

Campus should be safe, not sheltered

As a person who has taken three history classes from Dr. Epstein, the news of a complaint against him didn't come as a shock to me. To say the least, he is controversial and outspoken, and I could see how someone might get offended by

Many say that Dr. Epstein would make any homosexual person feel uncomfortable in his classroom. Last Wednesday night, a very brave young man stood up at the candlelight vigil and spoke in defense of Dr. Epstein. The man, a former Clackamas student, revealed that he was a cross-



Angie Daschel
A & E Editor

The way it really is!

something he said.

What really shocked and upset me was the fact that once the story broke about the *alleged* comment, letters streamed in accusing Dr. Epstein of being a horrible person and singling him out as narrow-minded homophobe.

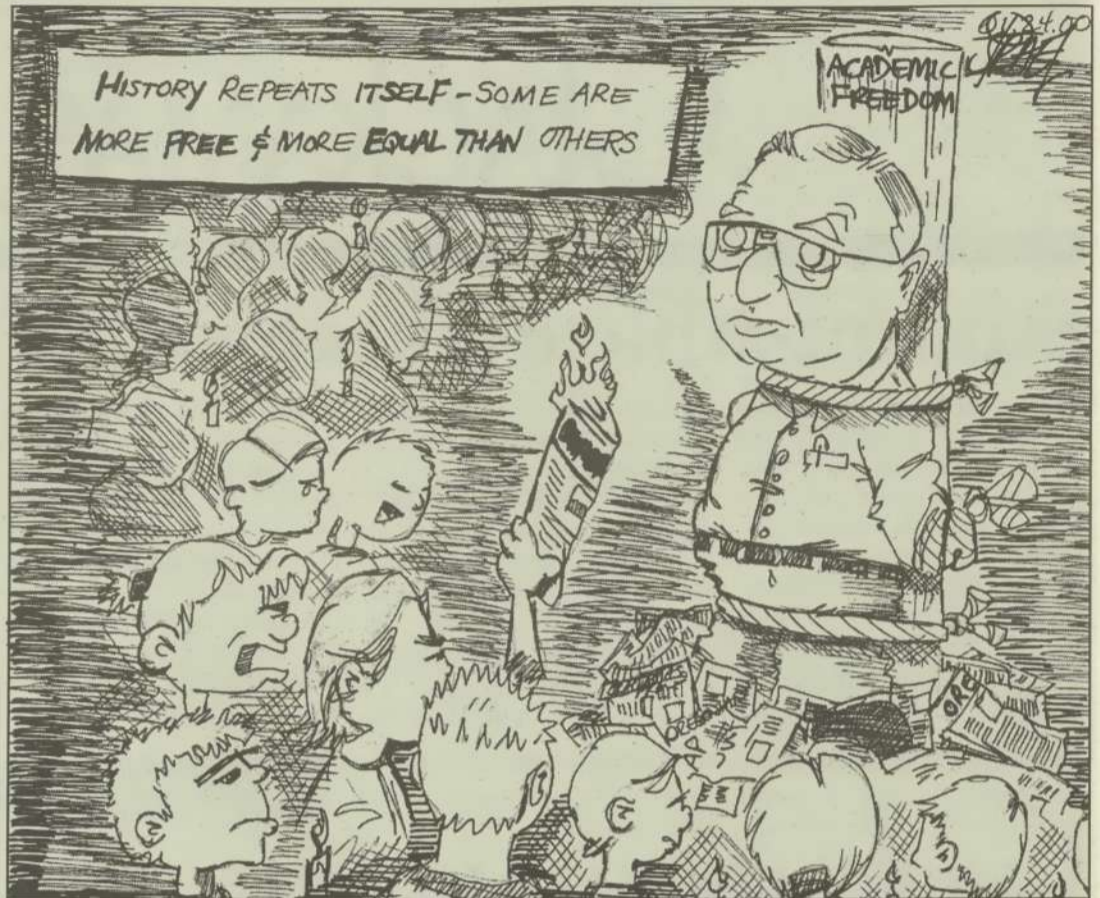
News flash, people: we don't live in a candy-coated world where everyone has the same opinion on everything. Now, I don't agree with Dr. Epstein on the topic of homosexuality, but I do believe that the man has a right to say what he believes, even though it isn't the politically correct view. What a sad and mind-numbing world it would be to walk around agreeing with everybody. This is supposed to be a college for grown-ups, who have already formed their own opinions on important topics.

Epstein did what so many instructors on this campus fail to do: *inspire thought*.

dresser who had taken four of Epstein's classes. Voice trembling, the man told how Epstein had invited him, as well as other students, to his home many times to discuss class topics and had made him feel welcome. Never did he say that Dr. Epstein was malicious or prejudiced towards him.

He did say, however, that the college is losing a great instructor, with which I wholeheartedly agree with. Epstein taught with great fervor and enthusiasm, and when I read that he had lost his passion for teaching, it broke my heart. The man who organized colloquiums and brought in Holocaust survivors to speak to the campus vanished simply because someone got upset over an *alleged* comment.

Thirty years of his teaching at this community college are wiped away by a complaint, and that not only angers me, but it got me thinking as



The views portrayed in this cartoon are not those of Linda Vogt, advisor of *The Clackamas Print* newspaper, or of the *Print* staff as a whole.

well. If one person can be brought down because they spoke their opinion, then watch out. You never know who has it out for you, and maybe something you allegedly say will get you in trouble, whether you said it or not.

Although this whole thing makes me angry and disappointed in this

community, it mostly makes me sad. I am sad for the students who will never get to take Dr. Epstein's classes on Oregon history, Judaic history or Western Civilization. I am sad for the students who don't feel safe on our campus because of certain ideas of morality.

I am sad for the people who

felt they had to condemn Dr. Epstein for his views. But mostly I am sad for Dr. Epstein. Not because he is retiring, but because he contributed so much to the campus over the last thirty years and the only thing he will be remembered for is an *alleged* comment.

Epstein controversy not taken lightly

As the Opinion Editor of the *Clackamas Print*, I not only value your opinions... I welcome them and I think you should know the creative process the staff went through in order to present the issues on the

Make a statement, be heard...

Salena De La Cruz
Opinion Editor

At this time, we had a meeting to discuss the validity of the accusations. That same day, I then went to talk to Dr. Epstein with my tape recorder, pen, and notebook in hand to get his side of the story. Other members of the staff interviewed



J o s h u a Alexander. We went through the interviews and sorted through the information. Some may say

Epstein matter.

When *The Print* first got word on Epstein's comment we weren't quite sure what to do with it; we didn't know if it was hearsay or not. We held the news for a week to gather more information and we ran my opinion. It was something to raise questions in the minds of the student body and faculty about academic freedom.

Epstein's comment was in the context of the course. I can agree with that to some extent, but what our readers don't know is that there was much more information. It was not released to you because it did not have to do with his comment, "You are better off dead than being a homosexual." I'm not going to say what the statements were because we chose not to publish them. I will

say they were very opinionated and would probably offend some people. This brings us to the real issue: Academic freedom or prejudiced opinion?

Some excerpts from the interviews were run in the Jan. 19 edition. This brought new issues to light. The conflict was no longer about Epstein's comment, it was about whether he should be allowed to say these things if it hinders students' success because they no longer feel comfortable in the class. *The Print* Editors asked that question and many more while reviewing the most appropriate way to run the stories.

We knew this was a sensitive subject and needed to be handled with the utmost care. While I cannot speak for everyone on the *Print* staff, I would like to say one thing: I feel we reported the story to the best of our ability with the information we had. I would also like to ask students in the Judaic Studies class who viewed the situation differently,

to let us know your thoughts on the incident.

During the Jan. 19 issue, we asked readers to decide—Academic freedom or prejudiced opinion? And decide you did. We received nine letters, which we printed in the Jan. 26 issue.

There are more letters here with contrasting views, some from our own staff. We are individuals; we have our own opinions. I would like to reiterate that the views in the Opinion Section are not those of the *Print* staff as a whole.

When the finished product comes out, think about the fact that we are all in a learning environment. It takes a lot for it to look like that and for the stories to be decided.

You may be learning $E=Mc^2$ in Physics, but we are learning how to report the news.

Questions, comments, or concerns call ext. 2309 or e-mail me at salenedelacruz@netscape.net.

Speak Out Where it Matters!

Write to *The Clackamas Print*. 500 words or less on disk and bring it to B104 or e-mail it to cccprint@clackamas.cc.or.us



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