

## Passing on Panama was right reaction

Panama's renegade leader Gen. Manuel Noriega is, without a doubt, one of the greatest scourges in this hemisphere. His involvement in the international drug cartel undermines the security of this nation. But should the U.S. jump at any opportunity to depose him? Not necessarily.

Noriega is still in power in Panama after his troops put down an attempted coup by a small rebel force Tuesday. The coup was marked by short, sharp fighting just 600 yards from U.S. troops stationed in the Canal Zone.

The end result of the coup appears to be a crushing victory for Noriega. He and his cronies have survived the coup intact, and his enemies (mostly junior army officers) have been captured or decimated.

Now, with the safety of hindsight, several members of Congress have taken it upon themselves to criticize the Bush administration's inaction during the coup attempt. David Boren (D-Okla.), Senate intelligence committee chairman, said that Bush should have sent troops in to help the rebels.

It's hard to take Boren's criticism seriously. First, Noriega's forces handled the coup attempt so swiftly and surely that U.S. assistance would most certainly have meant more than simple aid to the rebels — an invasion would seem more necessary, and this country doesn't have the right grievances to go to war with Panama.

Also, Bush is hardly the man to jump on instant opportunities such as a breaking coup. He is, by nature, a cautious man. This is perhaps especially true with Panama. The word in Washington circles is that Noriega has something dirty on Bush, perhaps concerning an involvement in Contra arms supply or CIA drug running. If Bush pushes to hard, it could be political suicide, and that would explain the ongoing Republican reticence to do anything too demanding with Panama.

Finally, U.S. intervention in Central America would not have improved the situation. This coup was attempted by the military. Why replace one military dictator with another? The United States has a sorry track record of being all too willing to deal with military leaders, and we should be glad that for once, the government passed on the opportunity.

While Boren looks back with hindsight, it's also worthwhile to remember that Noriega himself came to power through an unpopular military regime that had the good graces of the United States. Relations with the Panamanian people and a severing of the ties to the international drug community will not occur if we continue our ties with the Panamanian military. Instead, we must support a popular civilian candidate.



"I DUNNO, MRS MARCOS ASSURED US IT WAS JUST A PAIR OF PATENT-LEATHER PUMPS"

## Marcos' body could bring more turmoil

There hasn't been as much furor raised over a corpse since Alfred Hitchcock's *The Trouble With Harry*.

Ever since ex-Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos was forced to leave his country with angry and oppressed Filipinos hot on his heels in February 1986, he had tried repeatedly to get back home from exile in Honolulu.

First he tried overthrowing his successor. Troops sympathetic to Marcos took over the Manila Hilton in June 1986, and a radio-television station in January 1987. Both times Marcos was ready to leave Hawaii to reclaim the government if the attempts had succeeded, and both times the coup attempts were put down by the Philippine army.

His hostile attempts swatted, Marcos tried a different strategy. First, he needed to come home to tend to his ailing mother, then, as his own health failed, he requested permission to die in his homeland.

And every time, current president Corason Aquino denied his requests, believing (wisely) that either Marcos or his mere presence would entice his followers to mutiny again.

Now Marcos is dead, and his supporters in the Philippines are trying once again to have him brought home — for burial.

Yes, it's true that Marcos can't do much in his current state of health, and that support for Marcos has declined. Rallies for the ex-president are becoming smaller and more infrequent as time passes.

Yet, 19 of the seats in the country's 200-member House of Representatives are held by lawmakers that are in favor of a Marcos ally coming to power. Admittedly it is a small number, but something to consider. In a country as turbulent as the Philippines, any hint of returning to the old government could bring about disaster.

Something else to consider: While millions of Filipinos lived lives of despair and poverty, Marcos was a leader of the rich. His followers are well-financed and still wield a lot of power, as many of them are in the military.

For the time being, Marcos' appearance in the Philippines, living or dead, could threaten the still-fragile Aquino government, and the desperately needed reforms it has promised.

## Letters

### Archetypes

I am somewhat offended by Bert Tryba's letter "Theology" (ODE Oct. 2). He says: "God is no more real than 'Superman' or 'Batman,' and similarly, accommodates infantile imagination."

As someone who believes in "God," I take offense. Certainly, "God" is not a concrete object which you can put your hands around and grasp. It is a concept, but one that is real because of people's belief in the concept.

For me, I require the existence of some higher force in the universe (which I choose to call "God") to explain a variety of phenomena which fail to coincide with how I feel nature should operate. Such things include the existence of life, the speed of light, and the number pi. Without some guiding force, I can not otherwise rationalize the presence of these things to myself.

As someone who believes in "Superman" and "Batman," I

likewise take offense. No, I do not believe in them as concrete beings waging private little wars against crime somewhere on the Eastern Seaboard. However, they are important archetypes for our modern age, espousing 20th century ideals, something that classic archetypes cannot do.

They exist because the collective unconscious finds them necessary, even as the similar archetypes of King Arthur, Job and Odysseus were (and perhaps still are) necessary. So, yes, I believe in them as well.

I think that I represent "the average person" well enough, if such a thing truly exists. And I certainly do not consider myself to have an "infantile imagination."

James Drew  
Computer Science

### Good News

At a time when some students are closed out of classes

and everything seems to be going wrong, it is a good time to give credit to a University office which has developed something that will help students chart their way through what often seems like a maze of graduation requirements.

The Registrar's Office in recent years has made available to each student a free unofficial copy of his/her transcript and an Official Progress Report. The Progress Report is particularly useful for monitoring progress in satisfying general education requirements. Students can pick these documents up at their major department.

A careful review of these documents will enable students to spot problems early. For example, it would prevent a student from needing to take three upper division science courses in the last term of the senior year, only to find one of the courses closed or not taught that term.

It is amazing how many students don't take advantage of

this opportunity to better manage their education.

Barbara Nicholls  
Academic Advising and  
Student Services

### Disturbed

I am disturbed at the *Emerald's* sense of responsibility concerning student groups and student funding. In their Oct. 4 editorial about the ASUO Executive decision to freeze the funds of certain groups, the *Emerald* illustrated an ignorance on the handling of student monies.

According to the Aug. 25 memo that notified student groups, 16 groups, ranging from the Black Student Union to the *Oregon Commentator*, had their funds frozen due to deficits in their fundraising accounts for the 1988-89 fiscal year. The *Emerald's* editorial implies these deficits occurred in the overall budgets; this was wrong.

The *Emerald* also seems to

think the ASUO shouldn't meddle in student groups' affairs. The deficits in question ranged from \$3.63 to over \$8,000. Scott Wyckoff correctly acted when he froze those accounts; students do not need to deficit spend.

Some of these deficits were due to accounting errors, and these errors are being corrected. Were it not for the ASUO's action, these errors may never have been noticed by the student groups.

The IFC claims that the freeze created "bad feelings." Of course it did; the IFC's funds were among those frozen.

Students are spending student money through the incidental fee system, so what's wrong with a watchdog that keeps spending in line? The ASUO Executive handled the matter professionally, but unfortunately, some students prefer anarchic control over all our money.

Patrick Perkins  
Journalism