



WENDY FULLER/Emerald

Journalism professor Al Stavitsky speaks to the Rubicon Society Thursday afternoon about the future of public broadcasting as a non-commercial entity.

Stavitsky criticizes commercial role in PBS

■ **RADIO:** Professor Al Stavitsky questioned public broadcasting's increasing reliance on private support

By Eric Collins
Community Reporter

Public broadcasting is losing its legitimacy, funding and subsequent role in society, Al Stavitsky, associate professor in the School of Journalism and Communication, told members of the Rubicon Society Thursday.

At the society's weekly noon meeting, Stavitsky, who has been researching broadcasting over the past decade, told the moderately republican organization that commercial stations have increasingly taken over the educational and cultural role that public broadcasting has traditionally provided.

Stavitsky pointed to cable television, where the Discov-

ery, Nickelodeon and Disney channels are competing with the Public Broadcasting System.

Now that the average federal support for public broadcasting stations has dwindled to 15 percent, Stavitsky said broadcasters must rely more heavily on underwriting and local support. Underwriting is not blatant advertising but occurs when stations mention on-air the private entities that support them.

Stavitsky said increasing commercial support has not only created an emphasis on safe topics that pander to certain audiences who might give donations, but has also blurred the line between commercial and public stations.

Stavitsky used a critique of public television by television critic Walter Goodman to support this argument, saying as

long as public stations like PBS are not distinguishing themselves, producing controversial programming or giving a voice to the voiceless, their programs can be found elsewhere.

"There are certain topics that we would expect public broadcasting would tackle because they were too sensitive for a commercially supported broadcasting system to run with," Stavitsky said.

Yet now that public broadcasting stations are not running controversial and in-depth stories, Stavitsky said public broadcasting no longer has a specific niche in society.

Public broadcasters may also see a tremendous shift in editorial control if the Supreme Court upholds an Arkansas ruling that mandates the type of political coverage public broadcasting stations must produce.

UWAH seeks new members, director

■ **GROUP:** United Women of Asian Heritage is losing all members and its director to graduation this spring

By Dana Williams
Multicultural Issues Reporter

For Michiko Ono buying a morning mocha or her favorite CD often reminds her that she is a foreigner in this country.

"When I speak ... sometimes they get irritated ... at stores," Ono said.

With their eyes, store clerks say 'what are you talking about?' Ono explained.

"I felt like it was rude ... sometimes people try to listen ... try to understand, but when they are busy working they're not really friendly," Ono said.

She left Japan to receive her post baccalaureate in Asian Studies and Linguistics at the University, and she said she hopes to work in the United States after she graduates this summer.

Ono is the last director of the United Women of Asian Heritage (UWAH), a group that began on this campus three years ago to fight against discrimination, and it hasn't grown significantly during its few years in existence, she said.

She's not sure what to consider discrimination, but said it's important to have a group like UWAH to address these types of issues. She said she generally doesn't get discouraged when, for instance, store clerks or others get frustrated when trying to understand her.

"But at times [I think] 'oh, maybe this is the discrimination that people are talking about,' but then I think that maybe this person is working and tired."

Facing communication difficulties does have an effect on her, though.

"For me I always think that I

need to learn English and speak more clearly to people," she said.

As the current director of the UWAH, Ono said the group helps her deal with the concerns of living and studying in a foreign country. For Ono, UWAH is a place to get support and advice from other Asian women.

"It's somewhere where I can speak English very comfortably without feeling intimidated," Ono said.

The group currently has three members and meets weekly.

"Even though we speak English, somehow I feel that they understand me.... I'm not saying that Americans wouldn't, but when I'm speaking with Americans I don't understand their jokes."

Ono hopes to recruit members to the group because the current members are all graduating this year. The group receives \$300 from student incidental fees, which it uses to help sponsor events that larger student groups put on. UWAH is currently using some funding to create a pamphlet written in different languages for international students that gives information about date rape and abuse.

Ono is looking for an Asian woman to take over the position of director when she leaves the University. In her efforts to recruit, Ono organized an open house tea party last Wednesday — no new members showed up.

"It was pretty disappointing overall," Ono said. Although Ono felt let down by the turnout, she said she knows that people are busy with classes, but she hopes that students will see this group as important enough to save. "We don't want to say that we are dying out," she added.

But if no one takes on the director's position, UWAH will die as its last members graduate.

"I feel that being in the group might help someone," Ono said.

Anyone interested in taking over the UWAH director position should contact Ono at uwah@gladstone.



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