

Reverse prejudice poses new dilemma

The day has finally come some of us never thought we'd see: A man filing discriminatory charges against a women's organization.

University student Abe Hepner recently filed a complaint against Saferide, a shuttle service run by women offering nighttime rides for University females.

Hepner says anyone who feels unsafe — including men — should be able to use the ride service; by banishing men, Saferide only stereotypes them all as rapists. Wanting to see the "old-girl's club" broken up, he argues against "judgment by genitalia ... on this 'progressive' campus."

Mona Gentry, co-director of Saferide, counters that Saferide's women-only policy must exist to guarantee the safety of the service's drivers and passengers. She adds all men aren't dangerous, but the policy protects women service users from the few that are.

The dilemma: In striving to achieve equal freedom from fear which most men enjoy on this campus, Saferide feels it must exclude from their program the threat to that freedom — men. This ultimately means discrimination.

Consequently, there's been a long fight for equal rights in the workplace and beyond, now leading to the obvious question: Is it right for women to discriminate against men now that they're in the position to do so? Should they be held to practice what they've preached?

Since the goal of the fight for equal rights is equal rights, it's that ultimatum which should take precedence here. Hepner should be given equal access to Saferide. But wait, now the other side of the coin.

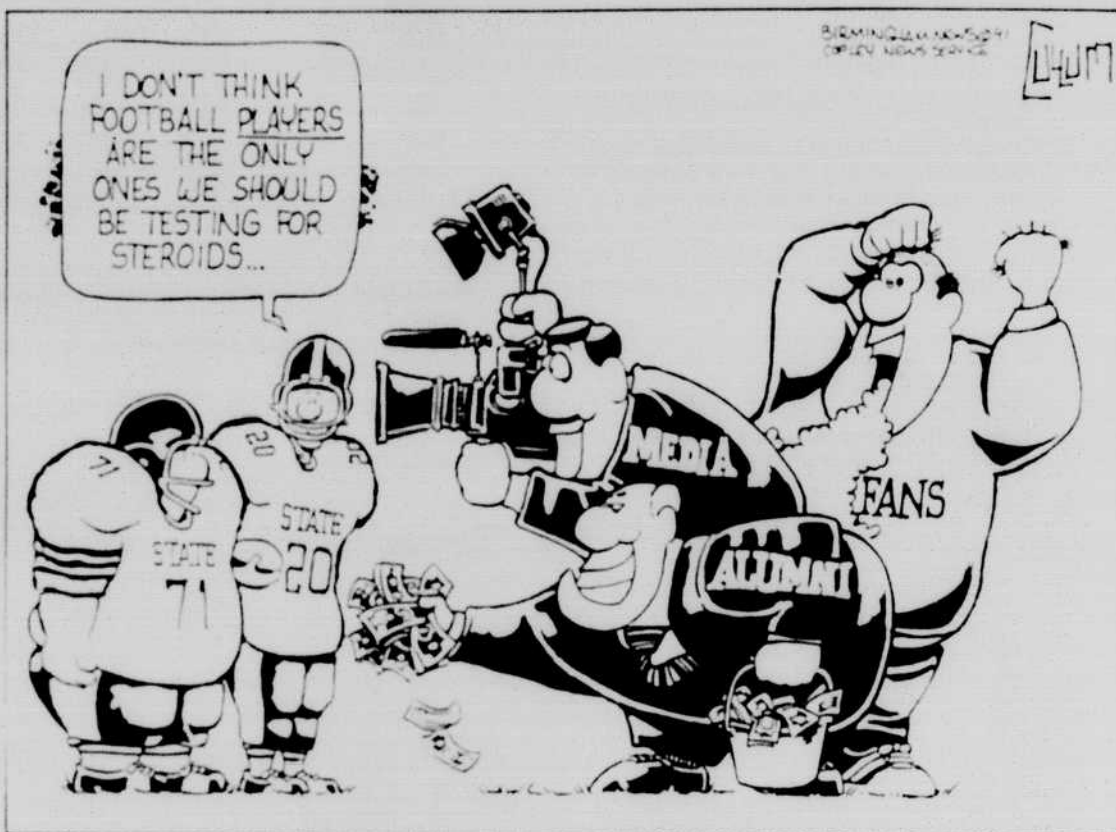
It may be necessary to ban men from an organization designed to protect women's safety in order to ensure an equal feeling of security to that of men; here "equal" takes on a new meaning.

Men as well fall victim to violators, and should also have a protection option available to them when necessary, but if women feel the need to protect themselves, and have organized to do so, they should be able to take those measures unabated.

Our society has long been dominated by a male standard; the force-feeding of men into the organization would seem like just another dilution of female power.

It's interesting to see Hepner voicing the same arguments against discrimination women have always used; men may begin understanding the frustration at locked doors women have long experienced. But he may have to back away from that door for now, until women have regained enough of their strength to open it from the inside.

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LETTERS

Open mind

Bryan Westly and the Department of Defense appear to be suffering from the delusion that lesbians, gays and bisexuals are interested only in sexual relationships and having sex.

They do not seem to understand that we are talking about people who identify with subjects other than their sexual orientation. Would Westly like it if every time he were introduced to someone they instantly wondered who he was sleeping with? No, probably not. Homosexuals don't like it either, especially since they do more than spend their lives in bed.

Westly and the DOD also seem eager to assume that homosexuals are also instantly attracted to every member of their preferred sex. This seems to be a rather egotistical misunderstanding. Just like heterosexuals, homosexuals are not attracted to everyone. When they meet someone they like, they go through the same process of reaching out, expressing their attraction. Like heterosexuals, they face rejection or acceptance. They also have the added fear of not knowing the sexual preference of the person.

Lesbians, gays and bisexuals are not dirty, nasty and sick "things" but sensitive, loving human beings who have meaningful friendships and relationships.

They are people who are on a campaign to gain their civil rights and equality. Lesbians, gays and bisexuals are very capable of loving, serving, fighting and dying for their country. Open your eyes, heart and mind and give them the chance.

Amy Joslin
Arik Hesseldahl
Students

The heat

I am writing you today to inform you about a problem of the highest magnitude. Yes it does deal with government and I'm sure you're aware of the problem; but as you are aware of the problem, you will soon be aware of the solution!

Corruption, governmental corruption. We see it everywhere: bounced checks, large

campaign contributions, restaurant bills, and not to mention names, but Oregon's own Sen. Bob Packwood spent over \$7 million on his last election campaign.

We all know the problem so let me inform you of the solution. The Gajdenson Bill is currently before the House. It will limit the amount that candidates can spend on their campaign.

If you take the money out of politics, some of the corruption will follow suit.

Call or write your representatives and urge them to vote yes on campaign spending limitations. Together we can clean up our government because everybody knows the politicians won't do it alone.

It's time to turn on the heat!

Trevor Deighton
Eugene

Something extra

Yet another letter concerning "Frog," the enterprising, if somewhat recherche, fellow who dares to earn a living by selling his joke books on the avenue.

But wait — the suggestion I offer may solve his problem.

Much like in the downtown pay parking debacle, Eugene's city administrators are making us all look foolish. Business permit "rules" state a license is required for street vending. Frog says, "OK, I'll pay for one!" The city (perhaps coveting a municipal monopoly on mirth) replies, "Sorry, we don't issue licenses for joke books — only food, balloons and flowers," thus revealing a catch-22 worthy of Monty Python on a good day.

Well, if its comedy they want, then comedy they'll get. Frog, why don't you just sell balloons (y'know, the little, un-inflated penny kind), and include as a bonus something extra — for instance ... hmmm ... oh gosh, how about a joke book! Voila, comedy check and mate.

While we're thinking about street vending, I've recently heard that our local planners may be about to declare a moratorium against all applicants for street vending. We may wonder at their rationale; start-up entrepreneurial activity must be discouraged? Popular, small, quirky, unique carts with personality are out of place in Eugene's conservative commercial districts?

The Frij-Joes cart is ruining the Hilton's lunch business? Free enterprise is a messy, quaint, empty fantasy only taught in history classes?

I'm sure City Hall would love to hear what a swell idea we think this is. Quick, call today before it too gets blamed on Measure 5.

Michael Lamont
Owner, Bijou Art Cinemas

Down tubes

Does anyone else get the feeling this university is going down the tubes?

Classes are becoming more crowded and harder to get into, teaching assistant positions are cut back and professors are expected to teach more classes to more students for the same miserable pay. And for all this we are supposed to pay more tuition and other newly created fees?

Whatever happened to quality education? You consider yourself lucky to have actually spoken to a real professor in person. If you are able to squeeze into crowded office hours, you may get a few minutes with the person who is teaching your class.

But chances are he/she will be so tired, overworked and irritable that it won't have been worth the trouble. I'm surprised the good professors stay here with such low pay. Dedication only goes so far.

Eben Fodor
Graduate Student

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