

Deejay Yanked from KBOO

continued from Front A1

"When we started, there was no other outlet for black music," said Berry.

It took a personal investment of thousands of dollars in music purchases over the years to bring current African-American music to his listeners.

"It wasn't until the 90s that record companies supplied stations with current music from black musicians," he said.

For his first eight years at KBOO, Kevin and his brother Ken never missed a show or pledge drive and helped raise tens of thousands of dollars for the station.

On the missed pledge date in question, Monday, April 5, Berry says he had a family emergency and was given an excused absence by the pledge drive supervisor.

But he said KBOO Program Director Chris Merrick cited the absence as the reason to end his service, and then in a subsequent letter said the "misogynist and homophobic lyrics of music you have played, lead me to decide that your program as a whole is not acceptable."

Complaints over music content were not a surprise to Berry, who has had several run-ins with Merrick over his show.

The first complaint, which Berry defines as harassment, came about a year ago, when Merrick asked Berry for copies of the songs he plays.

Berry complied with a playlist and Merrick approved the songs, Berry said. Additional requests for play lists continued almost monthly for a year, until Merrick told Berry his show was being monitored by the station's board of directors.

Merrick could not be reached for comment.

"KBOO has a programming charter that attempts to transcend a higher standard of broadcast ethics," said Victoria Stoppello, KBOO's acting station manager.

She would not say if or how Berry violated that ethic, calling his termination a "private personnel matter."

She read from the station's mission statement, saying, "We choose not to broadcast racist, homophobic or sexist music that demeans human beings."

According to Berry, he only plays radio versions of songs, music that has already been cleansed of lyrics demeaning to gays and women.

Berry has filed an appeal to the station, though he is uncertain whether he wishes to return.

"After putting in all these years, I feel like it's sort of a slap in the face,"

he said.

His appeal is currently being considered by the station manager and will be reviewed by a personnel committee and the board of directors.

Meanwhile, KBOO's staff participated in cultural sensitivity training called "Living with Diversity" with local acclaimed consultant Eddy Collins.

Before the meeting, Stoppello

said, "We look forward to that as an opportunity to basically enhance our sensitivity to each other's differences to educate ourselves. We come from different backgrounds, racial and economic groups, so it's easy to tread on each other's toes without intending."

Stoppello said the extra training is unrelated to problems with Berry and his music.



PHOTO BY JAYMEE R. CUTI/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Kevin Berry shows off some of the personal collection of records he shared as host of 'Time Sound' on KBOO. The fired deejay disagrees with station management who complained that the content of rap music on his show was offensive.

Traffic Stop

continued from A1

stop is not the time to make that complaint. This is a life and death situation, and I want you to come out of this alive."

Robinson later joined a panel discussion with several lawyers, state Sen. Avel Gordly, an African-American lawmaker who represents northeast and southeast Portland, and mayoral candidate and former police chief Tom Potter.

Missing from the discussion were members of the Portland Police Bureau. Ernest E. Estes, a forum organizer, said multiple invitations had been extended to Police Chief Derrick Foxworth or a representative from his staff.

"It was a disappointment," Estes said. "This is not a minority community issue. This is a minority community and police issue."

A Police Bureau spokeswoman said the chief chose not to attend.

Associated Press contributed to this article.

Catholics Tolerate Dissent

Bishops Won't Deny Politicians Communion

(AP) — Breaking with some colleagues, two Arizona bishops say they won't deny Communion to Roman Catholic politicians who support abortion rights.

Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix said that instead of refusing to offer Communion, he will attempt to use persuasion to educate politicians about church teachings.

"My job is to get to know the key people in the state and appeal to their consciences," he said.

Bishop Gerald Kicanas of Tucson didn't go as far as Olmsted but said Thursday that sanctions against politicians would be "premature."

Several conservative bishops have said Catholic politicians who support abortion rights, such as Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, should not receive communion. Archbishop Raymond Burke of St. Louis has said he would not give Communion to Kerry, and Bishop Michael Sheridan of Colorado Springs, Colo., in a letter last week, said any Catholic who votes for a politician who backs abortion rights cannot take Communion.

The next bishop of the diocese of Richmond, Va., said Friday he would not refuse Communion to parishioners who vote for a political candidate who supports abortion rights.

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