

Truth yet to surface in Challenger stories

NASA officials continue to shoot themselves in the foot. According to the Miami Herald's Sunday magazine, "Tropic," anonymous sources inside NASA now claim the Challenger crew actually survived the explosion of the space shuttle, and probably lived through a two-and-a-half minute plummet toward the sea.

Apparently NASA has known for some time that the impact of the shuttle cabin as it slammed against the surface of the ocean was the actual factor that claimed the lives of the astronauts.

But we can never know for sure. In the moment of overwhelming grief felt by the nation immediately following the tragedy, NASA moved in for an autopsy coverup that threatens to cloud the truth forever.

While we commend NASA's decision to focus on the healing process rather than dwelling on the traumatic events inside the shuttle's cabin, the decision to delude the public with misinformation truly undermines whatever scrap of confidence in the organization that the public could bring itself to maintain.

But now, NASA's actions since the tragedy make more sense. Evidence that the crew survived the explosion explains NASA's continued emphasis on the development of an escape system.

NASA told the public, on the one hand, that the crew could not have possibly survived the explosion, and on the other, that NASA was developing means for future crews to escape in the event of a similar incident.

But, why is it that organizations and agencies that become involved in events of international importance and widespread attention, particularly where death occurs, fashionably tend to favor a coverup?

Had NASA proceeded in the proper legal manner, an autopsy would have been performed and the results would have been made public.

Of course, we find ourselves thinking of the assassination of President Kennedy, another incident in which autopsy reports escaped the public eye.

What rule of decency or national security would be violated by initial openness in the time of a national crisis?

After all, when the tendency falls toward a coverup, but the need to hide the truth eludes the public, we always assume that the real truth has yet to emerge.

Whether or not that is a fair assessment, we cannot say. Unfortunately, all we can do is wonder. And that is NASA's fault.

America's space travels lost to tales of glory days

After all the smoke clears around NASA for its recent technical and public relations blunders, hopefully, the United States can get the space program back into action.

We hear everyone express disgust with the state of things behind the closed doors of NASA. Most people rightfully want to direct money inward, toward problems domestic and international instead of interplanetary. Our president wants to pump defense dollars into outer space with his Star Wars plan.

Gone are the wholesome excursions into space that captured the imagination of the land and that reaffirmed the pioneer spirit about which Americans grew up hearing and with which they proudly identified. When America lost its dreams of space travel, NASA lost its applauding audience. Now, they can hardly sell a ticket to the show.

Nowadays, we as a nation are pulled together only by tragedy and governmental scandal. More often than not, we are pulled apart, not unified, by the government's actions.

When the great interest in space travel began back in the late 50s and early 60s, America found itself in the heat of a race to the moon with the Soviets. When that race ended, NASA found a difficult time coming up with devices or gimmicks interesting enough to capture the attention of its audience.

Now, however, the Soviets and the Americans are planning trips in space, and they are inviting each other along. In Washington, D.C. this past week, American and Soviet scientists met to discuss plans to include Soviets on American space shuttles and Americans on Soviet missions to Mars. Talk has even circulated of a joint space station. We are swapping information, equipment, scientists, astronauts and cosmonauts.

Well, here finally is something to encourage. But you probably heard nothing about it. Media coverage of the event was negligible at best.

Where is all the hoopla, the hope, the tuba music when we need it the most?



Letters

Forgiveness

S. Stephenson writes (ODE, November 8) that she has had no regrets about having aborted her child, and rejects the idea that doing so was "murdering a baby." I find her reasoning understandable. Can you begin to understand the enormous trauma, guilt and despair that would be hers if she were to face honestly into the reality of having participated in the death of her own child? It is so much easier simply to deny the common knowledge about when human life begins and to write off any disagreement as being "twisted" and "misguided." How else can one live with such a thing?

I am sad for the death of Ms. Stephenson's child, as well as for her. The self-deception she exhibits and the dilemma it springs from are tragic and common to us all. Ignoring moral reality must lead us either to moral blindness or to despair.

By the merciful gift of our Creator, there is a solution. Through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, God has provided us with a just means of forgiveness and healing. This gift, however, is available only as we are willing to face into the reality of our moral bankruptcy and to acknowledge his right to rule us. I urge Ms. Stephenson and others to accept Christ's sacrifice on our behalf for themselves and to re-

spond to his offer to begin changing them into truly good people. Millions, including myself, have found the offer to be valid.

William Moore
Staff, Music

Bitter

You walk along campus in an election year and are molested by rude pushers of various pamphlets and forms to fill out. On every street corner, in every possible location there are groups of people stressing the importance of the vote. Are you registered? You'd better get registered. Are you registered?

You wonder about the officiality of the registration forms on the street corner; in the supermarket. And yet you trust those individuals who scream at you to carry out their duty once they've snagged you into their demands.

Election day arises and you've prepared very explicitly for your first vote. You feel very much like the responsible citizen you ought to be. You go to a polling place to find out where you vote, and they know not who you are. You call the voter's office; you're "not on their records." Sorry, buddy. You lose. You lose because you trusted someone who seemed the most trustworthy American around.

Funny this would happen in such a vote-conscious country. Even more funny though when

you tell your wearisome tale to a friend at the end of a bleak election day and he says the exact thing happened to him. Thanks, America. Are we bitter? You BET we're bitter.

Leigh Church
Pete Moshinsky
Eugene

Noteworthy

On Oct. 22 a crime was committed against a young woman on our campus. As she and her male escort were walking across the unlit area of Hayward Field, her escort was physically and verbally assaulted and the young woman was raped. She will be one of an estimated 225 sexual assault survivors on our campus this year.

How is it then that this crime went for four press days without being reported by the Oregon Daily Emerald? Furthermore when it was reported, it received little more attention than car windows being smashed. It would seem that a rape against a University student would be more noteworthy than a page four Police Beat.

I feel your response to this unfortunate incident was totally unacceptable. I would hope that in the future your report would be more punctual and professional.

Bob Holt
Eugene

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