

PERSPECTIVES

Editor in chief: Jack Clifford
 Managing Editor: Jessica Blanchard
 Newsroom: (541) 346-5511
 Room 300, Erb Memorial Union
 P.O. box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
 E-mail: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

EDITORIAL EDITOR: MICHAEL J. KLECKNER opededitor@journalist.com

Illuminating paranoia



CAPTAIN SENSIBLE

PAT PAYNE

Who controls the British Crown? Who keeps the metric system down? ... Who holds back the electric car? Who made Steve Guttenberg a star? We do! We do!

— Homer Simpson and The Stonecutters, "The Simpsons"

Have you ever noticed how so many people in America today have turned paranoia into the new national pastime? In so many places — talk radio, posters and newspaper ads, that smelly guy on the subway — you can see someone ranting about the communist-fascist-anarchist-illuminati-CIA-Bilderberg Council-Trilateral Commission-free silver-free Willy-free love-U.S. Space Command-Microsoft-Orville Redenbacher-Otaku-Sandinista-Sex Pistols-AAA conspiracy that killed (insert your favorite Kennedy here), stashed aliens at Area 51 and sent Yoko Ono out to break-up The Beatles.

This new brand of paranoia can actually be traced all the way back to May 1, 1776, celebrated since time immemorial as the traditional beginning of spring in Europe. But for some conspiracy watchers, there was a more sinister event going on in Europe that day. Adam Weishaupt, a Bavarian college professor, founded some sort of quasi-anarchist organization. Nobody knows exactly what it was, bizarre tales circulated by the Bavarian crown notwithstanding. He called it the "Illuminati," a highfalutin name that gives it a sense of grandeur. For my money, it was just him and a few of his close buddies, hitting beer halls all night and getting liquored up. However, according to some, the Illuminati is instead some "small group of men

whose sole objective is to enslave the whole world and humanity in their satanic plot for a one-world government," as one charming writer put it.

The Illuminati has become the granddaddy of the evil "secret societies," and until the advent of the Communist revolution in Russia, has been blamed for every horrible event since the 1200s. Every war, every revolution, in the diseased minds of the paranoids, can be traced back to Weishaupt and his drinking buddies. Even the United States was supposedly created, according to this fiction, as an Illuminati puppet.

Of course, the Illuminati are nowhere near as mentioned as they used to be. Now, the big bogeyman is the "New World Order." This is some nebulous plot supposedly hatched by the United Nations, the Trilateral Commission (an international "gentleman's club," which incidentally includes world leaders) and either the Freemasons or, for bigots, the Jews. The plan (snicker) is for the United Nations to impose a "one-world government" to supplant the United States, imposing a "big brother" rule by all sorts of foreigners. The "militia" movement uses this as its rationale to exist and keep any sort of artillery it desires.

Let's not forget, however, that the left can be as paranoid as the right. Recently, there has been concern among the left that the U.S. Space Command, whose job is to moni-

tor objects in space so they don't come crashing down on a populated area, has been accused of somehow single-handedly putting into action a plan with the very nebulous aim of "helping the final victory of

globalism through lending reconnaissance to counterinsurgency forces," as another writer claims. In case you haven't noticed, the left fears the "one-world government" as well. They just call it "globalism" and claim the plot (guffaw) is for governments and corporations to merge and turn us all into slaves for corporate aggrandizement.

Of course, conspiracy theories are, by their very lunatic nature, targets of ridicule. Steve Jackson Games, for instance, has a game known as "Illuminati," in which you can control your favorite secret subversive society and try to take over the world! In the '70s, a former Playboy editor wrote a farce called "Illuminatus" which said that the nonsense word "fnord" is fnord placed throughout the pages of The New York Times as part of an Illuminati conspiracy to keep you (what else?) paranoid.

Are there real conspiracies out there? Could be. As the old saying goes, "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean someone's not out to get you." Still, I doubt that either a 200-some-odd-year old wienerschnitzel society or the Pentagon has any real desire for world hegemony. I'd look in the places you'd least expect ... perhaps even a column for a small independent college newspaper. Oops, I must be going now. I've said too much. So mote it be. Nanu-nanu. Fnord.

Pat Payne is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached at Macross_SD@hotmail.com.



Bryan Dixon Emerald

Letters to the editor

It's 'You shall not murder' in the Bible

The May 11, 2001, Emerald had a cartoon by Frank Silva. The cartoon has two panels. In the first panel, President George W. Bush is preaching to a crowd. He says, "The Bible says 'Thou shalt not kill!'" The next panel depicts him pulling the switch to execute a condemned prisoner. I assume that this cartoon is meant to show that Bush is a hypocrite.

The King James Version of the Bible does indeed translate the Hebrew in Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17 as "Thou shalt not kill."

The Revised Standard Version revised the translation to read, "You shall not kill."

However, the 1917 translation

by the Jewish Publication Society of America translates the commandment as "Thou shalt not murder." In 1962, they modernized the translation a little, so that it now says, "You shall not murder."

According to The Interpreters One-Volume Commentary on the Bible, the word translated as "kill" in the RSV translation of the Ten Commandments "denotes premeditated homicide. ... The commandment does not prohibit killing in war or capital punishment."

The RSV was revised in 1989. The commandment in the New Revised Standard Version reads, "You shall not murder." There is a translation note that says, "or kill."

According to the New Oxford Annotated Bible, the commandment with the choice of translations "Forbids murder ... not the

forms of killing authorized for Israel, e.g., war or capital punishment."

Therefore, the whole premise upon which the cartoon was based is false.

Harry S. Epstein
 class of '73
 Eugene

Explore Yellowstone for credit this summer

Several weeks ago, the Emerald ran a short article showcasing some of the summer course offerings. I think that's great because it helps make students aware of interesting classes they might otherwise overlook. However, I was disappointed that the article did not include two summer field courses offered for the first time this year by the Department of Geological Sciences: Geology of Yellowstone National Park and

Geology of Mount St. Helens. These two incredible field trips are offered for general credit, so students may explore some of our nation's unique natural wonders from a geological perspective. It was a trip just like these that prompted me to change my major from English to geology.

The Yellowstone trip is eight days and seven nights of camping and will explore hotspot theory, geothermal systems and other geological features. The Mount St. Helens trip is five days and four nights and will include learning about the devastating power of pyroclastic flows, debris and mud flows that wreaked havoc on the landscape, and seeing the ongoing rebirth of that devastated landscape.

Both trips are scheduled after regular summer courses are finished so that students will not

have class conflicts. I urge all students considering a career in field sciences or wanting to go on an amazing, fun-filled, informative camping trip to check out these courses. For more information, stop by the geology department to get a brochure, or call Wanda Weber at 346-4691.

Katherine Lee
 graduate student
 geology

Can men admire women without oppressing?

I spoke at Take Back the Night. You'll know who I am, because I asked society to "deprogram" and "undefine." I can help, but as loud as the message needs to be heard, I don't want to reclaim a night that is not mine. If a male takes accountability for sexism and oppressive behavior that he

Turn to Letters, page 3