

Tom Wheeler earns praise from students, faculty

■ **JOURNALISM:** The professor is known for his successful careers as both a musician and journalist

By Amy Palanuk
Higher Education Reporter

While hanging out in the hallways of Allen Hall, journalism dean Duncan McDonald noticed a student approach journalism professor Tom Wheeler.

So the dean of the School of Journalism stopped to eavesdrop on the conversation.

"The student asked Wheeler to give him some more examples of writing for the media, so Tom started to go into this serious discussion," McDonald said. "After a quick thank you, the student paused, then asked, 'Did you ever meet anybody that was in The Who?' And Tom says, 'Well, of course. . .'"

Questions from students like this are common for Wheeler. As a former writer and editor for *Guitar Player* and an avid guitar player himself, Wheeler has jammed with some of the greats. And his acquaintances with stars such as Eric Clapton and Chuck Berry make him popular with his students.

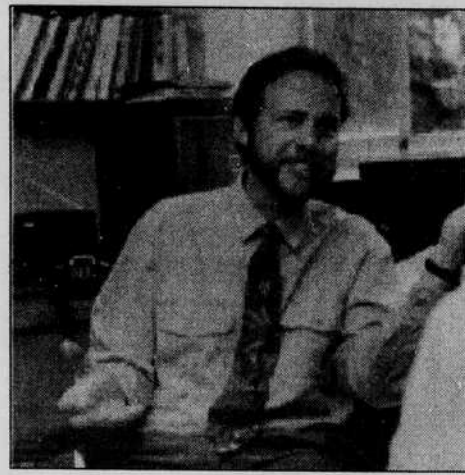
But Wheeler's skills as a musician and journalist are only part of what he does well. As a professor in the School of Journalism, Wheeler has recently earned tenure status with the University, making him a permanent fix on the faculty.

The tenure was announced a week ago by University provost John Mosely and comes as no surprise to McDonald.

"He takes such a deep interest in the success of students," McDonald said. "He's good in big classes, and he's good in small classes. That's a rare talent."

Many of Wheeler's students find his experiences with music stars fascinating.

"Tom has a certain cult following," Mc-



Professor Tom Wheeler earned tenure status at the School of Journalism and Communication last week.

Donald said.

But Wheeler tends to deny any sort of cult following, claiming that working with famous people was what he was paid to do.

"After spending 14 years with a magazine whose main focus was guitar players, interviewing famous bands was just part of the job," Wheeler said.

Wheeler won't deny that the job was fun, however.

"When I was editor of *Guitar Player*, I had literally the best job I'd ever heard of," Wheeler said. "Not because it was all fun and games, but specialty magazines allow one to pursue one's passion while still doing journalistic work."

Now, Wheeler's passion for teaching allows him to explore other interests.

Wheeler is currently working on research in digital photography, a topic he found interesting while watching television with his son.

"I was sitting on the couch watching TV when he asked, 'Hey dad, is this real?'" Wheeler said.

Wheeler's interest was immediately sparked. He wanted to study the effects on a generation of children who are growing up with digitally manipulated images everywhere in the mainstream media.

"The ability to alter images raises important issues," Wheeler said.

These issues are the focus of his research, which has led him into groundbreaking discussions with professionals in photography and law. Next month Wheeler will attend a conference in Washington, D.C. to discuss the ethics of digital photography.

"It means a lot when a faculty member gets picked to do those things," McDonald said. "I like it."

Wheeler's popularity in the classroom stems from the stories he tells students about working at *Guitar Player*.

One story that Wheeler shares involves an interview he once had with legendary blues musician B.B. King.

"He was telling me about when he was working in the late 40s, blacks were ashamed of playing the blues," Wheeler said. "Then he went on to talk about something else."

Wheeler did not understand King's comment on being ashamed of playing, but proceeded with the interview, pretending to listen.

"I kept thinking about, what was that about blacks being ashamed? They invented the blues, what do you mean they're ashamed?" Wheeler said.

So Wheeler went back to the question and asked King to explain what he meant.

"King then went into a dissertation about how there was a lot of pressure on

them to sound white," Wheeler said. "That discussion led into one of the most fascinating discussions I've ever had with an interviewee about race, culture and music."

Wheeler tells his students there is a lesson from this story.

"If it's not clear in the middle of the conversation, get it while you can, or you'll never know what direction that interview's going to go. You'll go home and kick yourself for not getting it," Wheeler said.

Wheeler's ability to relate past experiences with current techniques in journalistic writing has given him the popular edge with students.

"He's a hip teacher," said Gary Thill, a graduate teaching fellow in Wheeler's Writing for the Media class. "He can work with students on a real basis, and connects with them really well."

Being hip also includes playing the guitar, something Wheeler taught himself how to do when he was 13 years-old.

"He's pretty bad [meaning good]," McDonald said.

Wheeler is currently part of a band called the Emerald City Rockets. The band plays in Eugene venues such as Good Times and the Rainy Day Cafe.

"We gig very occasionally," Wheeler said, "but at this point it's a hobby. We're doing it for fun."

Wheeler has also written two books on guitars, one forwarded by B.B. King. He won the journalism school's Marshall Award for Innovative Teaching in 1993, and also helped start the award-winning Flux magazine at the School of Journalism.

"I don't know if it's a requirement, but when you can say that one of your faculty members knows Eric Clapton or Chuck Berry, that's pretty cool," McDonald said.

THIS WEEK

AVAILABLE AT EMU TICKETS AND SERVICES
http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/_emusched/tickets.html

EMU TICKET SERVICES

VOLLEYBALL—MEN'S TOURNAMENT
Ger B54
Fri 3/7 7-10pm
Sat 3/8 7^{am}-6pm

SKYDIVING MEETING
Sat 3/8 • 7-8^{pm}
Walnut Room

CULTURAL FORUM EVENTS

3/4 Merl Saunders.....\$12.00 UO, \$14.00 GP
3/5 MOE w/special guest Sweet Vine.....\$5.00 UO, \$6.00 GP

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

3/4 Adrian Legg.....\$7.00
3/5 The Hanson Brothers w/the Mex Pistols.....\$6.00
3/6 John McCutcheon.....\$9.00
3/7 Cherry Poppin' Daddies.....\$7.00
3/8 Pete Miser & DJ Chill.....\$6.00
3/9 Fishbone.....\$15.00
3/15 Skye & Crabs in the Skillet.....\$6.00
3/19 Sky Cries Mary.....\$8.00
3/23 The Brandeis-Bardin.....\$7.00

UNIVERSITY THEATRE TICKETS

3/6-8, 14-15 Shadowlands.....\$4.50 UO, \$9.00 GP
4/9-12, 17-19 Illuminati.....\$3.00 UO, \$6.00 GP
5/9-10, 15-17, 23-24 Dragon Tales.....\$4.50 UO, \$9.00 GP
5/28-31, 6/5-7 Vinegar Tom.....\$3.00 UO, \$6.00 GP

★ Tickets subject to service charge ★

emu

MARCH 3-9

The EMU Child Care and Development Centers (CCDC) announce:
ADDITIONAL AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE FROM A \$10 CHILD CARE SUBSIDY
Depending on financial need, qualifying students may be eligible to receive up to 45% of their child care costs. For information contact the CCDC office at 1511 Moss or 346-4384.

Student directories are still available in front of ticket office at the EMU.

OP
UO OUTDOOR PROGRAM

OUTDOOR STORE GARAGE SALE
THURSDAY, 7:30PM, MARCH 6
EMU BALLROOM

Returns, discontinued items, excess inventory, used rental gear, and other deals will be flying at this unique gathering of Eugene's outdoor gear stores! These folks are here to get rid of all kinds of gear at bargain prices...including camp gear, skis, boating equipment, bicycles, and climbing gear!

A great compliment to our traditional Equipment Swap. Don't miss this exciting event!!!
FREE!

Spring '97

Art Workshops

- Woodworking
- Ceramics
- Jewelry
- Photography
- Weaving
- Bike Repair
- and More

Registration starts March 13 at 10am

CRAFT CENTER
UO • EMU lower level • 346-1361

YOUR PATRONAGE SUSTAINS US. USE OUR SERVICES. TELL US HOW TO PROVIDE SERVICES THAT MEET YOUR NEEDS. YOUR FEEDBACK IS VALUABLE.

<p>EMERALD</p> <p>The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon. The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.</p>	<p>NEWSROOM</p> <p>Editor-in-Chief: Steven Asbury Managing Editor: Thom Schoenborn Copy Desk: Sarah Kickler, chief, Jennifer Kavanaugh, Holly Sanders, Mike Schmierbach, Shannon Sneed Opinion: Ashley Bach, Brian Diamond, editors. Chris Hutchinson, <i>illustrator</i>. PHONE: (541) 346-5511</p>	<p>Community: Jennifer Schmitt, <i>editor</i>. Eric Collins, Ryan Maughn Higher Education: Laura Cadiz, <i>editor</i>. Benjamin Kwasney, Amy Palanuk Student Activities: Angie Suchy, <i>editor</i>. Laura Baker, Autumn De Poe, Dana Williams</p>	<p>Sports: Mark McTyre, <i>editor</i>. Andrea DeYoung, <i>assistant editor</i>. Ryan Frank, Ryan Halvorsen, Chris Hansen Entertainment: Nicole Kreuger, <i>editor</i>. Jesse Stephenson Freelance: Carl Yeh, <i>editor</i>.</p>	<p>Presentation: Dennis Bolt, <i>editor</i>. Matt Garton Photography: Mathew Stiffler, <i>editor</i>. Michael Crisp, Vanina Eckblad, Wendy Fuller, Shannon Kilduff, Chad Patteson On-Line: Nicholas Stiffler, <i>webmaster</i></p>	<p>General Manager: Judy Riedl Business: Kathy Carbone, <i>supervisor</i>. Judy Connolly Distribution: John Long, Dave Ovall, Ferenc Rakoczi</p> <p>BUSINESS</p> <p>• EWEB & NWNG Pay Station • Hult Center Tickets • Personal Check Cashing •</p> <p>PHONE: (541) 346-5512</p>	<p>ADVERTISING</p> <p>Display Advertising: Becky Merchant, <i>director</i>. Anne Amador, Lee Yen Beh, Yujin Chi, Matt Johnson, Andrew Lakelish, Anne Miller, Trina Shanaman, Rose Soli, Matt Solomon, Greg Walsh Classified Advertising: Tara Sloan, <i>manager</i>. Kate Lamb, Debbie Levy, Natasha Lumpkin, Heather Moye</p> <p>PRODUCTION</p> <p>Michele Ross, <i>manager</i>. Ingrid White, <i>coordinator</i>. Laura Daniel, Susan Head, Trevor Kearney, Tara Knight, Melissa Lebahn, Molly McCanta, Leanne Nelms, Broc Nelson</p> <p>DISPLAY ADVERTISING: (541) 346-3712 CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING: (541) 346-4343</p>
---	--	---	--	---	--	---