

Careful, you never know who you're talking to

I've had a really strange week so Mister Funny is taking a break. Next week I promise to return with another 550 words carefully crafted to get everyone's undies in a twist. Seriously, aside from a few flip-pant remarks, there are no punch lines in today's column. Still with me? Great, then read on.

I watched a guy - most definitely not a student - picking bottles from one of the recycling containers on campus last week. During the five to ten minutes he went about his business, probably 20 people walked by. Not a single person issued any form of challenge or made any move to interfere or report him. He carefully cleaned it out, replaced the lid and moved on to another building. Frankly, at the time, I was impressed with the staff and my fellow students. What ruined it for me later was hearing a complaint that somebody should have stopped him from stealing from the school.

Personally, I don't feel he was stealing anything. If you don't agree, try getting your

deposit back the next time you polish off a Pepsi purchased from the cafeteria. Better yet, pick up a pen or jump on your keyboard and write me about it. With one exception: you will never convince me that the Associated Student Government or staff Xmas party planners would have made better use of the two to three bucks that guy walked off with. You don't know he was going to spend it on booze or drugs any more than I know it was for his mother's blood transfusion. Let's find out who the future prosecuting attorneys are in our midst.

The tone of those last sentences would be called ironic in English Lit. To the world at large it's simply known as sarcasm. In this vein I would like to offer two young ladies in particular a bit of advice that may save them some embar-

assment in the future. The guy who writes this column was homeless just six short months ago. Not only that, he used to dig through trashcans looking for bottles. Had you

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Guest Columnist



met me last August, it's possible this column you claim to love reading every week would never have seen the light of day. You might have had me locked up for offending you with my lack of housing.

I don't have the cure for homelessness; I wouldn't know where to begin or even how to explain how I made it off the street myself. But I do know when a student with a sociology textbook in her arms advocates arresting somebody for collecting bottles, we need to step back and define which problem needs addressing first.

I'm telling you guys this because I know from experience he will be back. He's found a source of income, and if possible he will visit every couple of weeks to cash in.

I'm not just speaking to the students. I haven't heard any derogatory remarks from staff regarding Boxcar Willie, but I know for a fact your students are picking up the double standard "In public we say this, in private we say that." This totally invalidates any real world application of the virtue education is supposed to instill. Once again, I will speak from personal experience to make my point.

I know some of you (staff) don't necessarily care for my rapier wit. Since I'm as old as most of you and wear the big boy pants and can go to the bathroom by myself and everything, that's not much of a consideration when I sit down in front of the keyboard. I have a friend who keeps telling me if everybody likes it not enough people are reading it. Most of you would probably agree. But think about this:

who are you hurting when you espouse tolerance and progressive thought in class, then advocate censorship during a General Foods coffee moment with one of your prodigies? I'm betting that poor bastard digging through the garbage feels the backlash more often than any one else.

I may seem like the last person in the world you would expect to speak out on the side of compassion, but I only poke fun at people's choices, not their misfortunes (the only exception to this would be the enigma of estrogen - sorry, can't help myself). I remember what it was like to be hopeless, desperate and invisible. Fortunately someone gave me a leg up and I landed here. For those of you who pride yourselves on progressive thought, think about that the next time you begin leaning towards, "out of sight, out of mind." This is a great school, and the staff/student mix is too complimentary for the perpetuation of the status quo - we can get hypocrisy everywhere else.

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Online registration arrives at Clackamas

ELISABETH MEYER
staff writer

Although spring registration is still weeks away, there's another reason to get excited about February 26: Clackamas' long-awaited online registration system is now available.

Returning students can access the web site to select, add and drop classes. Other features include access to course grades, transcripts, and financial aid information. All previous registration requirements will still apply; after the first

week, students will have to make in-person schedule changes to full term classes. Telephone and in-person registration will still be available, said Web Advisor Roni Wilhelm.

Online registration has the convenience of telephone registration and the comfort of seeing what you're doing, said Wilhelm.

"The phone system can be kind of disembodied; a lot of people like to see (their schedules) in front of them. This way, they can just print them out when they're done."

Besides, Wilhelm added, the quirks of the phone system are eliminated.

"It's kind of like: (in a phone voice) 'press one now, you know what I mean?' she said. "And anytime you have an automated system, people can get frustrated. If you are on too long, it kicks you off. The students who use telephone registration and love it always will, and that's fine."

Previously, online registration was used when signing up for

workshop-type classes that only last a weekend such as stress management or the fruit-growing seminar. But the convenience of the new system will gradually transform how students access classes, said Ariane Amstutz, a registrar.

"It's going to take a while for everyone to know about it, and for people to get comfortable using it," she said. "But by (summer) term, we should see shorter lines (in the Commu-

nity Center)."

The administrative folks expect things to go well.

"We've done a lot of testing," Wilhelm said. During winter term, two groups of students successfully accessed the system, as well as Registrar office employees and faculty. "If you're familiar with the web, it's a relatively simple process."

"I think it'll be a smooth transition," Amstutz agreed. "People our age are pretty familiar with the web."

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