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Thursday, April 18, 2002

NPR humorist brings dark wit to Hult Center

David Sedaris has been sharing his life stories on radios and in books, but Sunday he'll share his experiences live at the Hult Center

By Alix Kerl
Oregon Daily Emerald

David Sedaris is a pretty funny talker, and he'll be talking pretty at 7 p.m. Sunday at the Hult Center.

Humorist Sedaris displays his oddly dark humor regularly on public radio and intermittently in his four books. His stories tell of his deprived bourgeois childhood and moving to France with his boyfriend.

Sedaris became well-known for reading about his adventures as a green-

tights-clad elf from his story "Santaland Diaries," a recollection of his adventures as an elf at Macy's Department Store. The story is from Sedaris' first book of short stories, "Holidays on Ice."



SEDARIS

The story covers everything from group lectures ("You are not a

dancer. If you were a real dancer you wouldn't be here. You're an elf, and you're going to wear panties like an elf.") to Santa's race. Radio was Sedaris' first big national exposure. It was also many people's first exposure to Sedaris' work.

"I remember sitting in my living room in the early morning, listening to NPR," University journalism Professor Kellee Weinhold said about listening to "Santaland Diaries" for the first time. "I remember laughing so hard I couldn't breathe."

Weinhold appreciates Sedaris' uniquely dark sense of humor.

"He is the voice of the dark," Weinhold said. "But, he really, truly is something that everyone can enjoy."

In the late 1990s, Sedaris' radio role expanded when he joined Ira Glass' literary show, "This American Life." "This American Life" is described by creators as a bunch of stories.

"Its mission is to document the everyday life of this country," wrote Glass. Turn to Sedaris, page 10

'Stupid' is not as stupid does

Author Michael Moore speaks in the EMU Ballroom Sunday to promote 'Stupid White Men'

By Jen West
Oregon Daily Emerald

Michael Moore's controversial book, "Stupid White Men," probes into the corporate and government agendas of America's most powerful people and exposes them with political satire.

Moore, an author and film producer, will appear for a lecture and book signing at 5 p.m. Sunday in the EMU Ballroom. A live video feed will also be available in the EMU Ben Linder Room and 180 PLC free of charge.

"Stupid White Men" discusses issues from politics to the environment to race and gender in "down-to-earth language," UO Cultural Forum Contemporary Issues Coordinator Geoff Hoffa said. Moore's uncensored discussion of the current Bush administration has made the book controversial in a nation where Hoffa said recent polls have indicated most Americans approve of George W. Bush.

"Stupid White Men" takes a comical approach to explaining the state of the nation and the general power structure, said Tsunami Books owner Scott Landfield. He said humor is a great way to reach people about these uncomfortable issues.

"It's best to do it behind the guise of humor," he said, because the cold, hard truth is often difficult to accept.

Moore does not exactly speak the truth, but presents his take on the truth, Landfield said, and it is "closer (to the truth) probably than what we're being fed."

He said Moore's choice to use humor to reach his audience was a smart one, because if he had taken a more serious tone, he probably would have been in danger of assassination.

Moore does not just take "pot shots" at powerful American men; he proves his statements with facts, said Cheri Smith, president of SEIU local 503, Oregon Public Employee Union Local 085. She said in his book, Moore brings to light many facts the public may not be aware of, such as exactly how interconnected the Bush family is and how that affected the 2000 presidential elections.

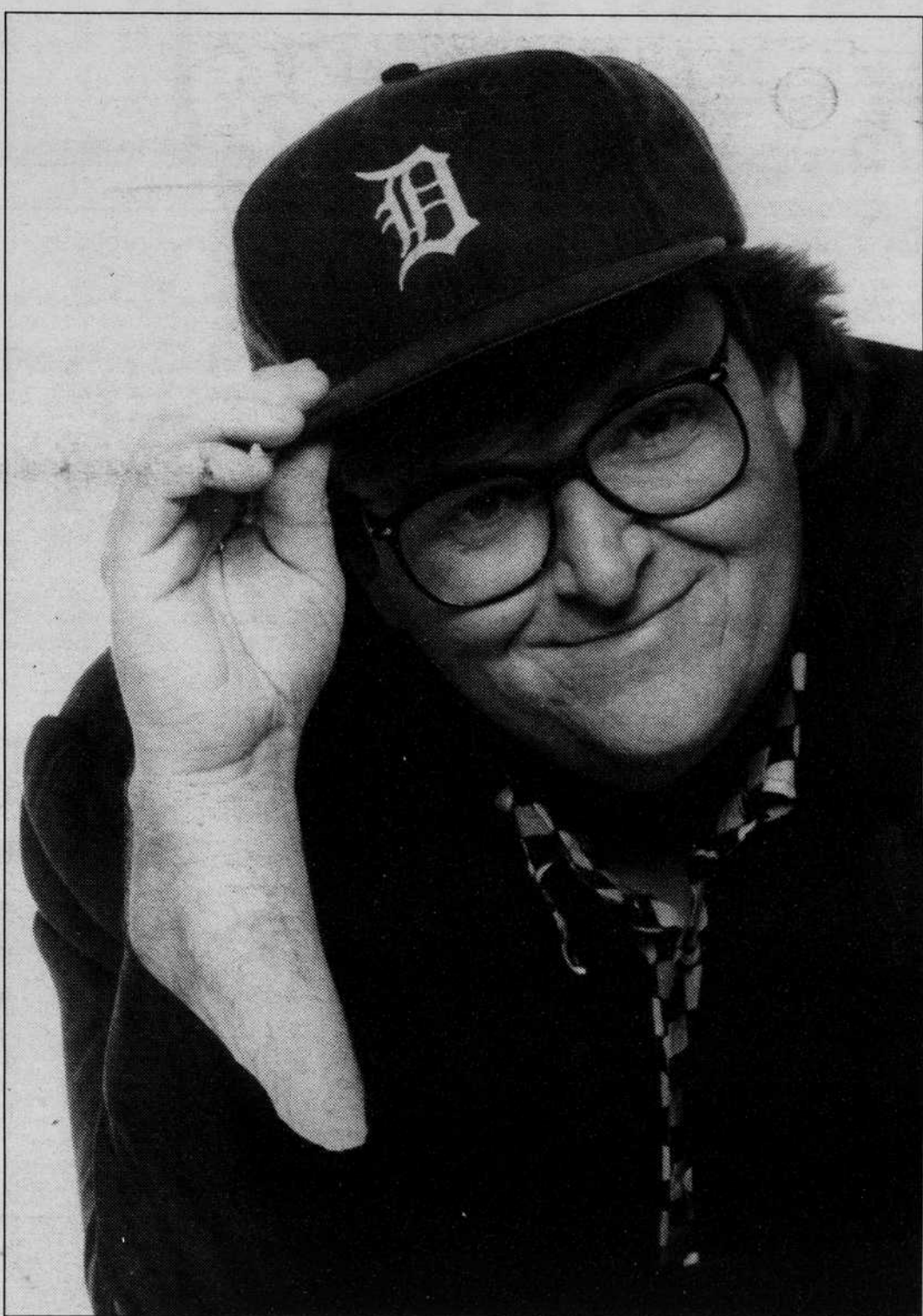
The book tells the reader, "You need to take a closer look at your government," she said.

But taking a closer look at the government nearly kept the book from being published.

After the events of Sept. 11, publisher Harper Collins labeled "Stupid White Men" as "too offensive" and halted its distribution before it ever reached the bookshelves, according to a message Moore posted to his Web site, www.michaelmoore.com. At first, Moore agreed to postpone the release date for the book, he wrote, but Harper Collins requested he tone down the scathing commentary on the Bush administration and other power entities in the United States. Fifty thousand copies had already been printed and sat in a warehouse awaiting their execution by shredder.

Then, a group of librarians discovered the book ban and organized a letter-writing campaign that eventually led to the salvation of "Stupid White Men," which appeared unchanged and uncensored in bookstores Feb. 19, ac-

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Courtesy Photo

Life's not a drag: Queens, kings strut their stuff in EMU fishbowl

LGBTQA will sponsor a drag show to promote queer visibility on campus and to have some fun

By Alix Kerl
Oregon Daily Emerald

Sarah Bluestein says dressing in drag is "gender fucking."

"It means playing with your gender," she said.

"It's playing with people's perception of your gender," interrupted Mary Bankhead.

"It's blurring the line," continued Bluestein.

"It's not a freak show," added

Bankhead.

Bluestein added, "It's a chance for people who are safe in their own socially prescribed gender to play with it."

"It" is drag. Only a half-century ago cross-dressing was punishable by arrest, and police raids of gay bars incited riots such as the historic riot at the Stonewall Bar in New York City. Now many performers dress in drag as a proclamation of freedom. A drag show is an impersonation festival where performers become

the opposite gender onstage.

The "Fish Bowl" Drag Show will be from 9:30 to 11:30 p.m. Friday in the EMU Fishbowl. The drag show, sponsored by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Alliance, will feature both drag queens (biological men that dress as women) and drag kings (biological women that dress as men).

The feature queen is Patti O'Dora, a former Miss Gay Oregon who has been playing in and around Portland for 18

years. She is the founder of the production company "House of the Goddess." She is also the hostess for the Saturday night drag shows at The Embers Avenue, a primarily gay male bar in Portland. Other "House of the Goddess" performers include Mr. Ty O'Dora, Pebbles Campbell Star, Ephiphany BeYonce, DeLana O'Dora, Joey De ValMont and The "Butch Boy" Troy.

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