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Zerzan: Challenge political system

Continued from Page 1
very far, of course, but it was an intoxicating time."
He developed anti-technology views when he studied the industrialization of England and came across the Luddites, a group of machine breakers who opposed industry's technological advancement and increasing social control. Zerzan's studies opened him up to an avalanche of new questions.

"Maybe this technology isn't neutral," Zerzan said. "Maybe it never was neutral in terms of industrial society, to have people obey the clock and give up a more free way of making a living which was more family oriented."

Zerzan views the domestication and the division of labor as turning points in the beginning of technology and the urge to control. His view — that technology is damaging and disconnects people from one another — is based on a different view of anthropology in the past 20 to 30 years that has a more positive view of prehistoric life and primitive communities.

"I was really inspired to dig into these findings [because] not all of them are new. There has been a big reorientation or appreciation of the way people did live in small groups," Zerzan said. "A lot of these things that we are contending with now didn't even exist before civilization — like organized violence and disease."

The Unabomber's manifesto mentions Zerzan's belief that small, decentralized communities and a more direct mode of social existence without bureaucracy and mass society should be the direction of our future.

"We went for these things and we slowly got more meshed in it and held hostage by it," Zerzan said. "At some point you break that off. I mean, that's primitivism."

Primitivism draws on the record of humanity before technology. Zerzan believes society needs to look further back than the Unabomber's manifesto, which

Excerpts from Zerzan's writings

ABOUT SOCIETY: "Computerization, with its congealed tedium and concealed poisons, expresses the trajectory of society, engineered sleekly away from sensuous existence and finding its current apotheosis in Virtual Reality."

ABOUT PROGRESS: "The pinnacle of progress is today's Information Age, which embodies a progression in division of labor, from an earlier time of the greater possibility of unmediated understanding, to the stage where knowledge becomes merely an instrument of the repressive totality, to the current cybernetic era where data is all that's really left. Progress has put meaning itself to flight."

ABOUT COMMUNITY: "The refusal of community might be termed a self-defeating isolation but it appears preferable, healthier, than declaring our allegiance to the daily fabric of an increasingly self-destructive world. Magnified alienation is not a condition chosen by those who insist on the truly social over the falsely communal."

ABOUT TECHNOLOGY: "Today we experienced that control as a steady reduction of our contact with the living world, a speeded-up Information Age emptiness drained by computerization and poisoned by the dead, domesticating imperialism of high-tech method."

SOURCE: Zerzan's essays on the Internet

deals with industrial society, and into primitive prehistoric culture.

"It has really big implications with the kind of presumptions we have — well, it has to be this way, we had to go that way — now it seems that there has been more and more work that shows that it was a bad idea," he said. "It still sounds crazy to say that, but it raises some more basic questions about the way society is organized."

Zerzan believes discourse is one of the first steps. Ironically, much of Zerzan's writings and essays can be found on the Internet. But he believes this same technology also divides people. He cites virtual reality as a classic example of the mediations that disconnect individuals from each other and reality.

Yet Zerzan admits he is only human and has his own weaknesses and dependencies.

"I watch TV. I've worked on these themes for a long time, and it's the same for me as everyone else," he said. "I need these diversions; now virtually everyone needs some kind of drug to get through the day."

Zerzan's views seem to point to

dropping out of the societal structure. Individuals need to be "unplugged," he explained. Voting and participating in politics through the normal channels of discourse isn't worth it to Zerzan; he said people need to de-legitimize the system.

"It's an act of faith in the system to cast that ballot. It is really saying that I still believe it is worth investing in," Zerzan said. "If people just stop doing it, that's a real big thing right there."

Zerzan's lecture is expected to fill Gerlinger Lounge. Seating is limited and students are encouraged to come early.

Zerzan hopes to challenge the audience with difficult questions about the basic structure of society. He hopes people will leave with introspective questions about how they live their lives.

"It's got to be deeper, it has to involve so much more and it's more difficult," Zerzan said. "The questions are harder but the promise is bigger too. The promise is saving the individual from complete dehumanization and the biosphere from extinction."

Kitzhaber: Shift higher ed focus to individual

Continued from Page 1
mitment in prevention that is at least as serious as the investment we are making in punishment. And the most effective way to do that will be to target at-risk kids to keep them from becoming entrapped in the criminal justice system in the first place."

Kitzhaber noted three proposals he has made to keep youth from using drugs and dropping out of school.

The initial proposal is to create a coordinated state and county approach to find a solution to the problem and reach the children in need.

"Today, tragically, even though we know [at-risk children] are on the edge of becoming involved in crime, we address them only in a patchwork way," he said. "Instead, we must focus our efforts where we know they will do the most good."

The second of Kitzhaber's proposals is to involve numerous state agencies in providing technical assistance for communities that want to address problems with youth.

"There is not a one-size-fits-all response to this problem," he said. "Each community is different, and reducing juvenile crime is more effective when a community has made it a priority than when the state has made it a mandate."

On the state's next budget,

Kitzhaber said he plans to focus attention on the resources of the state government and how those resources help to plan and fund "proven community-based strategies to help keep kids out of crime."

The governor's final proposal is to provide better patrol coverage on the state's highways. Kitzhaber said more people are traveling more miles on state highways at higher speeds than at any other time, but that there are fewer state patrol officers than there were 20 years ago.

There were 530 patrollers in 1979. Today, that number is only 355.

"More troopers means better law enforcement and a strong tool for identifying and intervening with the kids who are on the edge," he said. "To do that, I am working with both local law enforcement and with the Oregon State Police to build a proposal for the 1999-2001 budget that will fill the gaps we know exist in our law enforcement system."

Kitzhaber said rapid changes in the world today require adjustments in the higher education system.

He said the first change is to shift the focus of higher education's agenda from the requirements of the system and the institutions to the requirements of individual students. The second change is to reroute the focus of

the budget. The final proposal for change is to "shift the management focus from the needs of the institutions and presidents to the needs of the students in Oregon and the economic marketplace."

The governor outlined what he believes are the issues Oregonians need to address.

"Meeting the high standards of the Education Act, tending to our system of post-secondary education, reducing juvenile crime: These are among the greatest challenges facing Oregon in 1998," Kitzhaber said. "And to meet them, we cannot afford to simply look at our present prosperity and reckon that the future doesn't need tending because that simply isn't the case."

The governor pointed to times in Oregon's past when he said people did not assume the future would create itself. He also referred to a time when he felt people who had strong ideas and commitment could change the future.

"I refuse to believe that those people no longer exist," he said. "I refuse to believe that Oregonians today are unwilling to help children learn, unwilling to keep children from turning to lives of crime."

"Let each of us do our part to ensure that the state of Oregon and the community of Oregon remain, for us and our children, the best place in the world to live," he said.