

On Tea and Wine

The sun brings out Mad Hatters and merry sippers

May might be the merry month, but it'll be a challenge to top April for sheer zaniness and the standards for pranksterism set by the Tea Partiers, that goofy gaggle of ragtag characters and Pinocchios prompted by FOX News pundits and AM radio's own Humpty Dumpty, the Rushmeister. What a cast: NRA paranoids, white supremacists, Bush-leaguers, wingnuts, Walruses, Carpenters and Chicken Littles. When local-boy Jay Bozievich revealed the event as GOP political theater, with his partisan attack on Rep. Peter DeFazio, the curtain



came open. Bozievich shoulda worn an oversized top hat instead of a red coat so we could tell if he was playing the Wiz of Oz or the Mad Hatter. Strange guy: touts himself a Libertarian while periodically running for public office, hates all forms of government while drawing his paycheck from EWEB, a publicly owned utility. Predictable, maybe, for a guy who slurps his political and economic tea from the cracked pot of Ayn Rand's fables. Apparently the Partiers had planned May Day attacks on immigrants but were diverted by swine flu fears, but surely they'll be back on the block and

in full regalia — even if a bit confused on colors — for Fourth of July. What fun. Just a passing thought, and I hope someone will get back to me on this: With all those folks threatening armed overthrow of Dictator Obama, did Homeland Security attend? When Partiers' antics slowed traffic into the post office, did anyone from Eugene Police Department cuff and Taser an offender? And with all those costumed GOPers — same folks who just brought us eight years of war, torture, and financial lunacy — does anybody know the final identity of the Dormouse?

Back on this side of the looking-glass, Mole and I have sussed some merry wines for May, ready to pour with the cornucopia of good stuff flowing into our markets from local farmers and growers:

We like **Pappas Wine Co. 2008 Pinot Blanc** (\$10), a modest, dry white with nice round fruit flavors (notes of ripe pears, apples) on a balanced frame. Pinot

blanc is versatile, suitable for sipping, nice with aperitifs, fits a wide range of good grub, especially cheeses and veggies. Thanks to Portland's Boedecker Cellars, the bottle wears a screw-top — smart.

The Hausman family of Forest Grove bottle **Quailhurst 2006 Virtuoso** (under \$20), blended by the talented winemaker Joe Dobbles (St. Innocent) from pinot gris, pinot blanc, Muscat and a whiff of viognier to achieve a tasty white with tropical-fruit flair and food-friendly acidity. Serve cool (not ice-cold) with white pastas, even salads.

A must: **Evesham Wood 2007 Pinot Noir** (\$21) is elegantly crafted, light-bodied pinot with charming red-fruit flavors, cries for grilled salmon. It's also certified organic from one of the state's most responsible growers.

Mole and I just spotted a white rabbit with a pocket watch. We're on the trail. Croquet anyone? **EW**

BOOKS BY SUZI STEFFEN

Maps and Legends

Taking on the founding myths

U.S. creation myths: British pilgrims came to the U.S., stepped off the ship onto Plymouth Rock in 1620 and got help from friendly local Native Americans, who oh wait, maybe weren't friendly, and when they tried to kill John Smith, Pocahontas intervened, and then there was the first annual Thanksgiving. It all worked out, right? Because eventually there was this Disney movie ...

Tony Horwitz, history major, journalist and author of books like *Confederates in the Attic* and *Blue Latitudes*, knew something was off in this mélange of confusion. So, after he paid a visit to the disappointing actual Plymouth Rock, he began several journeys to figure out when

and where — and which — Europeans had encountered the U.S.

Voyage tells many tales and tells them well. Horwitz plies his trademark wit as he recounts his experiences in tracing the Norse settlements through the moose and black fly-ridden coasts of Newfoundland, attempting to follow the treks of Coronado or De Soto, winding up in Florida in the midst of a recreated religious battle and hanging out in Plymouth with the descendants of decidedly non-English immigrants. Furthermore, his wit makes the research easier to digest. Want to know what kind of lies Amerigo Vespucci made up about the native population of the continents that would come to bear his name? Horwitz can tell you. How about

conquistador armor — how heavy was that? Horwitz tries it on for a reenactment. Horwitz makes the facts, the ironies and the legends both real and amusing.

You'll not find California, the Pacific Northwest or much of the Midwest (and its French explorers) in *Voyage*. But the book serves as a corrective both to the idea that the continent was empty (not that anyone thinks that anymore, right?) and to the fantasy that the Native American tribes who *were* here had some kind of mystical connection to the land and to each other. The many governments, economies, political arrangements and laws of those who lived here then, and whose descendants populate the continent, stand as factual background to the Euro-invasion in *Voyage*.

Horwitz winds up back at Plymouth, revisting the rock, telling funny stories about townsfolk. But what remains for this reader is the image of Tisquantum, captured by an English ship, sold to the Spanish as a

slave, returning on another ship in 1619 to what's now Massachusetts. When the ship arrived at his "formerly large and thriving settlement called Patuxet," Horwitz writes, the captain "found its inhabitants 'all dead.'" Patuxet's cleared woods and empty settlement served as welcome to the Mayflower; Tisquantum (whom you may remember as Squanto) helped the colonists plant corn and died soon thereafter.

For the record, John Smith wasn't a Pilgrim and he wasn't at Plymouth; Pocahontas died in March of 1617; and there were many "thanksgivings." Horwitz concludes by acknowledging and admiring the power of myth, but his book, luckily, serves as its own corrective — an amusing, well-researched corrective with a light tone that makes some of the truth easier to tease out. **EW**

Tony Horwitz speaks at 7 pm Thursday, May 7, in 177 Lawrence Hall on the UO campus. Free.

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