

'OC' star visits, stresses importance of voting

As a Kerry supporter, Ben McKenzie stops at Taylor's to encourage students to send in their ballots

BY DAHVI FISCHER
PULSE REPORTER

Cool, calm and collected, in a pair of Levi's, sipping on a glass of Bud Light, Benjamin McKenzie, also known as Ryan "Chino" Atwood from the hit television show "The OC," appeared at Taylor's Bar & Grille on Monday to promote voting and express his pride in the Kerry/Edwards campaign. The 23-year-old actor happily answered questions, signed autographs and posed for photographs for close to one hundred swooning female fans and excited liberals.

The enthusiastically liberal Texas native expressed his passion for the approval of gay marriages and proclaimed the importance of people voting as a means to determine the status of health care, war, education, jobs and the military.

"We need to get back the desired image for America. If Bush is re-elected, the world will continue to look at us as a world bully, not a world leader," McKenzie said.

McKenzie, regardless of not having voted in the previous presidential election, said he has always been a Democrat, and said he didn't realize how

important voting was in the last election until it was too late. Even though he didn't vote last time, he said he has always identified himself as a Democrat because "Democrats are the real Americans — the people with strong families who work for a living."

Anne Marks, spokesperson for the Democratic Party of Oregon, was also present at McKenzie's gathering. She said that this event was arranged to encourage youth to vote.

"Given the number of first-time voters in Oregon, new voters will determine the election," Marks said.

"The purpose of this event is to get people to turn in their ballots. Because our state goes by absentee ballots (voting by mail), we need to get out the vote early."

Matthew Strickland, a senior political science major and Vote Blitz Team Manager said, "This event will appeal to young, single women. Twenty-two million single women under the age of 30 did not vote in the last presidential election. As an appealing male, McKenzie is going to talk to women about issues that affect them and why it is important to vote."

According to Marks, McKenzie came to speak to University students by choice.

"Ben was generous with his time. He wanted to get involved. He voluntarily came," Marks said.

He also made a stop at Oregon State University prior to visiting Eugene.

McKenzie, who spoke at the Democratic Convention, said he feels like his involvement has already made a difference.

"I've already collected 100 signatures from OSU alone," he said. "Every bit helps. Every signature makes a difference."

McKenzie said that voting is especially important because not only does it determine the president, but it also determines the Senate and the Supreme Court.

The actor said that the other members of his TV show are also fairly active with the Kerry/Edwards campaign.

"Adam (Brody) and Rachel (Bilson) promote a lot as well. They were just recently promoting for Kerry in Nevada," McKenzie said.

The event, organized by several University students associated with the Kerry/Edwards campaign, lasted about an hour.

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Decor: Organization the key to utilize small spaces


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rooms with a laundry line for hanging photos, magnets and large pieces of fabric as wallpaper. To make the best use of space, hall residents can raise their beds with cement blocks to create storage space underneath, stack plastic crates in their closets, use hanging shoe pockets for anything from hair spray to scissors and

give some items dual purposes, such as using a storage bin as a table. Above all, eliminating clutter will make any room look more spacious.

"When you're in a cramped space, it's good to have everything organized," Merrill said. "Give everything a place and that gives you more open space."

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■ Movie review

Russell film delivers a plot that should be taken to heart

Complex characters and comedic absurdities make 'I Heart Huckabees' post-modern excellence

BY RYAN NYBURG
PULSE EDITOR

A new sub-genre seems to be developing in American cinema — the post-modern comedy. The pioneer of the style has been writer Charlie Kaufman, who along with directors Spike Jonze and Michel Gondry has created films that find humor in a protagonist's search for identity and meaning in an absurd world. It's an oddly cerebral form of humor, and films such as "Adaptation," "Being John Malkovich" and "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" have been some of the best comedies of the past decade.

"I Heart Huckabees" can probably be considered the first film in this style to not have been scripted by Kaufman. Written and directed by David O. Russell (who directed the

excellent Desert Storm movie, "Three Kings"), the film concerns Albert (Jason Schwartzman), a confused environmental crusader who hires a pair of existential detectives to follow him and solve a crisis of personal identity. This is an irresistibly oddball premise, and one the film takes on all sorts of absurd digressions. The detectives, played by the pitch-perfect Dustin Hoffman and Lily Tomlin, follow Albert everywhere he goes ("even to the bathroom") and put together a story about his life that explains the difficulties he has been having.

In a way, the film expresses and resolves two views of existentialism: The view promoted by the detectives that everything is connected (the "blanket" theory) and the view of their nemesis, a mysterious French

existentialist who believes that everything is disconnected and disjointed. Through this search, the film often strays away from Albert to follow other characters. There is the overly-charming PR executive of a Wal-Mart-like chain store and his model girlfriend (played by Jude Law and Naomi Watts, respectively), who come under the radar of the detectives. Then there is the firefighter played by Mark Wahlberg, who is obsessed with the pain and suffering caused through petroleum dependency.


These characters are all fully realized and complex, partly because we can watch them deal with the problems of their own identity and partly because of the skills of the actors involved. If there is a weak spot in the film, it's Albert. His character is never filled out and though Schwartzman is engaging in the role, he simply isn't given enough to do.

But this hardly matters. There is so

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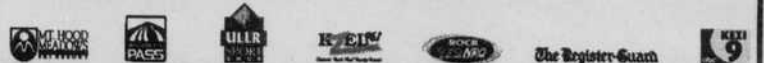
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