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PERSPECTIVES

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How much is too much?

Although visions of John Glenn in space gives us a sense of pride, we need to question NASA's spending

Some are calling it historical, others claim it produced valuable information in aging, and still others are calling it a chance to relive a proud American moment and an opportunity to instill that pride in future generations. President Clinton claims it ushered in the new era of space exploration. It is hard not to have a sense of awe when you think of John Glenn, the first American to orbit the earth, in space again. It brings

back memories for those who were there watching NASA take those first baby steps toward putting man in space. It also gives future generations a sense of history and how far the space program has come.

However, now that the celebrating is over and John

Glenn has safely returned home it is time to start asking some important questions about NASA and the future of space travel.

Although NASA was able to rally national support by including an American hero in its recent space mission, it continues to run over budget and behind schedule on plans for the International space station. Sixteen countries including United States, Russia, Canada, Japan, Brazil and 11 European countries are collectively sharing the responsibility of building and operating an international space station. Supporters claim that the space station would make it possible to conduct ground-breaking experi-

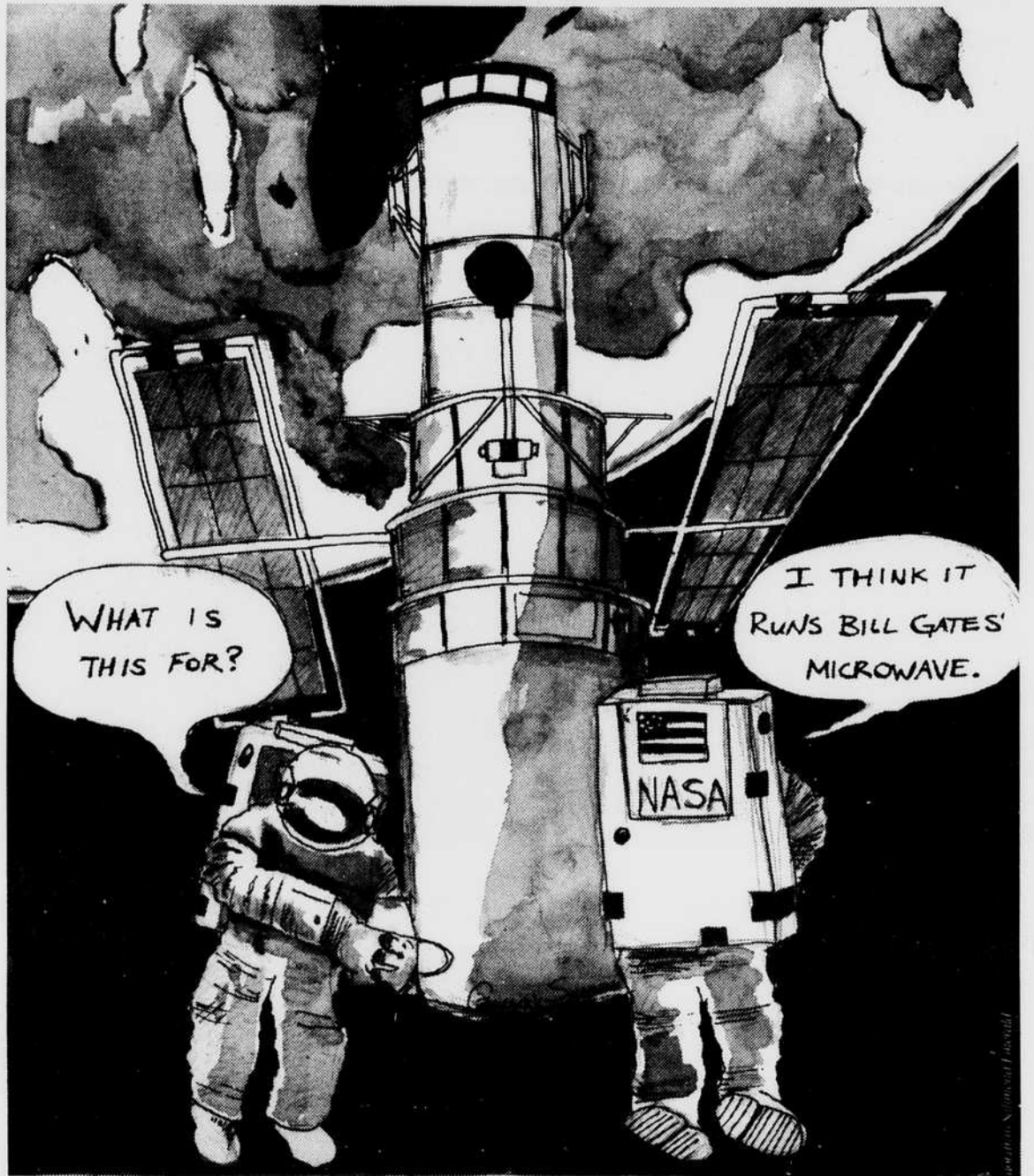
ments in space and that knowledge may lead to future trips to Mars.

Yet this information will come with a huge price tag. According to ABC online the space station itself will hold together for a little over fifteen years and cost over \$40 billion. It is hard to justify spending that much money on a station that will only yield a fifteen year window to conduct experiments.

In addition it is not even certain if the station will be completed. Russia, a recent addition to the international space station program, is having a hard time keeping up with its end of the bargain. They continue to postpone launch dates which puts the whole project behind schedule. Claiming that they need more money, Russia asks the United States to help fund its part of the mission.

This would add to the costs that NASA has already set aside for this huge project. They plan to give \$60 million in aid to Russia for the completion of the initial phases of the project. In addition they will give them \$600 million over the next four years to keep the intended schedule. NASA will also spend \$500 million on back-up plans in case the Russians are unable to fulfill their responsibility for the space station.

This is way too much money to spend on a project that may not even leave the ground. Even if the



project is successful, will the knowledge gained be worth the money the government has spent?

It is amazing to think that the United States would spend billions of dollars on its current questionable endeavor while it trails most industrialized countries in including comprehensive health insurance for its citizens. Issues like education, health care and overall public welfare should

come before the space program.

Although John Glenn's mission has sparked new interest in the space program, we need more carefully analyze how much our government is spending and demand an outline of the goals of NASA and its current endeavor. Are manned missions the future of NASA such as suggested by the new space station or are unmanned probes a better and

cheaper way to explore space? NASA needs to justify its spending to the American public, instead of trying to court them with visions of John Glenn and NASA's glorious past.

Stefanie Knowlton is an editorial editor for the Emerald. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

Letters to the Editor

Emerald coverage unfair

It is incredible that in such a progressive, forward thinking community such as this that our own student newspaper can still be so blindly accepting of the information handed to them by the authorities.

In your "Student arrested" article (ODE, Nov. 3), you leave out the key details as to why the confrontation happened in the first place. The student was in fact only talking to his friend through the window of his Collier dorm room. When Public Safety arrived, you didn't mention that the student was quickly maced without much discussion. This is the key reason he was verbally harassing the officers and why the crowd gathered the further taunt the police.

The police in this town and the public safety officers on this campus are out of control. They are biased, unthinking and on a power trip. I have seen it many times, living in Eugene for 20 years and being apart of the University community for three.

What they are doing is not justice and not what we are paying them for. They're supposed to be protecting all of us, and instead they are the ones who initiate the harassment. Why do you think there was a measure on the city ballot this year to form a citizen review board of their actions?

Next time, try interviewing actual participants and witnesses instead of unquestioningly accepting what the authorities hand you as the truth. Please, do your student body some justice.

David Nelson
Community Education Program

Students and Police

Residents in the campus area are tired of EPD officers abusing their rights, persons and property. I refer to warrantless home entries, illegal searches of pockets and backpacks, officers kicking in doors or threatening to, false arrest for non-criminal offenses and physical abuse and damage to property

after entry. Recurring tales of bad police behavior form unacquainted students ring true. Grievances against police get white-washed.

Students respond to respect with respect. They respond badly when they are treated badly. An EPD visit is often a student's first contact with any police authority. When initial police contact is unprofessional, rude, unnecessarily threatening and verbally abusive, the situation deteriorates. Students learn to expect the worst form police. Word spreads.

Group reactions to police presence reflect growing frustration with police behavior. EPD routinely dispenses multiple canisters of noxious tear gas before the group- most people merely standing around-comprehends any warning and can leave. One minute is not enough. I have not heard of another municipal police force which uses tear gas so causally.

How might 250 people wind up in an intersection setting the stage for a "riot"? Each

30 person party police empty displaces all but tenants. EPD's practice is to clear the premises-even those over twenty-one must leave. Those displaced move to the next premises which the police empty, now dispersing sixty, and so on. Soon there are 250 displaced people in the street. Much of this is within police control.

Calling on courts to impose swifter, harsher action without curing police abuse trains another student generation to detest police. Students are realizing this "whatever-means-necessary," police conduct is condoned by university administrators. Bad police behavior escalates anti-police conduct and feeds the dilemma. Police behavior is within police control.

I do not suggest students bear no responsibility for the current problems but that ample room exists for attitude and behavior adjustment by students and police.

Ihona E. Koleszar
ASUO Student Legal Services