

# OREGON COMMENTATOR

Volume I, Number 10

Eugene, Oregon

Monday April 2, 1984

## Buckley, Clark ponder liberal decline



William F. Buckley, Jr. pondered the question "Is Liberal Politics Dead" at Pacific University last Thursday.

Photo by Robert Davis

By Richard E. Burr, Editor and  
Michael Rust, Assistant Editor

Displaying the wit, intelligence and flair that have made him a conservative hero, William F. Buckley, Jr. debated former Iowa U.S. Senator Dick Clark on the future of liberalism in a forum at Pacific University in Forest Grove last Thursday night.

Both men traveled at least halfway across the country to debate the topic "America's Future: Is Liberal Politics Dead?" and answer questions from a panel that included University economics Professor Robert Campbell.

"I think it remarkable that Senator Clark should make such an extraordinary effort to attend a funeral," Buckley said, standing on his toes as he emphasized the point.

"I didn't come to attend a funeral. Liberalism is alive and well," Clark responded at the Tom Lawson McCall debate sponsored by the Pacific University Politics and Law Forum and three other sponsors.

Liberalism is a nonredemptive philosophy that is methodological and has no ends, said Buckley, the founder and editor of *National Review* and host of Public TV's "Firing Line."

"Liberalism is a lack of philosophical substance, something for which we should not automatically condemn it, it must be agreed," Buckley said.

Liberalism is full of illusions, one of which is that the more people vote, society becomes better, he said. That is like saying the more people write, the better literature becomes, Buckley said. The freedom to vote is not always best as the 1933 election of Adolf Hitler proves, he said.

Government intervention is the central characteristic of liberalism, Buckley said. Liberals especially advocate the use of government to regulate and manage the economy, although such intervention fails to cope with what society is attempting to achieve, he said.

Buckley cited as an example the welfare programs intended to eliminate poverty. Welfare expenditures total \$30,000 for each person who is below the poverty line. With the poverty line between \$11,000 and \$12,000, "one wonders why there is a poverty line," he said.

In addition, despite all the programs to deal with black teen-age unemployment, it is five times higher today than it was in 1945, Buckley said.

He also said the government has contributed to moral decay.

"(Liberals) have contributed a great deal to the retrogression of social progress and, unhappily, a great deal to the corruption of the vocabulary of social progress."

"In Sweden, which is still a couple of steps ahead of Dick Clark, it is legal for a father to sleep with his daughter, but illegal to spank his son. These are the lengths to which liberalism has taken us."

Buckley also cited an example provided by neoconservative writer Irving Kristol, who says in New York City it is legal for an 18-year-old woman to fornicate on stage provided she is earning the minimum wage.

Clark then took the podium, warning that the death of liberalism would have grave consequences for the United States. "The death of liberal politics is synonymous with the death of liberal society in America," he said.

Liberalism is freedom from arbitrary government, Clark said. "Liberalism emphasizes both the individual and the emphasis on individuals in society collectively—what we call the general welfare," he said.

Liberalism is social democracy, which appeals to the "generality of the people" and not to the aristocracy or special interests, Clark said. It also has an anti-military tinge, he said, adding that liberal philosophy advocates world peace through world order.

"I do not believe that conservatives would like to see the death of liberal politics in America," Clark said. They would rather want liberals to be a minority rather than nonexistent, he said.

But the New Right, not the Old Right, wants the elimination of liberalism, Clark said.

The Old Right advocates "unfettered capitalism" and national security concerns and is associated with established interests such as big banks, he said. The New Right, however, is a populist movement reacting to the changes that occurred during the 1960s, he said.

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The *Commentator* editors explain why the Tom Lawson McCall debate at Pacific University was both refreshing and eye-opening.

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Oregon *Commentator* Publisher Dane Claussen explains the importance of "historical illiteracy" and why it must be dealt with.

## Pacific debate revives faith

Civility lives.

Being bogged down in Eugene, it is easy to forget that civility, tolerance and courtesy can actually see the light of day in our citadels of higher education. Unlike the University, Pacific University in Forest Grove is a small institution with only 1,100 students. However, they are to be commended for the Tom Lawson McCall debate last Thursday, in which conservative hero William F. Buckley, Jr., debated former Iowa Sen. Dick Clark on the question, "America's Future: Is Liberal Politics Dead?"

For a group of Eugene students who attended, the debate came as a pleasantly stunning surprise. An auditorium, filled to a large extent with students and academicians, was the scene of a civilized encounter. There was no heckling nor any attempt at disruption. Politically incorrect thoughts were tolerated and even considered seriously.

At the Forest Grove debate, the crowd seemed mixed in its sympathies, with perhaps a small majority favoring former Sen. Clark. However, this did not prevent people from attempting to understand the other point of view.

Coming from the wilds of Eugene, it was astounding to hear a college audience applaud both speakers when good points were made or a witty turn of phrase was given life. We could not help but reflect on the stark contrast this debate had in comparison with the political discussion on this campus, which has developed a sadly well-deserved reputation for incivility, boorishness and Philistinism.

The University has compiled a hefty list of uncivil credentials: symposiums and lectures more often than not degenerate into open forums for mindless invective from the audience; student leaders regard their constituents as mindless creatures needing corrective political "education"; the epithet of fascist is hurled by some who seem to bear more than a passing resemblance to the Brownshirts; ridicule and attempted intimidation are preferred over dialogue; the loutishness that was directed against returned hostage Victor Tomseth embarrassed the University in 1981; the deep intellectualism of our local "progressives" is exemplified through obscene graffiti, anonymous phone calls and the spectacle of upper middle-class children squatting in the EMU lobby for reasons that none can clearly enunciate; and the inanity of the questions that greeted then-candidate Ronald Reagan in 1980 provoked even the exasperation of *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker.

Also refreshing was lack of cynicism displayed by the audience, the panel and the two distinguished speakers. The idea that it is possible to learn from a respectful airing of different points of view can come as a shock to sensibilities calloused by years on the University of Oregon campus, where stock Reagan jokes seem to be the prerequisite on the first day of most political science classes.

It is difficult to understand just where so many of our local "activists" derive their incredible arrogance. Self-satisfied, complacent, intellectually static, they are cheating this University community of a chance to participate in the sort of functions that a scholarly community is supposed to provide.

Some call Eugene a cheap-ass Marin County, Freak City, a strange combination of a bigoted small town and a suburb in the middle of nowhere. Living here can warp one's perspective. It's delightful, therefore, and emotionally invigorating to rediscover that the real world is not a microcosm of self-indulgence and incivility.

This dose of reality was what made the McCall debate between Buckley and Clark not only intellectually stimulating but reassuring as well.

## Great Quotes in Recent History:



Cartoon reprinted courtesy of the United States Industrial Council Educational Foundation.

## Hart's ideas mirror 1976 Carter

"Is it live or is it Memorex?" may be a more appropriate question than "Where's the Beef?" when considering the 1984 Democratic presidential race.

Walter Mondale, as cartoonists remind us even if columnists don't wish to insult the dead, is in philosophy and attitude a Hubert Humphrey look-alike. Mondale never has denied this nor attempted to distinguish himself from his mentor.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson admittedly does not have the basic characteristics of any former presidential candidate, being less qualified than Barry Commoner. He generally is not even worth commenting about except for his apparent desire to preserve black-white tensions. Any white or Republican clergyman running for president—such as Billy Graham or Jerry Falwell—would be laughed out of the race and that Jackson has become a sacred cow because of his race.

Colorado Sen. Gary Hart, however, is most worth commenting about because of his newfound prominence. Mike Royko and others have compared and contrasted (primarily the latter) Hart to John F. Kennedy. James J. Kilpatrick, attempting either to seem wise, seem profound or predict Gary Hart's approaching obscurity in history, compared him to Wendell Willkie. David Broder, usually one with a fresh idea, compared the Mondale-Hart fight to any two-man race that deadlocks a party and results in the nomination of a dark horse, which he believes is a possibility.

We think the more obvious comparison for Hart is with 1976 candidate Jimmy Carter. Hart won't win in Carter's 1976 style because of the differences between Ronald Reagan's and Gerald Ford's personalities and circumstances. Reagan has many of the best characteristics of popular and/or wise presidents and will shatter the glass with replays of his fairly successful campaign strategies of 1976 and 1980. This does not excuse Hart from examination, however.

While the Jan. 13 *Wall Street Journal* found it necessary only to compare Carter and Hart generally, the historically illiterate American public and national press have yet to make the connection.

In overall philosophy, Carter said he was a foe of big government and most what Washington, D.C., stood for, but he actually wanted government to grow and allowed it to do so. Hart says "old coalitions do not lead in new

directions" but would be bound to them to get his legislation through Congress. Carter included old coalitions as part of his anti-Washington rhetoric and he failed miserably on the Hill. A president cannot both legislate and execute, something recent presidents and the population who elected them keep forgetting in attempts to elect a savior rather than 435 wise men.

Carter and Hart both pushed their youthful images, including their dry-look hair and glistening toothy smiles. Hart would be younger than Carter at inauguration but four years older than J.F.K. at the time and would, in any case, be old enough to have grandchildren, as the originally not-so-worn-looking Carter did.

Carter and Hart both represent traditionally politically impotent states with fairly homogenous, American-gothic and modern suburbia population images. They were both born in small towns, raised religiously and strictly and were bright students. Hart attended Yale Divinity School and Carter taught Sunday school. Supposedly non-establishment, Hart stayed around the Ivy League long enough to also attend Yale Law School (Ford's alma mater), while limited-nuclear-power candidate Carter was a nuclear physicist. Carter almost was a career Navy man, but even Hart, who ran George McGovern's anti-Vietnam campaign in 1972, gained a Navy Reserve commission in 1980 after an exception was made...for his age.

Carter's campaign was and Hart's is vague. Recall this gem from Carter's "somehow" campaign: "Federal education laws must be simplified to substitute education for paper-shuffling grantsmanship. Local systems need federal funds to supplement these programs for students where wealth and tax base are inadequate." Compare it to Hart's detailed plan for implementation of a "comprehensive federal education policy." Says the literature, "He would combine targeted federal aid with incentives for more state and local spending to improve and expand teaching of mathematics, science, foreign languages, communication skills and more." Never mind again that the president doesn't have the power to make these changes.

Compare Carter's "repair railroads" and "build mass transit" plans to Hart's "Infrastructure Investment Program," or their ideas on decreasing dependence on foreign oil, or their dreams, as Hart put it as naively as Carter could, of a "top-to-bottom reform of America's defense," or....

We don't even need to closely examine Hart's change in name, change in age, change in state, the motivations behind his Navy Reserve commission, or his subtle-but-so-political imitations of J.F.K. to conclude he'll do anything legal, though perhaps unethical, to get elected.

What surprises us is that Mondale has had trouble with a rehash of former boss Carter's campaign with dashes of personal vulnerability. Perhaps he is tone deaf or doesn't own any crystal.

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# “Off the Rocker”

Magazine for useful pawns

Volume 1 Number 5

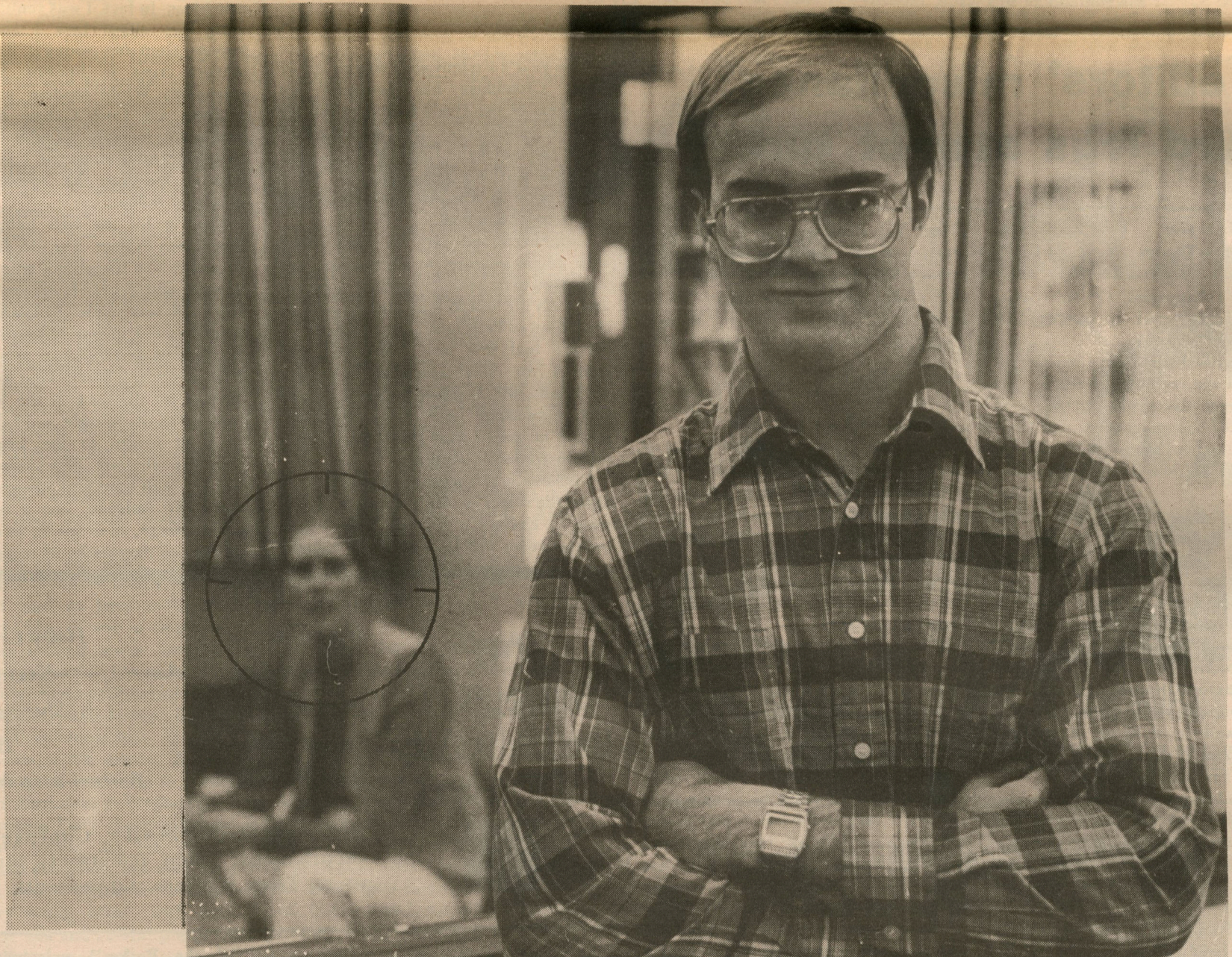
University of Oregon

April 1984

“You are a loathsome reptile. I hope you die.”—D.H. Lawrence to Katherine Mansfield



John Kaiser:  
Victim of  
the Right



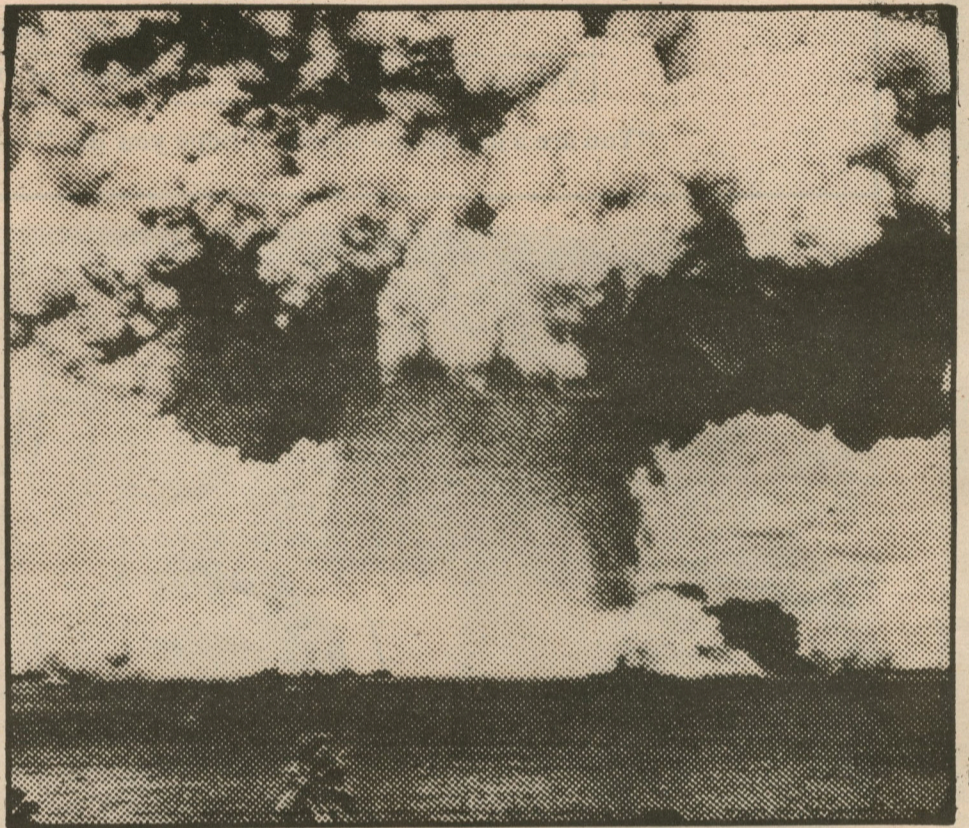
Mary Hotchkiss: Is she next?

...and the Commentator  
even likes Jews!



Richard Burr, Robert Davis and Michael Rust are solely responsible for the contents of this issue.

## Paul Onan commends responsible activism



## An open letter to students

By Paul Onan

This year's student government led by Hairy Crotchkiss has reheated the remnants of the 1960s frozen in the Ice Age of Apathy that once was the late 1970s and still is the 1980s, and I assume that the ASUO's ascendancy to Third World nation status will be a reflection of that activist position.

Sometimes one gets the impression that administrators at universities are supposed to be afraid of student activism and wish life would stay simple here at the hollowed halls of academic pursuit. I do not feel that way; after all, I've trained my secretaries to keep me secluded: one handles correspondence with Crotchkiss and the others are skilled at crowd and riot control. The demonstrations continue.

I believe it is important students care about the world in which they live and to want to change it for the better. The college years are important for testing

new ideas. In fact, I was reminiscing the other day about how I could apply lessons from my younger days to the present crisis in funding for higher education. While student government receives aid from Cuban and Soviet advisers to increase its lobbying power, what innovative steps can I as president take to increase the administration's sphere of influence?

Then it hit me like lightning: the Manhattan Project. The old days before Nagasaki and Hiroshima when Airhead Noneck and I could roll in the New Mexico desert sands. Airhead could get some use out of our renowned physics department and build an atomic bomb. Wouldn't it be a blast? That would make the hair on the back of the legislators' necks stick up straight and fall out.

So, to return to the beginning, I welcome serious discussions about change, both here and elsewhere in the world. No violence, just a responsible use of energy, so to speak, as a welcome antidote to the apathy of recent years.

## editors' miscellanea: Bird legs attract turkey

By Tank Shaw and Brenda Horny-Thorny

**Tank:** It's happened 123,902 times. Each time I try to pick up an awesome chick, disaster strikes.

But my luck changed one day at the bank when I was trying to hurdle the red ropes all over the place in order to prove to a disbelieving woman that I was a Marine. Needless to say, I tripped over the first rope and half the building caved in.

Lying on the ground, I did my arches like they instructed me to do for parachuting. Then I saw something erotic: bird legs.

**Brenda:** So I see this guy crawling through the rubble toward me as though this were some sort of infantry drill. Then he picked me up and started tossing me around, muttering something about not wanting me to go into shock. I let out a well-timed burst of anger—"Rape!"—and he said, "I like a woman who thinks for herself." Love.

**Tank:** So I suggested we go running. She said she had her bra on so she couldn't. I suggested she take a couple of deep breaths and reconsider. Sure enough, the bra slipped off, and we went jogging.

**Brenda:** Then we ran into some guys at a softball field who told me the Pirates were in town looking for their sunken chest. They had to be kissin' cousins of Frank's.

**Tank:** We started to sit down, thinking we should rest for a while, but a drunken student came up and said,

"Hey! You can't sit there." We were pretty confused, especially when the guy slobbered, "Birdlegs!" and took off all of Brenda's clothes and began tossing her up and down into the air. He was joined by "friends" in various stages of drunkenness.

You guessed it, they were from a fraternity. I stayed and watched. In a few minutes I wished I hadn't.

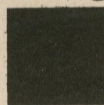
While all the time I was trying to watch Brenda be molested, I was distracted by their talk about parties and girls. I listened to two sorority girls moan about not having Vuarnets for the glare that was bouncing off of Brenda's svelte body, as well as to an in-depth discussion on the relative merits of different fingernail polishes.

It was...um...stimulating conversation. But certainly not as stimulating as listening to me talk about not being able to get a "date" for Saturday night or justify my inability to remember that commas go inside quotation marks.

Fortunately my editor, Truck, came along and started throwing people right and left, mostly to the left. It was just in time because I knew that they were probably the sort of people who use "who" and "whom" correctly, or even ask questions in class.

I went home, where I observed my roommate, ODE associate editor Adolph Nazch, as he slunk his naked way toward the bathroom, with his dried-out hair, low-slung bottom and visible pimples popping out on his wimpy shoulders. "He's skinny, not petite," I thought to myself.

Ass  
Students of  
the University  
of Oregon



Big Sister

Impotent Male Lackey

Princess

Sixties Holdover

Baby-Fat marxist

Birkenstock Bolsheviks, Confused suburbanites, token minorities, angry young Trots, workers and peasants.

Hairy Crotchkiss

Kevin Kountz

Sherrie Schlutz

Bill Snide

Barbed-wire McCarthy

Any similarities between names in "Off the Rocker" to names of people living or dead are (oops!) purely coincidental.

"Off the Rocker" is an Affirmative Action employer. Brain-damaged children encouraged to apply.

"Off the Rocker" welcomes special contributions from the Oregon Daily Emeroid in this issue.

"Off the Rocker" is a publication for useful pawns attending the University of Oregon.

## Pep Smear '84: "Smash Their Balls"

In an attempt to whip students into a frenzy of support for local radical feminists, the ASUO is joining with Students for a Progressive Agenda and other local groups for a festival tentatively entitled "Pep Smear."

The ASUO, SPA and Freaks Without Acronyms are joining forces with Womyn's Simp and the Amazon Machine Gun Collective to produce the festivities. The highlight will be a concert by feminist recording artist Holly Far, who will sing compositions from her latest album, "How to Achieve Orgasm Without Recourse to the Male Member."

"We need to prance a little after spending so much time holding back fascism," said ASUO President Hairy Crotchkiss. "Sometimes it seems as though all we do is race around plugging

up holes where fascism can sneak through. I know I've had my finger in a lot of dikes lately."

In addition to the Holly Far concert, "Pep Smear" will also include a special showing of the widely acclaimed film, "Crack the Nuts Until They Die."

Some have complained that "women only" events held at both Pep Smear and Womyn's Simp violate University policy and state law. However, University President Paul Onan says that nothing will be done.

"I commend responsible activism," Onan says. "Just leave me alone, will you?"

Onan lied when asked about possible violations of University rules, saying "Excuse me, but I have to get back to work."

## Mary's housekeeping hint: Hire Cuban help

By Hairy Crotchkiss

April in Eugene, boxes of foreign assistance piled high above the EMU Suite 4 entrance, sunny skies foreshadowing the glorious day when Cuban planes will land on an EMU Breezeway runway, midterms and desperate phone calls home to mom and dad complaining about my Thought Police. It's easy to pass by the Jerry Garcia revival sessions during the open mike session. It's painless to stuff a pie in the face of one of my student representatives as he emits so-called "socialist" and "unpatriotic" terms such as social injustice and military industrial complex.

How how else are we, the hastily warmed-up remnants of the 1960s, supposed to revive student activism without making the ASUO a Third World nation? It brings the badly needed resources of Soviet and Cuban advisers who can aid students in their battle to gain student rights against imperialistic state legislators. How else can students speedily close the "window of vulnerability" between itself and the Establishment?

Yet you scoff at our catch phrases filled with three syllable passwords. I understand. I used to have problems assimilating the idea of war in Granada and Nicaragua without some context. Can you say campesino? I couldn't at first. But with repeated practice and the help of my impotent male lackey, Kevin Kountz, I could say words like, uh, liber-a-tion the-ol-o-gy. Of course, Kevin had the advantage of practicing in front of The Militant Bookstore in Portland for the Social Workers Party. Four syllable words still are tough, but the cause demands mental discipline. But with the help of Kevin, whom I've likened to Billy Joel's "Angry young Man" with his "working class ties and radical plans," the Thought Police soon will have you appreciating decolonization in the context of a University education.

Of course, assimilating the concepts and characteristics of a Third World nation takes time. Cuban advisers are providing tanning parlors to make the

gradual adjustment. I know I am anxious the shed the Snow White skin or Nordic-style fascism for a darkened complexion of Third World independence.

Again you balk. I understand, you don't have the memories of the glazed eyes, the burning bodies, the uncontrollable sobbing of children, the rape and the murder that people who incinerate reject G.I. Joes and Ken and Barbie dolls have. Will you go to one of these plants and incinerate these dolls I met doing production line duty because doing so is necessary to maintain capitalistic consumer purity or will you rehabilitate them?

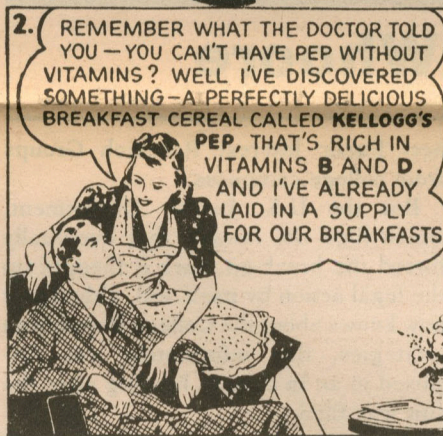
I recently was reminded of such violent practices becoming accepted in a non-third World nation the other day when I saw two children playing "Patty cake, patty cake, baker's man." As the sound of pressing flesh resonated from the children's clapping hands, I was immediately reminded of the violent connections between war and forceful human contact; but this was nothing compared to the two paper airplanes that whizzed close by my head. After watching the test-launching of the Pershing II missiles on TV the previous evening, I found this spectacle of flight-testing frightening and morally repulsive.

This fright and disgust turned to anger, anger that precious resources are expended on pseudo-military adventurism; anger that while the peasants and workers, guided and helped by the Cuban advisers, smooth each inch of the new EMU Breezeway airplane runway by sacrificing their Birkenstocks, untended students ruin Third World nation dreams by scrawling capitalistic slogans such as "Eat at Joes" and "Kilroy Was Here" in the slow-drying asphalt.

Still, I understand, though I'm getting impatient. While scrawling capitalistic slogans and throwing paper airplanes are not exactly the same as supporting a military build-up and suppression of anti-colonialism, the people of this campus are obligated, as world citizens, to take wholeheartedly moral stands that precludes this beating around my bush.



SO THE HARDER A WIFE WORKS, THE CUTER SHE LOOKS!



IF YOU, TOO, HAVE LACKED VITAMINS, DISCOVER THE GRAND THINGS THEY CAN DO FOR YOU. AND TO HELP GET YOUR VITAMINS, EAT KELLOGG'S PEP FOR BREAKFAST. IT'S A SUPREMELY DELICIOUS CEREAL — CRUNCHY GOLDEN FLAKES OF BRAN AND OTHER PARTS OF WHEAT, ENRICHED WITH VITAMINS B AND D. EAT IT EVERY DAY, AND SEE IF YOU DON'T HAVE MORE ZIP AND ZEST!

**Vitamins for pep! PEP for vitamins!\***

\*Pep contains only vitamins B and D. Each ounce contains 1/5 of an adult's and 4/5 of a child's daily requirement of B, and about 1/2 the daily requirement of D.

## Trickle-down theory

By Jim Whoore

A series of thunderstorms last week that caused unseasonably cool spring weather strongly resembles recent efforts by the College Republicans, the group that used less-than-ethical tactics in the 1972 presidential campaign, to dampen the spirits of Public Interest

Research Groups on college campuses. But local weathercaster Dave Wienie, who predicted the unseasonable weather, says he reached his forecasts individually and, although he now knows about the College Republican strategies that information was provided after his predictions were broadcast.

## Can you say conspiracy?

By Jim Whoore

The Santa Clara Bulldogs' 66-53 win over the Oregon men's basketball team in the National Invitational Tournament on March 16 resembled recent efforts by the College Republicans, the group that used less-than-ethical tactics in the 1972 presidential campaign, to defeat Public Interest Research Groups on college campuses.

But Bulldogs' Coach Carroll Williams, who directed Santa Clara's pummeling of Oregon, said he was not receiving signals from spies in the crowd and, although he now knows about the College Republican strategies, that information reached the bench after the Bulldogs had gone into their stall game.

An Oregon Daily Emeroid decision to print few, if any, editorials is darn tootin' similar to recent efforts by the College Republicans, the group that used less-than-ethical tactics during the 1972 presidential campaign, to censor Public Interest Research Groups from college campuses.

Truck Howler, Emeroid editor who decided to print more letters to the editor than editorials, says she is acting as an individual and, although she now collectively knows about the College Republican strategies, the information was leaked by ASUO President Hairy Crotch-kiss in a closed-door discussion after the decision.

## Words, words, words: A journalistic abortion

When they were in their early 30s, Jesus Christ conducted his ministry, Martin Luther posted his theses, Alexander the Great conquered the world and Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence.

In his early 30s, Emeroid propaganda editor Coke Fernard is working for a campus newspaper and contemplating an end to a seven-year undergraduate career.

To grasp the true depths of this pathetic specimen, "Off the Rocker" visited the plush offices of the Oregon Daily Emeroid for an informative chat with Fernard.

Coke, looking back on your long career of undergraduate journalism, what do you think has been your principle contribution?

"Words, words, words," Fernard shrieked, nibbling on his tongue until blood dribbled down his sagging chin.

What do you think of Commentator publisher Swede Claws?

"I wish that back in the days when abortions were illegal, his mother had had one. I remember my first abortion, lying on a dirty table as I hemorrhaged bright red, and the Neo-Right PIRGbusters writhed to the beat of those old fossils, Dylan and the Stones, while the real American music like that which would be produced by X was still unborn and there was no one to say 'spare us the manure' when Republicans and Who fans spread their poison, shutting down the WOW Halls of the world and denying deserving journalists a chance of being editor of the Emeroid because the fix was in.

"Besides, Claws doesn't read Melody Maker."

Coke, how would you sum up your philosophy of life?

"Jerry Garcia sucks."



## A boy and his dog

Lesbian studies major Kevin Kountz has condemned Students for Bestiality members Michael Crass and Dan Goul-ish to 10 years imprisonment in the ASUO's equivalent of the Gulag, the Beaver Dick heterosexual prison, for the politically incorrect thoughts the pair

recently had.

"You'll rot before you'll ever make it out of there," Kountz told Crass and Goul-ish following a recent purge and subsequent "trial" on campus. "Unless, of course, you bring me another puppy like the last one I had," he added.

## Pity poor Whoore

By Jim Whoore

Pity the poor telephone company.

The break-up of AT&T, which has caused price hikes and may eventually drive the company from the market, strongly resembles recent efforts by the College Republicans, the group that used less-than-ethical tactics during the 1972 presidential campaign, to discon-

nect Public Interest Research Groups from college campuses.

But the U.S. Justice Department, which filed the lawsuit that eventually forced the break-up, says it thought up the legal action by itself and, although it now knows about the College Republican strategies, that information was disclosed in an in camera hearing after the suit was filed.

# ASUO presents a Special Women's Symposium

## Is Mary Hotchkiss Stupid?

Distinguished leaders discuss the question

Featuring Kate Millett, Bella Abzug and various bitchy left-wing nuns

# Historical illiteracy pervades America

By Dane S. Claussen  
Publisher

Increasing numbers of references to Americans' alleged "historical illiteracy" have been included in the *Commentator's* articles and editorials in the last few months, but nowhere has it really been explained.

Normally, the number of political, philosophical, journalistic, and other ideas read, thought about and written about would limit the prominence of any single one in print. But it isn't unfair to say that "historical illiteracy" hit home with many readers in addition to staff members, and it has become an underlying point of several paragraphs.

The reasons are not surprising. Mike Rust, our now-graduated assistant editor, brought the term and idea to the attention of our readers with force. Whether one agrees with his political views or not, he graduated with honors in history and is on solid ground in criticizing a shortfall in the collective conscience. In all modesty, as his friend and colleague, I believe Mike to be the best-read college student I've met (or at least the one who can most easily recall, synthesize and utilize what he knows); his reminder that George Orwell wasn't such an egalitarian (with the gem that he sent his child to the private Westminster school because it no longer required top hats) is strong medicine for those "experts" who have read, primarily or wholly, secondary sources and portray Orwell as the patron saint of modern political trendiness.

What perhaps is so urgent and basic about "historical illiteracy" in this nation is that it is a fact. It is not simply a theory. The statement that "Americans are historically illiterate" is not open to debate; surveys and studies prove it.

It is a problem far surpassing the general public's ignorance of the most recent developments in science or politics. If an average American doesn't know who the U.S. Attorney General is or believes it is William French Smith or may be Ed Meese. History to many students seems hopelessly dull and descriptive, rather than prescriptive and skill-oriented; but general implications of the Vietnam War derived from the study of pure history are more important than what political model it fits into.

As George Santayana said, those who

don't understand history are condemned to repeat it. Certainly Abraham Lincoln said "we cannot escape history." I think both these statements are true; the American public, being historically illiterate, can only smile because it doesn't understand the jokes about Japanese winning the next war—economic. It continues to be shocked after unqualified politicians do a poor job, it finally opposes wars they encouraged and it often believes that single Supreme Court decisions, new child-rearing methods or new rock groups will permanently revolutionize their lives.

The basic cause, fascination and horror of historical illiteracy is that these illiterates, like many political illiberals, have forgotten (albeit it's not as if they ever knew) context. This is nothing new. James Fenimore Cooper, Mark Twain, Alexis Tocqueville and others early on discovered the synthesized problem of a short national history, the melting pot as cause and result, and a public present- and future-oriented with no memory.

A solution doesn't require billions of dollars of new federal aid to education and a dozen doctoral dissertations. One only need reconsider the cliché, "The more things change, the more they stay the same," and the question, "Whatever happened to the conventional wisdom of common sense?"

"The more things change, the more they stay the same" is likely to be uttered only about such things as Maryland's consecutively crooked governors, the Seattle Mariners' record or a latest visit to the in-laws. But the idea is true whether one is surprised to read ancient Greek literature on the same ideas as writings today or one compares Gary Hart to Jimmy Carter, which the *Commentator* could only just begin to do today. Two new books explain that the Victorians' sex lives were not as dull as previously believed, nor can the birthdates of first-borns conceal a long history of premarital relations.

Don Sterling of *The Oregonian* wrote a column on March 7 about *The Oregonian* of that date 50 years ago to test the hypothesis "that somehow things were better—sweeter, brighter, more cheerful—in the old days." His findings on the front page alone included a murder conviction, a bank robbery, the accidental death of a child, the Portland trolley system's finan-

cial problems, a drowning, an airplane crash and several other pieces of happy news. Examples of the American people making the same mistakes twice or more or falling victim to the same circumstances often are seemingly endless in the areas of warfare, economic policy, attempts to legislate morality, electing politicians, et cetera, ad infinitum, ad nauseum.

As for common sense, not so common, an increase in education, standards of living, and other evidences of sophisticated society also have allowed questionable facts and bogus or unprovable ideas to replace common sense. Irving Kristol, himself a professor at New York university's Graduate School of Business, calls it a "tyranny of ideas...exercised by academic, quasi-academic, and pseudo-academic ideas over the common sense embodied in the practical reason of traditional wisdom."

I'm not sure I would use such terms, but I do agree with Kristol that in a growing number of areas of American life, "we have witnessed educated and well-meaning people trying to impose, enthusiastically and obstinately, their 'truths' about human nature or social reality upon the real world." These people, often exhibiting more than a little bit of cognitive dissonance, seem to believe it is so necessary to categorize, analyze, theorize, formulize and systemize a discipline or problem that they self-righteously do so until they spend more time debating various "models" than doing anything constructive. This is true in education, child-rearing, sex, crime, religion, international relations, and other facets of life that have been important and dealt with relatively well for hundreds to millions of years without scholarly journals, manuals, courses, formulas, multi-dimensional models, highly specific regulations, and other "academic" versions of "how-to guides."

I disagree with Mr. Kristol that "sociologists and criminologists and jurists have applied their theories and their presumed expertise to create a criminal justice system that has supposed to reduce criminality but has instead caused it to proliferate wildly" (emphasis added), or that studying much else except education (as opposed to learning and teaching) itself is harmful.

I wonder why, however, many modern "experts" have not accomplished as much

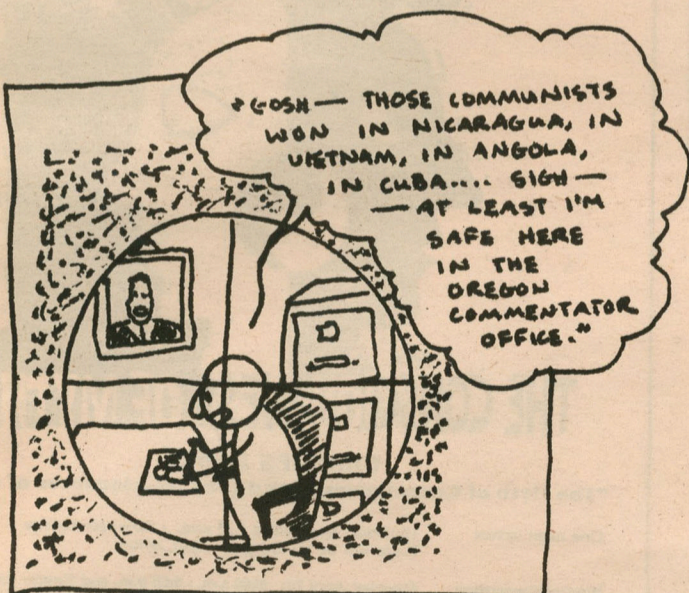
as they should or were expected to; let's not be conned into believing that any ill is going to be cured when it is not. Moreover, reflect on the possibility that historical illiterates, particularly in academia, may realize that upper middle-class parents in the 18th century managed quite well, thank you, without Masters and Johnson, Freud or Spock. Theodore Roosevelt negotiated the treaty ending the Russo-Japanese War without knowing of various models of international conflict (translation: types of war). The statement of a former University political science professor that hostilities between two nations constitute "what we (as opposed to the student workers and peasants) call international conflict" was almost as brilliant as Calvin Coolidge's quip that large numbers of people out of work can lead to unemployment.

On balance, I must say that while the uneducated masses and even some educated liberals tend to ignore history's lessons, particularly the greater context of single events and general need for gradual change to prevent backlash, many conservatives (in their zeal to understand and utilize history) say odd things. It is not clear why Rust felt compelled to note that Scott Nearing wrote a good book on maple syrup. Among hundreds of other examples, several conservative writers have been obsessed with the source of the Kennedy family's wealth (Prohibition-era liquor). And currently, several conservative writers are taking an unusual interest in Mahatma Gandhi's preoccupation with the "ingress and egress of food." Fortunately, whether such information is an attempt to discredit the Kennedy brothers, Gandhi, or Nearing, or simply to entertain the reader is of note but not important when the alternative may be ignorance.

William F. Buckley has said a basic principle of conservatism is the belief that the sum total of what has happened to date is more important than the future or the present. To me, those who believe in the need to understand history are not necessarily conservative and not close to all conservatives understand it, even though those such as President Reagan are living in it. I am concerned about the real possibility that America may choose to be happy (and at least temporarily fat, rich and dumb), as *Silas Marner* author George Eliot implied, by choosing to "have no history."

## LETTERS

### Revolutionary threat



Anonymous

### LaRouche

In recent days, there have been people standing outside the main post office in Eugene. They are asking registered Democrats to sign their petitions to put one Lyndon H. LaRouche on the Oregon ballot as the presidential nominee of something called the National Democratic Policy Committee.

When I asked one of the petitioners if this was the LaRouche of National Caucus of Labor Committee fame, I was told in a hostile manner to go away.

It's not surprising. The history of LaRouche is unsavory, to say the least. LaRouche is the Harold Stassen of the political fringe element. He has already run for president three times. In April 1973, he called himself Lyn Marcus as his followers were physically attacking with clubs and lead pipes members of other groups such as the Martin Luther King Coalition and the Young Workers Liberation League.

LaRouche is the hidden hand behind such groups as the U.S. Labor Party, the Fusion Energy Foundation, and the National Anti-Drug Coalition. He preaches a confusing mixture of anti-Semitism, Zionist conspiracy, Big Government, and

sexual freedom from "mother problems." In addition to having organized his own personal pipe-wielding goon squads, his groups have smeared political opponents and kidnapped their own members to "deprogram" them from alleged KGB brainwashing and protect LaRouche from assassination by "zombified" double agents.

People who want to check this out for themselves can read the Aug. 16-23, 1980 issue of *The Nation* or the Feb. 15, 1982 issue of *Inquiry* magazine for further information.

The electoral process has enough problems as it is. Don't burden it further by putting a repulsive and fanatical ideologue like LaRouche on the ballot.

David Isenberg  
P.O. Box 10401  
Eugene

### New idea

How many Gary Harts does it take to screw in a lightbulb? Two. One to do it and the other to tell the public what a "new and bold idea" it is.

David Isenberg

## Buckley mourns at liberalism's 'funeral'

Continued from Page 1

The New Right and Moral Majority are a reaction to the changes in social values that occurred during the 1960s, Clark said. "They wish to purge society of these tendencies," he said.

Whereas President Ronald Reagan is part of the Old Right and serves as a bridge between the Old and New Right, Buckley is part of the New Right coalition of Jerry Falwell, Richard Viguerie and Phyllis Schlafly who killed the Equal Rights Amendment, Clark said. Buckley joined part of the audience in applauding his effort to defeat ERA.

"If the New Right had their way, they would be in a position to impose their views on the American public through government," Clark warned.

During the panel questioning, Buckley said this was the first time he had been called part of the New Right. He said he is part of the Old Right.

Buckley argued that he was part of the Old Right by comparing himself to the "ultrasophisticated" conservative George Will, who thinks government should have morals, thus putting Will in agreement with Falwell. Although he agrees with such a position, Buckley said he tends to be more libertarian.

But conservatism is a negative philosophy without any positive nature that threatens to eliminate the social programs liberalism has established during the last 50 years, Clark said.

But the Bill of Rights also is negative, Buckley said, adding that, "The Bill of Rights is a list of 10 things the Congress can't do."

Just because the conservatives oppose progressive legislation does not mean they do not share the same concerns and values that liberals have, he said.

"Everybody in this room should believe in faith, hope and charity. You should be generous. The difference between him and

me is that I will leave this room tonight without passing a law imposing my view on what is charity."

Welfare programs increasingly fall short of their goals, Buckley said, citing the fact that the percentage of one-parent black families has increased from 20 percent to 50 percent during the last 20 years.

"If we attempted to reach the moon and fell shorter and shorter, we would probably get a new set of designers," he said.

"Ideological commitment prevents them from taking intelligent action," Buckley said.

No program is perfect, but the social programs have been beneficial, Clark said. He asked the crowd whether they thought social programs had failed. Though some in the audience indicated they thought programs such as Social Security and Medicare had failed, a majority of the audience applauded in support of Clark.

Though Clark seemed to have more crowd support than Buckley, it was

Buckley, who stole the show, often being applauded for his witticisms. After the debate, Buckley chatted with admirers, signing autographs and chatting genially while Clark sat ignored in the limousine that was waiting to take the two men to Portland's Benson Hotel.

Buckley still was in top form with his admirers, although the public spotlight of the university auditorium had been replaced by the darkness of a parking lot. After signing a copy of his spy novel, *Who's on First?*, for an elderly woman, he quipped, "You're too young to read some of the chapters in that."

Buckley's performance motivated some conservatives attending the event. A University of Oregon student said that listening to Buckley was "a little like listening to Jesus. You were inspired to dedicate your life to bashing liberals."

"He makes you feel proud to be identified as a conservative," another chimed in.

## SPEW

Child activist Josh O'Brien, 11, proves that anti-nuclear parents do make good stage parents:

"You know what's odd is if I was born in another family, maybe I'd be totally for nuclear arms. It all depends on the evidence you hear about," he says. "I'm not hearing as much from the other direction because my parents have already made up their minds."

Oregon Daily Emerald, 3/8

A moving manifesto in support of the economic democrats of Southeast Asia from Byron Brittingham, particularly useful to those who ignore pre-1975 history:

"Who supports the Pol Pot forces? U.S., China, and some members of the ASEAN. The Reagan administration would put proven mass murderers into a position where history could repeat itself."

Oregon Daily Emerald, 3/5

A cautionary note for faculty advisers as a grad student learns to like himself:

"An unremorseful Theodore Streleski, who bludgeoned a professor at Stanford University to death with a hammer in 1978 and says he isn't sure he won't kill again, will be paroled today under a state law no longer on the books. Streleski, now 47, served 5 1/2 years for the slaying of mathematics professor Karel de-Leeuw. Streleski killed him in frustration at having spent 19 years without obtaining his doctorate degree from the university. He said the killing gave him his self-respect."

Register-Guard, 3/8

Our impending doom is prophesied by a disciple of Alan Cranston, Messiah:

"The only candidate with the courage, wisdom, and integrity to address the real issues is a voice crying unheard in the wilderness.

Not enough people know or care enough about the fate of the world to give Alan Cranston enough support so his, the voice of sanity, can continue to be heard."

"Talk about a whole nation fiddling while the world burns about their ears!"

M. Boyd Berryhill  
Register-Guard, 3-14

A new idea from Gary Hart on how to handle a Czech airliner that violates U.S. airspace and appears headed for a military command center:

"Hart said he would order fighter pilots to look in the airliner's windows and to shoot it down if the passengers were wearing military uniforms."

Register-Guard, 3/13

This just in—Spanish leader Francisco Franco is dead, but his spirit lives:

"An uproar has resulted from a new written exam for aspiring Malaga policemen that asks such questions as 'What do Alaskan fur seals eat?' and 'What is the official currency of Madagascar?' The exam has been protested by local unions, and Mayor Pedro Aparicio called the test 'sur-real.'"

"Three thousand people applied last weekend for 47 police cadet positions by taking the rather unusual test, which contained such questions as 'In what year did the Visigoth King Recusinto die?'... 'In what year was Julio Acosta president of Costa Rica?' and 'In what year was the Battle of Mohacs fought?' Only one of the test's questions refer-

red to Malaga..."

"About 2,000 of the test-takers flunked it. Police Commissioner Jacinto Mera defended the exam

and said those who flunked would not be given another chance."

Register-Guard, 3/13

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