

EMU 'Performance' is an issue of free speech, not of art

Guest commentary

The first rule of reporting is to accurately scrutinize the thing you are reporting. According to Michael J. Kleckner's column, ("Is it offensive? Is it acceptable? Is it free speech? Is it art?," ODE, Oct. 25), "I have been assaulted by this performance while walking to and from classes ... the first time I encountered this performance, I heard only the four-letter words and 'Die, Die, Die.'" Since by your own admission you only heard a few words while walking past, that makes your entire column null and void. I am speaking here of my performance art/political rap that goes on every day at noon, 6 p.m. and midnight in the Free Speech Amphitheater. The "offensive" word is "fuck," which is repeated many times in different ways in this particular performance. I only did this particular performance three times on Tuesday before I was arrested on Wednesday.

You apparently saw a short part of it twice. You could at least have listened to the whole thing. Before I was so rudely interrupted, I intended to continue with "Sit on your fat asses and eat doughnuts. Sit on your fat asses and watch T.V. while children in Afghanistan and Iraq die so you can have gas. Die pigs, die! FUCK WAR! Which of these words is obscene?"

You, the editor of the school newspaper, can't be bothered to come down to listen for 15 minutes, but that doesn't stop you from slopping your uninformed opinion all over. You also don't understand the question. The question is not, "Is art sometimes offensive, and who decides if it is art or not?" The question I'm asking is, "Do we have free speech or not?" Whether what I do is art or not has nothing to do with it. Again, in your own paper is a pulled-quote from Tom Hicks, DPS Assistant Director, that stated, "People certainly have a right to express themselves, but the University has the right to dictate the time, place and manner

which it is done." Dictate? By the University's own rules, the Free Speech Amphitheater is open 24/7 to anyone who wishes to speak on any subject.

It's a sad day when the police paid by our own tuition and tax money to enforce the law don't have a clue what it is. To quote our Constitution: "Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech..." The University has usurped the right to regulate the time of performance

by claiming that amplified (i.e. electronic) sound is a noise nuisance but speaking, which is what I do, is not allowed to be "dictated." The Constitution does not say, "if the speech was too loud or offensive."

It's too bad you were "assaulted." Our illegitimate government flouts established international convention by making assaults on other countries. Our Constitution lies in shredded tatters.

If there ever is a time to scream, howl and be offensive, it is now. I intended to be offensive, it is now. I don't care if you knew it was a performance or not. Figure it out. If you don't like it, don't walk so close to the Free Speech Amphitheater or your little ears might get burned. Neither you nor anybody else will shut me up.

Don Goldman is a sixth-year student majoring in classics.

Money pressures cause Frohnmayer's KUGN stance to be transparent

Guest commentary

As President David Frohnmayer dons the robes of one seemingly protecting free expression in two current campus issues, the robes become transparent. They reveal one who, committed to resolving budgetary problems, tramples on free expression to protect major sources of revenue.

The squabble over KUGN is the small-timer among the two. Students and faculty urge the University to ask the radio station — anchor of the Oregon Sports Network — to not carry other programming whose viciousness and bigotry toward minorities contrasts to the University's mission statement and principles.

Cause of the concern is the daily syndicated show of attack talk show host, Michael Savage. Recordings document the program's savagery toward minorities. The request is not that he be censored, but that the University make it clear to KUGN that it will not give silent approval to the Savage words by having Oregon game broadcasts originate at a station that carries them. Ironically, a high proportion of players on the men's basketball and football teams are of a race subjected to the verbal bigotry.

If KUGN is not willing to make the choice, the University should exclude it and any other station that carries bigotry from bidding for the broadcast contract up for bid again this June. This should be part of the stated criteria, along with other re-

strictions. Money is involved, as the current contract is worth \$1 million to the University Department of Athletics. Will other stations bid as high? Perhaps not. But the rights are an advertising goldmine, and bids of others would be comparable.

When the president praises student concern, but rejects their request to move to another station, he is disingenuous, if not hypocritical. Whether the station calls itself "the voice of the Ducks," listeners to all of its programming associate it with the Ducks.

The big-time squabble relates to the proposal of Prof. Frank Stahl that the University Senate formerly oppose the United States starting a preemptive war against Iraq, or anyone. The president's response was, once again, crafty: "It is not the place of this University to be captured by any one political voice."

If the issue is political, it is only because, as Stahl said, an anti-war vote could cost the University support from the Republican state Legislature and from corporations that profit from a war economy. This also might lead to potential loss of grants from federal sources accountable to the war stance of the Bush administration. When a president feels his hands are tied by the will of donors whose money is needed, the University is fortunate to have a spokesman of principle like Frank Stahl.

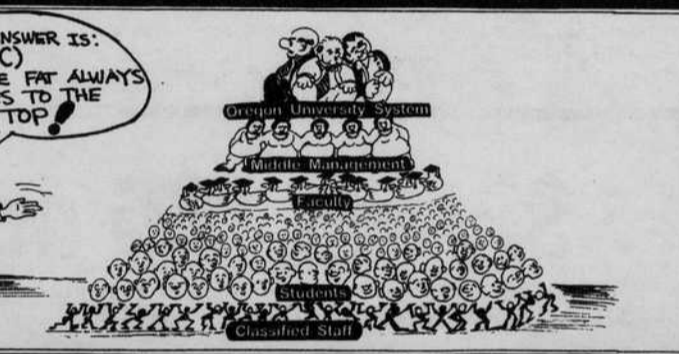
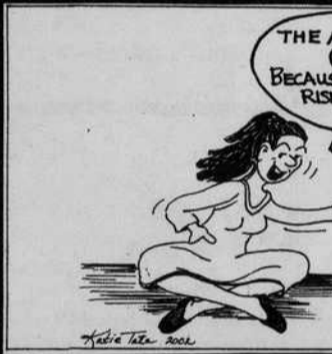
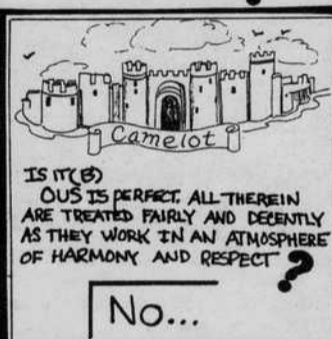
George Beres was formerly the University sports information director, and later manager of the University Speakers Bureau and editor of the faculty-staff newsletter.

Guest illustration

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by Kitty Forbirds

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