16



JOHN ALEXANDER FIRMANI, INDEPENDENT FLORIDA ALLIGATOR, U. OF FLORIDA

Not all neighbors get along as well as U. of Florida juniors Dani Thompson and Mark Wall and nearby resident Willam G. Pothier, Jr.

Zoned out: New ordinances help give students the boot

By JOHN CHEVES

The Miner, U. of Missouri, Columbia

Forget environmental awareness and cultural diversity. The new trend on campus is zoning laws.

City councils, tired of dealing with strained relations between town residents and off-campus students, are dictating how students live.

These restrictions, which limit how many unrelated people can live in one house, will force some students out of their homes. While the total rent remains unaffected, the amount paid by each resident increases.

Zoning laws are the latest twist in the student-resident relationship, and they helped one angry neighbor throw the book at Reggie Grant, a senior at the U. of Florida in Gainesville.

"The local zoning laws say only three unrelated people can live together," Grant said. "But we had five, and of course our neighbors counted us as we walked in and out."

"They reported us to the realty company. We were forced to move out of our house because the owners wouldn't renew our lease."

Grant thinks he knows the reasoning behind the decision.

"The owners knew we were having these parties because the cars were all blocking the streets, and people were urinating in all of the neighbors' yards," Grant added. "It was a residential area, and I guess we didn't live up to their standards."

Not all students are facing confrontations with reluctant neighbors.

See RESIDENTS, Page 13