

# Callahan

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gave him his sense of humor, but he began drawing as he grew up in The Dalles under the education of the Sisters of the Holy Names. Callahan said that as a fourth grader in Catholic school, he started drawing cartoons of nuns in compromising positions for his friends.

At the age of 12, he discovered gin at his grandmother's wake.

“Culture is becoming more cartoon-like all the time. The world is just plain funny: Hillary Clinton running for senator, for example.”

John Callahan cartoonist

and from that point forward, his life as a cartoonist became clouded by alcoholism.

On July 22, 1972, shortly after his 21st birthday, he and a friend left a party in Callahan's Volkswagen, reaching speeds of nearly 90 miles an hour. That night was the last time Callahan ever walked. His friend, in a drunken stupor, drove the car into a utility pole, destroying the vehicle and leaving Callahan with a severed spine.

As a result, Callahan's artistic career was put on hold until after college. He majored in English at Portland State University and started "doodling" again after graduation. With the help of re-

habilitation, he could draw holding a pen in his right hand guided by his left hand.

But his first big break wasn't a strip next to "Peanuts" or "Doonesbury"; it was for Penthouse, a return to those first drawings he made in fourth grade. The men's magazine published the first of his cartoons in 1985 after rejecting 10 drawings a week for an entire year.

Now a recovering alcoholic and firm believer in Alcoholics Anonymous, Callahan's career has taken off. He produces three to 10 syndicated weekly cartoons, which appear regularly in more than 50 publications, including The New York Daily News, the London Observer and the Los Angeles Times, and his work has shown up in magazines such as Sports Illustrated.

"He is one of the more original cartoonists I have ever read," said Owen Norvell, a University sophomore and Callahan fan. "The artwork really lends to the controversy of his words. I'd like to see him published locally."

For inspiration, Callahan, who lives and works out of his Portland apartment, said he draws what is around him and what people around him say.

"Culture is becoming more cartoon-like all the time," he said. "The world is just plain funny: Hillary Clinton running for senator, for example."

Callahan, now in his late 40s, is known for poking fun at everything and everyone. He said political groups, animal rights groups, political figures and activists are his favorite people to lampoon.

He has published numerous books, including his popular

## Disability awareness

Who: Quadriplegic, cartoonist and author John Callahan

What: A free Disability Awareness Event speech

When: Tuesday, May 9, at 4 p.m.

Where: EMU Ballroom

1989 autobiography, "Don't Worry, He Won't Get Far On Foot!," a New York Times bestseller.

In 1998, the book's movie rights were purchased by TriStar pictures. Robin Williams is slated to play Callahan in the upcoming film "He Won't Get Far." Williams will be teamed with Portland director Gus Van Sant, who also directed "Good Will Hunting."

Callahan has appeared on national television as well, including The Today Show, Entertainment Tonight and 60 Minutes.

"Matt Groening, from the Simpsons, also introduced me to a crowd of 1,000 people last year at a Portland Creative Conference," Callahan said.

Callahan enjoys the perks of the job, including the interesting people he has met, such as Bob Dylan and Richard Pryor. But he said his fame has one drawback.

"My girlfriend doesn't like to go around with me on the street because people know who I am," he said. "So I take her to dinner in the country."

Callahan said he just plans to do some "stand-up" comedy at Tuesday's performance. This was a fortunate opportunity for the University because as Callahan said, "I don't travel much."

Molly Sirois, from Disability

Services, said Callahan will show some of his cartoons, talk about his life and end with a question and answer session and a book signing. She added that Disability Services chose him to speak at the Disability Awareness Event because of his use of humor as a means of educating people about disabilities and the difficulty of having the disability.

"I expect an engaging, entertaining and provocative time," Sirois said. "I hope it generates a lot of discussion around disabilities and around appreciating different perceptions on different issues."

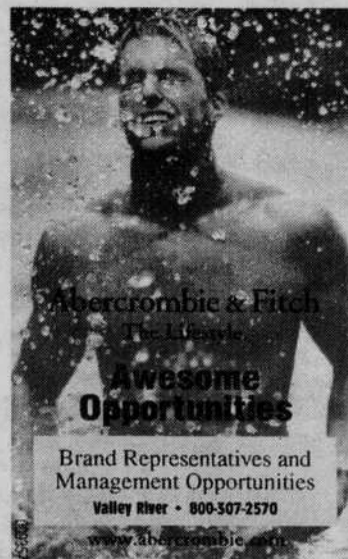
Callahan added that he will address some hot campus issues, including the Worker Rights Consortium.

"It was insulting to a man who gives that kind of money," Callahan said of Nike CEO Phil Knight. "He goes out of his way to be a fair employer." Callahan said the actions behind getting the University to sign on with the labor-monitoring organization were "naive of the students."

Nilda Brooklyn, an ASUO intern and sophomore women's studies and art major said she is excited to see Callahan because she knows his work but not him as a person.

"People with disabilities are invisible on campus and society in general," she said. "Hopefully, people will see people in wheelchairs but also what they can do and create."

It appears Callahan agrees. Being a quadriplegic cartoonist "helps me because I am always sitting down," he said. "It gives you a unique perspective. It gives you insight into people."



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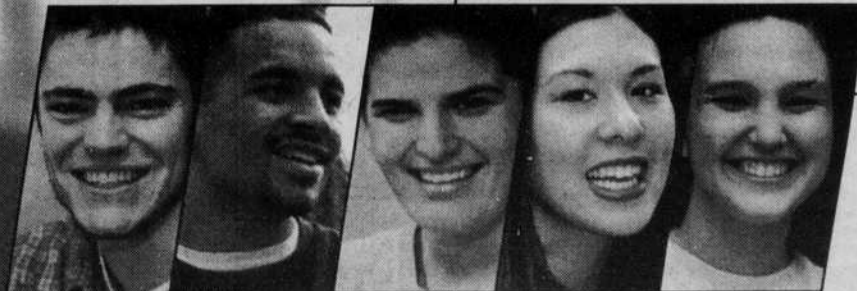
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