

Objectivity, war don't mix

At 3:30 a.m. my alarm clocks buzzes and I shift around in my warm sleeping bag. "What's going on," I wonder. "Oh, yeah we are going to go stop the white train again."

It's cold outside. It's warm in here. I ponder the struggle going on in my mind. Why should I go out and face the cold and the unknown when I'm so safe and comfortable here? I can understand more clearly now the inner conflict people have about getting involved. Especially in an issue as frightening as this one.

Some 150 people helped stop the white train last February in Portland. The action raised a lot

the train coming toward us, I was filled with such horror and terror that I felt compelled to sit on the tracks in solidarity with others.

I wasn't arrested. I had told myself that next time I would get arrested. But next time I had to be objective.

Objectivity. What a concept.

Commentary

On Friday, 200 protesters had a spiritual gathering to confront one of the most destructive powers on earth. It was estimated that this white train contained 144 hydrogen

grades, scientists, and an ex-policeman.

The large group broke into affinity groups, including people who would commit civil disobedience, support people and peacekeepers. Their approach was of total non-violence according to the philosophies of Gandhi. "Satyagraha" is the type of non-violence emphasized. The term means "truth-force," to find the commonality and love in everyone — even those who you believe are your opposition. They were seeking to change people's hearts about the nuclear issue.

For many, the police are believed to be the opposition. But many protesters said the police agreed with what the protesters were doing, but they had to do their job. I believe the police respected the protesters.

Even the train employees responded positively to the protesters as they waved and flashed peace signs.

A spiritual bonding took place. It wasn't us against them, them against us or anyone against anyone. It was everyone for everyone and all for all. Though our actions were different and opposed, in heart we were all as one.

So, I'm supposed to be objective. I cried when I saw the train. A lot of people were crying. I hugged a male friend who was crying. A woman I didn't know hugged me when she saw me crying. I sat on the tracks and took pictures. But I was really protesting. I was protesting the madness of the arms race — the threat of the extinction of life.

Objectivity. There is no such thing as objectivity when confronting the threat of total destruction of earth. Nobody wants to see that. There isn't another side.

By Shannon Kelley



Photo by Shannon Kelley

Although many protesters were arrested, the conflict was more spiritual than physical at the organized blocking of the White Train last month in Vancouver, Wash.

of consciousness in people — people who never knew that this train existed, much less that it traveled through their backyards. It has been running from the Pantex plant in Amarillo, Texas to the Trident Submarine base in Bangor, Wash.

I hadn't planned on committing civil disobedience. I didn't have non-violence training to prepare myself. But when I saw

warheads, with each warhead equaling the destructive force of five times the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The Trident Submarine contains 408 warheads. That's 2,040 Hiroshimas, and the plans are to build 15 submarines.

The protesters were not just a group of radical hippies. The ages ranged from 2 months to 70 years. Among them were full-time activists, students of all

Experts diagnose Legislature

By Paul Ertelt
Of the Emerald

Oregon's "citizen's legislature" may soon be replaced by a full-time professional law-making body, former legislator Stafford Hansell said at a conference at the University this weekend.

"In another 10 to 15 years we're going to have a full-time Legislature whether we want one or not," said Hansell, who is currently a member of the Land Conservation and Development Commission. Despite Oregonians' skepticism about professional politicians, the increased workload of the Legislature means fewer people will have the time to leave their other jobs to come to Salem, he said.

Hansell was one of 20 participants at the "Conference to Improve the Oregon Legislature" held in Johnson Hall on Saturday afternoon.

The round-table discussion brought together Oregon legislators, journalists, University faculty

and other observers of the Legislature to consider ways of improving that body. Most participants agreed that the public's perception of the Legislature and its effectiveness is much worse than reality.

"Criticizing the Legislature has become a popular public recreation," said Associate Prof. Edward Weeks. Weeks and Associate Prof. Carl Hosticka, who is also a Democratic state representative, opened the conference with a summary on the performance of the Legislature, its structure and organization, the effects of lobbying, and other topics.

Media coverage is partly responsible for the public's distorted perception of the Legislature, said Paul Hansen of KGW-TV in Portland. The media often focus on controversies in the Legislature while ignoring much of the important

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