

Request for office: Is it discrimination?

For the second time in as many weeks, a battle for office space in the EMU has uncovered the undeniable discriminatory motives of a student-funded organization on campus. This time, the villain is radio station KWVA. The victim: all women everywhere.

How dare the upstart station suggest that a neighboring women's bathroom be converted into office space? The mere suggestion indicates a deep-seeded hatred toward women and their excretory rights. It's a travesty! How could the EMU Board even consider such a blatantly anti-feminist proposal?

Although KWVA argues that the bathroom is hardly ever used, the fact remains that it *could* be used by any woman on campus. That bathroom represents more than 8,000 people — so what if only the tiniest percentage of those people actually make use of the facilities?

The true motivations behind KWVA's claim are proved by solid evidence: some bathroom patrons claim to have overheard KWVA staff members telling a joke about the station being the "Male student union." The whole affair smacks of woman-hating.

ATTENTION: This has been a test of the emergency satire system. This was only a test.

Of course, KWVA cannot be fairly accused of woman-hating, just because it has asked for permission to convert an infrequently used bathroom to office space. The request was made because the station has outgrown its existing space and needs to expand. That's all.

Similarly, it was also unfair for the *Oregon Commentator* to be accused of racism when it made a request earlier this month for additional office space. Its proposal would've moved the growing publication into the joint office of four student unions — the Muslim Student Association, the Japanese Student Organization, the Iranian Student Association and the Singapore Student Association — and moved the unions into the piano room, larger than the *Commentator* office but smaller than their previous accommodations.

Officials from the student unions described the request as an affront, and at least one was offended that the proposal was even considered. The only affront that could've occurred would have been if the EMU Board had refused to listen to the *Commentator* just because some people think it's racist.

There is hidden racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination on this campus, and everywhere. No one can dispute that. However, the acknowledged existence of such discrimination doesn't mean accusations of discrimination should be thrown around lightly. It is a serious charge, and it is used too often.

Whatever happened to "the benefit of the doubt"? It's getting so that people are considered guilty of discrimination until someone proves them innocent — as if it was possible to prove it, one way or the other.

The case for discrimination must be supported by more than a simple request for office space. If the charge is dispensed too liberally, then it loses its punch. And no one stands to gain from that.

Adam Kinder

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OPINION

Tonya could have rocky homecoming



ROBBIE REEVES

Tonya Harding is at the Olympics and not a moment too soon.

Oregon somehow deserves to have a couple of weeks where Tonya will be out of the state, thereby possibly freeing up the front pages of newspapers for other news.

But she didn't leave quietly. Thousands of Portlanders bid Tonya goodbye, hoping she would get the gold medal.

Although Tonya isn't considered to be the frontrunner for a medal in the Olympics (they haven't got an event involving creative assault as of yet), it would be nice if Tonya got a medal. For that matter, it would be nice if everyone got a medal at the Olympics.

However, although Tonya has gone to Norway, the Tonya stories just keep on coming.

On the Sunday before she left, Tonya joined friends and went to a church in Portland. She told the priest that she wanted him to pray for her when she skated at the Olympics, and she gave him the dates. The priest then told Tonya that she was skating for Christ now and to do a good job.

I didn't know that higher beings took sides in the Olympics. I guess that Tonya just needs all the help that she can get.

Speaking of getting help, Tonya is getting support from another favorite person of mine, Sen. Bob Packwood.

While addressing a group in Medford, Packwood said that "the press has convicted her,

and that isn't fair." Packwood declined to talk further about the implied disparity between his case and Tonya's.

This brings up an interesting point. Who will hurt who more? Will Bob's support of Tonya hurt her, or will Tonya's alleged antics hurt the senator?

Actually, probably neither. Nobody but columnists seem to care about these things.

And Tonya Harding isn't the only one making news in Lillehammer these days.

Nancy Kerrigan, in a very thoughtful way, called a news conference in Norway to tell the news media that there was more to the Olympics than the Tonya Harding fiasco, and that the press should perhaps cover other Olympic stories as well.

Ironically, Kerrigan's well-attended news conference (several hundred reporters attended the meeting in a room that looked bigger than a stadium) coincided with the opening ceremonies to the Games, with a corresponding lack of coverage. Way to go, Nancy!

I hope that Tonya does well at the Olympics. I really do. Seeming that it probably is her last shot at a gold, it would be nice to see her accomplish her dreams while she still has a chance to.

There's also another reason why she should really enjoy Norway. Her life is likely to be a living hell once she gets back to the states.

While the lawsuit that would have kept Tonya from going to the Olympics has been dropped (in return for Harding dropping her multimillion-dollar retaliatory lawsuit that would have kept her from being dropped), it is still possible that she can be

charged by either state or federal officials.

Officials in Portland are still investigating the allegations that are flying around, and a trial still may be forthcoming. In fact, a grand jury in Multnomah County was hearing more witnesses regarding the assault.

Maybe if Tonya is charged, there could be a big party when she returns from Lillehammer. There could be a crowd at the airport in Portland, with big "Welcome back, Tonya" signs. Then, the district attorney could hand Tonya her subpoena, maybe with a few balloons attached for good measure and fun.

I'd be there, and I have the feeling that I wouldn't be alone.

Somehow, Tonya Harding is one of the better things that has happened to the Olympics in the past few years. She has lightened things up a bit. Sure, felonious activities aren't exactly what Olympians are supposed to be striving for, but the comedy has certainly interested a few more people in the Games than would normally care (like me).

Of course, as Nancy Kerrigan pointed out, there is a lot more to the Olympics than the Tonya and Nancy story, and the media should try to cover as many of the stories besides the Harding controversy as they can. After all, the Winter Olympics only happens once every four years. (But then again, how often are we fortunate to have someone come along like Tonya?)

Go for the gold, Tonya. Believe me, we'll be watching. And, for that matter, waiting for you to come back home.

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