

Public libraries under attack

Attention anyone who believes in the democratic process: your public libraries are under attack.

In the current proposal from the Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA) titled "The Minority Status and Child Protection Act of 1996" it states in section 4:

Though subsection one is established and in effect, books and literature in public libraries which promote or express approval of homosexuality shall be kept from minors: access made only under parental supervision. Such material must meet local community standards established through the existing library review process.

This section is vague and leaves questions concerning specifically what types of literature "express approval of homosexuality." In what way does a book, poem, play or general information provided by a library express approval? Would our history books need to be rewritten so that we wouldn't read about great people who gave much to the civilized world? Leonardo da Vinci, Walt Whitman, Steven Foster, Alexander the Great, Michelangelo, Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky, Gertrude Stein and Tennessee Williams were all gay people who gave a lot; their being gay shouldn't affect whether we learn about them or not.

"If you were to take out all of the literature written by homosexuals in the Intro to Literature book there would be very little left," stated Kate Gray, English Instructor at CCC.

Cyndi Andrews, director of the Learning Resource Center for CCC, agrees that the literature in the libraries shouldn't be subject to censorship.

"The implications of such an amendment severely compromise the mission of the college library," Andrews said.

Library Mission Statement: *In keeping with the purpose of Clackamas Community College, the primary mission of the college library is to provide information resources and services to support instructional programs. The library also provides for the general information needs of students, staff, and community patrons, maintains a well-balanced collection of print, non-print, and electronic resources, and assists patrons in the effective utilization of these resources.*

Judith Krug, director of the office for Intellectual Freedom at American Library Association (ALA) interviewed in *Church and State*, Nov. 1995, said "This all comes down to political control. They (OCA) think if they control the ideas and information available, if they teach the future generation not how to think but what to think, they will create a new society that only a few people feel comfortable in. This is not about who is going to run this country in the year 2000 and beyond, but what this country is going to be, who's going to be acceptable and who is not."

Because of the threat to our freedom to learn, the members of the *Clackamas Print* feel that the passage of such an amendment would do harm to existing public libraries and institutions receiving public funds for literature and educating purposes; therefore, we do not endorse the amendment in any way.

We support the following statement from the ALA: "The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong what one man can read should be confined to what another thinks proper."

First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States: *Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*

Constitution of Oregon: Bill of Rights, Article I

Section 8. Freedom of speech and press.

No law shall be passed restraining the free expression of opinion, or restricting the right to speak, write, or print freely on any subject whatever; but every person shall be responsible for the abuse of this right.

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OCA's Minority Status and Child Protection Act 1996

The Oregon Citizens Alliance is on the road with their third attempt to legitimize discrimination against lesbians and gay men. Here's the language:

Ballot Title: Amends constitution: Restricts local, state, government powers concerning homosexuality.

Question: Shall constitution forbid basing civil rights on homosexuality, other sexual behaviors, desires; bar spending public funds in a way approving homosexuality?

Amendment to the Oregon Constitution:

1. Minority status shall not be based on sexual behavior or desires; therefore (a) Children, students and employees shall not be advised, instructed, or taught by any government agency, department of political subdivision that a person's sexual behavior or desire is the legal or social equivalent to existing minority civil rights classifications. (b) The People find that to be morally opposed to certain sexual behaviors such as homosexuality, when based upon a person's convictions, is a Right is Conscience in accord with Article I Section 2 and 3 of this Constitution. Such objection produced by one's moral standards and values is therefore not discrimination relating to civil rights, nor shall it be considered to by any unit of state or local government; therefore: (1) Public funds shall not be expended in a manner that has the purpose or effect of expressing approval of homosexuality. (2) Marital status shall not be recognized or spousal benefits awarded on the basis of homosexuality.

2. Though subsection one is established and in effect, no licenses, permits, services or benefits shall be denied any person otherwise due under existing statute; nor shall the holding or exercise of any rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the State of Oregon or of the United States of America, be deprived, nullified or diminished.

3. Though subsection one is established and in effect, with regard to public employees, it shall be generally considered that a person's private, lawful sexual behavior is a nonjob related factor, provided such consideration does not violate any provision of this Act or the Constitution of the United States.

4. Though subsection one is established and in effect, books or literature in public libraries which promote or express approval of homosexuality shall be kept from minors: access made available only under parental supervision. Such material must meet local community standards established through the existing library review process.

5. The term minority status shall refer to any class or category of individuals created in the law as a special civil rights classification such as race, religion, gender, national origin, etc.

6. The people intend that if any part of this enactment be found unconstitutional, the remaining parts shall survive in full force and effect. This Act shall be in all parts self-executing. For the purposes of this Act, every Oregon resident and non-profit entity doing business in the State of Oregon has standing.

Creativity, academics can go hand in hand

Joel P. Shempert
Staff Writer

I have been attending Clackamas Community College for about a year and a half now, and I must say that the experience has been enlightening and enjoyable.

However, I have observed a general condition which seems to have crept into various corners of the college--some people just don't want to learn.

The cross-section of students to which I refer, though I would make no attempt to pigeonhole them, in general seem to take an attitude that the formalities of their college education don't matter; that they can "get by" with a substandard level of work and a loose interpretation of the conventions of their particular field.

I believe this to be a serious problem.

I would propose that students should push themselves to greater academic achievement, and realize that, whatever their long-range goals, this is the time of their lives where the foundation is laid for their futures.

Reality is that one must adhere to certain standards in order to succeed in various fields in our society.

I'm sure that some will object to my contentions. A comment I hear frequently goes something like this: "I think that those who make great art don't worry about proper form. They just put down whatever comes to mind, and the rules and regulations don't matter."

This is used most often regarding writing. Anyone can write, which means that literally anyone can take a crack at creative writing if they really want to, and while some of those who do have a good grasp of grammar, others who try it do not.

As a result, there are many amateur writers who produce interesting work but possess almost no knowledge of spelling, punctuation, or sentence structure.

The truth is, however, that quality artistic creation and academic excellence go hand in hand. Before you learn the art, you must first learn the craft. The reasoning behind this is simple. Basically, you must learn the rules before you are allowed to break them.

"I think that those who make great art don't worry about proper form."

A rule broken in ignorance speaks nothing of the practitioner's artistic ability, while a rule broken deliberately and with expert perception speaks volumes.

If you want to create beautiful art, than you should strive to learn as much as you can about that artform, so that your art will be more beautiful.

There may be talented amateurs who, for instance, paint beautiful figure pieces, but there is no question that their paintings would improve if they studied anatomy.

A second objection would likely be similar to this: "But I'm just not as talented as those high-achieving people!" This is, of course, a valid concern. No one would expect a student to be the next Einstein simply because they

were enrolled in a Physics course.

Some courses at CCC, such as Leland John's art courses and Bill Braire's Comparative Religion, take this into account, grading students based on their individual abilities. However, most classes by their nature are very concrete and inflexible in their knowledge base.

If you don't know the chemical formula for Hydrogen Peroxide, then you don't know the formula for Hydrogen Peroxide. You may be a wonderful person, but I wouldn't necessarily want you to do medical research for my hospital! The point is not that students should be better than everyone else, but that they be the best that they, personally, can be.

I would like to make regarding our academic achievement as it relates to our future careers. Quite frankly, like it or not, everything in the workforce, no matter the field, is based on economics.

One thing I hear over and over as a music theory student is that commercial success as a musician depends on versatility--being able to say, "Sure, I can do that" as opposed to, "Oh, I don't know that scale." Simply put, how well you succeed depends on how much you learn about your particular field.

All these points come together in one fact--academic achievement is the cornerstone of artistic creation. All fields of study, and the arts are no exception, contain great depth and complexity, and even the most dedicated of students rarely even scratches the surface.

It is an admirable thing to retain artistic expression as your primary goal, but only if you are willing to learn the conventions that make that expression real.