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COMMENTARY

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EDITORIAL

UO groups need to start advertising free tickets

Some eight months ago, the Student Senate quietly passed a rule entitling students to free tickets to all incidental fee-funded events. Since then, though, most people in the campus community have remained largely unaware of the rule — documented in the Green Tape Notebook, Rules of the University of Oregon Student Senate, 13.7 — including not only students who shell out funds for those events, but also students who organize and advertise events, and even ticket distributors.

ASUO Controller Persis Pohowalla has said the ticket office and student groups should be aware of the rule change. But Mary Barrios, director of ticketing services, said that nobody in student government informed the EMU Ticket Office — which provides tickets for many student group events — of the change. Either way, no student has ever requested a free ticket from the student office, so none have been given out.

Even some members of the Student Senate seem to be unfamiliar with these ticketing rules. Students of the Indian Subcontinent, which recently hosted the fee-funded and ticketed Utsav celebration Jan. 30, was told by a student senator that the group was allowed to sell tickets with a mandatory charge for the event, given that the dinner portion was only a "suggested donation," SIS co-Director Edwin Prasad said.

So, this is a simple, open-and-shut case of widespread ignorance of a rule. Unfortunately, until recently, no one seems to have told the ticket office or student groups about this rule.

Moreover, the Green Tape Notebook offers little incentive for groups to inform students that fee-funded event tickets technically carry a suggested donation, not a mandatory fee. As written, there's no rule requiring student groups selling event tickets to make the distinction, ASUO Accounting Coordinator Jennifer Creighton-Neiwert said, calling the debacle "one area where the Senate needs to do more clarification to help the groups out."

And so they should. To their credit, Student Senate Ombudsman Mike Sherman told the Emerald he would personally inform the ticket office about the rule. And this is a good start, but students deserve to be wholly informed about their options: After all, requiring students to pay for tickets to fee-sponsored events is tantamount to double-charging usually cash-strapped members of the University community.

So the Student Senate should amend the Green Tape Notebook to include a provision that requires groups to mention that ticket prices are indeed suggested donations on all advertisements, including advertisements at the ticket office. As a show of good faith, student groups should do this voluntarily in the interim.

Finally, the Student Senate should draft a memo to all student groups that could hold ticketed events, informing them of this seemingly little-known rule.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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HOW MICHAEL JACKSON
 COULD HAVE SAVED HIS
 CAREER...



Eric Layton Illustration

The Passion of Gibson

On Saturday morning, a man appeared before almost 4,000 people at all-Christian Azusa Pacific University near Los Angeles and gave a sermon of sorts. The feed was broadcast to 2,000 churches nationwide via satellite.

Was it the pope? Jerry Falwell?

Nope. Just Mel Gibson.

Gibson may soon become a religious figure in his own right if his new movie, "The Passion of Christ," converts as many people to Christianity as he wants. Already, church leaders from Azusa to the Adirondacks are buying out theaters like they were Bibles. Preachers are planning sermons around the Ash Wednesday (Feb. 25) release date as Gibson gives away promotional materials to church leaders like candy to preschoolers.

For those non-believers, like me, this may seem like an unwanted blitz of the sort Oregon quarterback Kellen Clemens might face. The controversial movie will be all over the media for the next few weeks, and some Christian leaders are calling it the greatest recruiting tool in their history.

But, even though I don't want to be recruited, I still say "Go Mel." I don't share his beliefs, but I admire his, well, "Passion." When someone is so impassioned about his religious views, it's easy for those of us who think differently to jerk our knees and fire off bullets of criticism. But maybe it's time to honor somebody for his fervor instead of lambasting him for his views.

Gibson funded the movie almost entirely by himself. It only cost \$25 million, not

much by Hollywood's standards, but Gibson didn't have a major studio to open his wallet for him. He shot the movie, which tells the tale of the last 12 hours of Jesus'



Peter Hockaday

Today is Hockaday

life, entirely on location in southern Italy.

The cherry on top of the sundae is that the tale is told entirely in the languages of the time — Aramaic and Latin — with English subtitles.

It's certainly one of the most ambitious religious movies ever, if only because of the subject material. Actor Jim Caviezel, who plays Jesus, went through seven hours of makeup per day for later scenes, which depict Christ's crucifixion.

The movie has come under fire from Jewish leaders, who say it has anti-Semitic overtones. One Los Angeles-area rabbi, Marvin Hier, saw the movie twice and still told the Los Angeles Times it was anti-Semitic. Jews, other than Jesus' disciples, are cast as the "bad guys" complicit in Jesus' death. Hier said Jews are "portrayed cruelly."

But Gibson insists the movie isn't meant

to be anti-Semitic. At the question-and-answer session in Los Angeles on Saturday, he strongly denied the accusations and said he harbors no ill will for Judaism. Christ's death is an important event in both religions, so hopefully the movie won't create a rift between the two.

I admire most Gibson's leap of faith into producing this movie. He obviously cares deeply about the subject and wanted desperately to put this exact movie into the American subconscious. It's along the lines of Michael Moore's "Bowling for Columbine" or Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List." None of these movies would have been made if not for their makers' deep passion for the subjects.

And yes, Gibson's topic is unappealing to many moviegoers. We don't want to face the issue of religion because it's hard to face within ourselves. Personally, my parents took me to church when I was younger but it never really "stuck." Now I don't hold onto a faith, but I admire those who do. I suspect that I'm not strong enough, and that's why it's easier for me to criticize than to praise those with strong faith.

So, Mel, you may not convert me but you've converted my way of thinking by injecting this movie into the culture. Hopefully others can do that, at least.

Godspeed, Mel. So to speak.

Contact the columnist at peterhockaday@dailymerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

OSPIRG funding situation is worse than book prices

The shady OSPIRG claims textbooks are the root of students' financial woes ("OSPIRG's study dubs textbooks 'rip-offs,'" ODE, Jan. 31), but the greater outrage is forcing

students to fund a politically motivated group of lobbyists.

Adjusted for 2003 dollars, the group has taken well over \$2 million from this campus alone, while failing to provide even one worthwhile service in 30 years. It's hard to take OSPIRG seriously when they attack a legitimate business such as textbooks, even as they snatch millions through a shameful,

coercive funding scheme.

Students shouldn't worry about their textbooks. The only lesson here is that the UO must defund a group whose only green interest is the cash they funnel away to lobbyists.

Bret Jacobson

Class of 2003