

## Give remains back to Native Americans

Cultural traditions and the Native American Grave Protection and Reparation Act of 1990 are butting heads on Native American remains.

The University has Native American remains in its possession and Native Americans want them back. However the University believes it is entitled to study the remains under the Act.

The Native American Grave Protection and Reparation Act of 1990 required the University and all museums to notify federally recognized tribes of their holdings by November 1993. Any skeletal remains and sacred objects must be returned by the University to the tribes by 1995 and the University intends to.

The Act has one major stumbling point - the definition of sacred objects. Many objects are buried with Native American remains, objects that to the Native Americans are sacred. However to others they may simply be objects.

Much of the conflict of interest stems from the Missouri flood last summer that unearthed remains, many of them Native American remains. President Clinton provided funds for caskets to rebury the remains, but the Native American remains have been kept.

"I hate the word 'repatriation,'" Don Dumond, director of the University Museum of Natural History, told the Associated Press. "That implies we know who they are and we can give them back. We would like to do that, to have this controversy over with. But in all honesty we have no idea where some of them belong."

"The medicine men tell me the bones cry out, that they want to be safely put away," said Prosanna Williams, a spiritual leader who has served as an undertaker for the Warm Springs, Wasco and Paiute tribes.

Even if the remains end up in the wrong burial ground, it's better than in boxes in the museum, she said.

The issue seems to be about the museum and its interest in keeping the bones for classification and display, and the Native Americans wanting the remains buried. According to the law the museum has the right to keep the bones, at least until 1995.

Also according to the law, the remains must be returned to the appropriate tribe. The University argues that it doesn't know who the appropriate tribe is for some of the remains.

The pieces that are accounted for should be returned to their respective homelands for proper burial as soon as possible. The remains that are not accounted for or have an unsure identity need to be returned as well. The question is, where to return them to?

A logical and appropriate agreement must be met between the tribes and the University about returning the remains to a resting place. The bones and sacred objects, objects that Native Americans deem sacred and agreed upon by museum officials, have resting places beyond the museum as well.

Many of the remains were unearthed by the Missouri flood, an act of nature that produced an archaeological find. Certainly in the name of science it is necessary to evaluate the find, but the evaluation should not take the maximum time allowed by law. The remains have a respectable place to rest and it's not a box in a museum.



### OPINION

## Whitewater? Gimme a break



ROBBIE REEVES

**W**hitewater, whitewater. What's the big deal? A bunch of Republicans in Washington who have nothing else better to do but derail legislation got together to do something really meaningful for America. They dug up a controversy.

I won't bore you with the details. Like the overwhelming majority of Americans, you probably don't care. But some of the elements of the much-vaunted "Whitewater Controversy" are downright odd.

Take the example of the First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton. A little over a decade ago, she invested some money, and, lo and behold, she made a bit of money. Actually, she made a lot of money. But this sounds suspicious, according to Republicans, who would like to crucify (my contribution to Jesus Week) her for it. Weren't Republicans in favor of "get rich quick"-kind of schemes?

That's only the beginning. Bill Clinton is charged with improperly handling finances with Whitewater, a property deal that he was handling with a man named James Mc-something-or-other, who is most well-known for his then really goofy looking sideburns.

Then there are the accusations that Clinton misused contributions to his 1984 run for governor of Arkansas, that Hillary's then law firm had improper dealings with the state, and a whole slew of other things.

Pretty soon there will be Republicans on the floor of the House with other charges. "Is it true, Mr. President, that in 1977 you actually forgot to balance

your checkbook one month?" they might start, or perhaps they might find out that Bill parked in Little Rock once without feeding the parking meter. Who knows?

But more importantly, who cares?

I'll admit it right off the bat. I'm partisan, and I think that Bill Clinton is doing a pretty good job. I'd probably get mad at anyone who got in his way of accomplishing what he is setting out to do.

There are those that claim that Clinton and the Democrats are "fair game" because Democrats exposed the Iran-Contra scandal with Ronald Reagan, or because Richard Nixon came pretty close to being impeached for Watergate.

Nonsense. There is a big difference between Watergate, Iran-Contra, and what might be called Whitewatergate. Watergate and Iran-Contra both were direct results of the actions of a president while he was serving his term as president. The Watergate complex (which, of course, Nixon was running for re-election in) was broken-into during the 1972 presidential campaign, while the Iran-Contra affair was a direct result of the policies of the Reagan administration.

On the other hand, the charges that Bill Clinton is facing now all relate to things that he allegedly did (or had knowledge of) while he was governor of Arkansas. Nothing that relates to Whitewater, the land dealing (notice that most of the charges don't specifically relate to the land deal, but that doesn't stop 'em from complaining in Washington) occurred during Clinton's term as President.

So why do Republicans care about Whitewater? Because, often times, they can't win on the issues. Clinton has, often times, a supportive Congress in which he can pass his policies, and without something like Whitewater to gum up the works, much of his stuff would pass.

But now that Whitewater is the controversy that it is, people

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seem to forget that Clinton is trying to pass some important programs. Instead, in the true American tradition, the irrelevant controversy catches more attention than anything else.

Leaders in Congress are apparently in the process of negotiations that will decide how this whole thing will be resolved. It looks like it will mean hearings of some sort or another. And while Republicans swear (without breaking into laughter) that they really aren't trying to stop the President's programs from passing, the fact is that if hearings are going on, Congress is going to grind to a halt. Representatives can't be in two places at the same time.

What would you rather your representative be doing?

The Clintons will survive this controversy just like all of the others, and in a year, Whitewater will have gone the way of Gennifer Flowers and the Arkansas state trooper fiasco. It's unfortunate, however, that it will take several months to resolve the problem in Congress.

And by the way, rumor has it that there are still plots for sale at Whitewater, a somewhat-tolerable looking place in Arkansas. Interested? Give the President a call. He'd love to hear from you, I'm sure.

*Robbie Reeves is a columnist for the Emerald.*

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