

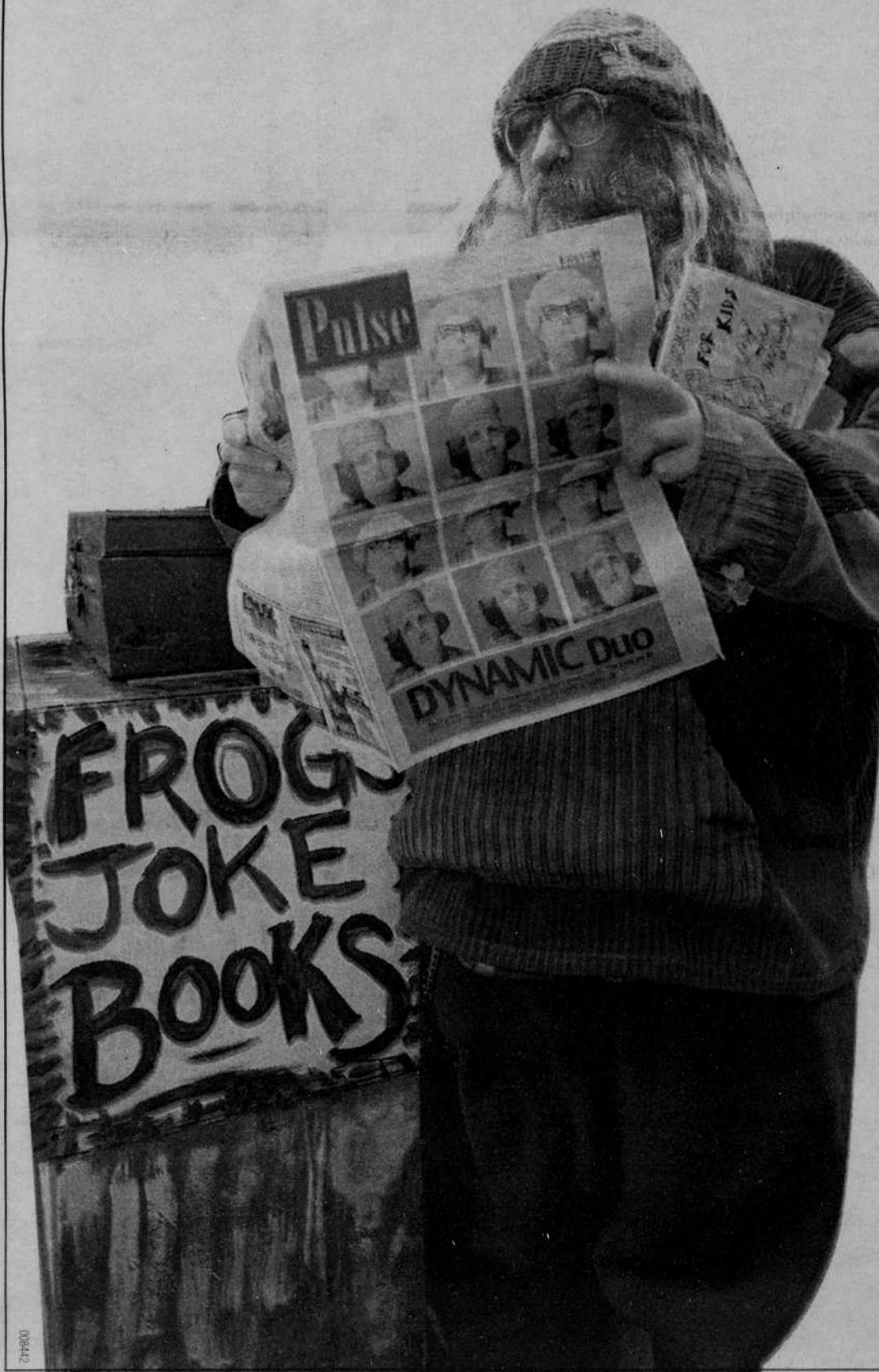
# Campus Icon "Frog" has a Pulse.

## Do you have one?



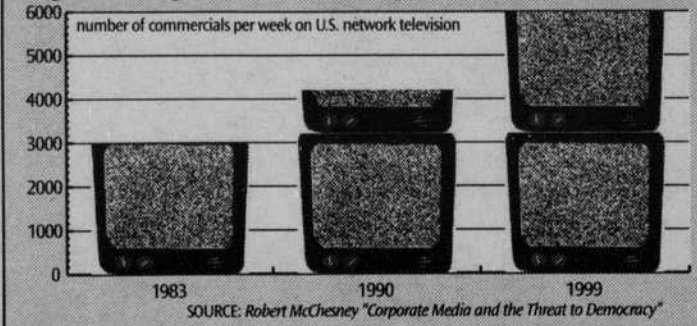
Check your Pulse, the Oregon Daily Emerald's entertainment section, every Thursday.

# Oregon Daily Emerald



### More fluff, less stuff

U.S. television advertisements have increased 50 percent since 1983. Corporate mergers are causing the media to be increasingly commercialized.



Katie Nesse Emerald

### Merger

continued from page 1

is that it hampers the ability of news organizations to objectively report on stories, University Professor Carl Bybee said. "It's amazing how far we've come in terms of accepting that what's good for the consumer is good for democracy."

On the other hand, big players in the media industry are praising the mergers for their proclaimed ability to increase communications accessibility, quality and content.

The merger of AOL and Time Warner is the largest in history, combining a total revenue of \$30 billion and \$350 billion in stock, according to CMJ New Music Reports. Last week, AOL Time Warner Inc. chairman and CEO Steve Case shared his thoughts on the new merger in an e-mail addressed to AOL subscribers.

"This really is something to celebrate," he said. "We are so excited about how this new company will speed the growth of the Internet, making the on-line experience richer and more meaningful than ever before, for more people than ever before."

Although it remains to be seen whether Case's prophecy of enhanced media content will become a reality, the face of communications technology is expanding and changing rapidly.

"The role of the communications industry has experienced a phenomenal shift, moving their focus from information content to providers of entertainment," Bybee said.

According to CMJ, the AOL-Time Warner deal will significantly increase the amount of entertainment and information that is broadcast over the Internet and other media channels.

But not everyone thinks such drastic shifts in power are a good thing for consumers.

"The commercialization of the media provides many choices for consumers, but what about citizens?" said University Professor Janet Wasko.

Although this recent media merger stands out as a modern-day communications Goliath, corporate media mergers have recently been far from uncommon.

In September, MTV parent Viacom announced plans to merge with CBS, which is already

owned by Westinghouse. The four largest media corporations each earn between \$15-25 billion per year, University of Wisconsin-Madison Professor Robert McChesney said.

Much of this new media consolidation has come forth as a result of legislative changes made

### AOL Time Warner Inc.

The following companies now fall under the AOL Time Warner Inc. partnership:

**Internet content providers:** AOL.com, CompuServe, Netscape, ICQ, AOL Instant Messenger, AOL MovieFone and Winamp

**Television networks:** TBS, TNT, CNN, The WB, The Cartoon Network and HBO

**Print publications:** Fortune, Entertainment Weekly, Sports Illustrated, People and In Style

**Others:** Warner Bros. Studios, Time Warner Cable, Warner Music Group and Warner Books

SOURCE: AOL Time Warner Inc.

in the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Among other changes, the Telecommunications Act deregulates the number of stations a single company may own, and allows their audience monopoly range to increase from 20 to 50 percent of the viewing population, according to the media advocates group, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR).

Although the legislation was passed by Congress, its legality and fairness are still under scrutiny from smaller organizations and individuals.

"So little attention is being paid to anti-trust laws under the guise that it is better for consumers," Wasko said.

This increase in the number of mergers has raised eyebrows in the communications industry as well. A report on the Telecommunications Act, filed by the Consumer Project on Technology, criticizes the deregulation of corporate mergers.

"As tends to be the case with most anti-consumer legislation, the bill stealthily moved under the guise of 'encouraging competition' but will, in reality, have the opposite effect by creating huge new concentrations of media power," the report stated.

## Student Groups

Advertise your events in the Oregon Daily Emerald.

We have special university rates.  
Call 346-3712