

Satirist Buchwald talks about art of being funny

By DENISE LAFFAN
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

It's sort of funny how Art Buchwald, who is probably America's best known satirist, claims he is a very serious man. "You have to be serious to be funny," Buchwald said at a press conference following his speech at Rec Hall last night.

This statement would probably strike most of last night's audience as strange. From the moment that Buchwald walked on stage with his arms extended in the famous Nixonian victory gesture, he kept the audience laughing as he entertained them with a plethora of anecdotes.

Buchwald, however, is very modest about his ability to make people laugh. "I swear I can't make up anything," he said. "What is on the front page is far wilder than anything I could make up."

But Buchwald said he finds it disturbing "when I make something up and it comes true."

To illustrate his point, Buchwald mentioned a column he wrote about a fighter plane that flew so slow it could not be shot down. "Two days later, the Pentagon called and said I violated security," Buchwald joked.

Many of Buchwald's other stories also dealt with either politics or the Washington scene. Buchwald poked fun at President Carter, but qualified his jokes by saying, "I have great respect for Jimmy Carter. I worship the very quicksand he walks on."

While Buchwald did make fun of both the president and his family, in his column Buchwald later said he would not pick on people "who can't defend themselves." He added that he saw no

need to apologize for what he wrote since he only "picked on the people in power."

As far as humor goes, Buchwald said Nixon was his favorite president. "Watergate was like Camelot to me," Buchwald said.

Buchwald did not dwell only on politics, however. Buchwald said he found today's society to be made up of many uptight people. "And for every uptight person, there's an uptight organization to back them up," Buchwald said.

One of the most uptight organizations, in Buchwald's opinion, is the National Rifle Association. "I'm for gun control and with me it's a very personal issue," Buchwald explained. "My neighbor has a gun and he can't even water the lawn straight."

While all of Buchwald's stories were received with much laughter, response to one of his more serious points concerning student apathy was also quite favorable. "There was a period where students were saying something that needed to be said," Buchwald added, "I wish students would get a little more involved because not one of the problems has really been solved."

Buchwald offered his own solutions to problems plaguing society today. For instance, instead of finding a substitute for saccharin, Buchwald suggested the companies look for stronger rats, and not ones that "keep getting sick whenever we give them too much to eat."

When J. Edgar Hoover was director of the FBI, Buchwald wrote an article claiming Hoover did not exist but had been created by Reader's Digest.



Everyone's man in Washington, columnist Art Buchwald, entertained a Rec Hall audience with his rapid-fire but soft-spoken wit last night. Photo by Joe Tori

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UNIVERSITY CALENDAR SPECIAL EVENTS Friday-Sunday, Feb. 9-11

Friday, Feb. 9
Jazz Festival '79. Workshop with Matrix, 2 p.m., HUB Ballroom; Matrix Concert, 8 p.m., Eisenhower Auditorium.
Hetzell Union Board Folk workshop, 3 p.m., HUB Main Lounge.
France-Cinema, Kings of the Road, 7 p.m., Room 112 Kern.
Model RR Club, work meeting, 7 p.m., HUB Club Room.
SFO film, The Last Detail, 7, 9 and 11 p.m., Room 102 Forum.
Wargamers meeting, 7 p.m.-midnight Sunday, Room 101 EE East.
Commonsplace Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., Room 102 Kern.
University Theatre, H.M.S. Pinafore, 8 p.m., The Playhouse.
Penn State Brass Chorale, 8:30 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall.

Saturday, Feb. 10
Sports: women's fencing, vs. Jersey City State, 10 a.m.; men's and women's bowling, vs. Drexel, 1 p.m. men's fencing, vs. Navy, 1 p.m.; women's swimming and diving, vs. Slippery Rock, 1:30 p.m.; women's basketball, vs. Cheyney, 2 p.m.; men's basketball, vs. Navy, 2:10 p.m.; men's volleyball, vs. Rutgers-Newark, 7 p.m.; wrestling, vs. Lehigh, 7:30 p.m.
Jazz Festival '79. Jazz dance workshop, 1 p.m., White Bldg; workshop with Bill Lewis, 2 p.m., HUB Ballroom; Bill Lewis Concert, 8 p.m., HUB Ballroom.
Friends of India film, Koshish, 6:30 p.m., Room 101 Chambers.
France-Cinema, Dear Inspector, 7 and 9 p.m., Room 112 Kern.
Graphic Design students, Film Follies, 8 p.m., Walnut Bldg.
University Theatre, H.M.S. Pinafore, 8 p.m., The Playhouse.

Sunday, Feb. 11
Alliance Christian Fellowship Worship Service, 10:45 a.m., HUB Assembly Hall.
University Chapel Service, 11 a.m., Eisenhower Chapel. John Wenzke, Lutheran Student Parish, speaker.
Sports: men's bowling, vs. Penn State-Capitol, 1 p.m.
Interlandia Folk Dance performance, 2 p.m., Room 132 white.
Commonsplace Theatre, Fantastic Animation Festival, 2, 7 and 9 p.m., Room 112 Kern.
Artists Series, Mummenschanz, 8:30 p.m., Eisenhower Aud.

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