

## Indian ceremony a religious right

The Oregon Supreme Court heard arguments this week on a Klamath Indian's right to take the drug peyote in religious ceremonies even though it conflicted with his profession. Alfred Smith was fired from his job as a drug counselor after he took peyote during a Native American Church service. Although Smith knew he was breaking the rules of his job, his religious rights should be upheld.

The conditions of Smith's employment stated that he remain free of drugs and alcohol. Smith was born on a Klamath Indian reservation but raised as a Catholic. He was drawn back to his native religion after overcoming alcoholism.

Forbidding Smith to take peyote would be denying Smith his religion. The drug is a vital part of the religion. Comparisons have been made to a Catholic taking wine as part of communion. According to the conditions of Smith's job, taking communion would be a justification for firing a person.

Communion is a symbolic rite used to demonstrate Christ's hardship. And while many Christians see the sacrament of Holy Communion as a symbolic rite, members of the religion practiced by Klamath Indians believe peyote is more than symbolic, and it can be the object of their worship.

According to Sandy Schmidt, a staff attorney for the Native American department of Oregon Legal Services, taking peyote is an integral part of the religion. "It functions almost as a deity, a power, a healer," she said. "It also is used as a tool or mechanism to get closer to the deity." Unlike communion, peyote is actually worshiped, she said.

Peyote is used in a night-long ceremony. The drug brings on positive feelings and a sense of brotherhood and unity between the people, Schmidt said.

Using peyote in this sense is not abusing the drug or using it for recreation. Smith commented that people do not enter the ceremony as a reason to get high. "The Native American people don't define peyote as a drug; it's a sacrament. This is the age-old misunderstanding between white people and Native Americans," Smith told the Oregonian.

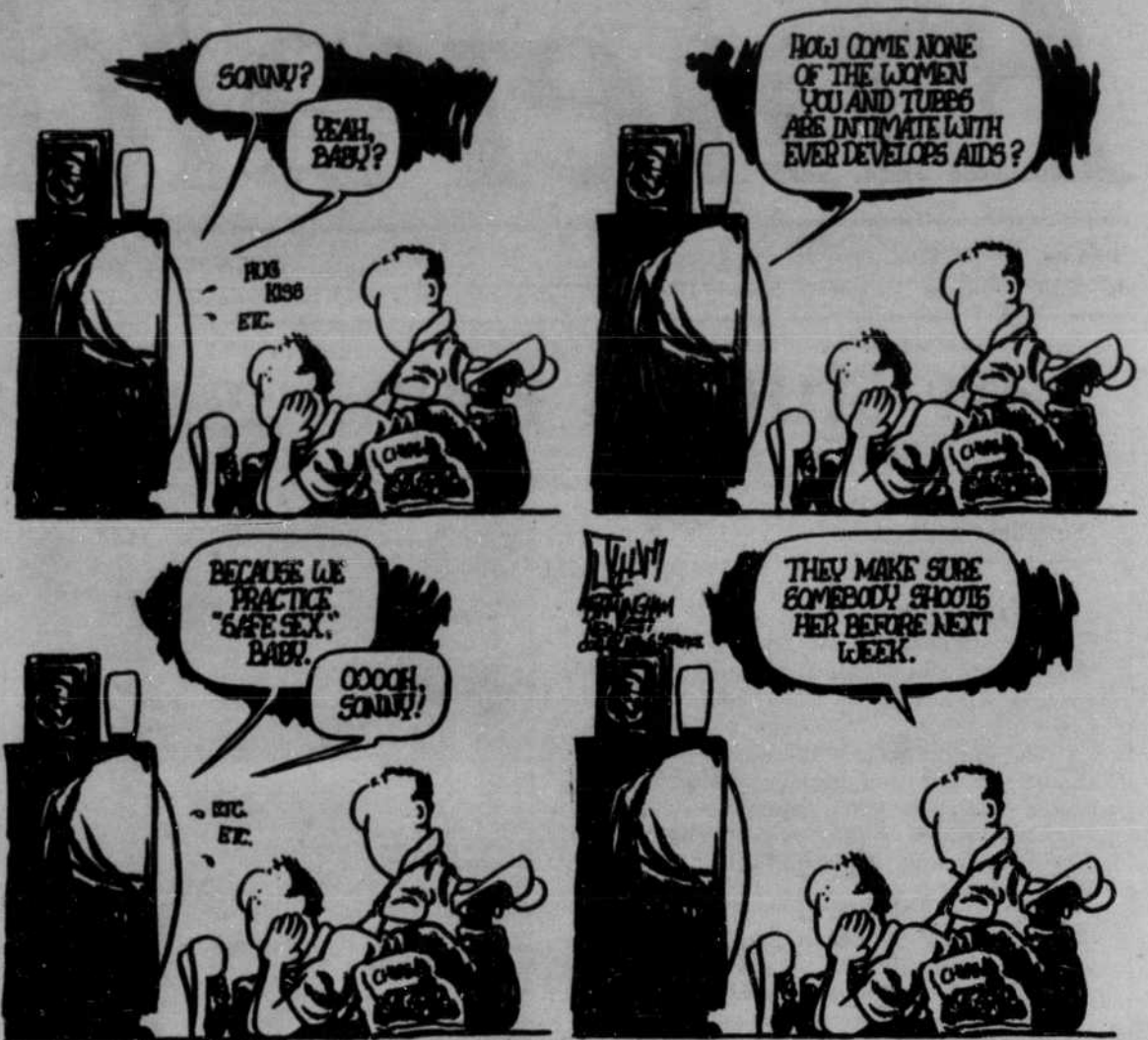
Smith's religion has been misunderstood and he has suffered for practicing it. The stipulations in his job contract were clear and understandable — as a drug counselor, Smith should not abuse drugs. But the conditions do not allow Smith to acknowledge his Native American heritage.

The program director of the drug and alcohol program where Smith worked said he was hired to reach out to other Indians. However, he must do this by denying a common bond he shares with other Indians — his religion.

The ceremony did not interfere with Smith's performance on the job; it only violated a principle. But the rules of his job do not fully consider the benefits it gives Smith. The ceremony is a peaceful expression. Schmidt described it as a "cleansing and healing process."

Smith did not abuse the drug and was aware it violated his job conditions. Nonetheless, his freedom to express his religion should take precedence over his employment stipulations as long as they do not interfere with his work.

This case is an extreme because peyote is so central to Smith's religion. But it is not an excuse to take drugs. The ceremony is a centuries-old experience and a form of expressing the Klamath Indians' closeness to their God. In this case the conditions of Smith's job asked him to sacrifice too much of his personality and heritage.



## Letters

### Hanukkah

Although the holiday of Hanukkah may not be as religiously significant as Rosh Hashana or Passover, (its timing usually in the Christmas season) has made this holiday well known.

However, it is important to understand that Hanukkah is not the Jewish Christmas. While Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus, Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees (a Jewish family/tribe) over the Syrians led by Antiochus IV.

If you are interested in a more thorough explanation of the "miracle" of Hanukkah, or would like to celebrate Hanukkah, I recommend that you attend the Hanukkah Celebration Tuesday Dec. 15 at 7:30 at the Koinonia Center.

Happy Hanukkah and best of luck with finals!

Stephanie Kustner, Director  
Jewish Student Union

### To the guardians

This letter is to the self-appointed guardians of Eugene's morality. "Woman is the nigger of the world." What do you think of that? I suppose now you are going to tell everyone to burn their Beatles albums and boycott record stores that sell such demeaning trash.

Eric Johnson  
English literature

### Rational writing

I write not in response to a particular column, but to the manner in which the editor delivers his viewpoint. I am not offended by his "liberal" editorials. However, I do object to the abusive, unfair insults thrown at anyone not towing the liberal line.

The editor does not respect a person's right to a different point of view, or consider reasons supporting that view. He just slams them.

Let's have a free flow of ideas, persuasively written, not personal attacks. The editor will not win anyone, except angry, irrational people, to his cause. The editor needs to argue rationally, not hurl invective.

Robert Burns  
Law

### Man with the ties

I'm madder than a pit bull with a toothache at the furor created by the liberal press about Paul 'Red' Olum's dismissal by the state board. Good riddance to the leftist-oriented rubbish.

I, for one, stand behind the board and its so-called 'secret' agenda because this is the 1980s, and almost the 1990s, and not the 1960s. We need a

university president with ties to the CIA, NOT the Kremlin, if the University is ever to garner any of the weapons research dollars the board so obviously covets.

Therefore, I fully support the nomination of the man who most obviously fits the board's needs, a man who has the experience in backroom dealing and secret operations necessary to operate the University in the years ahead.

Ed Meese, you have my support!

J.P. O'Neil  
Eugene

### Respected

I would like to take this opportunity to express my regret at the resignation of Incidental Fee Committee member Sandra Thompson.

While I rarely agreed with Sandra philosophically, I always respected the fact that she was dedicated to the business of the committee, and actively sought to gather as much information from as many sources as possible before reaching a decision.

When the ASUO Executive decides who to nominate as her replacement, and the ASUO Senate deliberates confirmation of that nominee, I hope they will set standards no lower than those Sandra set for herself, selecting a new member who has both the background and experience, as well as the commitment to the committee, that will be required as we go into months of budget hearings, and that they will not permit political considerations to sway their decisions.

Bob Baldwin  
IFC Chair

Friday, December 11, 1987

## Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, Oregon 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during exam week and vacations by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

### General Staff

Advertising Director: Susan Thelen  
Production Manager: Michele Ross  
Classified Manager: Kelli Mason  
Assistant to the Publisher: Jean Ownbey

Advertising Sales: Rick Martz/Sales Manager  
Teri Boring, Gary DeLossa, Tom Leech, Catherine Lilja, Rick Martz, Laura McKinney, Joann Nelson, Julie Paul, Barbara Rogers, Scott Thorkildson, Joan Wildermuth

News and Editorial: 686-5511  
Display Advertising and Business: 686-3712  
Classified Advertising: 686-4343  
Letter Perfect Graphics: 686-5511  
Production: 686-4381  
Circulation: 686-5511

Editor: Stanley Nelson  
Managing Editor: Scott Maben  
News Editor: Carolyn Lamberson  
Editorial Page Editors: Angela Muniz/Steven Hoenisch  
Sports Editor: Aaron Knox  
Photo Editor: Shu-Shing Chen  
Graphic Design Editor: Lorraine Rath  
Special Issues Editor: Kelly Kortekaas  
Entertainment/Sports Segment Editor: H.C. Hutto  
Night Editor: Stanley Nelson

Associate Editors  
Community: Stephen Maher  
Higher Education/Administration: Michael Drummond  
Student Government/Activities: Will Holbert  
Features: Kelly Kortekaas

Reporters: Betsy Clayton, Paula Green, Frale de Guzman, Craig Harris, Gary Henley, Andrew LaMar, Jeff Morgan, Ingrid Petersen, Cami Swanson, Kelvin Wee

Photographers: Sherilyn Bjorkgren, Christophe Chabaudie, Andy Cripe, Cliff Etzel, John Giustina, Bobbie Lo, Gregor Okorn, Andre Ranieri, Ted Shepler, Michael Templeton, Dan Wheeler

Production: Sandra Daller / Ad Coordinator  
Kelly Alexandre, Ronwin Nicole Ashton, Virginia Baniaga, Laura Carhart, Eva Cohen, Stephanie Drynan, Dolores Ferrero, Shannon Gaither, Lisa Haggerty, Stephanie Holland, Deirdre Kelly, Elliot Knight, Chris Knox, Jung Lee, Bobbie Lo, James Mason, Ross Martin, Angela Muniz, Ted Shepler, Linda Sperling, Lisa Svanevik, Ingrid White, Kelly Williams, Serena Williams, X. Kang Xie