

Patterson unpredictability entertaining

By CECILIA LYNN CASEY

A half hour before he had to perform, Tom Patterson was standing on the stage of the main room of the Student Activities Center behind the podium, writing away.

His jacket still on and a bag still slung over his shoulder, he composed a song that he would sing later. Several persons who arrived early and watched him writing had the burning question, "What is he writing? What's he doing?"

It was that sense of curiosity about what he would do next that kept the audience entertained all evening.

Patterson started his performance by putting on a mask made for him by an "outsider" artist named Bernard Schatz, who goes by the name of L-15, and singing a rap song that he had made up. This led into some slides that he had brought showing pictures of L-15 and some of L-15's other pieces of artwork.

Next he read a poem entitled "Miles Cook On This Eternal Blue Flame," which he wrote when Miles Davis died Sept. 26. Accompanying this, Patterson

read "Thelonious Sphere Monk Passes On Into The Great Beyond 17 February 1982," which he said he had written while he was driving in his car and first heard that Monk had died.

From poetry to a short story, Patterson then read the account of "The Phantom Sheik." In the summer of 1974, Patterson went out west where he met George Cornforth, also known as the Phantom Sheik. "The path of my life has always put me in contact with these eccentric old men," he said.

Patterson had been hitchhiking when the Sheik picked him up and gave him a ride to a place called Rodeo. During the ride the Sheik told Patterson about his rather colorful life. It seems that for 34 years Cornforth had the Sheik living in his body and teaching him different things and helping him through life.

As Patterson read the story of the Sheik, he would imitate the voice of George Cornforth, which delighted much of the audience as was apparent by the applause.

Then Patterson revealed what he had been writing before the performance, a song "The Ballad of Senator No!" This was the

Review

highlight of the evening as Patterson put back on his L-15 mask and sang in a southern accent about Senator Helms.

Later, during an interview, Patterson said he "is very disappointed that Jessie Helms is the nation's greatest enemy against culture." There was laughter throughout the song and loud applause after it.

Patterson jumped back into showing more slides, followed by another poem, "God's Last Red Light," written for the Rev. Howard Finster who is an "outsider" artist.

From there he read from two of his books, "Howard Finster Stranger From Another World, Man of Vision Now on This Earth," and "St. Eom in the Land of Pasaquan," which were about the Rev. Finster and St. Eom, also known as Eddie Owens Martin, both of whom are outsider artists. Patterson made the reading even more lively by impersonating

both Finster and St. Eom, truly bringing them to life.

During his interview after the performance, Patterson explained what outsider art is and why he writes about art. "Outsider art is a term used to refer to an artist who has had no formal background or education," he said.

"I have always been interested in art, especially outsider art. As a child growing up in Georgia, I would go on trips with my family and I would see different kinds of art along the road that people had put there to show off," he said. "Then as a teenager, I grew interested in contemporary art."

Patterson majored in English in college and is now the editor of A.R.T.V.U., a quarterly visual magazine. Patterson is also a free lance writer, art critic for the *Winston-Salem Journal*, poet, and essayist. When asked what he enjoyed most when he wrote about art, he said, "It gives me an opportunity to think about art more fully and in the process of writing about it, I understand art more completely."

Next he was asked what he enjoyed most about art, and replied, "That's impossible to answer," going on to explain that

he enjoyed so many things about art that there would be no time to list them all.

Patterson was himself enjoyed for his artistic talents by many in the audience. Junior Charlotte Layton was very inspired by Patterson. "I liked that he was different from what one might normally expect from a typical writer. He was great," she said.

"He is writing from today's perspective," she added. "I do believe that he was a wonderful representative for outsider art."

This was the last of the visiting writers to come to Wesleyan this semester, and in some way the most distinct. As Patterson jumped from subject to subject, reading and singing, he had the audience wondering what he would do next. With the other writers, there was some form to what they did, and although this was not bad, there was high fun to be had by watching and listening to Patterson break the pattern.

It was also more than fitting that Patterson was the last writer, because just as the audience wondered what was next, so could they wonder what will be next in the Visiting Writers Series.

College papers face increasing censorship

By AMY REYNOLDS

On Dec. 15, the nation will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights. Yet, after two centuries, student newspapers are still fighting to uphold their constitutional rights to a free press.

And now, a 1988 Supreme Court ruling that gave high school officials broader power to censor school-sponsored student publications has some free press advocates fearing that the same argument may be stretched to include college newspapers.

The Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier ruling specifically referred to the censoring of student publications when they are part of a school's curriculum and when the decision to censor is "reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns."

The Student Press Law Center says that's what is happening at Ohio State University.

Last month, the student newspaper, *The Lantern*, began publishing under protest after the

school attempted to enact a policy of prior review aimed at preventing libelous stories from running in the newspaper. The student editors said it was censorship. Three weeks later, when the policy was approved, three editors and six reporters resigned and seven editors were fired.

"When I started my job, I asked what the policy was and they (the publication committee) told me there was no prior review," says former editor Debra Baker, a senior who quit because of the policy. "I asked that question before we got started (publishing this quarter), and that's what started it."

Ohio State runs its student newspaper as a laboratory for journalism classes. While most student reporters and copy editors are required to work for the paper as part of the lab, the editors and some reporters are paid by the school to run the paper. Financially, the newspaper is independent, generating revenue to run itself through advertising and

giving enough money back to the school to pay for the student staff.

"Financially we're independent, but we're not separately incorporated," Baker says.

The new policy, approved by the faculty of Ohio State's school of journalism, allows the faculty advisor of the newspaper to read stories prior to publication but does not give the advisor the power to pull a story for any reason. Any disagreement between the editor and the adviser about a story and its potential for libel is given to an outside attorney who would render a legal opinion about the story. The editor would then be forced to alter any potentially libelous parts of the story, if they exist.

The policy came about because the university feared that its ties to the newspaper would make it liable for what appears in the newspaper; hence, if someone sues *The Lantern* for libel and wins, Ohio State says it has to pay.

Mark Goodman, executive director of the Student Press Law

Center, disagrees. He says without the prior review policy the school would not be liable. He thinks Ohio State is attempting to expand the Hazelwood ruling.

Ohio State says it is just trying to avoid a costly lawsuit.

The Ohio State conflict is just one of many across the country. After the Hazelwood ruling, censorship of student publications started to rise.

Goodman estimates that the law center receives about 500 calls each year about the issue. Only a fraction end up in court.

Currently, another censorship battle is brewing at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, where the Student Government Association decided to stop funding the newspaper's outside media services that provided editorial cartoons and columns from writers Mike Royko, Dave Berry, and others.

The SGA conducted a student survey at the university cafeteria and student union asking readers what they wanted to read in the

newspaper.

"As far as funding is concerned, if the students don't want (Royko, etc.), we're not going to fund it," says Tina Brooks, SGA president. The absence of the columns "would open up some pages for more news," she says.

The advisor of *The Spectator*, Tom Stanko, says the SGA is trying to censor the paper to get more coverage of Greek events because the majority of the SGA membership is Greek.

Some examples from the previous year:

- The University of Denver's student newspaper, *The Clarion*, was indefinitely shut down for printing sexist jokes on its back page, an area devoted to jokes and satire.

- An editor at Long Island University's newspaper, *The Seawanhaka*, was arrested and had film from his camera exposed after he took pictures during a speech by controversial City College professor Michael Levin that ended in a scuffle between protesters and the police.