

# VIEWPOINTS

EDITORIALS, OPINIONS, LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Recordings may answer Watergate questions

**■ OUR OPINION:** Secret tapes may reveal more about Nixon's personality

"Uh, sir, there's been a break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate hotel..."

"What? Dammit man, take care of it!"

While the nation was still mired in the quicksand of Vietnam, a conversation like this undoubtedly took place at the beginning of what was to become one of America's biggest political embarrassments in a long line of national crises: the Watergate scandal.

If only. If only Nixon had made a thousand different choices long before, up to and during the Watergate affair.

If only — in what would have been an otherwise brief flash of ethical decency — he had told his cabinet to expose the crime.

That Nixon allowed and then covered up the break-in revealed that, at best, the late president was not able to effectively communicate

with his own people. At worst, the fiasco showed one side of a man who was obviously too paranoid and corrupt to have ever been trusted with the highest office in the land.

But none of that matters now.

What does matter is that Nixon's estate has finally agreed (bending under the pressure of a massive lawsuit) to release most of the remaining secret recordings the disgraced politician made in the White House.

As early as November, historians might find themselves studying a 201-hour-long series of tapes containing Nixon conversations from 1972 to 1973 — recordings that reveal the president's "abuse of government power."

The tapes might allow Nixon to explain some of his actions from the grave, and they might even help us understand a little more about the man himself.

The recordings will definitely help us understand what happened to a nation after one man stole its trust.

## People are not running to OCA chief's campaign

**■ OUR OPINION:** Mabon is dreaming if he thinks he'll get any real support

Is that so?

Lon Mabon, that shrill Oregon Citizens Alliance chairman not exactly loved by the entire state, is currently not getting much of a turnout when he shows up to stump for his bizarre bid as a Republican contender for the open U.S. Senate seat.

Support for Mabon is so bad, only 20 people showed up recently to hear the man speak in the conservative mecca of Medford. The turnout was no better in Klamath Falls, another city known for its conservative bent.

If Mabon does no better in Grants Pass, Roseburg or Corvallis, maybe he'll wake up and stop kidding himself. After all, the joke's on him.



## Closed minds reject creationism theory

**W**hy is it that we preach respect for diversity of opinion and then shut our minds to any theory that conflicts with our personal beliefs? I'm not talking about rejecting a theory after examining it for any possible grains of truth; I'm talking about complete dismissal as impossible or foolish without giving it a moment of thought.

When the *Emerald* ran an editorial last term on recognizing that creationist and evolutionist theories are just that — theories — the mailman almost had a hernia delivering the letters of outrage and indignation. Most of the mail ridiculed the editors for daring to suggest that schools be allowed to discuss creationist theory.

OPINION



Larry Haft

Before Darwin, people accepted as fact that humans, and the rest of the universe, were created by some divine being or beings. This belief was held to be an absolute fact, not just a theory. Today, most people accept the theory of evolution as absolute fact and then ignore or ridicule anything that challenges that belief.

When Darwin wrote *On the Origin of Species*, he did not assert that humans are descended from apes. Darwin was a careful scientist who developed a theory based on observation of the world around him. Since those observations contained nothing that could definitely prove that humans were descended from apes, he was careful not to make that assertion.

Today we have more evidence that points to such a link, but the unanswered questions far outnumber the answered ones. Yet so many of us have accepted the theory of Darwin as gospel that we close our minds to any other possibilities.

In my column last Monday, I offered another possibility — that there may be tangible evidence of our human origins on Mars and on the moon. Please note that I said *may be*, not *is*. There are indications of the possibility, but it will take another space mission to Mars before we learn any more. In the meantime, let me throw out another bit of possibly related information.

A few months ago, the *Register-Guard* ran a short article about a team of genetic scientists from Yale University who have been conducting a world-wide investigation of genetic patterns. They collected and analyzed a specific chromosome from 1,600 people in 42 population groups from around the world, and they found a pattern. One of the scientists said, "This pattern of variation suggests that all non-Africans derive from a single common ancestral population which migrated out of Northeast Africa." She went on to say, "It will be very complicated to determine how big that migrant population was, but I would say it was very small. Some people have estimated that it could have been as few as

1,000. This pattern of variation also suggests that the common ancestry of the non-African populations is quite recent." She estimated that the migration was no earlier than 100,000 years ago and could be as recent as 70,000 years ago.

That figure of 70,000 to 100,000 years set off a little "ding" in the back of my mind.

There is a very old map — sometimes called the map of the ancient Sea Kings — that shows a view of Africa, the Mediterranean and Antarctica as they would be seen from an elevation of about 5,000 miles up. What is most amazing about this map, aside from the elevation of view, is that it shows details of Antarctica that have only recently been identified because they lie beneath miles of ice. Scientists estimate that these details would have been visible 100,000 years ago because the ice pack that covered Antarctica at that time was much smaller than it is today.

Now add the hypothesis that Richard Hoagland made in his book *Monuments of Mars* (mentioned in my column last Monday): It is possible that humans from Mars may have come to Earth, perhaps about 100,000 years ago.

Stir in a bit of creationism (we all descended from Adam and Eve), add a dash of evolutionism ("out of Africa") and an interesting pattern starts to emerge. Enough of a pattern to at least make a new theory about the origins of intelligence on this planet.

And that is all we have — theories, not incontrovertible proofs. Creationism, evolutionism, Martian origins and genetic patterns all share the same quality. They are each a "best guess" about who and what we are and how we got here to begin with.

Each of those guesses has tangible evidence to support it, and all of them lack some ultimate, definitive proof. It is only in our minds that connections are made between the bits and pieces we see before us.

Dr. Lilly, the guy who did research on porpoises, wrote a book that contains one of my all-time favorite quotes: "What one believes to be true is true, the limits of which are found by experience and experiment." The key to that statement is in the finding of limits. It requires openness to new evidence and a willingness to re-examine even the most cherished and closely held beliefs in the light of that new evidence.

There may or may not be artificial structures on Mars and the moon, humans may or may not have descended from Martians or monkeys or both, and there may or may not be some really powerful conscious force at work in the universe. We may never have the definitive answers, but if we keep our minds open to new possibilities and take the time to examine them objectively, we may get a lot closer than we are right now.

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## Oregon Daily Emerald

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