

Letter to the Editor... 'A lot made of so-called controversy'

January 6, 2000 Dr. Donald Epstein made a statement in his Judaic Studies/Holocaust class at Clackamas Community College. That statement was, "You're better off dead than being a homosexual." This is a direct quote attributed to Dr. Epstein by Joshua Alexander. A lot has been made of the so-called controversy surrounding that statement.

The problem I have is that as of this moment I have yet to see anywhere that anyone actually asked Dr. Epstein what the context of the statement was. I'm sure that there was more to the statement than simply a professor of religious studies rushing into his class and blurting this out.

I also find it hard to believe that the editors and staff of the Clackamas Print, with few exceptions, would rush to ignite the kindling at the base of the funeral pyre of Dr. Epstein's career. I might remind the editorial staff of that paper that Article I of the Constitution of the United States of America guarantees the right of the free exercise of religion, the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press.

By my reckoning Dr. Epstein was exercising his rights while Joshua Alexander and the

Clackamas Print seemed to be attempting to undermine the very thing that allows them their own rights. Perhaps the staff at the Clackamas Print are pursuing careers at the Weekly World News, The Globe, or the National Enquirer, but I would hope that they would aim higher. Journalism is supposed to be about integrity not without integrity. In rushing to ask Who, What, When, Where and How they forgot to ask Why. Why did Dr. Epstein make the comment?

In an ideal world the full context might have been, "In a world where you may be beaten virtually beyond recognition and left hanging for dead on a fence, you're better off dead than being a homosexual." If that be the case maybe we're all better off dead. But since the very question appears to have been overlooked, we'll never know. In a few short weeks this problem will all have been swept under the carpet and Mr. Epstein will be gone.

Ironic then that those who seek to be accepted, tolerated at any cost are so willing to forgo the tolerance of others.

Chad J. Durbec
Gresham, Oregon

Letter to the Editor policy

All signed Letters to the Editor should be 500 words or less and will be considered for publication if submitted by 1 p.m. the Friday prior to publication. Letters to the Editor are subject to editing. We reserve the right to not publish any letters.



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19600 S. Molalla Ave., OREGON CITY, OREGON 97045
(503) 657-6958 EXT. 2309
CCCPRI@CLACKAMAS.CC.OR.US



Who decides whether art is tasteful or tasteless?

If art is in the eye of the beholder, or the person who interprets it—who gets to decide whether it's tasteful or tasteless?

I find the measures taken were very forthright in trying to resolve the situation. I am glad that we have differences of opinion or views on campus, we can share them in a mature, reasonable fashion. However, I am sorry that



Salena De La Cruz
Opinion Editor

Make a statement, be heard...

Gene Flores, an artist from Texas, displayed his unique works at Pauling Art Gallery. During the exhibit, people walked by to their classes and were able to view the artist's works. It wasn't until people looked closer that they realized the painting titled "Two Popes Boinking" showed frog-like creatures in a compromising position with papal hats on.

The lines have been drawn. Many people have converged on their opposite sides either strongly opposing or strongly in favor of the artwork. This prompted a forum, sponsored by Rick True, art department chair, Feb. 22 to discuss everyone's concerns involving the artwork.

we feel we have to question something that is a little out of the norm. Why can't we have something new and different and thrive because of it?

Gene Flores has every right to name his artwork in a way he feels best represents it. I congratulate him on his success and hope more people can learn from his example. Step out of the standard, try something new and different.

As I look at the artwork, I wonder about freedom. This year we had freedom of speech questioned in the classroom. Now, we have freedom of expression censored from art—what next?

Read this quickly!
You never know when the printed word may be taken away.

"Quote of the Week"

"At no time is freedom of speech more precious than when a man hits his thumb with a hammer."

Marshall Lumsden, writer, 1975

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