

Prosecuting 'Frog' squandered \$20,000

One of the Eugene's most colorful sagas has finally reached a conclusion, and the cost of the whole affair to taxpayers was a paltry \$20,000.

If the money had gone to researching ways to revitalize downtown, or to help replace the public library, or to paying for a few more city services, it might have been worth it.

But \$20,000 to prosecute "Frog," the off-beat joke book vendor of 13th Avenue? Because he didn't have a permit to sell his books?

Come on, Eugene. Couldn't you do better than that?

In a decision handed down last Thursday, the Oregon Supreme Court overturned two earlier convictions against "Frog," a.k.a. David Miller, who was cited numerous times for selling his homemade joke books without a permit. At the time of the citations, Eugene city ordinances did not provide permits for the sale of anything but food, beverages, flowers and balloons.

In other words, the city required "Frog" to buy a permit that couldn't be bought. It couldn't be bought because the city didn't sell them.

So Eugene police continued giving tickets to "Frog," and "Frog" continued refusing to pay them. Besides the above complaint — that he couldn't be expected to buy a permit that the city doesn't sell — he also argued that the permit requirement was a violation of his right to free expression, as guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution.

He was right on both counts, although the court stopped short of stating that the sale of his joke books is a Constitutionally-protected form of free speech. Instead, it said that the city could not impose stricter requirements on a vendor of expressive materials (like joke books) without a reasonable justification why that particular kind of sale should be prohibited or restricted while other sales are not. The court did not clarify what would constitute a reasonable justification, although it did say that Eugene did not provide such a justification when it began its campaign against "Frog."

During the course of all this litigation, the ordinance that restricted sidewalk sales to only certain items was changed. It no longer specifies what sales are legal, so "Frog" could, in theory, buy a permit to sell his books.

But "Frog" has not said whether he will actually choose to buy a permit, even now that they are available.

So this saga may not have reached a conclusion after all. If the city tries to force "Frog" to buy a permit, and he refuses, it may end up in court all over again, gobbling more and more of the city's sparse funds.

It may take a long series of court battles to determine conclusively whether a person can legally be forced to pay for the right to disseminate the products of his or her expression.

Although the answer to that question will eventually have to be found, maybe Eugene should let some other city do the finding. If Eugene still insists on prosecuting "Frog," however, maybe he could do the citizens of this city a big favor and buy the permit. That may be the only way to stop the city from squandering its money.



LETTERS

Accusations

Saferide is just a tip of the iceberg when it comes to the oppression of white males on campus. We know that this service, which excludes men in an attempt to prevent rape, effectively accuses all men of being capable of rape. This is really unfair. Those who agree with this logic might want to help me with the following projects:

- The removal of the bars on the fire escapes of PLC, which tacitly accuse all of us of being klutzy or suicidal.
- The banning of bike locks, which give the impression that all of us are capable of stealing bikes.
- The elimination of final exams, which makes the implicit statement that some of us have slacked off in class.
- The destruction of handrails on all stairways, which seem to imply that all of us are capable of falling down stairs.

Of course, this would leave suicides, thieves, slackers and the equilibrially challenged to fend for themselves, but it's worth it in the name of fairness.

Now, it occurs to me that nobody thinks of bars, locks, finals and handrails as any kind of accusation. These are merely precautions that acknowledge the ever-present dangers of gravity, theft, lack of motivation and wet floors. So what is it about acknowledging the ever-present threat of rape that makes certain men feel "accused"? I'll let you figure that one out for yourselves, but hey, I'm not accusing anybody of anything.

Steve Close
English

Don't demolish

I lived in Amazon family housing for two happy years while attending the University and raising two teens. More than housing, Amazon was a community.

Children ran in the safety of the compound, with schools, playing fields and caring neighbors nearby. We had a cottage with a yard, small by American

standards, but a place which assisted my dream of going to the University. I came from a family of 11 children and could not have afforded going to the University without low-cost housing and financial aid. We didn't mind Amazon's scruffy looks. The community had a soul: alive with friendship!

Today I direct disease prevention programs for youth using art and recreation. Amazon helped me get here. The playground, the laundry, organic gardens and friends kept us going. My first photo exhibit was in the Amazon laundry room. Our clothes and furniture came from the free box. Everyone helped each other. Our neighbors were South African, Iranian, Asian and single parents, struggling families sharing the goal of an education. My children learned culture from the people next door, not from TV stereotypes that link people of color with crime and fear. My kids are grown now. They know that people who look different are just people who look different. Amazon taught these things.

Demolishing Amazon for costly buildings may also demolish hope for many who can't afford both high rent and high tuition. Please save Amazon. Preserve the opportunity for everyone.

Sharon Rose
Bishop, Calif.

Kitzhaber 1994

Kitzhaber: not a beer, not a German sausage and not something you say when someone sneezes. John Kitzhaber is a gubernatorial candidate dedicated to Oregon's future. Kitzhaber's accomplishments as an Oregon legislator include authoring the Oregon Health Plan, rewriting the Forest Practices Act, and fighting for Oregon's workers. His experience at facilitating compromise among diverged groups is desperately needed to encourage community among Oregonians.

We especially appreciate Kitzhaber's emphasis on job creation. In this period of transition for our resource-based economy,

we need a governor who will protect the jobs and wages of Oregon's families. During Kitzhaber's legislative service, he made job creation a high priority. He supported funding that created 130 jobs and saved 120 jobs at the new Planar Systems plant in Washington County. Kitzhaber has worked to develop local economies by supporting regional strategies for job growth and creation.

Kitzhaber realizes that job creation must not come at the expense of a sustainable environment. He helped stop attempts to derail Oregon's nationally-recognized land use planning program. Kitzhaber also protected Oregon's Coastal resources by supporting the Oregon Ocean Resources Management Program. These efforts have helped make our state one of the nation's most livable.

Kitzhaber's record of service to Oregon convinces us that he would do one hell of a job as governor. Register by April 26 in the ASUO office, EMU Suite 4, in order to vote in the May 17 election.

Kendall Parmeter
April Brinkman
Students for Kitzhaber

Brick for a buck

Be a part of someone's dream. This week in the EMU, the United Way Youth Volunteer Council will conduct a fundraising project to benefit the St. Vincent dePaul American Dream Home #4. Students can donate change or buy a paper brick for \$1 (a brick for a buck). Names will be written on each brick and will go on a poster in the form of a house indicating how much money is raised. This money will be used as a down payment on a house for a homeless family.

This is everyone's chance to be an important part of someone's life. A family in the community will greatly benefit from the University's efforts. Do what you can do: donate to this worthwhile cause.

Nikki Martinez
ESCAPE Field Studies

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