

OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

Should the City of Eugene prohibit skateboarding and dogs on 13th Avenue between Kincaid and Patterson Streets? Let us know.

▶ SOUND OFF

EDITORIAL

First Amendment applies to Promise Keepers too

OUR OPINION: As an institution that encourages the exploration of ideas, the University should not discriminate on the basis of speakers' messages

The conservative-Christian organization, The Promise Keepers, should be allowed to hold its men's conference at Autzen Stadium despite the fact that portions of their message disturb many people on campus and in the community.

Opponents, including gay and lesbian and women's advocates, say the group's message and mission is anti-woman and against gays and lesbians. They call into question the University's decision to rent the stadium to a group they feel is discriminatory.

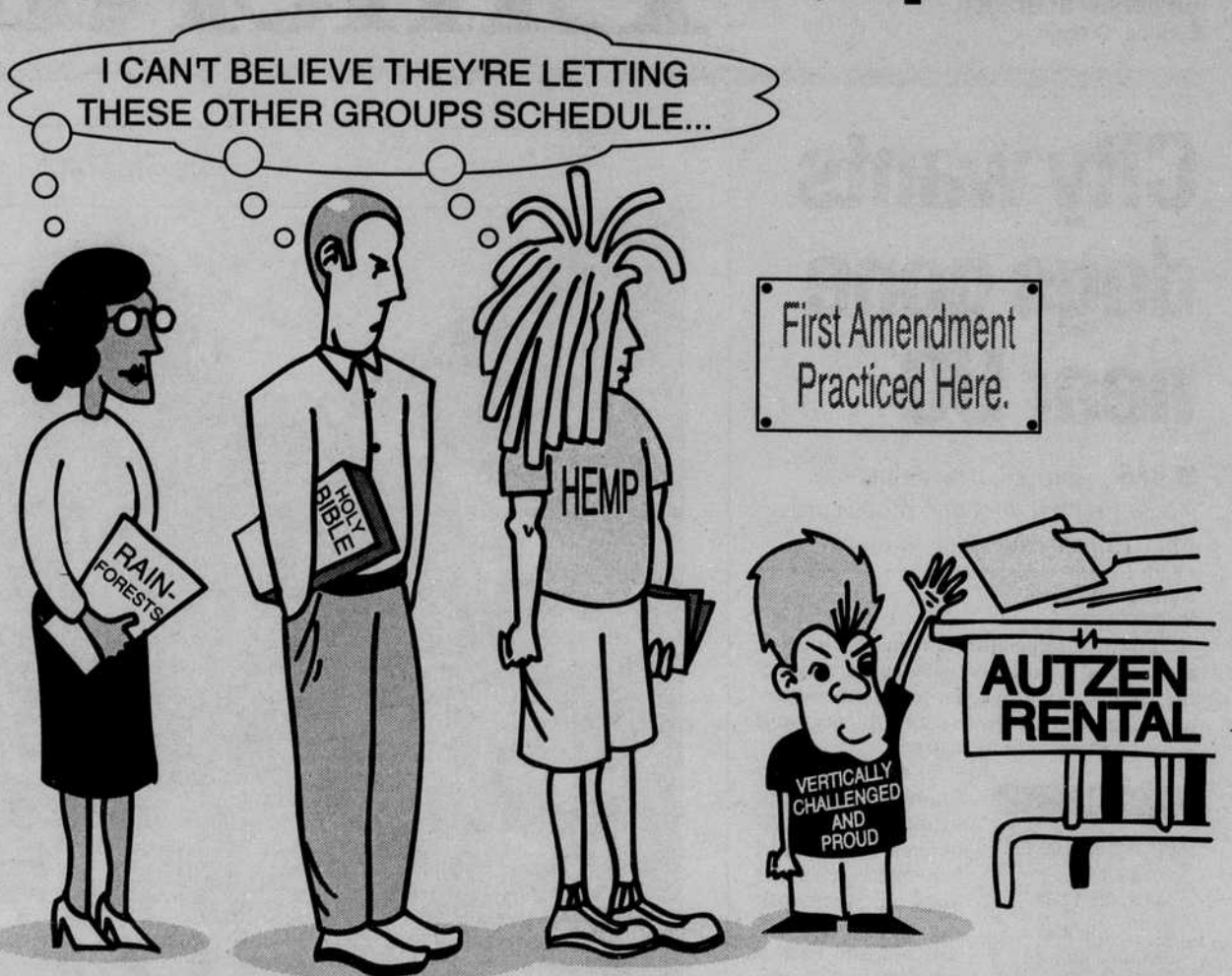
The Promise Keepers have proved to the University they are able to provide the financing to cover rent and security for the event. They are protected by the First Amendment to voice their message and should not be prohibited from renting University facilities based solely on the content of their message.

This situation highlights an interesting trend on college campuses with regard to free speech. Universities are traditionally thought of as arenas for free thought and exploration of new ideas. People with views that may be considered politically incorrect are finding it more and more difficult to voice their opinions.

No matter the logic and manner of speech of these different voices, we cannot shut them up. As a campus community we must work to insure that all speech, regardless of the content, be unfettered. Doing so creates a healthy debate that actually helps bring important issues to the forefront of campus discussion.

We are fortunate to live in a country where a person can say just about anything and still be protected by the First Amendment. To silence even the most threatening voice ultimately silences our own.

This editorial reflects the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

CONTACT US

What do you think? Write us a letter expressing your opinion or E-mail us at ode@oregon.uoregon.edu. Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

HISTORICAL

PERSPECTIVE

June 5, 1996: The Promise Keepers signed a contract with the University to rent Autzen Stadium for its men's convention. The group agreed to pay \$50,000 for use of the stadium.

July 10: The Promise Keeper Action Committee presented the University with a petition requesting that funds raised at the convention be used for an anti-discrimination conference.

July 19: The Pacifica Forum presents "Promise Keepers Lifestyle: Implications and Practices," an analysis and description of the Promise Keepers' lifestyle. 11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Wesley Center 1236 Kincaid St.

August 2: A vigil organized by the Promise Keeper Action Committee will take place in the Autzen Stadium parking lot.

August 2-3: The Promise Keepers convention will be held at Autzen Stadium.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stop whining

To those who choose to be offended by the onslaught of 40,000 Christian men (Promise Keepers) to Autzen Stadium next month: Stop whining!

Since when is every member of every interest group entitled to an equal piece of every pie? The problem with everyone trying to squelch every group that disagrees with you is that eventually, nobody will be allowed to openly speak, form an organization, express an opinion, or live a certain lifestyle. No matter who you are, or what you believe, someone will always disagree, or be offended. If keeping everyone happy is the prerequisite for whether we can lawfully meet and express our opinions — goodbye diversity!

Imagine: Jews couldn't congregate in synagogues on the Sabbath — they'd be excluding/offending Christians, agnostics, Hindus, Moslems.

500,000 black men couldn't convene in Washington, DC to recommit themselves to their families and communities — they would be excluding black women, and peo-

ple of other races.

Gay Pride Week would have to be canceled — they'd be excluding and/or offending straight people.

Democrats and Republicans couldn't hold conventions — they'd be offending each other, and excluding nonpartisans.

Duck fans couldn't go to football games, because they might offend Beaver fans or anyone else who prefers another team.

Get the picture? Stop shooting yourselves in the foot by trying to prevent freedom of speech. Your own liberties are at stake.

Barbara J. Guardino
Student, Public Relations

Story one-sided

I found Monday's article on the expanded bottle bill very limited and one-sided. De Young presented the view of one small grocer who does not agree with the proposed expansion. She never mentions even one of the hundreds of businesses that consider the measure necessary and overdue. Small grocers such as L&L Grocery, Sundance, and Oasis have stepped behind the Oregon State Public Interest Research Group in their efforts. OSPIRG is work-

ing to expand the nickel deposit so it will include drinks such as Snapple, iced tea and bottled water. These supporters consider themselves to be responsible actors in the business community and hope large corporations will soon follow.

One hundred million cans and bottles are ending up on Oregon's roadsides and landfills every year because they are not covered by the nickel deposit. The expansion of this 1971 bill would not only prevent this litter, but would also require corporate responsibility for the non-recyclable, non-biodegradable products they create. Recycling a product creates nine times more jobs than landfilling. Although the majority of Oregonians have supported an expanded bottle bill, the Legislature has repeatedly failed to listen due to the influence of big business like Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Phillip Morris. Now the vote will be put in the hands of the people this November. It is up to Oregonians to take care of our state and its environment. The expanded bottle bill is a critical step in the preservation of Oregon's beauty.

Mikole Liese
Education

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