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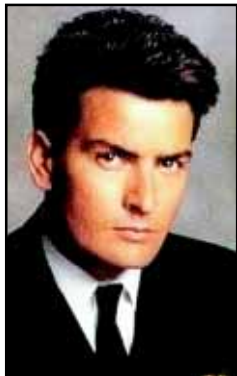
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WAR IN IRAQ

Casualties:

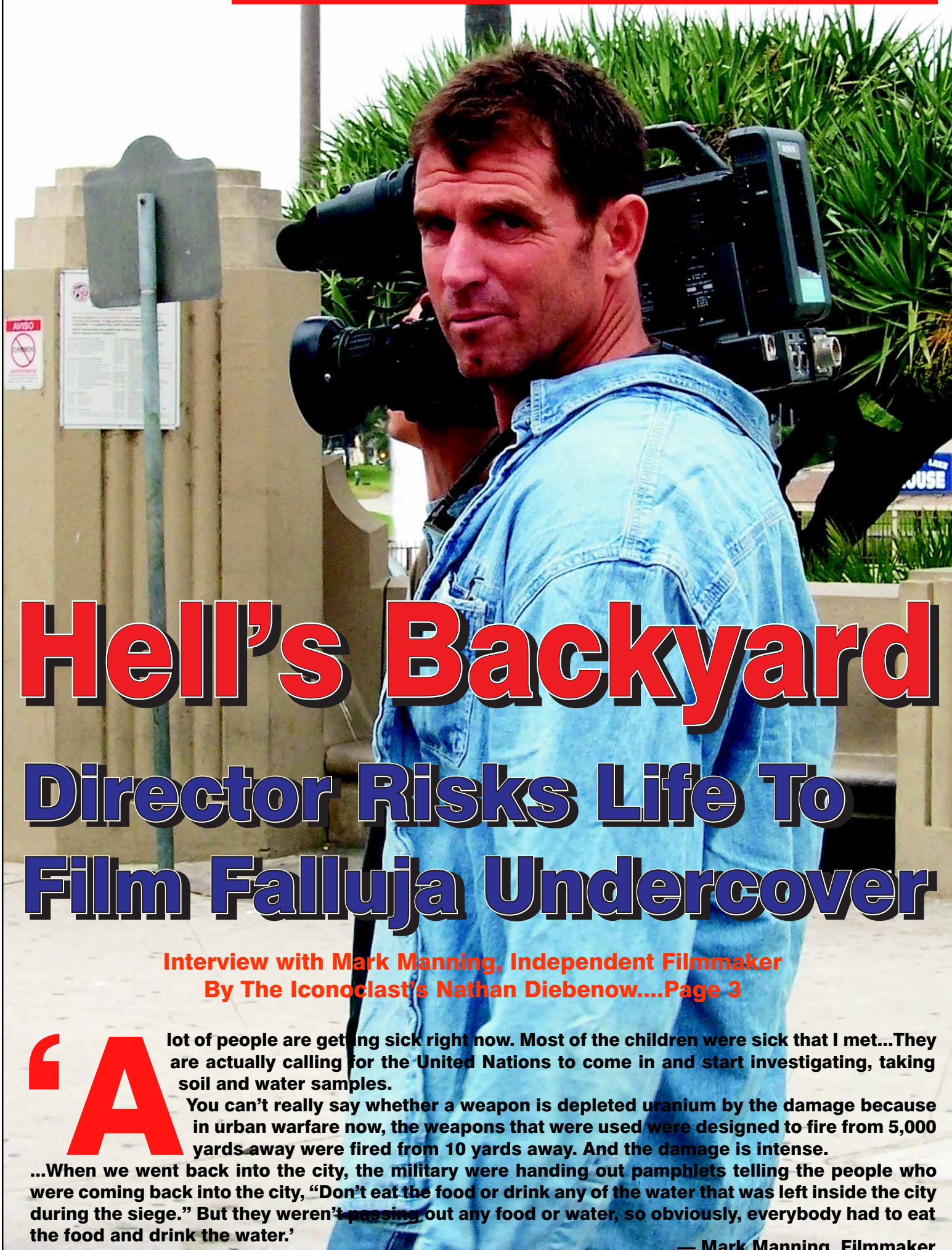
U.S. Military Deaths

2,314

U.S. Govt. Statistics



The Lone Star ICONOCLAST



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A lot of people are getting sick right now. Most of the children were sick that I met...They are actually calling for the United Nations to come in and start investigating, taking soil and water samples.
You can't really say whether a weapon is depleted uranium by the damage because in urban warfare now, the weapons that were used were designed to fire from 5,000 yards away were fired from 10 yards away. And the damage is intense.
...When we went back into the city, the military were handing out pamphlets telling the people who were coming back into the city, "Don't eat the food or drink any of the water that was left inside the city during the siege." But they weren't passing out any food or water, so obviously, everybody had to eat the food and drink the water.'

— Mark Manning, Filmmaker

Wal-Mart's Proposed Bank Struggles On Capitol Hill

WASHINGTON — The world's largest retailer is struggling on Capitol Hill to apply to create an industrial bank to oversee its electronic payment processing.

Last week congressmen on both sides of the aisle asked the U.S. federal Deposit Insurance Corp. to deny Wal-Mart's bank application ahead of public hearings set for April. The reason stated was that the company's financial problems could hurt the bank and the U.S. payment system.

Concerns over the type of bank the retail giant is seeking is also being raised as been raised because an industrial loan company has less regulatory banking oversight. A Wal-Mart spokesman said that the company is waiting for the hearing to reveal why its proposed bank will not offer certain services to retailers and the public and not create bank branches.

Analysts say that Wal-Mart's bid could still pass the FDIC since the industrial bank application for its rival Target Corp. has already succeeded. Still, critics note

that if judging by Wal-Mart's history of driving small retailers out of business, the chain could quite possibly do the same to community bankers.

Calls of out right rejection or caution during the FDIC review has been leveled by many lawmakers already, such as Sen. Hillary Clinton, (D-New York), who is a former Wal-Mart board member, and Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), who sits on the House Financial Services Committee.

U.N. Arms Trade Embargoes Fail, Says Report

CRAWFORD — The United Nations Security Council received a report for human rights groups last week stating that all U.N. arms embargoes have out-and-out failed. The groups ask that stricter measures be taken to regulate weapons proliferation through an international arms trade treaty.

Although this proposed treaty is already backed by 45 countries, including Great Britain and other European Union member nations — the United States, Russia, and China, all three of which account for the most sales of arms, do not support it now.

The report, *U.N. Arms Embargo: An overview of the last 10 years*, explains that one reason proliferation continues is that U.N. member states have not combined the U.N.'s mandatory arms embargoes to that of a criminal offence within their own countries. Another reason is that U.N. investigation teams are underfunded.

The arms trade reforms are also backed by Nobel laureates, a former U.N. high commissioner for human rights, the Albert Schweitzer Institute, and others such as the leader of U.N. forces during the Rwanda genocide, Lt-Gen. Romeo Dellelaire.

"What we are calling for is not revolutionary. It simply consolidates countries' existing and emerging obligations under international law into a universal standard for arms sales. But it has the power to save hundreds of thousands of lives," said a letter from the embargo reform backers.

World Mourns Over Slain Peace Activist

WASHINGTON — To the shock of peace activists around the world, a Quaker who believed in non-violence was discovered dead in Iraq after he was abducted last November with three other members of a Christian Peacemaker Team.

Iraqi police reported that Tom Fox, 54, of Clear Brook, Va., was apparently tortured by electrical cables before he died of gunshots to his head and chest. His body was found by children in an upscale neighborhood of Baghdad.

In a statement posted on its website, Christian Peacemakers said that the organization mourned the loss of Fox and renewed its plea for the release of Canadians Harmeet Sooden and Jim Loney and British national Norman Kember.

A new group, the Swords of Righteousness Brigade, has said it is responsible for the abductions.

Fox quit his 10-year job at a grocery store chain in Springfield, Va. in 2004 to work with the Christian Peacemaker Teams in Iraq. He became a Quaker 22 years ago and served in the U.S. Marine Band for 20 years.

Peacemaker teams have worked in several war-torn areas of the world such as Haiti, Bosnia, Chechnya, and Colombia. Fox's death, however, was the group's first in almost 20 years.

Supremes Deny Puerto Rico U.S. Vote

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The citizens of Puerto Rico still have no right to vote for U.S. presidential elections, according to the U.S. Supreme Court last week.

The appeal that was thrown out by the judges was the latest in a debate over the constitutional rights of the citizens there since the island, which is not an official U.S. state, came under American control in 1898.

Puerto Ricans still have the power to elect a delegate to Congress, although he can only vote in committees.

While the attorney who filed the appeal — Gregorio Igartua — complained that the islanders have "an inferior type of American citizenship," polls show that they are undecided on whether they should become a U.S. state or remain a U.S. commonwealth.

Willie Nelson Concert To Benefit Hill County Fire Departments

HILLSBORO, Texas — Willie Nelson and family will be performing at Carl's Corner, Texas on Monday, July 3, for a pre-4th of July picnic.

The picnic will take place at a staging area near Carl's Corner Truck Stop, located on I-35E, a few miles north of Hillsboro. Slated to perform are Del Castillo, Paulene Reese, Geezinslaw Brother, Asleep at the Wheel, Ray Price, and Willie Nelson.

Nelson donated the first 5,000 tickets sold to the Hill County fire departments to use the money for equipment and other needs.

Only 1,000 tickets remain for the fundraiser.

Tickets are priced at \$35 each and may be purchased from any of the fire departments in Hill County.

For additional information on the concert or where to call for tickets, contact the Hillsboro Fire Department at 254-582-2401 or the Hillsboro Area Chamber of Commerce at 254-582-2481 or e-mail <hillsboro@hillsborochamber.org>.

Hillsboro Area Chamber of Commerce is an official sponsor for the one-day event.

TSTC Waco To Hold College Preview

WACO — Texas State Technical College Waco will welcome visitors and prospective students from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Friday, April 7, and Saturday, April 8, to its annual College Preview and Open House.

After registering for the event at the Student Recreation Center, visitors can step into the SRC gymnasium to ask questions of representatives staffing booths for each of TSTC's technical programs. Also in the SRC, Admissions Advisors will provide information sessions every hour on the half-hour, beginning at 9:30 a.m. In addition, guests can board shuttles to visit technology locations on

campus and examine housing facilities.

During the event, visitors can consult with counselors and testing is available at the Counseling and Testing Center in the Student Services Center. Testing will be offered at 9 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on Friday and at 9 a.m. on Saturday. Financial Aid Office personnel and area lenders will also be on hand to answer questions on how to fund a college education. Visitors can enjoy a free barbecue lunch.

On Saturday, in the parking lot in front of the Student Services Center, visitors may observe muscle cars, antiques and race car on display in the Automotive SkillsUSA car show.



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Hell's Backyard

Director Risks Life To Film Falluja Undercover

Interview with Mark Manning, Independent Filmmaker

BY NATHAN DIEBENOW
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

LOS ANGELES — The way Mark Manning tells it, he didn't know what he was really getting into.

When the former deep sea oil rig diver turned independent filmmaker decided to travel and film the terrified people of the city of Falluja, Iraq, he had only the eyewitness accounts of Iraqis who were attempting to return there with more medicine and aid.

At the time, December 2004, Falluja had been under siege for a month in an attack coordinated by the U.S. military called Operation Phantom Fury.

This, however, wasn't the first time the U.S. took action against the city known for its many beautiful mosques. The original siege started when the dead bodies of four American contractors were burned, hacked to bits, and hoisted onto a bridge spanning the Euphrates River on March 31, 2004.

With the aid of Rana Al-Aioubi, a humanitarian aid worker and journalist, Manning snuck into Falluja to produce their film *Caught in the Crossfire, The Untold Story of Falluja* undetected by Coalition authorities. There they walked with the people of Falluja, capturing their shattered city in which the Pentagon estimated thousands of insurgents had died during the sieges.

The **ICONOCLAST's** Nathan Diebenow spoke with Manning, 45, by telephone to talk about why he went to Falluja to film the devastation, what his expectations were prior to his travels, what the current situations are for the people left in the city, and how his film project and his life has changed.

.....
ICONOCLAST: You shot film footage around the time of the second siege of Falluja, a siege that took place from November 2004 - April 2005. What makes a former deep sea oil rig diver like yourself want to head into a battle zone like Falluja to film in the first place?

MARK MANNING: Well, I quit oil rig diving around 2001 and started a film business doing documentaries, and I was

actually making a different film called *American Voices*. I had been working on that film for two years and I had been going around the United States interviewing Americans about their beliefs on pretty much the Iraq war and terrorism, and I was looking into why people feel the way they feel. I was getting a broad cross section of Americans.

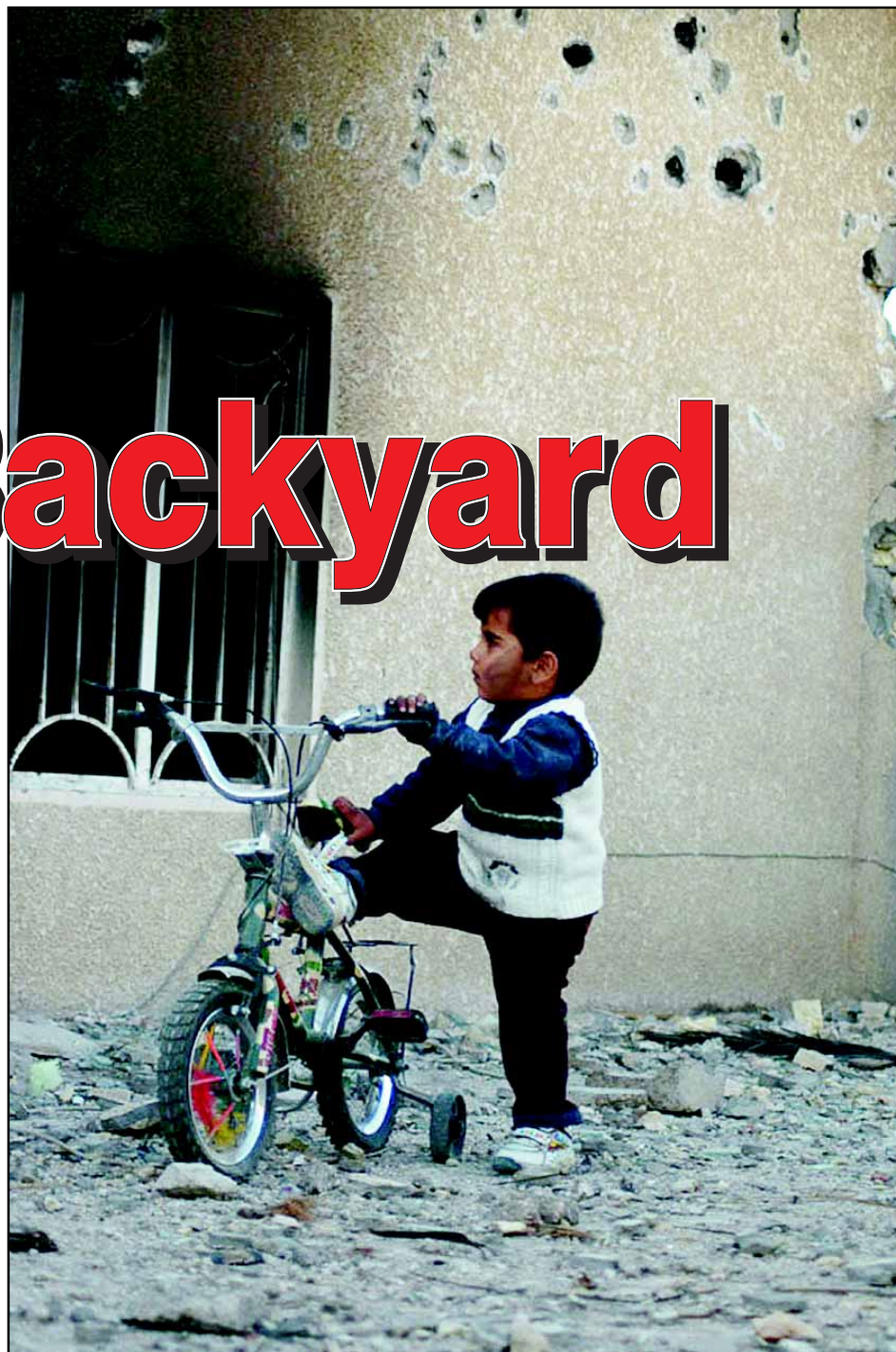
I began to find out in that film that Americans were generally very passionate about their beliefs, but most people had little or no facts to back up why they felt the way they felt on all sides of the issue. Pro-war people really didn't have facts. Anti-war people didn't have any facts. Everybody was really sort of operating from an emotional base.

That documentary was called *American Voices*, and during that time, I had met a series of family members who had lost their children in 9/11 and in the Iraq War. The Iraq War had just started while I was making this film. A group of those families decided to go to the Middle East and try to meet their Iraqi counterparts, the Iraqis who had lost children in this war. They tried to start a peace delegation between the two people who had lost the most. Their premise was if the families who lost children can get together and start talking peace, then why can't the rest of us? They were going to try to set an example that way.

So we couldn't get into Iraq. It was too dangerous, so they went to Jordan and they brought the Iraqi families to Jordan. I went to film that, and made a short film called *Journey To Peace*, and while I was there, some Iraqis were there who had just gotten out of the city of Falluja. The siege had already happened. They started giving eyewitness testimony as to what had happened to the civilians, and hearing that very compelling eyewitness testimony, I felt moved to cover that story, and then they offered me a chance to go there with them unembedded and pretty much document the point of view of the civilians of that city.

ICONOCLAST: And that was in November 2004?

MANNING: It was in December. We



MARK MANNING, 45, (upper left photo) filmmaker from Santa Barbara, Calif. traveled to Falluja, Iraq in secret of the U.S./Coalition authorities to film the devastation there in December 2004. When he returned, Manning created a 20-minute documentary which he intends to release as a full-length feature this summer. Above, a burnt out house serves as a playground for an Iraqi child in the city of Falluja, Iraq. (Mark Manning photo)

ended up joining forces with Iraqi filmmakers and use some of their footage. Iraqis had been in the city during the same filming. The time frame we put in the film is the joint between me being there and the Iraqis being there also.

ICONOCLAST: So for how long were you there?

MANNING: I was in Falluja for three weeks.

ICONOCLAST: What were your expectations prior to entering Iraq?

MANNING: You know, I really didn't know what to think. My expectations were that I think I was hesitant and leary. It really wasn't something I wanted to do. I had done enough thrill-seeking in the oil field that I wasn't looking for another thrill. Having heard their testimony about what had happened to the people there, I think I had a lot of reservations about what I might find. But my expectations — I was trying to keep an opened mind and go in there and see, so I can't say I was looking forward to what I might find, but I really wasn't clear on what I might find there.

ICONOCLAST: How hard was it to get in and out of Iraq during the time you were there?

MANNING: It wasn't easy. I took a humanitarian flight in and we did have medicine. The families that went to Jordan had raised money to bring medicine. They earmarked it for Falluja General Hospital. They had to leave Jordan without delivering that medicine. Iraqis and I took that medicine in. All the journalists got turned around. There were new rules at that time that you had to have a letter from the Iraqi government inviting you in, and I got through there because I had humanitarian aid that I was responsible for. They let me in because of that reason.

So it wasn't that easy but once you got into the airport and through the initial check, then I just left the confines of any authority and met my Iraqi friends and traveled through Iraq pretty much as an Iraqi.

ICONOCLAST: So you were dressed as an Iraqi?

MANNING: Yeah, I had a full beard. We had gone shopping in Jordan to try and blend me in as much as we could with slacks and loafers and full winter overcoat — a cafia.

ICONOCLAST: What did you have to
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do to be psychologically there and handle what you saw?

MANNING: Just a lot of meditation and prayer was the way I psychologically prepared myself. I have a pretty strong spiritual base. I did a lot of prayer about it.

ICONOCLAST: What equipment did you take with you? You said you were there for three weeks. Were you going spartan in terms of your film equipment?

MANNING: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I had two small cameras and a still camera and then I had some sound gear and a lot of small tapes. It was a one-man show really. A very rugged bare bones film package I took in, something I could carry on my back. I had everything in one little backpack.

ICONOCLAST: How did your relationship with your producer Rana Al-Aioubi develop?

MANNING: I met her in Jordan. She was part of the delegation, working as a translator, and we just developed a very close friendship as any friendships develop. We found a lot in common with each other and trust and mutual respect. We spent I think it was up to a month in Jordan just developing a trusting relationship.

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, how long were you in Jordan?

MANNING: I think I was there for three months.

ICONOCLAST: So you were there to cover this one event among the Iraqi and American families, and then you go off on this other jaunt, so to speak. You were okay with film stock and stuff?

MANNING: Well, the only thing I really needed over there were tapes. I had brought a bunch of equipment from Jordan to film that conference. Jordan is a lot easier to film in, of course. It's actually allowed. So I left my tripods and everything like that, and when I went into Iraq bare-boned down to what I could carry, I had tapes because we were shooting on mini-DV, those tapes you can actually find in Jordan. We took spare tapes, everything with us you might imagine. You're not going to find spare parts in Iraq.

ICONOCLAST: On top of shooting footage over a three-week period of time, you lived among the people of Iraq. What are they like?

MANNING: It was a really beautiful experience actually. We set up a base at a farm house right outside of Falluja where we lived with the refugee village, where a lot of the refugees from the city had come. We were living in a one-room farmhouse with 60 people. It was about 10 families. They just made me a part of their family. We would stay up all night in this one-room farmhouse, and they would all gather round and talk to me and ask me questions, and I would ask them questions, and they, you know, sheltered me and fed me and protected me. We would make jaunts into the city, stay there a few days at a time, and come back and stay at the refugee house. By the end of it, we became very close. They made me a member of their family. They were all crying when I left (because) they had met an American who they could trust and believe in. We formed a really tight, tight friendship. It was a beautiful experience.

ICONOCLAST: You've compared Falluja to Cincinnati, Ohio with regard to land area—

MANNING: And the population of the incorporated area of Cincinnati.

ICONOCLAST: Right. And do the Iraqis compare the siege of Falluja as their version of 9/11? Do they see it in those terms?

MANNING: I think they do in the terms of 9/11 in that they feel they have been a victim of a terrorist strike, and they're looking at America as terrorists, so in that term they look at it that way. Yes. And it has become very, very famous. All of Iraq knows about Falluja, what happened there, the people of Iraq, and so do the people of the Middle East. There are folk songs being written about it. They are playing on all the airwaves as you go through Jordan. A friend of mine in Syria said they heard about it on the radio. There's brochures everywhere passed out on the street with pictures of all the mosques in Falluja that were destroyed, pictures with anti-American slogans written on them, and the most common name for babies in Iraq is Falluja. Women are naming their babies Falluja.

ICONOCLAST: Wow, it's become this a big cultural storm.

MANNING: Yeah, it's become a battle-cry really across the world for an anti-American sentiment now.

ICONOCLAST: So did you meet any member of the Coalition forces there? What were they like?

MANNING: I only saw Marines and Iraqi National Guards. My impression of the Marines on the ground — I have a very serious problem with American policy — but the Marines I met on the ground were very professional. I never saw them acting inappropriately. As a matter of fact, they saved my life a couple of times for being detained by the Iraqi National Guard. I think the policy of the American government is causing a lot of problems, and the Iraqi National Guardsmen themselves are definitely considered thugs and dangerous. They're Shias. They wear complete face masks, and you know, they are very dangerous people to be around. When the Marines aren't around controlling them, they're very dangerous to the Iraqi people, the Sunnis in Falluja especially. They've done a lot to fan the flames of — civil war we're talking about here now.

ICONOCLAST: So you say there's a civil war even back in 2004?

MANNING: I was looking at the beginning of it because we were using Shias to carry out operations in a Sunni town, and the Shias were being ruthless. The Fallujans were saying, "We want Sunnis in our town." And it looked like the beginning of serious trouble to me.

ICONOCLAST: Do you think that the move to incorporate Shias to patrol Sunni lands was intentional? Do you think it was meant to stir up trouble?

MANNING: Personally — and I'm very careful of when I speak about this now between what I know and what I don't know — I don't know the answer to that question. When I don't know the answer, I will say that, but I also like to say what the Iraqis tell me. And in Falluja especially, and really the Sunni area, they think that that's absolutely the case, that the Shias were being hired and put on certain missions to fan the flames of unrest because the Iraqi people think that if there wasn't this unrest, the very first thing a united Iraq would do is force the Americans to leave. They call it "planned chaos." They definitely think that the



REFUGEE WOMEN AND CHILDREN lived in tents, cars, or farmhouses during the sieges of Falluja, Iraq. Young survivors of the two sieges of Falluja, Iraq, often go into catatonic states but when they snap out of it, they scream with horror, according to filmmaker Mark Manning who produced a film giving voice to the people still living there.

— Photo By Mark Manning

Shias were hired to come to Sunni areas to carry out these operations. It is definitely a technique to create civil disorder and strife, so the Americans will have to stay.

I just want to be clear that I'm telling you what they told me. I don't have enough information to really make that kind of judgment.

ICONOCLAST: Can you speak to the claims that depleted uranium radiation from American military munitions is negatively affecting the people of Iraq?

MANNING: Yeah, I think that's a very good question. All I can tell you is that this urban warfare is amazingly destructive, and nobody knows right now what munitions are being used. But the Iraqis are calling for an investigation, especially in Falluja where most of the city has been destroyed. A lot of people are getting sick right now. Most of the children were sick that I met. They are calling for an investigation because it

doesn't do any good to say it wasn't done or it isn't done without investigating it. They are actually calling for the United Nations to come in and start investigating, taking soil and water samples.

So they are asking that that be done because you can't really say whether a weapon is depleted uranium by the damage because in urban warfare now, the weapons that were used were designed to fire from 5,000 yards away were fired from 10 yards away. And the damage is intense.

And also when we went back into the city, the military were handing out pamphlets telling the people who were coming back into the city, "Don't eat the food or drink any of the water that was left inside the city during the siege." But they weren't passing out any food or water, so obviously, everybody had to eat the food and drink the water.

ICONOCLAST: Wow! It's almost like

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AN OLD MAN walks home passed a blown out building in Falluja Iraq after the second siege there led by American forces.

— Photo By Mark Manning

Hell's Backyard

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we gave them blankets with small pox. From what kind of symptoms were the children and adults suffering? Can you talk about that?

MANNING: Yeah, psychologically, there was a lot of trauma damage. You can tell just by people having the shakes. Children had sort of blank stares that were hard to reach, and when they snapped out of it, they go into terror with screams and yells. Then a lot of open sores on their faces. Fevers. Parents saying their children have kidney problems. Diarrhea. Just a lot of bad signs of physical breakdown and of the immune system and disease. But you know, that alone was pretty disturbing.

ICONOCLAST: I understand that the main part of the DVD is 18 minutes long, and that there is extra footage on there, too. What footage didn't make it on to the DVD?

MANNING: Well, we're making a 90-minute documentary, and I believe in being balanced and I don't like to bring up an issue without giving both sides to the issue, so in the short version — the 20 minutes you're talking about — our sole purpose was to show what this war in Falluja is like for the civilians, to show their situation. The interviews that we put in there were short with people just describing their situation today, and what we left out was people talking about, for instance, chemical weapons or DU because in the longer version when that comes up to analyze it more succinctly and give all sides to the story. We also cut it to the point where it could play on television, so we left out some of the grotesque scenes of the dead bodies. We're showing mass graves, but we're not showing the actual bodies shattered, headless, and all that kind of stuff. We tried to make it compelling to watch and moving to watch and look very believable, and we're trying to make a film that all people will watch and not offend people as far as bringing up a point that we don't give both sides a chance to comment on. So if I have a civilian in Iraq in the documentary saying that the American military used chemical weapons, well, what we'll do is talk to the American military and have them give their response to that. I think that's only fair journalism.

ICONOCLAST: How hard was the editing process for you personally? You went over footage that you've taken which is like reliving the whole scene over and over.

MANNING: It was a very emotional

process editing this kind of stuff, emotional because I'm deeply connected with the people there, but it's inspiring more than it is troubling. What I found from the people of Falluja is they can be our teachers about compassion and grace when we were told they were insurgents and terrorists. What I found from the people whose city was destroyed by American policy, they have a totally open feeling about the people of America. So as troubling and emotionally devastating as it was to see all that, it also gave me a real strong hope for peaceful solutions. So going through that, I'm usually inspired and remembering these people, and they're giving me that motivation and hope for the future. It's kind of a dual thing. It's very painful to remember but it's also very inspiring to remember because they told me, "Go home. Tell the American people what's happening here. They'll save us. They'll stop all of this if they only knew." I think there's a lot to learn from people like that because here in this country when 9/11 happened, we pretty much wanted to kill all Arabs, and you know, the people of Falluja have their whole city destroyed and their children and their lives and their mosques and they're compassionate toward the American people. There's a lot to learn from a group of people like that.

ICONOCLAST: I imagine that when you returned to the United States, you showed signs of post traumatic stress disorder. Are you pretty much over it?

MANNING: Yeah, I think I'm pretty much over it. You know, when you come back, you have it, and I think one of the leading ways to heal that is to realize you have it. I was fortunate to have friends who were combat veterans — Navy Seals — who actually work in the field of post traumatic stress, and they treated me as soon as I got back. So I had a good support system and I also realized that I had it. I think it's important for anybody that comes back from combat zones to get the support they need because you can't come back from there without it. As long as you can catch it early and treat it early, there's a solid way to come out of it.

ICONOCLAST: Good, good. And what has been the reaction to your 20-minute film so far? Lot of people have seen it?

MANNING: A lot of people have seen it, and it's been a really, really positive experience. People generally really appreciate the film. They really like it. They like the fact that I'm not preaching. They like the tone of it and they are very moved



HOLDING A TIGGER DOLL, a child from Falluja, Iraq, stares into space, a witness to the horrors of a U.S.-led siege that started in part to the killing and mutilation of four U.S. contractors there on March 31, 2004. — Photo By Mark Manning

by it. It's starting to spread across the country and across the world even. It's getting pretty much high reviews and acclaims from people. I think they appreciate the fact that we've made it as short as it is on this one subject without preaching. I think people really appreciate that. Show the truth and let the audience decide and think about it. That's what we went after.

ICONOCLAST: Since you left, what has become of the people of Falluja?

MANNING: You know, that's a really good question. A lot of people were forced back into the city. There were actually raids made on a lot of these farmhouses where I was at, forcing people to go back in (to the city) because I think they didn't want their story to get out. The city itself is still under curfew. There's still fighting going on there. Marines are dying there. Civilians are still dying there. And then the checkpoints have been established around the city. Everybody that was forced back into the city by gunpoint was given a retina-scan, fingerprinted and a barcode and put on this thing called a C-list by the American military where they are now registered terrorists. If they leave the city and are stopped outside the city and their cards are shown, they will be detained. So the people of Falluja are

pretty much living under horrific conditions and are sealed inside their own city and are not allowed to leave.

ICONOCLAST: Wow! That sounds like New World Order kinds of stuff.

MANNING: Yeah, all of them, kids, women, everybody.

ICONOCLAST: Well, I noticed that 25 percent of the profits from this DVD goes to charity to the people of Falluja. Where specifically does the 25 percent go to? What organization(s)?

MANNING: There's a couple of them. All of the aid organizations in Iraq have withdrawn, all the international ones and the United Nations, of course. Everybody pulled out of there. So when we went in, it was me and a couple of Iraqis, Rana and myself that put this medicine in, and we became like the international aid for the city of Falluja. It was one cart at a time, Rana and I carrying this aid on our shoulders in boxes because we weren't allowed to drive to Falluja General Hospital across that bridge where the contractors were hung, across a live fire zone, one box at a time — we did it for three weeks straight. That was the international aid that came in to Falluja. To this day that is the way the aid is getting in. Individual Iraqi people are braving the

Continued On Next Page



DOWNTOWN FALLUJA was ravaged during the November 2004 siege led by U.S. forces after four American contractors were killed near there. — Photo By Mark Manning

Hell's Backyard

Continued From Previous Page

checkpoints and combat zones and taking the aid in. When they do these missions, we send them money, and there's one aid organization called International Peace Angels that was formed by these Iraqis. Another one is like for individual orphanages in Falluja that we are trying to fund right now. I have friends over there and doctors, and when they call and say they need something, we send them the money. It's very tricky. It has to be done obviously squeaky clean and it takes a long time to get done, but really what it emphasizes is the complete breakdown of the society over there where so many people are sick and dying in these combat zones, and there's no aid at all being delivered. It has to be done through these one time shots of cash and individual Iraqis. We post most of that stuff on our website when we do the missions.

ICONOCLAST: Is that the <<http://www.conceptionmedia.net/index.html>>? MANNING: Correct.

ICONOCLAST: If you could do it all over again, would you do it? If so, why?

MANNING: Yes. It's probably been the most important thing I've ever done in my life. It made me a much better person, and what has really made me a much better person is experiencing the deepness and realness of these people over there. The people of Falluja have taught me a lot about what it means to be a human. What is so important to me is that there are the people we were told are extreme Islamic radicals, and they ended up being the most beautiful people I've ever experienced in my life. I continue to learn from them.

ICONOCLAST: And would you do anything differently?

MANNING: Yeah, I probably would have filmed more. (laughs) It's very dangerous to film over there, and you know, every time you pull the camera out, you're risking your life. If I had to do it all over again, I would have filmed more. I missed a few things that I wish I had on film.

ICONOCLAST: What is your next project? I guess a part of it would be getting this 90-minute documentary out, right?

MANNING: Right.

ICONOCLAST: How far along are you with that?

MANNING: I'm pretty close. We're going to release it this summer, and the premise of that movie is that we're going to try to dispel all the myths that allow this violence to continue and show the common humanity between the American people and the people of Iraq. I don't think there are any terrorists except for a few wacked out people. I think it's just a matter of violence, only caused by misconceptions, and if we can break those misconceptions, and we can have people talking to each other, we can stop this violence and that's what we're going to focus on with this film. Breaking down the misconceptions of who each other are and connecting the Iraqi people to the American people.

ICONOCLAST: Is there anything you wanted to add?

MANNING: When I say there are not terrorists, obviously if you take a bomb and try to kill civilians with that bomb, you're a terrorist, and I think the thing is though that if you call everybody a terrorist, you missed the chance to create peace and I guess it's really important for us to look at the humanity of each

other. That's what I did by going into Falluja. I found the most beautiful people I've ever been around, so I just hope we can try to start to find the humanness in each other.

MORE INFO:

Conception Media
www.conceptionmedia.net/index.html

China, Russia Stand Firm On Iran Negotiations

BEIJING — China and Russia stood together last Tuesday in their plea for negotiations with Iran to assuage its aspirations for developing nuclear energy for civilian use.

The United Nation's Security Council — China, Russia, the United States, Britain and France — remain in disagreement over a statement on halting Iran's uranium enrichment program, which it maintains has the right to do for peaceful purposes.

A Chinese official said that his country has okayed a Russian proposal to let Iran use an internationally-monitored Russian plant for uranium enrichment purposes, saying that some oversight is better than none from the International

U.S. Troops Killed Civilians, Report Iraqi Police

BAGHDAD, Iraq — An Iraqi police report released by Knight Ridder newspapers says that U.S. troops earlier this month executed 11 Iraqi people after a house raid in pursuit of a suspected terrorist.

Although claims that American forces have killed civilians are not unusual and turn out to be false, the document detailing the incident in the Abu Sifa area of

Ishaqi, 60 miles north of Baghdad, came from Iraqi police with the signature of an Iraqi police colonel, Col. Fadhil Muhammed Khalaf.

A U.S. military spokesman said that he held no information to prove nor disprove the report's claims. However, Gen. Issa al-Juboori, the head of the center that wrote the report, said that document is true to the current police investigation into the event.

The U.S. military's official account of the incident differs from the Iraqi police report after the firefight between the suspected al-Qaida member inside the house and the U.S. ground force and the helicopter gunships.

The U.S. military says the building fell due to the barrage of gunfire, but the al-Qaida suspect was still alive and then arrested. The troops also uncovered a dead man thought to be an al-Qaida member, two dead women, and a dead child.

The Joint Coordination Center's report, which follows the local police report, said U.S. forces entered the house as it still stood and "gathered the family members in one room and executed 11 persons, including five children, four women and two men. Then they bombed the house, burned three vehicles and killed their animals."

The report further details the dead's names and ages.

A local Iraqi police commander said autopsies "revealed that all the victims had bullet shots in the head and all bodies were handcuffed." Knight Ridder was unable to reach a hospital spokesman for its initial story.

The U.S. military's spokesman said, however, that in photographs of the victims he had seen did not show handcuffs, a point which fostered doubts of the report in him. He added that he didn't know which U.S. unit conducted the raid.

Neighbors and townspeople verified the U.S. troops' involvement in the incident and wanted an explanation, according to Knight Ridder.

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna.

Still, the West insists that Iran is making moves to create nuclear weapons, an allegation the Middle Eastern nation denies. During his speech in Cleveland, President Bush continued his threat to use military force if Iran does not comply but still insisted the Security Council agree on a solution.

"The threat from Iran is, of course, their stated objective to destroy our strong ally Israel," he said. "That's a threat, a serious threat. It's a threat to world peace... I made it clear, I'll make it clear again, that we will use military might to protect our ally, Israel."

Iran restarted its uranium program last August after a 2004 agreement fizzled.

Voter Activists Sue California Over Diebold

SAN FRANCISCO — Diebold, Inc. took another shot last week when voter activist groups in California filed a lawsuit in Superior Court in San Francisco against the state's head election official for certifying the use of the company's electronic voting machine systems.

The lawsuit is intended to reverse Secretary of State Bruce McPherson's certification last month and block the purchase of Diebold's TSX products. Similar systems were used in California's November 2005 special election.

Troubles for Diebold in California started at the polls during the state's March 2004 primary election. Glitches there were blamed on the company's voting systems, causing activists to question their security.

Later that same year, the company settled a California lawsuit for \$2.6 million. The suit claimed Diebold lied about its security to get payments for e-voting equipment there.

Almost half of the counties in California have used Diebold voting systems.

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Bush Passes Troop Withdrawal To Next President

WASHINGTON — In his second White House news conference of this year, President Bush said last Tuesday that a future president will decide when to bring U.S. troops back from Iraq in the years to come.

Bush said he remained optimistic about the American presence in Iraq while rejecting claims that civil war has engulfed the region, claims such as those made by former Iraqi prime minister hand-picked by the administration Ayad Allawi.

If civil war does develop, however, President Bush said he would bring all the 130,000 troops home. Until then, he has no plans to restructure his Cabinet, he said, as he defended Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld from calls of resignation.

The conference was intended to assuage the president's low approval ratings, which are direct tied to his handling the war in Iraq and the aftermath of two hurricanes that ripped through the Gulf Coast. In a rare move, President Bush even called on longtime White House correspondent Helen Thomas, a unapologetic critic of the administration's plan to go to war in Iraq.

During the hour-long conference, Bush played down criticisms from within

his own Republican Party as a "certain unease" in an election year.

The president also took to the offensive against Sen. Russell Feingold (D-Wis.) who has called for Bush to be censured for authorizing the secret Na-

tional Security Agency spying program to eavesdrop on American citizens.

Sen. Feingold has also been a chief opponent of the USA Patriot Act, which President Bush reauthorized earlier this month with an addendum stating that he

should not be required to tell Congress of the FBI's activities the measure now granted the agency. Under the law, though, Bush is regularly required to inform Congress at certain times.

In a statement, Bush said could work around the law if he thought that disclosing the information would "impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative process of the executive, or the performance of the executive's constitutional duties."

Past presidents have issued such signing statements, but the frequency of these statements have escalated under the Bush administration as it has claimed more constitutional privileges.

"The president's signing statements are not the law, and Congress should not allow them to be the last word," said Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vermont), a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, in a prepared statement. "The president's constitutional duty is to faithfully execute the laws as written by the Congress, not cherry-pick the laws he decides he wants to follow. It is our duty to ensure, by means of congressional oversight, that he does so."

The White House notes that the Inspector General has not found any civil rights abuses caused by the act.

Peace Activists Rescued In Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq — After four months in captivity, three Christian peace activists were rescued by U.S. and British troops last Thursday. Although not one bullet was fired in the operation, one of the kidnaped activists — Tom Fox — was found dead three weeks prior.

The three liberated members of the Christian Peacemaker Team were Canadians James Loney, 41, and Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32, and Briton Norman Kember, 74. The two Canadians needed hospital care, but the Briton was in "reasonable condition," according to a British official.

Although the U.S. military said the American Fox was a victim of apparent torture, Claire Evans of the Chicago-based CPT group said his body showed no signs of torture when she and others viewed it at a military base in Dover, Del.

"We didn't see any signs of torture, and we do not believe that he was tortured," Evans told The Associated Press. "There was a Newsweek story that said his throat was slit. We saw no indication of that whatsoever. There was a gunshot wound to the head and gunshots wounds to the chest."

The Christian Peacemaker Teams' volunteers have investigated allegations of Coalition forces' abusing Iraqi detainees since October 2002. CPT co-director Doug Pritchard said the Coalition should leave Iraq because the "illegal occupation ... is the root cause of the insecurity which led to this kidnapping and so much pain and suffering in Iraq."

So far, five American civilians have been killed in Iraq. Australian Douglas Wood was the last civilian hostage to be rescued by the use of military force.

A freelance writer is still missing in Iraq since his Jan. 7 kidnaping. A military official said he could not discuss any information on Jill Carroll of the *Christian Science Monitor*.

Southern Celebs Criticize, Snub Bush

CRAWFORD — Usually keeping their politics to themselves, celebrities from Southern states have openly criticized President Bush as of late. One even refused to mix politics with her non-partisan charity by turning down an invitation to meet with the president at a GOP fundraiser.

Earlier this month, country music entertainers Faith Hill and Tim McGraw tearfully slammed the slow progress in cleaning up the Gulf Coast states after Hurricane Katrina during a press conference to promote of their Soul2Soul II Tour.

"When you have people dying because they're poor and black or poor and white, or because of whatever they are — if that's a number on a political scale — then that is the most wrong thing. That erases everything that's great about our country," said McGraw, 38, of Delhi, La., on ABC News Radio.

McGraw extended criticism President Bush's way: "There's no reason why someone can't go down there who's supposed to be the leader of the free world ... and say, 'I'm giving you a job to do and I'm not leaving here until it's done. And you're held accountable, and you're held accountable, and you're held accountable."

"This is what I've given you to do, and if it's not done by the time I get back on my plane, then you're fired and someone else will be in your place."

Hill, a native of Jackson, Miss., exploded with anger, calling the situation, "Bull- - -."

"I fear for our country if we can't handle our people [during] a natural disaster. And I can't stand to see it," she added. "It doesn't take a brain surgeon to figure out point A to point B. . . . And they can't even skip from point A to point B. It's just screwed up."

The Country Music Association has nominated McGraw and Hill's duet "Like We Never Loved At All" as the Vocal Event of the Year.

More recently, pop star Jessica Simpson, 25, a native of Abilene, Texas, turned down an invitation to meet with President Bush about her charity — Operation Smile — during a fund-raiser for the National Republican Congressional Committee.

Sources close to the star of "Dukes of Hazzard" told Reuters last week that she didn't want to talk to the president at the fund-raiser because her charity, which gives free plastic surgery for poor children with facial deformities overseas, is a non-profit organization.

The NRCC fund-raiser is expected to raise \$7.5 million for Republican candidates in the congressional mid-term elections in November. Each plate costs the \$2,500 at the dinner event.

Wearing cowboy boots and hot pants, Simpson can currently be seen in a TV advertisement for a pizza company.



Tim McGraw



Faith Hill



Jessica Simpson

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Water Forum's Stance Saddens Activists

MEXICO CITY, Mexico — Activists expressed their disappointment toward the Fourth World Water Forum last week here as the organization composed of transnational corporations and wealthy nations issued a declaration that failed to include access to water as a fundamental human right.

Members of the Forum argued that adopting such language, although noble in principle, could be detrimental internationally because legal problems might occur due to it. As a compromise, the delegates from 148 countries added a phrase that said water is a "guarantee of life for all of the world's people" in the non-binding agreement.

The three Latin American countries — Bolivia, Cuba, and Venezuela — dissented, siding with the water rights activists and adding that the privatization of water resources through free trade agreements could harm much of the world's people, of which 1.1 billion people have no access to water.

The activists at the Mar. 17-19 International Forum in Defense of Water, which issued its own human rights declaration for water access, noted that the organizer of the FWW Forum, World Water Council, is a think tank that handles water policy on behalf of a global network of private businesses.

Still, delegates of the Forum maintain that they are concerned with keeping water and sanitation services a high priority for community and regional development and with expanding access to water services. Delegates, like those from the World Bank, also admitted the failings of water privatization.

The Forum, which is not an official intergovernmental meeting though it gathered over 13,000 representatives from big business, governments and U.N. agencies, ended in Mexico City on World Water Day last Wednesday. The next gathering will take place in Istanbul in 2009.

Actor Challenges Official 9/11 Story

AUSTIN — The 9/11 Truth Movement shot into the mainstream media last week as actor Charlie Sheen challenged the U.S. government's official explanation of the events that led to the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York City almost five years ago.

Sheen called into question the government's version of the events a "conspiracy theory" last Monday on The Alex Jones Show on the GCN Radio Network.

"We're not the conspiracy theorists on this particular issue," said Sheen during the phone interview. "It seems to me like 19 amateurs with box cutters taking over four commercial airliners and hitting 75 percent of their targets, that feels like a conspiracy theory. It raises a lot of questions."

Sheen went on to specifically challenge the official reason why "Building 7" crumbled, noting that it fell yet was not directly hit by the airplanes that had earlier slammed into the World Trade Center's Twin Towers.

"There was a feeling, it just didn't look like any commercial jetliner I've flown

on any time in my life and then when the buildings came down later on that day I said to my brother, 'Call me insane, but did it sorta look like those buildings came down in a controlled demolition?'"

Sheen pointed to Larry Silverstein's use of the term "pull" in a September 2002 PBS documentary when the owner of the WTC complex said that the decision was made to "pull" Building 7 before its collapse. The term "pull" is demolition industry jargon for collapsing a building by pulling in its outer walls to the middle of the imploding structure. Firefighters on the scene could attest to the demolition-style make-up of the collapse, the actor said.

Sheen continued to wonder about President Bush's slow response on Sept. 11, 2001, and about the suspicious nature of the plane that is said to have crashed into the Pentagon, video footage of which has not been released by the government showing the plane's impact.

"September 11 wasn't the Zapruder film, it was the Zapruder film festival," the actor stressed, calling for an independent investigation into the matter for the

sake of the family members of the victims of 9/11.

"It is up to us because we owe it to the families, we owe it to the victims. We owe it to everybody's life who was drastically altered, horrifically that day and forever. We owe it to them to uncover what happened," said Sheen.

On CNN's Showbiz Tonight last Thursday, the star of hit comedy show "Two and a Half Men" addressed his critics who attempted to discredit him by blasting his personal life, not by arguing the facts.

"I am an American citizen that loves my country and as a citizen with my passion for this great country I demand that I be challenged on the facts, not on immature behavior from 20 years ago," said Sheen. "If they continue to attack me personally it only gives credence to our side of the argument."

Sheen added that his critics failed to realize that both Dan Rather and Peter Jennings — seasoned television news anchors who covered the events on Sept. 11 — had similar "gut reactions" when they referred on air to the collapse of the buildings as looking like a controlled demolition.

Sheen restated his stance on Building 7 and asked that the owner of the World

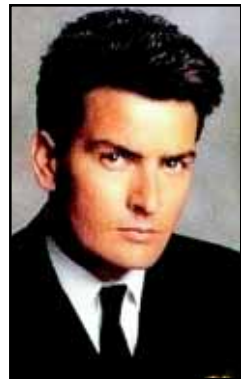
Trade Center come forth and explain why she referred to its collapse using the term "pull."

"When someone makes a statement like that I think it warrants a follow-up response," said Sheen. "In fact, you know what. I'll come right out and say that I'm personally requesting a direct answer from Mr. Silverstein about what he meant....give him my number, tell him to call me. I'm just curious. Tell him to call CNN, tell him to call somebody because you cannot make a statement like that and not follow it up, and not back it up and not explain it."

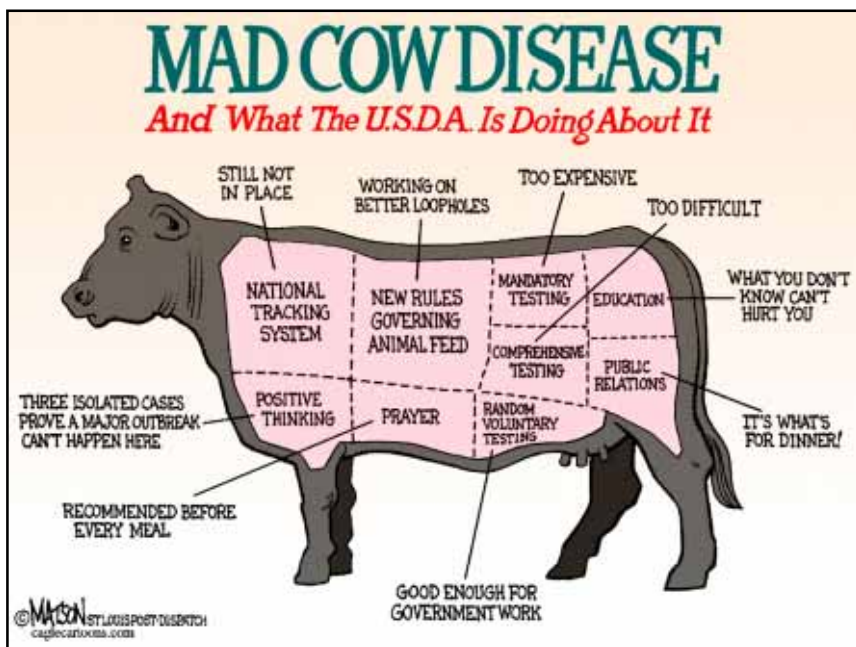
Sheen and Jones, who appeared earlier in the week on CNN, congratulated host A.J. Hammer and his production team for having them on the show to give the 9/11 Truth Movement a fair shake in the mainstream media. A CNN poll that ran during the week found that around 82 percent of its viewers supported Sheen's views on 9/11.

Jones told Hammer that more celebrities hold Sheen's views but keep them secret for their own reasons. When asked, the broadcaster from Austin refused to divulge names of these actors for their protection.

INFO
Prison Planet, www.prisonplanet.com



Charlie Sheen



Kansas Meatpacker Sues Gov't For More 'Mad Cow' Tests

WASHINGTON — A Kansas meatpacker isn't satisfied with the federal government scaling back its testing for the mad cow disease, so it has decided to take a case to the U.S. District Court in Washington.

Creekstone Farms Premium Beef CEO John Stewart stressed at a news conference last week that although he believes that the U.S. beef is safe, his consumers want the tests. According to court documents, though, the Agriculture Department will file criminal charges against the company if the testing is performed.

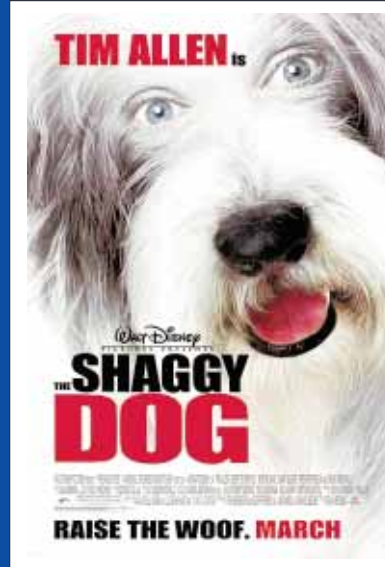
While the department maintains it has the final say over the tests, officials there say that testing every animal does not ensure food safety and therefore should not be implemented across the board. Roughly one percent of the 35 million head of slaughtered cattle are tested

each year, and the test reductions are currently being planned.

The U.S. meatpacking industry fears pressure from Japanese buyers who want the testing done, which may not always find mad cow disease irregardless in the source of most beef, namely younger cattle. The disease is tested for in almost every head of cattle in Japan. In the U.S., testing each animal would add about 10 cents per pound to meat consumption costs.

Because of a Japanese ban of U.S. veal, Creekstone fired 150 of its plant workers in Kansas. Japan has cause for worry since it has had 24 cases of mad cow disease, also known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE. Over 150 deaths worldwide have taken place due to this human nerve disorder that effects the brain.

Shaggy Dog



Tim Allen transforms from a family dad to family dog and back again in this update / remake of THE SHAGGY D.A. When district attorney Allen takes a case that involves an animal laboratory, he is accidentally infected with a top-secret, genetic-mutation serum that transforms him into the household pet. This new identity allows him to gain a whole new perspective on his family's secrets and dreams.

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DR. HANSARD OF THE BOSQUE VALLEY FAMILY DENTAL OFFICE provided a demonstration of dental care to a group of Crawford first and second grade students. He taught the youngsters about proper flossing, brushing, and general dental care.

— Staff Photo By Michael Harvey

Strayhorn Calls For A Halt To NAIS

AUSTIN — Texas Independent Candidate for Governor Carole Keeton Strayhorn today said Gov. Rick Perry should stop the state's participation in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) and that the whole program should be looked at from top to bottom in the upcoming special session of the Legislature.

"No half-baked solution should be accepted and the Texas Animal Identification System (TAIS) should be rescinded and repealed," said Strayhorn, "and the Texas Legislature should clearly state that it will not fund any such program and is against the federal NAIS."

"This program is big government tax mandates at its worst," Strayhorn said. "This unfunded tax mandate threatens the livelihoods of ranchers and places unreasonable burdens on every animal handler from veterinarians to livestock show organizers to children raising prized livestock."

Perry signed into law House Bill 1361 that directs the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) to create rules administering the government ID program that could require each horse, cow, steer, bull, pig, sheep, goat, turkey, chicken and other domestic and exotic livestock be registered and tagged with an electronic identifier. It also requires each rancher-cattle, horse, chicken, etc. - to register with the state and pay a fee.

Strayhorn said Perry, who once served as Texas Agriculture Commissioner, should not be supporting this intrusion into rural Texas life and lifestyle.

"Maybe he didn't understand just how intrusive this program is when he signed it into law," she said. "But now that the TAHC is debating rules to implement the

program, it is clear this unwieldy tax program needs to be abandoned." She said lawmakers should be given the opportunity during the special session Perry has called to begin April 17 to abolish Texas' participation in the program.

"The USDA is already slowing this program and is essentially letting states impose the animal tracking systems," Strayhorn said. "Texas should just say no, now."

Strayhorn has always fought for less mandates and less government regulation and especially against unfunded and unnecessary mandates that create new layers of taxes and unnecessary burdens on our farmers, ranchers, and veterinarians, and even tries to tax our school children

raising prize livestock for competitions.

"I strongly oppose the overly burdensome and intrusive NAIS because it is another tax on our agriculture community, which should be taxed less not more, unduly burdens our veterinarians, and because it is certainly not well thought out. It appears to be another example of special interest legislation being crammed down Texans throats."

"Our children and grandchildren, who are competing with their prized livestock, should not be so burdened," she continued. "I am still strongly fighting the governor's still secret agreement with a foreign company to take our land and put toll roads all over Texas with Trans Texas Catastrophe," Strayhorn concluded.

On-line Ordering Of Birth, Death Certificates Available

AUSTIN — Birth and death certificates can be ordered on-line, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) announced today. Previously, the certificates could be requested only by mail, fax, or by visiting the DSHS vital records unit in Austin or one of the 490 local registrars' offices throughout the state.

DSHS Chief Operating Officer Randy Fritz said, "Customers needing copies of birth or death certificates should find the speed and convenience of the new on-line ordering system a real timesaver."

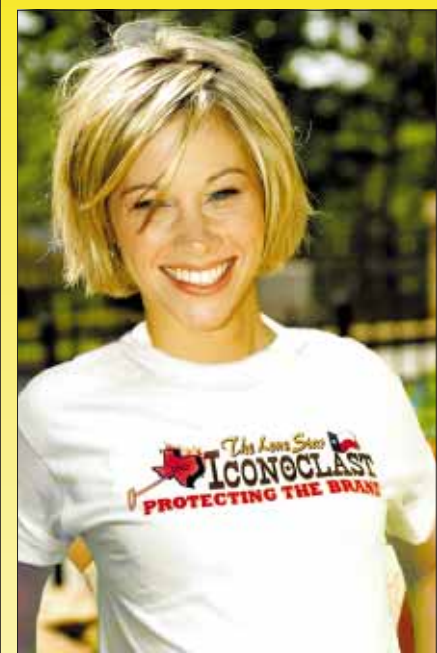
He clarified that while certificates can be ordered on-line, they cannot be downloaded or printed.

On-line ordering of a birth certificate for a birth that occurred in the last 75 years is limited to the individual for whom a birth certificate is requested and to the mother or father of that individual.

On-line ordering of death certificates for death that occurred within the last 25 years is limited to the surviving spouse, a parent of the deceased, and to certain funeral directors.

Verification of any birth, death, marriage, or divorce — regardless of date — also is available on-line.

Forms for ordering by mail can be downloaded from the DSHS Web site at <www.dshs.state.tx.us>. Certificates may be ordered on-line at <www.texasonline.com>.



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Waco Protest One Of Hundreds On Invasion Anniversary

By NATHAN DIEBENOW
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

CRAWFORD — Hundreds of demonstrations occurred worldwide over the weekend of the third anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Despite the low turnout as compared with the previous year's anniversary, the approval ratings of President Bush and his handling of the war in Iraq are at an all-time low.

In Waco, Texas, not 20 minutes away from the president's vacation ranch, less than a dozen protestors marked the anniversary on Saturday, March 18, by holding up cloth banners that read "Honk for Impeachment" and "Bring The Troops Home Now."

Holding up one end of a banner, Kelly Stanley of Austin said she was upset about how the United States created more terrorists by entering this war. She said she feared the war was not making Americans safer.

"I feel like my country is gone," said Stanley, a chemist who works for the City of Austin. "We need to get out (of Iraq) now."

Holding up the other end of the same banner, Boyce Vardiman of West agreed: "It's a bankrupt situation we're in. We're just in a world of chaos. We want to believe in our administration, but this one let us down the fool's path. We're sick of it."

Alan Northcutt of Waco, wearing a mask of George W. Bush under a tall crown, referred to the president as "King George."

"This is what he sees when he looks in the mirror," said Northcutt, carrying a sign that read a quote from Bush: "This would be easier if I was dictator."

Farris William, 72, of Whitney, Texas, said he was protesting at the corner of Waco Drive and Valley Mills Road because "we believe things are going wrong. I mean, do you believe in torture?"

In the two hours the Waco activists stood on the corner, several drivers honked both for and against the issues raised there.

In Dallas on Sunday, roughly a hundred activists gathered at St. Paul's Methodist Church for an afternoon of speeches, songs, and spiritual guidance before demonstrating at the Earle Cabell Federal Building.

"It's important that we remain faithful," said Rev. Charles Stovall of Dallas. "We cannot equate Christianity with blind nationalism. It's a mistake. True patriotism is when we challenge our country..."

Rev. Stovall noted that the slow response by the federal government during the two hurricanes that ripped through the Gulf Coast was due in part by the war in Iraq.

"We can't have an economy based on war and peace. The two cannot co-exist," he said.

After waiting for the stormy weather to die down, half the activists drove while the other half marched at least a mile to the sidewalk across from the federal building. The group, which was comprised of diverse ages, races, and genders, chanted and held signs that read "There's No 'Win' In War," "End the War Bring the Troops Home," "No Blood for Oil," and "Make Love, Not War."

In Arlington, a suburb of Dallas/Fort Worth, a group of about 20 activists also marched Sunday from a shopping center to an Interstate 30 overpass where they held signs for the drivers below to see. The activists stood in the rain for about two hours, holding signs that read, "I Stand For Peace."

"Motorists were generally supportive, thumbs-up outnumbered thumbs-down by about 200 to 1," wrote Len Ellis, founder of the Peace & Justice Center — Arlington, on the Dallas Peace Center's website.

The small groups of demonstrators in Texas, however, were accompanied by a chorus of protestors around the world.

In Cleveland, Ohio, roughly 150 war protesters gathered outside a building where President Bush gave a speech on Monday. The group there banged drums and denounced his presence.

In Washington, outside Vice President Dick Cheney's residence, about 200 people demonstrated. One protester donning a Bush mask waved at passing traffic with his hands dripping fake blood.

Outside the Pentagon, 51 people were arrested on misdemeanor charges of failure to obey a lawful order during

Continued On Next Page



CURB THE IRAQ WAR — Elsa and Stephanie Locke of Collin Co. and C.J. Durbin-Higgins and Kathy Williams of Grayson Co. (from left) stand on the curb of Griffin St. in downtown Dallas to protest the third anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



THROWING PEACE SIGNS to a driver that honked his horn in Waco are Boyce Vardiman of West and Kelly Stanley of Austin (from left) on Saturday, March 17, the weekend of the third anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



ACTIVISTS IN WACO marked the third anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq on Saturday, March 18. Although this turnout was low, the approval ratings of both President Bush and his handling of the war in Iraq are at record lows, according to the latest poll figures.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



STILL ACTIVE AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, Joan Britton, 76, and Farris William, 72, (from left) both of Whitney, Texas demonstrated in Waco the weekend of the third anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



THE CODE RED REGGAE BAND, with lead singer Tunde Obazee, performed during a rally at St. Paul's Methodist Church in Dallas commemorating the third anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

— Staff Photo by Nathan Diebenow

From Previous Page

a demonstration, according to a Defense Department spokesperson.

In Hollywood on Saturday, the Veterans for Peace group carried 100 flag-draped coffins made from cardboard cartons down Sunset Boulevard. To date, more than 2,300 U.S. troops have been killed in the Iraq war.

In San Francisco, police arrested 17 protesters during a rally estimated to have gathered 10,000 people. Other demonstrators wearing orange jumpsuits were pulled from a pretend prison that recalled the Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib prisons.

In Chicago, protesters marched down Michigan Avenue to a Saturday night rally at downtown's Daley Plaza. More than 7,000 people are said to have taken part. Police there said no arrests were made.

In New York City, more than 1,000 people gathered in Times Square near a military recruiting station guarded by police.

Obtained from Infoshop.org, the following is a list of cities around the world that held protests and the estimated numbers of attendees: Budapest, 4,000; Calgary, Canada, 150; Concord, New Hampshire, 300; Copenhagen, Denmark: 2,000; Istanbul, Turkey, 5,000; Kansas City, Missouri, 800; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 600; London, England: 15,000-80,000; Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 100s; Montreal, Canada, 700; New Haven, Connecticut, 100s; Ottawa, Canada, 500-1,000; Perth, Australia, 1,000; Portland, Oregon: 10,000; Rome, Italy, 1,000s; Salt Lake City, Utah, 200; San Rafael, Calif., 100; Seoul, South Korea, 1,000; Stockholm, Sweden, 1,000; Sydney, Australia, 500; Tokyo, Japan, 3,000; Toronto, Canada, 1,000; Traverse City, Michigan, 200; West Palm Beach, Florida: 75.



KING GEORGE — Alan Northcutt of Waco, wearing a mask of George W. Bush under a tall crown, referred to the president as "King George" the weekend of the third anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



THE REV. CHARLES STOVALL gave spiritual perspective to the activists gathered during a rally at St. Paul's Methodist Church in Dallas before their demonstration at the Earle Cabell Federal Building on Sunday, March 19, the eve of the third anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

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Feed me!

Or, I'd Like To Rent Your Education Until I Graduate

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "You get what you pay for. Or what somebody or other pays for."

When the Reagan Disaster struck, its most prevalent damage was to education.

The whole "vomit to the test" system produced an unintended consequence: Education became the responsibility of the state; not the individual.

Each student is now required to learn the state's lessons, accept the state's point of view, believe in the state's reality.

And repeat to the state's satisfaction.

This week, a colleague looked at a piece of education-ese that is a product of that mold, and she responded with a thought-provoking essay that should remind us of how much we've lost in the interest of "learning on the cheap."

As the Texas Legislature prepares to meet for the fourth time to decide how little they can spend on our children's future, we would do well to consider Charlotte Laughlin's views.

First, the student assembly instructions penned by Phillip Wankat, Clifton L. Lovell, and Frank Oreovicz, three engineering professors who perhaps should have stuck with their trains:

Since the attention span of almost all students is between 10 and 20 minutes, you can expect to lose most of your students if you lecture for 50 minutes straight. Even professionals fall victim to the "my eyes glaze over" syndrome. Not only do students tune out once that "dead" period is reached, the energy level of the class also flags. The solution might be to structure a 50-minute class something like this: a mini-lecture including an introduction, an activity break, a second mini-lecture, an activity break and finally a third mini-lecture, including a wrap-up. The mini-lectures contain an introduction, a body and a closing, similar to a straight lecture except they are shorter. (EDITOR'S NOTE: And evidently need not be properly punctuated.)

Activity breaks should incorporate active learning and the formation of cooperative groups.

Both techniques practically force students to become involved. They can be very simple, like turning to a peer and comparing lecture notes.

Alternatively, ask the student groups to solve a short problem. If the problem is part of the homework assignment, they will be more motivated to do it.

Somewhat earning a passing grade is no longer motivation to do homework?

But I'd now like to present a more cogent response:

By Charlotte G. Laughlin

Instructor, McLennan Community College

At UT from 1969-1975, I had nearly all lecture classes, and only in two did I ever have a multiple choice test. I had essay exams, essays, and research papers. The students who "glazed over" after 10 to 15 minutes of lecture failed. I was very actively involved in lecture classes, scribbling frantically to keep up as the former campaign manager for Adlai Stevenson paced at the front of 150 students lecturing at the pace of a machine gun (yes, I'm that old; in 1970 I took "Political Parties in America" from the former campaign manager). Or maybe I was taking notes while doing mental gymnastics in anticipation of the sudden, "Miss Laughlin, according to the ethics of Puritan society,

Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



how would you defend Hester's decision not to reveal Chillingworth to Arthur Dimsdale?" And I had to answer the question at least semi-intelligently or dissolve in a puddle of disgrace.

The classes were challenging, but not entirely different from my high school classes. Brownwood was a mid-sized, basically rural school (about 200 students in my graduating class). We had six 55-minute classes a day; we listened; we read books; we took notes; we wrote essays and research papers, and we took essay exams. We left at 4 p.m. with homework to do, including memorization of poems, parts of historical/political documents, organic chemistry formulas, geometry theorems, lists of Spanish verb conjugations and vocabulary, etc. Talk about learning mastery—I knew I could be called on at any moment to recite from memory what I was supposed to know. People thought I loved school because I made such good grades, but the truth is I was terrified.

If you ask me, the trouble isn't with lectures. The trouble is that no one is terrified of me and some aren't even nominally respectful. I assumed my teachers knew more than I did in their subject and that I was in class to try to learn some of what they knew. I don't think a whole lot of students come to school with those assumptions any more.

I've tried dividing my classes into "learning communities," "peer accountability groups," you name it; and I've watched them operate as play groups or worse. So what do I do? I now give 15-question scantron reading quizzes at the first of every class, so at least a fair percentage of the class will have read most of the assignment. I lecture and I ask questions and assign essays and give essay exams... and did I mention I'm killing myself grading all those essays? And for what? A few students do improve. Many don't.

But I don't think the problem is with lectures. My daughter just graduated from Baylor and is now in a masters program; my son is a computer science major at A&M. They both hate the "learning group" approach of some college classes. They say their fellow students don't know any more than they do; so they want the professor to share what she/he knows that the undergrads don't. My daughter is quite snippy about it: "What do they think I pay tuition for? Not to try to learn from students who know even less than I do and talk about how 'wasted' they're going to get when this is over." And it isn't that my children aren't independent learners. Having been homeschooled, they're very independent learners. I guided them when they were little, but once they had the basic tools of reading, writing and math computation, I pretty much turned them loose. That may be why they so greatly resent having their time wasted with group "learning." They want the professor to give them the tools and then let them run with it, whether the "running" involves writing essays or producing computer programs.

Editorial

The Buck Stops... In The Future?

Harry S Truman rolled over in his grave last week after President Bush announced that the end of the Iraq war will be up to a future President.

What Bush was intimating is that this war will not be won during his tenure as President and that the loss of life will not stop.

In other words, he will remain unaccountable for the war's outcome.

That'll be someone else's problem.

History continues to repeat itself when it comes to our part-time Commander in Chief.

In an age when communities nationwide consider their youth populations as their most valuable assets, we shouldn't be sending our youths into harm's way to start with.

We should be sending Congressmen, Senators, and other American warmongers over the age of 45 into the battlefields.

It is ridiculous to raise our children, instilling in them untested idealism and great hopes for the future only to have them cut down as collateral feast on a diet of war.

Economically speaking, why not send baby-boomers to lose their lives? Reduce future Social Security payouts and keep vibrant those who will be saddled with contributing tomorrow.

Young men and women are the future of our country. Why are we killing them off and bringing them

home maimed?

Why are we destroying their futures?

Why not send those who have already had their turn at raising families? Let's poison the older generation with nuclear radiation, not our children.

Why couldn't youths who want to serve be placed in humanitarian endeavors that benefit our country and mankind in general? Isn't that a more practical goal?

Teach the benefits of peace, for isn't that where we want the world to go?

If President Bush and his administration refuse to be held accountable for this war, then what is he doing as President, marking time?

It is imperative that this administration be removed, by first asking that it politely step aside so that a responsible, accountable one can step in and get the job done.

If that is not an option, impeachment certainly is.

Did we raise our children only to turn them over for sacrifice at the hands of corporate pirates seeking unbridled profits?

It is obvious that this is what we have and will have until the tides turn.

The buck no longer stops in Washington. It stops with Americans demanding accountability from those we hire to carry out our wishes.

— W. Leon Smith

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Breathing Easier

Last Sunday, I took a CPR class at the local Red Cross. I'd been wanting to do this for a long time, but since it was a four-hour class, it was always easy for me to find an excuse not to go. But this time, because of my love of humanity and the absence of any games on TV that I wanted to watch, I went to the class. There were a few reasons that I wanted to learn CPR. I wanted to have confidence and to be more relaxed in case of an emergency situation. And I admit that when I fantasized about using my CPR and reviving someone, I kind of liked the idea of being a hero.

There were six of us taking the class from our instructor, Sean. Sean was a great teacher who exuded confidence. If I could just always have him with me, I'd be able to handle any emergency. The other five students all had jobs that required them to take the course and be certified. I was the only one there for heroic/neurotic reasons. (Sean wore surgical gloves throughout the class, explaining that he got fewer colds ever since he started doing this. So, maybe I wasn't the only one who

hadn't checked his neuroses at the door).

One of the first things I learned is that I need a new cell phone. I had been proud of the fact that, unlike the other members of my family, I'd resisted getting a new cell phone with all kinds of unnecessary features. I have no intention of ever watching "The A Team" on my phone or taking a picture with it of a shirt I'm thinking about buying. Unfortunately, a cell phone as old as mine is not what is called "GSM ready." In other words, it can't automatically tell the people at 911 exactly where I am like the newer ones can.

Once Sean started talking in more detail about CPR, we all seemed to have the same fear: what if we accidentally kill the person we're trying to help? But Sean quickly put this fear to rest. As he pointed to the plastic dummy, "Bob," he reminded us that the person you're working on, in the worst possible situation, isn't breathing and doesn't have a pulse. He's already dead. Our job is to revive Bob and keep him revived until the professionals arrive. So, you can't kill him. The worst you can do is to not miraculously revive him. (Okay, I added the



Modern Times

By
**Lloyd
Garver**

word, "miraculously").

Bob was a very good patient, who never complained if we accidentally tickled him or pressed too hard on his ribs. On the other hand, Bob never thanked us for bringing him back to life.

We got a short lesson in using an AED which is an Automated External Defibrillator. We had the thrill of yelling, "Clear!" Unfortunately this also brought on a little anxiety when Sean mentioned if the patient were a woman with a metal underwire in her bra or with metal piercings on her torso, we'd have to remove them. This didn't seem like the kind of action I'd be able to do calmly. But I reminded myself that taking off that woman's bra could save her life. Sounds like a line some teenage boy might use, but in this case it was true.

After taking the class, I felt that everyone should take CPR. You might save

someone's life. Isn't that worth a few hours in a classroom?

Knowing that there's a chance that I might save someone's life gave me a new sense of responsibility – and anxiety. I realized that everywhere I go from now on, I might be called upon to respond to an emergency. My first instinct was to just stay home and avoid being around people so my CPR skills won't be tested. But then I realized that even though I might forget a detail or two of what I learned, I'm certainly more qualified to help someone than before I took the class. I'm not so anxious to be a hero as I was before. I'll be happy if I never have to use CPR, but I'll use it if necessary. It's like having a good spare tire in the trunk.

However, there's one set of circumstances about which I have complete confidence. I will spring into action without hesitation if I'm ever with a plastic dummy who has a heart attack.

Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier" to "Home Improvement." He has also read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the "Modern Times" column for CBSnews.com's Opinion page and a weekly column for SportsLine.com. He can be reached at lloydgarver@yahoo.com

At A Newspaper, Every Roll Is Crucial

There are few things that can bring a newspaper to a halt when it is facing a deadline. In fact, aside from a natural catastrophe or a critically important breaking news story (Example: Anything related to "Dancing with the Stars"), nothing stands in the way of our commitment, as journalists, to ensure that the power of the press continues — unless, of course, the unthinkable happens, and we run out of toilet paper in both employee restrooms.

As professionals, this is a scenario we train for. We know how to recognize a potential "situation" that could leave us vulnerable and without back-up. Yet, as we learned today, all it takes is a momentary lapse in resoluteness for things to escalate into a full-blown crisis.

"Has anyone seen Bill?" (Note: The names in this dramatic re-enactment have been changed to protect the innocent, such as myself, from being physically assaulted by "Bill.")

A cursory sweep of the newsroom was extended to an exhaustive search of the front office, sales room, break area, composition department and, eventually, the restrooms.

Total elapsed time: 1 minutes, 30 seconds.

(We're a small paper.)

Being that we are seasoned journalists capable of recognizing the subtlest signs of trouble, and given the fact that the news department is within six feet of the bathrooms, we quickly deduced that a toilet brush being jammed repeatedly under the doorframe meant a potential situation was brewing. And due to the respect I've gained from my peers in the news department, coupled with the fact that I was standing closest to the door, I was asked to investigate.

After talking with "Bill" and confirming that the adjacent restroom and storage area were, indeed, also without toilet paper, it became clear that our doomsday scenario had developed into the "perfect storm."

I explained the situation to our publisher, who looked grim as he gathered us around his desk. "You're positive a roll didn't fall behind one of the commodes." I shook my head.



By
**Ned
Hickson**
Siuslaw News

"What about the medicine cabinet?" he blurted. "Maybe somebody stuffed one in there. Or above one of the ceiling tiles?"

Our editor put a steady hand on his shoulder. "This isn't helping, and the clock is ticking."

Everyone exchanged uneasy glances. We knew "Bill" had been sitting there for a good 20 minutes. Completely alone. Except for the scrub brush, and what must have been a difficult decision to use it as a signal for help.

"What about paper towels?" someone asked.

"We switched to those stupid hand driers, remember?"

The frustration was tangible.

"Maybe Bill could turn around and aim his..."

A unanimous look of disgust immediately squelched my idea.

"Sorry," I muttered. "I just feel so helpless."

"What about asking if anyone has some tissue, or a handkerchief they don't want anymore?" someone suggested.

Our publisher put his fist down. "I'm responsible for the safety of everyone in this building. I can't risk starting a panic."

And so it went.

Out of respect for "Bill," I can't divulge exactly how he was rescued. What I CAN tell you is he drew on his journalistic experience to get out of a tight spot.

In a completely unrelated matter, if anyone has an extra phone book, please bring it by the office. Ours seems to be missing the "Government" pages.

(You can write to Ned Hickson at nhickson@oregonfast.net, or at the Siuslaw News at P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR. 97439.)

The E-Mail I Did Not Understand

Sometimes I feel like Lucy and Ethel working on the assembly line.

Just can't keep up.

I am referring to e-mails.

I normally get over a thousand a week incoming, and deal with about half that outgoing.

When visiting on the phone with a friend from California this past week, the subject of e-mail quantity came up.

I said boastfully, "I get about 150 a day."

Her response:

"Is that all?"

In running a public relations business, as she does, the inflow is apparently vast. I don't see how she does it, and commented thusly. She replied, "I don't know either."

Most of the e-mails I get are easily digested by the brain. I understand them.

I received an e-mail last week from a friend who sent an attachment containing videoclips of several cats doing funny things.

We like cats at our house, so I forwarded the e-mail to a few relatives, including my spouse.

Unfortunately, I neglected to send it to my youngest daughter, an eighth-grader, who happened to view the one I sent to my wife.

My daughter sent an e-mailed to me at work:

"ok i see how it is.. dont send me the cat video lol jk. will you send it to me sometime?"

I asked our composition expert, "What does lol mean?"

"Laugh out loud."

"Oh."

Then I asked, "What does jk mean?"

"Just kidding."

"Oh."

I replied to my daughter's e-mail that I would send to her the cat video attachment momentarily.

Her reply: "thank you very very much. cya at supper."

To our composition person: "What does cya mean?"

"Cya? Oh, it means see you at."

"Oh."

So I e-mailed my youngest daughter

The Trenchwalker

By W. Leon Smith



again:

"I need you to do me a quick favor. Provide me a list of word shortcuts (acronyms) commonly used in text messaging and chatboxes, like cya, lol, etc., and give me the definitions. I might do a column about them. Please e-mail back to me ASAP (oops, another one)."

"Leon

"swak (ask your mom if you don't know what this means). My computer just shocked me when I did this."

So, she sent me a reply with some acronyms and definitions.

Here are but a few examples of the language of the future:

- brb — be right back
- ttyl — talk to you later
- ttfn — ta ta for now(lol)
- nm — nothing much
- nvm — nevermind
- btw — by the way
- bbl — be back later
- b/c — away from keyboard
- afk — because
- w/ — with
- w/e — whatever
- omg — oh my gosh
- w/o — without
- wb — welcome back
- zzz — sleeping
- crz — crazy
- dlo — down low
- dt — dang typos
- eg — evil grin
- no1 — no one
- nt — nice try
- nw — no way

I later asked my daughter, in person, if she knew what swak meant.

"You mean sealed with a kiss?" she replied.

"So you did know," said I.

"After Mom told me."

The Life And Death Of Mexico's Lincoln

On March 20, 1872, Benito Juarez suffered the first of three heart attacks that five months later brought down the curtain on the amazing life of the "Lincoln of Mexico."

As a Zapotec Indian born in the first decade of the nineteenth century, Juarez's birthright was poverty, oppression, ignorance, and disease. Orphaned at the age of three, he was taken in by an uncle and taught to be a shepherd.

But the boy wanted to do more with his life than to herd sheep and goats. He wanted an education, but the closest schools were on the other side of the mountains. So on a cold winter day in 1818, the 12-year-old walked the 41 miles to the state capital of Oaxaca.

Juarez could not speak a word of Spanish. He wandered the strange streets of the city repeating the name of a sister, until someone finally took him to her.

The extra mouth was passed onto a bachelor bookbinder that needed help around the house. The "pious and very honorable man," as Juarez described his benefactor, put him in a parish school,

where he found out what it meant to be an Indian in the conquered country.

Three wasted years later, Juarez could barely read or write. Then he found out that the best school in Oaxaca, the Catholic seminary, accepted Indians free of charge.

By 1827 the gifted student had aced every course in the seminary curriculum. However, his formal education might have ended right then and there, if the state government had not opened a secular college that very year.

Juarez majored in physics at the Institute of Sciences and Arts and mastered the subject so completely that he was made a member of the faculty while still an undergraduate. "This one whom you see here, so serious and reserved," a professor declared in class, "will rise higher than any of us, and he will be one of our great men and the glory of our country."

Like generations of students before and since, Juarez earned extra money waiting tables. One night in December 1829, he worked a banquet for the "hero of Tampico," an army officer who had

This Week In Texas History



By Barte Haile

repulsed Spain's attempted repossession of their lost colony.

Jose Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna de Lebrun had done no such thing, but he did take credit for the victory. Learning the waiter's identity many years later, the "Napoleon of the West" deduced the die must have been cast that fateful night.

"Juarez could not forgive me because he had waited on me at the table in his bare feet," Santa Anna theorized, trivializing his foe's principled opposition. "It is amazing that an Indian of such low degree should have become the figure in Mexico that we all know."

When Santa Anna lost the Battle of San Jacinto, the province of Texas and his dictatorship all on an April afternoon in 1836, Benito Juarez was already a rising star in Oaxaca. The brilliant attorney had been elected three years earlier to the state legislature, and briefly jailed for refusing to toe the prevailing political line.

Over the next dozen years, Juarez was a judge, a justice of the state supreme court, and finally a member of the national congress. Elected governor of Oaxaca in 1848, he improved healthcare with free clinics and new hospitals and made public education a reality by building 200 schools and eight teacher colleges. And he did something no governor in Mexican history had ever done by adding money to the state treasury instead of looting it.

Juarez was a stern and stoic figure in his black wool suit and stovepipe hat — a "uniform" that would cause American historians to label him Mexico's Lincoln. He certainly was as homely as the 16th president, and even less charismatic, but his courage and concern for the common people would endear him to millions of Mexicans.

A military takeover paved the way for Santa Anna's return to absolute power in 1853. Driven into exile, Juarez spent a year and a half in New Orleans rolling cigars.

But the popular revolt that sent the dictator packing in 1855 ushered in a regime that included Juarez as minister of justice. He authored a radical reform that got rid of the special courts for the clergy and military and made all Mexicans equal before the law.

The Catholic Church and its aristocratic allies did not take such an earth-

shaking change lying down. A bloody and complicated struggle ensued that ended with Juarez's election as president in the summer of 1861.

Faced with a bankrupt national treasury, he was forced to suspend payment on loans from European creditors. Spain, England, and France reacted by sending troops to collect the debts. Juarez worked out a payment plan with Madrid and London, but Napoleon III installed a puppet emperor — Archduke Maximilian of Austria.

The U.S. offered Juarez asylum, but he flatly refused. "It would be easier for the earth to move from its axis than that man from the Republic," an admirer proudly wrote.

Under pressure from Washington, which massed troops on the Rio Grande, and facing war with Prussia, Napoleon III pulled the plug on his pawn. Stripped of French troops and support, Maximilian was captured in May 1867 and executed by a peasant firing squad.

Benito Juarez tackled the job of rebuilding his devastated country and literally worked himself to death. A mild heart attack in March 1872 was followed by a serious coronary on July 8. Ten days later, he suffered a third and died at his desk late that night.

"Outlaws & Lawmen" - "Best of This Week in Texas History" Vol. VI, now available for \$10.95 plus \$3.25 postage and handling, from Barte Haile, 1912 Meadow Creek Dr., Pearland, TX 77581.

The Art of Waging War: Iran, She ran, He ran, We all should run

Slowly but surely the Bush administration is eyeballing its next invasion — Iran.

We're told it has an "unstable" government and we need to restrain it, that it has "nuclear" arms and other WMD's. *Now where have we heard that before?*

Heck, if we're so focused on "unstable" governments you'd think inevitably we'd start to work on restraining our own.

While it's true that the government of Iran is not being managed by some idyllic hall of fame "Ayatollah of Rock 'n' Rolla" do we really want to "stick our noses" into another endless war crusade in the name of "Democracy"? Do we want to spend another \$3 trillion of our taxpayer dollars on another war so wealthy corporations and individuals may bask in more imperialistic profiteering and gluttony? Do we want to kill-off another several thousands of the world's human population, including our own?

Look, it's not just Iran. It's also China, India, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia — and does anyone recall Libya? *Talk about unstable!*

Isn't it getting a bit *Hitleristic* if we continue to bulldoze our way and lifestyles throughout the world's nations and killing off their young?

It's overdue that Americans LOUDLY question the priorities of our leaders. We've already had enough fighting and bloodshed in Iraq and Afghanistan to last us several generations. It's bad enough wasting U.S. taxpayer trillions on an irresponsible war and "reconstruction" in Iraq, but do we really want to kill-off more of our own children soldiers with an invasion of Iran? Currently, it will take many generations of births to rebuild the population of our youth lost in Mid East fighting without killing-off more invading Iran.



Commentary

By
Peter
Stern

It's time to do something worthwhile with our taxpayer dollars. What immediately comes to mind is impeaching most of the current and undercurrent administration.

If printed truthfully in history textbooks, the past five years of our own history will portray the irresponsibility of American actions. Not only has American leadership shown poor judgment, so have American voters. Never before have our uniquely American culture, principles, and dreams been so abused and shackled by an American administration so bent on ravaging destruction in the name of the holy dollar.

Instead of embarking on another oil run in Iran, we should all run from the idea. Instead, we must focus on invading and reconstructing our own government.

It's time to get America back on track. Rise up and send a clear message to the Bush administration and Congress — **"NO WAR, NO MORE!"**

Peter Stern of Driftwood, Texas is a political writer well-known and published frequently throughout the Texas community and nationwide. He is a Vietnam-era Disabled Veteran and holds three post-graduate degrees. While a lifetime member of the Republican Party, he does NOT support the party's current platforms, philosophies, and actions. You may contact Peter Stern at: <pstern@austin.rr.com>.

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No. 1 Steers
under 300 lb. 160-210
300-400 lb. 140-168
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500-600 lb. 115-130 \$1 Up
600-700 lb. 105-116
700-800 lb. 95-105

No. 1 Heifers
under 300 lb. 140-190
300-400 lb. 130-157
400-500 lb. 115-142
500-600 lb. 110-127 \$1 Up
600-700 lbs. 95-110
700-800 lbs. 87-95

Slaughter Cows
High Yielding 45 to 54
Low Yielding 40 to 45 Steady
Fats 44 to 49
Thin & Shelly 30 to 37

Packer Bulls (1250-2075 lb.)
Yield Grade 1&2 53 to 67 Steady

Cow & Calf Pairs
Young Choice 1100 to 1150
Young Fair 900 to 1100 Steady
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We're Not All That Stupid

At a very tender age, when tests proved that young Forrest was possessed of limited intelligence, his Mother philosophically summed it up thusly:

"Stupid is as stupid does."

As he traveled life's serpentine, sometimes happy, often harsh, road, Forrest never lost sight of that simple yet valuable maxim.

And his life, as well as the lives of those with whom he came into contact along the journey, were far better off for the kind, non-assuming nature imbued within the man.

Now, I know the "Forrest Gump" analogy has been used repeatedly to describe George W. Bush and his Comedy of Terrors desecration of the United States, the Constitution, and our very way of life. From pundits to essayists, op-ed pieces to cartoonists, one doesn't need six degrees to equate the 72 IQ hero of Winston Groom's 1985 novel with our Fearless Leader.

The similarities don't stop there: They hail from the South, although Forrest was actually born there; they like to run; they would be approximately the same age; both are fictional heroes.

The big problem is that Forrest Gump is far more of a humane, sensitive, compassionate creature than George W. Bush.

Would George have befriended the poor girl who lived in the shack outside the periphery of accepted society? Not a snowball's chance in hell.

Forrest got into university through his own achievement, then earned grades at least as good as, if not better than, those received by George.

Oh, don't forget - where George was a cheerleader, Forrest actually played football.

During the VietNam unpleasantness, George hid under his bed by day, partied by night, even went missing from flight training. Forrest got shot in the buttocks and still managed to save Lt. Dan.

Forrest took a decrepit shrimp boat plus nothing more than a promise to his fallen comrade, Bubba, and along with the legless Lt. Dan turned them into a multi-million dollar business.

George took any number of companies, well-financed with moneys inherited from Granddaddy Prescott as a profiteer of dealings with Hitler and the Nazi Reichsbank, supported by daddy George H.W. Bush, and throughout the 1970s-1980s ran them from solvency directly into the ground.

In five short years as governor he oversaw the utter ruination of the great state of Texas.

Now, in the same short amount of time as ersatz president of the United States, would-be King George XLIII has done more damage to this Nation and the Planet than even H.G. Wells could have imagined in his worst nightmare scenario.

Where Forrest Gump was a kind soul, George W. Bush exhibits absolutely no compassion whatsoever - except when it behooves his purpose for the cameras.

And there are many times when he can't even get that right.

Several months ago, when he made an early attempt at an "impromptu" question and answer session with one of his handpicked audiences, someone actually queried him on how many Iraqis had been killed since the (illegal) invasion. King George did his usual slovenly, non-presidential lean on the podium, complete with rolling of the eyes as if to come up with a good response, then casually stated, "Oh,

about thirty thousand, I guess."

I'm taking the liberty of paraphrasing here, but I distinctly remember the number; because worldwide media sources were estimating well above 100,000 by then. And I shall never forget his cavalier, "so what" attitude as he threw the figure out.

The man didn't blink an eye while making this comment, on camera worldwide, that he had set in motion events which had cost the lives of some 30,000 innocent children, women and men - *human beings*. Worse, he knew it was a bogus response, at least 70% short of reality.

They simply are not real to him. Nobody who dies on his watch is real to him, or deserving of his consideration.

The first three days of this week King George XLIII has made three appearances to convince America and the World that not only is the war in Iraq a just war, but the U.S. and its dwindling coalition will be victorious.

Everyone knows in war there are no victors.

That's virtually all the guy talks about in public anymore - Iraq.

Except when he's trying to convince Congress it's a perfectly sound policy to allow "guest workers" in so his Big Biz cronies, already reaping huge profits from outsourcing cheap labor, can circumvent unions by hiring cheap labor right here at home.

That way the Bush Pioneers can make money coming and going while they enjoy their hefty tax breaks - and American workers are forced to settle for lower wages and longer hours.

Forget everything else that we need taken care of within our Nation's borders.

And he expects the largest chunk of our tax dollars to go to military spending, tossing it away on Rummy's Follies in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I do not want the largest portion of my tax dollars to go to military spending; to be wasted on death and destruction in foreign nations; to disrupt the legitimate governments whom the RoveBush Fascists don't like; to be usurped for regime change, which is against American law.

Okay, so we invaded Iraq to stop Saddam from launching any of his weapons of mass destruction.

Wait... it was because he had aided and abetted Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda pull off the 9/11 attacks.

No... we bombed Iraq back into the Stone Age because Saddam was trying to buy yellowcake uranium from Niger.

Oh, I've got it now... we hafta spread



Out Of The Blue

By
Jerry
Tenuto

Democracy all over the Middle East, because Daddy, Dickie and Donnie are responsible for th'levashun of Saddam and all them other dictators.

Why did we invade Iraq?

It's the oil, and Bush and his Gang are willing to spill as many pints of blood, American and whatever other nationalities, it takes to acquire the black gold.

The office of president, even if its holder had a 99% majority vote, is not free to make up laws off the cuff. George W. Bush, with the ever-present Herr Oberst Karl Rove and Dark Lord the Dick Cheney buzzing in his ear, has this wrong-headed delusion that with an edge of less than 1%, a gift from Diebold's CEO and the Ohio Republican hierarchy rather than the will of American voters, he can do whatever he wants.

So on Monday Bush went to Cleveland and spoke at the City Club of Cleveland, where he expected a regime-friendly audience. While painting the usual rosy picture scenario, King George XLIII threw in another of his fanciful tales that can't be proven. He related the story of Tal Afar, a city in northern Iraq of some 200,000 that was an al Qaeda stronghold now cleared out and in the process of being rebuilt by Iraqi and U.S. troops.

Of course, as usual George left some vital information out of his Faery Tale. Such as it's the only Iraqi city of any size that had been quieted down. He also failed to mention the part about the recurrence of insurgent activity to take the city back.

Funny how Right-wing, Neo-con talk show blowhard Laura Ingraham went to Iraq and the only success story she came back with was the very same tale of Tal Afar.

During Tuesday's "surprise" press conference, King George again made a throwaway reference to "sure, some people are gonna die" in his war without end. Matter-of-fact, no sorrow or remorse in his voice, no hesitancy.

And promise us a war without end did he, verifying that some future president would have to clean up the mess and bring our brave troops home.

Yet he assures us of victory. All this doublethink makes my head hurt.

The surprise press conference has

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been traditionally used when a president wishes to make an announcement of unique or emergency stature. Bush calls them whenever Herr Oberst Karl Rove feels the Party needs a boost in the polls.

The polls Fearless Leader never pays any attention to, because he doesn't give a rat's ass what the people he has sworn to serve need and desire.

Have you ever noticed how every time George actually does answer a question regarding policy he prefaces it with "I think it should..." or "My feeling on that..."?

It's always what he wants, never what might be good for the aggregate group.

And what Bush wants is never anything based on reality within the physical time-space continuum of the Earth's planetary confines.

In short, what he says never materializes unless it results in death and destruction.

What does King George care if two-thirds of the country thinks he's a complete screw-up?

Virtually every sane and sober adult with access to a free speech newspaper or newscast realizes that Donald Rumsfeld is, and always has been, wholly incompetent to be Secretary of Anything, especially Defense of the World's most destructive War Machine. Still, upon repeated calls to dump him for someone who is... let's say, qualified, Bush refuses, saying this 72-year-old fossil "is doing a fine job."

Geez! Where have we heard that before?

To its credit, even CNN refused to air King George's speech on Wednesday, adding the comment that it was "just more of the same" of what we've heard the past two days.

Of course, it doesn't help when King George XLIII, Dark Lord the Dick Cheney, Rummy, and their minions, led by dullards such as RNC honcho Ken Mehlman and talk show host Laura Ingraham, blame the media for the horrendous mess in Iraq.

Hey, the media allowed the RoveBush Fascists to have their war, now they, too, are trying to correct mistakes.

There's a lot of "stupid is as stupid does" to go around, beginning with about half of the people who voted for George W. Bush because he claimed Christianity, or because Bill Clinton proved to be human. There's even more to go around among those who voted for George W. Bush the second time. Fool me once, shame on me...

And there doesn't seem to be an end to it.

Yes, I know Forrest Gump is just a character in a novel and a movie.

Nevertheless, maybe we wouldn't be in this mess if Mother Barbara had used that "stupid is as stupid does" bit of wisdom around the Bush mansion some 58 years ago.

Y'think?

1,935 days since the Rehnquist Supreme Court illegally allowed this illegitimate takeover of our Government by the RoveBushCheney Fascists. Impeachment is our legal recourse to deal with Bush, but can we get rid of the rest by tarring and feathering, and running them out on rails?

(Jerry Tenuto is an erstwhile Philosopher and sometime Educator. A veteran with seven years of service in the U.S. Army, he holds a BS and MA in Communications from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Depending upon your taste in political stew, you can either blame or thank Jerry for his weekly "Out Of The Blue" feature in THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST. Visit his blog BLUE STATE VIEW at illinoiscentral.blogspot.com)

Saving The World And Our Wallets From The NeoCons

BY MELINDA PILLSBURY-FOSTER
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

As the joke goes, when three wolves and a sheep vote we all know who is going to be dinner. How does that work when there are millions of sheep and only a few thousand wolves? That in a nut shell is government today. It is time the sheep reconsidered how the game is to be played.

While this administration might have stopped casting hungry eyes on the profit potential of Social Security that is no guarantee that the fingers connected to those eyes might not still be twitching. Since they have spent us into unprecedented debt soon it will be impossible to continue their predatory behavior without continuing to open new vistas for their avaricious gleanings.

Although the Dubai Ports Deal failed it is well to remember the enthusiasm Bush and his cohort of NeoCon Counselors viewed what looks like the mistimed garage sale of America's property.

This will probably not reoccur before the elections this autumn – but after that all bets are off and public goods of all kinds can be assumed to be up for grabs. Outright sale is only one means for milking assets supposedly owned by the public. Look for bank shots through the cohort of clutching corporations and financial institutions who comprise Bush's 'core' constituency.

But only sheep chew placidly while the shepherd is inside sharpening his knife. We need to think about saving the assets.

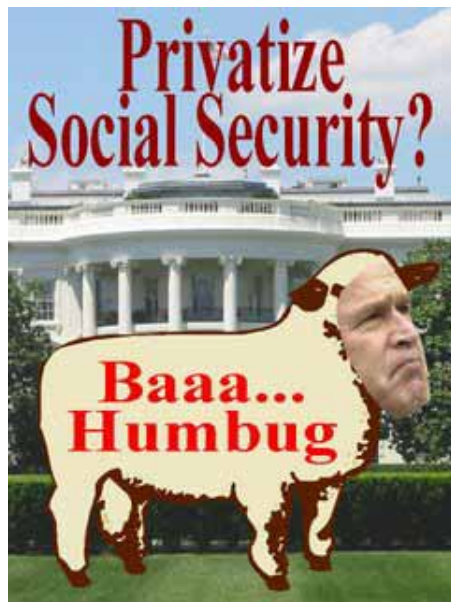
We already know through their long ogling of Social Security that it is on their menu. That plan has been percolating through their calculations for a long time. In fact, since 1977 when a 20ish young man declared he intended to go to Washington D.C. and get rich. The man's name was Edward H. Crane, III.

Don't pause to wonder if he is any kind of old money. He is not; but his eyes have ever been on acquiring that status. Ed had a vision of himself as walking the halls of power and to accomplish that he needed something to sell. He had also been involved in Libertarianism, the then newly fledged movement that spoke its determination to return America to its individualist roots, reinstalling all of our freedoms. Ed looked over the assets there and decided to become an intermediary for selling those ideas to corporate interests and to Congress through what is known as Cato Institute. To make that attractive and acceptable to Libertarians he used the rhetoric of freedom as cover.

One of the first papers written by the original cadre at Cato for the presidential campaign of Ed Clark, a candidate for the Libertarian nomination in 1980, was the privatization of Social Security. The idea was greeted enthusiastically by Libertarians who naively assumed this would give Americans control of their money and allow for retirees to enjoy far larger retirement incomes. But that is not how the application of policy works when you want to sell it to the greedy who view government as an elegant way to separate the sheep from their hard-earned money.

The amount of money under discussion was enormous.

If on the one hand you allow government to keep the money it has stolen through the misappropriation of Social Security while transferring the money still to come to financial institutions for 'investment' owned by your friends, then you might be working with chumps but it is not chump change.



Reselling the ideas of freedom to the greedy made Edward H. Crane, III a wealthy man.

Decoupling accountability, either from government or from corporations, from profits while selling the ideas using the rhetoric and cover of freedom reborn became the formula for success for all involved. Now, that is sleazy.

So what to do instead?

The fact is no one's retirement is safe if it controlled by government. They are not to be trusted. But in the last over 200 years America has birthed institutions by the dozen most of us trust with our lives, adding infrastructure to those already existing that have proven to be reliable. You probably belong to one yourself.

You may be an Elk, a member of that Benevolent and Protective Order that opened their hearts and wallets to fund the first hospital for American Veterans in 1918. Yep, that wasn't the government either. You may be a member of Rotary International, Soroptomists, The American Humanist Society, or any of an incredible number of organizations run mostly by volunteers who are the backbone of good works in America.

This also includes religious and spiritual organizations of all kinds. Churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, all of these present opportunities. Each of us should be able to judge for ourselves how trustworthy our own might be for the purpose. I have friends who are Mormon, Catholic, Congregationalist, and Muslim who say they know they can trust their own church with their retirement. I am sure there are many others.

What to look for in any organization is the internal values regarding responsibility, accountability and how long individuals have been volunteers invested in making their own mission work.

Institutions organized along these lines possess the essential attributes to handle large amounts of money honestly and to do so while keeping the costs minimal; they had to do that to be successful in the first place. As volunteer organizations the motivation for moving up and donating even more time is dedication to the Mission of the organization. Most of those who work at the National or International level have been socially and emotionally invested in that organization for a lifetime. Their 'profits' and not calculated in dollars but in knowing the work is done and done right. They want to leave a legacy of love for future generations. Can they meet that challenge? If their members ask them to they probably could.

Allowing the transfer our retirement plans from an institution, government, that has proven entirely unreliable to institutions who have proven their worth over generations is only common sense. We can't make them do it but their record of civic responsibility would make it likely they would offer that service to their own members.

This would be a win in many different ways. Ensuring that the transfer of funds into these trusts opens up another opportunity to change how government 'works.'

Money handled by these organizations creates a market in investment managed and controlled by organizations who are conservative, canny, and trustworthy. Different organizations and churches could handle this each in their own way, reflecting the vision of their own members. This area would develop the latent potential still to be developed in volunteer organizations that are controlled by their memberships at the most local level. These organizations already do good; this would allow them to do more.

At the same time removing what proved to be an irresistible temptation to those in government would reduce that well documented impulse to steal. Removing attractive nuisances from the morally impaired is only responsible. And Edward H. Crane, III would have to figure out something else to do for a living, eventually. For a while he will doubtless continue his campaign to repackage despotism as freedom and sell it to the credulous and greedy.

Now, how to pay for this. Collusion to engage in theft is a crime. The attempts

to hold up a banner of 'sovereign immunity' by those in government must finally be ended. Government is not sovereign; the only sovereignty mandated by America's Mission Statement is that accruing to each individual. A liability has been created by those who allowed Social Security to be converted from a trust fund to a source of funds. They are as individuals absolutely liable. The corporate interests who cooperated are liable; and penalties should be exacted in full measure.

Government is no more sovereign and immune than is your plumber when he screws up the repair of your toilet. Our justice system also needs reforming; a system for justice is intended to ensure that those doing wrong are held accountable. It is time to do that to government and its minions.

Americans face a challenge that holds both hazard and promise. We faced a similar threat at the beginning of the Revolution and at the beginning of WWII. It is always individuals working cooperatively for a common goal who change the world. America was built on those principles and it can be rebuilt the same way.

The naked politicians waltzing around D.C. in their sheepskins are the past. The future belongs to us – if we choose it.

Get off all the grids, organize locally, build Coalition.

Freedom is still a good thing.

Melinda Pillsbury-Foster is author of a novel, GREED: The NeoConning of America. She runs the Arthur C. Pillsbury Foundation and writes poetry in her spare time.

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I need to know if you understand that the Second amendment to the U.S. Constitution confers an Individual Right to the People to possess Arms or firearms as individuals, or do you believe that this Amendment is only about a "collective right" granted to the States?

Please send their replay letter, or a GOOD QUALITY COPY (preferable color) to:

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Your reply will be used as evidence to resolve this question. Anyone who already has a letter from a U.S. Congressman or a U.S. Senator which clearly states that the Second Amendment confers an Individual Right to the People is urgently requested to send a GOOD QUALITY COPY of that letter to the address above. Please do your part to contribute to this project to restore the Rights granted to the People. Your efforts benefit all the People. Thank you for your Patriotism.

GUEST COMMENTARIES

Spring Cleaning... **Investigate the Entire Bush Regime for War Crimes, for Crimes against Humanity, and for the Crime of 9-11**

BY LINDA ZOBLOTSKY
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Americans, ask your Representatives why in the world in almost five years the United States has failed to bring anyone to justice for the 9-11 murders? Why has the "Omissions" Commission failed to

uphold justice for any individual or group responsible for the 9-11 tragedy?

Why did we kill first anywhere from 30,000 people in Iraq, according to President Bush, or thousands more in Afghanistan and Iraq, before we came as a nation to closure by finding out who co-

ordinated the 9-11 attacks and then punish those proven to be involved, as we came to punish McVeigh for the Oklahoma City bombings?

Why hasn't anyone asked why the 9-11 Commission was delayed until after the rubble at the very large crime scene of Ground Zero was cleared away? The mainstream press reported within 24 hours of the 9-11 attacks the names of the 19 hijackers. With families of the victims working to obtain DNA evidence of their loved ones in order to have some kind of a funeral, where is the DNA evidence that these 19 men acted alone or with Osama to bring down the towers and the Pentagon and possibly another attack on Washington with the airplane shot down in Pennsylvania.

The American people pay the salaries of these two men, President Bush and Vice President Cheney, who with the help of corporate cronies and the Supreme Court hold this nation and this democracy in hostage of their ill-conceived neo-conservative ideals. No impeachment procedure is complete until Congress demands the reopening and completion of the 9-11 Commission. Bring the American people justice by having the 9-11 Commission interview Bush alone and Cheney alone on camera in prime time.

Invite non-corporate cronies to attend and question the President. Let's show the world democracy and justice in action. Bring it on, get Michael Ruppert, Ralph Nader, The 9-11 Citizen's Commission, and Cynthia McKinney to question the President and the Vice President about what they knew and what orders they executed in response to the Aug. 6, 2001, Daily Briefing that was supposed to warn our Commander-in-Chief that America was in grave danger. What did the "MBA" "Education" and "Compassionate Conservative" President order any government agency to do to protect American citizens in response to that Aug. 6 Daily Briefing and even other briefings unknown to the American people, but helpful to other people who avoided flying commercial that summer of 2001?

What has the President done to protect Americans in his ill-conceived war on terror? Has the President contributed to a bake sale to raise money for our loved

ones' armor in Afghanistan and Iraq? How are we different from Saddam's regime when we do not ask the questions

that need to be asked of President Bush, Vice President Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of "WAR" Donald Rumsfeld, and Attorney General Alberto Gonzales when it comes to the illegal wiretapping of citizens of the United States?

How cowardly that we ask men and women to die on foreign soil to protect us, yet we do not demand those in charge to go on record with the court system for obtaining the permission to spy on our own.

Some conservatives might read what I am writing and accuse me of hating America.

I see the quest for Peace, Democracy and Justice in our own country as a positive value and as a positive value shared by the American people.

The Progressives, real Conservatives, some Republicans and Democrats, Greens, Libertarians, Socialists and Independent Thinkers of the United States are reaching out to the world to communicate that the war in Iraq, the massive killing and destruction is not being done in OUR name. We see the world and the earth's people and environment as one and connected.

We reach out and join groups such as United for Peace and Justice and the Peace Alliance and support a U.S. Department of Peace, proposed by Congressman Dennis Kucinich (Ohio-D) at the Executive Branch level because Peace and Justice is a noble cause and inevitable.

Linda Zoblotsky is writer, producer and director of the one-woman play, "Linda Zoblotsky Is Luvchild," about adoption and an adopted adult's search for her birthparents. There are 6,000,000 adopted people in the United States. The play helps the non-adopted population understand the obstacles that adopted adults face when searching for their natural families. Zoblotsky was a volunteer for Kucinich for President. Living and working in NYC as a performing artist she has toured the United States in "Phantom of the Opera." She enjoyed the "Grease!" tour with Frankie Avalon, playing Miss Lynch.



Linda Zoblotsky

Advice To My Son

BY VIVIAN GREENTREE
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

My son turned two this month. When friends and family started to ask what they could give him for his birthday my mind immediately went to his 529 college fund. By the time he is in college who knows how much tuition, room, and board will cost, right? Besides, the last present my mom sent him is sitting in the corner languishing, being thrown over for the present that was sent shortly afterward by his other grandmother. His attention span is that of, well, a two-year-old, and my husband and I are trying to plan for his future.



Vivian Greentree

Of course I hadn't, who wanted to incur the wrath of a bunch of pre-teen girls? Not me.

That was when I got the "Stand up for others who can't stand up for themselves" advice. Of course, we argued over the literal meaning of the phrase when I wanted to adopt every stray animal in our neighborhood, but it has since been one of the most lasting pieces of advice she has given me. Over time, standing up for the marginalized and oppressed has come to mean championing social issues like universal healthcare and gay rights.

And I am already instilling the importance of sharing with my son. While today it is toys and books, tomorrow it will be the environment and funding for those federal programs designed to assist the needy (which corresponds nicely with standing up for others).

My mother was also a big fan of Stephan Covey. So I often got, "Seek first to understand, then be understood."

This one I am still trying to master today. Right now.

Every time I read a newspaper article mentioning the possible repeal of Roe v. Wade or even locally here in Corpus Christi, giving our precious public beach over to money-hungry developers...this is the counsel that I really rely on. It will take a couple more years to approach MJ with this particular piece of advice, though, since right now he doesn't even understand his own emotions - only that he wants what he wants when he wants it!

Still, this is one of life's instructions that I think more people should take advantage of.

Squabbles, fights, perhaps even wars could be avoided if we were all a bit more attuned to others' needs and motivations.

So, this year, as the best kind of gift, I am going to ask all of my family and friends to send us one piece of advice they think will serve MJ well as he journeys through his life.

Advice that will make him a better man, a man that will someday impact the world in a positive way.

As for me, my advice to him will be, and continue to be, mind your mother!

Vivian Greentree graduated from the University of Georgia with degrees in Political Science and Public Relations. After serving as a Supply Officer in the U.S. Navy for four years, she is currently pursuing her Masters degree.

Still, while I sat thinking of the best present to get a toddler, my mind kept replaying some advice I remember my mom giving me stretching back all the way to my own childhood days. If I went to her and whined about my older brother and his annoying (one-way) spitball games, she would say, "Look at each other with love in your heart."

When I got in a fight in grade school over who got to sit by Ms. Swinton, and later complained about it to my mom, her advice, "Look at your friends with love in your heart."

And later, in college, when I got my heart broken by the boy I had thought I was sure to marry and cursed him to my mom, she commiserated, but ultimately said, "You have to look at Russell with love in your heart."

She even held her ground during the last presidential election, when I felt all hope was lost and called her, ranting about the setbacks in social, political, and economic justice and questioned the personal integrity of those who would seek to instigate a pre-emptive war and then lie for the very...well you can see where it was going. Still, and I know it was hard for her, but she said, "You have to look at these people with love in your heart. That is the only way anything will ever get solved."

So, reflecting on such wisdom, I decided the best gift I could give my son on any given birthday is to relate to him the kind of guidance that my mother bestowed upon me. Look at others with love in your heart was the most often said mantra, but certainly not the only one.

I remember vividly in the 5th grade when my friends started picking on a new girl in our classroom. Because by 5th grade, everybody who's anybody is already somebody, right? When I got home and told my mom about it, she asked if I spoken up for the new girl.

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An Examination Of The 9/11 Truth Movement, Part One

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, I was leisurely walking out of my college philosophy class when a friend ran up to me. He was short of breath and red in the face. He stopped and panted a few times. "What's wrong?" I asked. "Dude, we're under attack," he said. "They flew planes into New York. Anarchy is breaking out!"

I raced home, unsure of what was happening. My vehicle's radio had broken weeks earlier, so I could only hope to find a television. I parked the car in my driveway and raced into my room, throwing the door open and picking up the remote with one smooth motion. The dial was already tuned to ABC. As the screen came into focus, I could hear the sound of screaming people. "Oh my God! Oh my God!" trembled a voice from off-screen.

Then the first tower collapsed. As I watched in utter horror, thousands of pounds of debris fell from the skyscraper and into the streets of New York. It collapsed straight down, and the rest of the building went with it. "We have no idea what caused this," said Peter Jennings. "Anybody who's ever watched a building being demolished on purpose knows that if you're going to do this, you're going to have to get at the under



The Webster Retort

By
Stephen
Webster

infrastructure of the building in order to bring it down." Little did Jennings know, he had just given birth to what has come to be called the 9/11 Truth movement.

As the day went on, millions of Americans sat in front of their televisions, transfixed by news broadcasts coming out of New York and Washington D.C. Many of the reports aired that day were never revisited by this country's major news networks. Hundreds of people in New York were caught on tape talking about a series of explosions that rocked the base of the towers hours after the first plane hit.

A firefighter peppered with dirt and blood stared hopelessly into an MSNBC camera, recounting his experience. "As we were gettin' our gear on and making

our way to the stairway, there was a heavy-duty explosion," he said. An NYPD officer on CBS claimed, "We never even got close to the building. The explosion blew and it knocked everybody over." On Fox News, a bald man in a white shirt recounted his experience escaping WTC7, the third tower to fall that day. "I was down in the basement. All the sudden we heard a loud bang. The elevator doors blew open and some guy was burnt up. So I dragged him out. His skin was all, hanging off."

What is the 9/11 Truth movement? It is a collection of 43 authors, 18 professors, historians and theologians, a former Congresswoman, a host of television and print journalists, musicians and actors who have rallied around 49 individuals who lost family members on Sept. 11. According to 911truth.org, an Aug. 31, 2004 Zogby poll found that 49.3 percent of New York City residents and 41 percent of New York state residents believe that the president had knowledge of the coming attacks and "consciously failed" to act. Sixty-six percent of those surveyed called for a new investigation into the attacks in light of questions Congress and the 9/11 Commission failed to answer.

Some of the central organizing tools for the 9/11 Truth movement have surfaced in the form of documentary films such as "9/11 Revisited" and "9/11 - In Plane Sight." Like any movement without a central organizing group, the "truth" message is split into several factions. Each faction within the truth movement has a slightly different version of the events, but they all agree on one thing: airplanes alone did not bring the towers down.

The "official" finding of the 9/11 Commission is that both towers collapsed upon themselves after the building's steel frame melted from extended exposure to burning jet fuel. Stephen E. Jones, a professor of physics at Brigham Young University, authored a report titled, "Why Indeed Did the WTC Buildings Collapse?" Among his various allegations, Jones insists that the fire could not have melted the steel supports in both towers, as jet fuel burns at a maximum of 1000 degrees Celsius, but steel does not give way until temperatures

reach over 1500 degrees Celsius.

"[T]he official theory lacks repeatability in that no actual models or buildings (before or since 9-11-01) have been observed to completely collapse due to the proposed fire-based mechanisms," writes Jones. "On the other hand, dozens of buildings have been completely and symmetrically demolished through the use of pre-positioned explosives. And high-temperature chemical reactions can account for the observed large pools of molten metal, under both Towers and WTC 7, and the sulfidation of structural steel. The controlled-demolition hypothesis cannot be dismissed as 'junk science' because it better satisfies tests of repeatability and parsimony. It ought to be seriously (scientifically) investigated and debated."

Yet today, no such debate exists in our government or mainstream media.

It is for these reasons that I will be chronicling, to the best of my ability, the various theories that have risen out of the ashes of the World Trade Center towers. From the mysterious attempts by the Bush administration to block an investigation into the attacks to the strange lack of evidence that a plane hit the Pentagon, I'll be going there, and I'm taking you with me. Over the next few weeks (or months, maybe), this column will be dedicated to exploring this large and growing movement.

For a preview of what I will be covering, point your web browser to <www.911revisited.com> and click "Watch movie online." This documentary is a collection of news reports (some of which I have cited above) aired on Sept. 11. Also covered in the film are a couple of speeches aired on C-SPAN, given by scholars who support the 9/11 Truth movement.

Watch it, and keep your tin hats close at hand, campers. This is going to get a little weird.

Stephen Webster is an Investigative Reporter and Syndicated Columnist with *The News Connection*, a Staff Columnist with *George W. Bush's hometown weekly The Lone Star Iconoclast*, and a former Contributor to *The Dallas Morning News' Science & Technology* section. For more of Webster's musings, visit GonzoMuckraker.BlogSpot.com.

N for Nathan

I liked *V for Vendetta*.

Honestly, though, I was tempted to start my own cult after watching it 14 times last week.

But then, I thought about it more...

Why should I reinvent the wheel when I'm already a part of so many cults already?

First, well, there's government, every single level of which tells me what to do and how and when to do it.

Next, there's all the stores I'm forced to shop at with all the brands of clothing I'm forced to "choose" from.

Then, there's all the "fan clubs" I've joined on the Internet due to peer pressure.

(You know, Tom Waits would make an awesome cult leader if he only toured more, don't ya think?)

Oh, and of course, there's my job working at the *Iconoclast*, which no doubt has a cult following all its own

I can tell we have a cult following by the looks I get from people's eyes when I tell them about myself:

"Yeah, I work for the *Lone Star Iconoclast* — President Bush's 'hometown' newspaper in Crawford, Texas. We endorsed Sen. Kerry for president back in 2004, you know.

"No, please, keep your clothes on, Ma'am. I'm on the clock. You don't need to thank me like that. Oh, geez, not again!"

At the time, I'm sure a lot of Bush supporters thought we were crazy for supporting Kerry in Bush's backyard.

But the *Iconoclast's* endorsement wasn't exactly leveling Parliament with 40 tons of TNT.

You don't need Hollywood special effects to get people's attention either, by the way.

Cults are funny that way.

People think that they're all about poisoned Kool-aid when a simple kiss on the cheek is all you really need.

(For all you non-Christians, that was a Judas reference. Judas is the disciple who betrayed Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas when he kissed

The Rubber Cement Index

By Nathan Diebenow



Jesus tipped off the authorities of Jesus' identity.)

Still, you've got to be careful where you put your faith, folks. Losing track of your priorities can get you into deep doo-doo, especially when you believe your shit don't stink because you think you're God's gift.

Yeah, if you don't check yourself, you'll end up getting your ass kicked or an airplane sent flying through your skyscraper if you're not careful.

Fortunately, for me, I've never had that problem because —

I AM GOD!!!
M U A H -
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!!!

Just get that cheese away from me, okay? You know I'm allergic to cheese. Get it away! Put the "airplane" spoon-thingy down! Ha-ha, this is not funny, you guys!

Okay, so, I'm not God, and I'm not "the bomb" either.

Actually, I'm pretty lame. I mean, I saw *V for Vendetta* 14 times last week.

Duh!
I can't believe you actually believed me!

Oh, well, in Lutheran terms, whatever faith-path (or economic system) you end up choosing, you can't escape "the Law."

You may be able to put things into perspective and perhaps see how worthwhile helping the underprivileged is in the process — but don't believe that you're some hero and act holier-than-thou because of it.

As Max Fisher said in the Wes Anderson flick *Rushmore*: "Sic Transit Gloria" (Glory fades).

And for me it's fading a whole lot faster after that last quote.

I'm such a dork!
Have a pleasant evening.

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LETTERS
TO THE
EDITOR

Dear Editor:

Though I rarely write letters to media, after reading the March 1 issue of The Iconoclast I could not restrain myself from heaping praise on your publication, in particular for your outstanding DU interviews. To my mind the worldwide dispersal of aerosol uranium 238 is the most critical danger facing the Earth's population, surpassing even global warming in severity. As far as I am aware, no single information source has done a better job of alerting the public, long held in abject ignorance by the corporate media-brain-wash-machine, to this danger.

Sadly, the devastation perpetrated by DU on all Earthly life-forms would not cease even if the hideous US military juggernaut were halted in its tracks today. As several of your interviewees asserted, the damage inflicted by DU on all Earthly life-forms will persist perhaps for geological ages. But though the situation appears grim it may not be entirely hopeless.

The Japanese, as we know, have had plenty of experience dealing with radionuclide poisoning. They were in fact somewhat successful in mitigating the effects of chronic radiation poisoning through the introduction into the diet of atom bomb victims certain enzymatically active foods such as miso, a fermented bean or grain paste. Dr. Bertel states in the Iconoclast interview that DU attacks the body's enzymes in a negatively catalytic manner and suggests that a high protein diet may protect people to a degree. Miso, kambucha, poi, among other Asian foods are indicated as enzyme supplements available in the US and Europe. In addition, for the price of a cheap tv set, there are highly effective HEPA filters that will eliminate practically all of the dust and airborne pollution inside a house. Considering that DU particles can ride on dust a HEPA filter may be helpful.

Of course the most immediately important thing to do is to end the Iraqi invasion with its concomitant mayhem, murder and torture. And it goes without saying that the US should cease all production and use of all radionuclides and forget about encouraging other nations such as India to participate in creating new nukes.

Once again, heartfelt thanks and best regards!

Rayner Ward

Letter To The Editor:

With scant forethought beyond doing what his father had not, topple Saddam Hussein, George W. Bush launched his war into Iraq. Now mired in the fourth year of this misadventure, Bush's litany of justifications has him sounding like the perpetual delinquent that thinks he can talk his way out of anything.

As shortsighted now as before, Bush spins out his broken-record mantra: "The world is better off without Saddam Hussein." If Bush can find a silver lining in a manmade disaster of his doing, surely he might be able to detect great purpose in a catastrophe of Mother Nature's making.

To wit, if a tsunami had swept up the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and had gotten Saddam Hussein, but in the bargain also took the lives of thousands of Iraqis, killed over 2,000 of our troops, permanently maimed untold more, seriously

damaged our nation's hard-gained reputation, and cost our people billions upon billions of dollars, we might expect George W. Bush to place much value in the devastating wall of water and to take credit for its course.

He talks and talks and turns a deaf ear as he leaves unanswered the damning question; was war with Iraq our nation's only course? The answer is no.

When presidents of past were faced with the threatening march of Communism from a USSR bristling with real weapons of mass destruction and with agents secreted throughout the world, these leaders opted for containment of this threat until it inevitably fell of its own weight. These courageous Commanders in Chief believed in the courage of our people and in the superiority of our free way of life.

Sam Osborne, West Branch, IA
To The Editor:

The Bush administration, Republican Party, Department of Defense, military commanders, all give-us, the American People, the same rhetoric, and stick to the same agenda. That being, we the American People, who are paying the bills for the actions of the few in Washington, are stuck on stupid, have no idea of what is really going on, should not have any opposing ideals from them.

We should not expect the truth from government, that government need not be accountable to the people. That once in power, regardless of the fraud used to get there, no one need question the abuses of power by any member of their organizations.

It seems congress is very accepting of that, but I really believe the American people are about ready to pull the rug out from under a few butts that put themselves on such a pedestal.

We disagree with the war, the control of our government by AIPAC & Israel. We could care less if Israel remains a state or not, we care about America, Katrina victims, our people in poverty, our education level. Why should we be supporting the WELFARE state of Israel? We did not cause their problems, they created their own and NEED TO DEAL WITH IT THEMSELVES.

They would make peace with their neighbors if they didn't have the USA DOING THEIR DIRTY WORK.

They do nothing but "TAKE " & "TAKE," what have they ever given to benefit another. How have they treated their neighbors? They have stolen from all, pushed and bullied, and killed.

Continually at odds letting the USA settle all disputes to their benefit while crying discrimination.

My question is, how is it they can always fool the American government, but no one else falls for the bull crap?

Now we are broke again, and need to go further in debt to continue bailing Israel out.

The end is coming soon. Americans will protest, riot, demonstrate for our own causes. Let Israel be China's ally. They have been selling all our defense systems to them any-how. Of course, behind the scenes, how else does an Israeli operate.

Ronald Waldron

Hi mate

I wrote you to thank you for your excellent coverage of the DU catastrophe. I have marvelled that each new article, as

research progresses, is orders of magnitude more frightening than the last. The new article, from Rense, is no exception. He is one of few that carried your special edition.

Jeffrey Irving

To The Editor:

Past, Present, and Future?

Although the symptoms of the malignancy are easy enough to identify, as many writers can attest to, the goal is more elusive. Using the puppet's experience as a cheerleader has worked sufficiently well on the apparent majority of this country who prefer trusting to seeing, and choose to remain oblivious to life beyond their nose, that the show has been taken on the road to a state level.

Ohio with it's resident puppet being a good case in point.

The simplicity of the plan, divide and conquer, has withstood the test of time, and deriving the desired revenues from both destroying and rebuilding may very well predate the Rothschild-Rockefeller clique. So, in the end, this may be nothing more than the old standby of world domination with what Jimmy Buffet would call "a different point of view." One can only hope that when all is said and done there will be something left worth dominating.

Alan MacFarland, Tallmadge, Ohio
To The Editor:

"Depleted Uranium For Dummies," went on line yesterday and has now been posted on <After Downing Street.org>, the Information Clearing House, and many international websites. "Dummies" is popularly written, but some of the best experts on depleted uranium have confirmed its accuracy.

In simple but precise language, it presents everything you need to know about depleted uranium to convince remaining supporters of the Iraq War that every day our troops remain in Iraq increases the chances that they will come home sick, produce children with birth defects, and

die prematurely.

Deadly uranium permeates the air, water, and soil. Baghdad's Green Zone is as contaminated as any battlefield. The Iraqi people's future will be catastrophic.

Irving Wesley Hall

To The Editor:

If the Congress passes a law, can Bush ignore it? Fasten your seat belt folks, looks like our Constitutional Republic whose checks and balances we cherish and depend upon to assure our civil liberties and the rule of law, is in for a bumpy ride.

I was astonished to learn that Bush signed an extension of the Patriot Act that included provisions that he informs Congress about how the FBI was using the act's expanded police powers, and then in a u-turn, signed an addendum, which de facto thumbs his nose at Congress saying he can choose to ignore such rules. Who needs Congress if Bush chooses to ignore the laws that they pass anyway?

If the D.C. Democrats are too timid to even censure Bush for illegal spying on Americans, where do we go from here? What's next - goose-stepping "Youth For Bush" wearing brown-shirted uniforms funded by grants under his faith-based initiatives?

Harold S Kramer, Marblehead, MA
Dear Editor:

CNN, Gallop Poll, and USA Today put President Bush's job approval rating at 35 percent and declining. Lowest in Presidential history. This is a reflection of the voters intelligence, who put him back in office. Reelecting Bush is like reelecting Herbert Hoover during the Great Depression! It's no surprise when Europe questioned, how could 59 million Americans, can be so dumb to vote for bush? Now this country is paying dearly for it! Warrantless wiretaps, holding people without charges, torture, and Iraq war turning into civil war.

John F. Parker

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Rainy Day Patriots Descend On Denton

By **STEPHEN WEBSTER**
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

DENTON, Texas — On March 20, 2003, George W. Bush announced the start of America's invasion of Iraq. Just two months later, on May 1, 2003, Bush landed a fighter jet on the flight deck of the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln and delivered his now-infamous speech, declaring that "major combat operations in Iraq have ended." He stood before the nation in a gray flight suit, framed by hundreds of cheering soldiers, under a red, white, and blue banner that read "Mission Accomplished." Three years later, America is still waiting for that promise to come true.

On Saturday, March 18, 2006, Peace Action Denton and Veterans for Peace convened a protest of America's involvement in Iraq at the Courthouse on the square in Denton. The rally was just one of thousands that dotted the U.S. and the world in commemoration of the third anniversary of the Iraq war.

In February of 2003, Peace Action Denton organized a protest which attracted fewer than 10 people. On Saturday, in spite of pounding rain and temperatures in the 30s and 40s, nearly 100 people came to show their resistance to America's current foreign policy. Those in attendance included U.S. Congressional candidate for Texas District 24 Gary R. Page and Denton County Justice of the Peace Precinct One candidate Mac Poe, both Democrats. Members of the Denton County Green Party were also present, collecting signatures to put their candidates on the general election ballot this November.

"I came here to talk about how we go about stopping this war," said Mac Poe. "How do we take this country back from the Neo-Cons? I have been against this war since they began talking about it."



These flags were hung by a Vietnam Veteran dressed in a tattered uniform. The notes under each flag read (from left to right), "Past - Present - Future."

— Photo by Stephen Webster



About 100 protesters gathered outside the Denton County Courthouse on the square to protest the Iraq war.

— Photo by Stephen Webster

This war, if you look at international law, is an illegal war. If you remember, this president, had it not been for one Supreme Court justice, would not be in office. Last week, Sandra Day O'Connor gave a speech saying that this country was on the verge of becoming a dictatorship. My response to Mrs. O'Connor is that your vote — one vote — could have prevented George W. Bush from becoming our president."

"If that had happened, today we would still have a democratic government," he continued. "Today, we would still have our freedoms and liberties that have been taken away by the Patriot Act. Today, there would be no war that has maimed over 20,000 of our soldiers. Over 2,500 of our soldiers are dead. Over 100,000 Iraqis are dead. This is unconscionable. How do we stop it? We stop it by registering to vote. We stop it by getting out to the polls and supporting candidates who reflect our views. [...] Our money is going to kill people in other countries, and it should be going to help disadvantaged people. It should be going to help the 43 million Americans without health care."

As protesters stood in the downpour listening to Poe's speech, two police cars pulled up to the courthouse. The officers got out of their cars and walked up to

each other, standing approximately 100 yards away from the protest. They observed, but did not approach any closer. After standing in front of their cars for several minutes, they both departed. Over the next hour, a total of 10 other officers arrived on the scene, though no protesters were arrested or detained.

After Poe finished his speech, Gary R. Page stood to share his thoughts on the war. "The only ones who are going to be able to turn the tide in Iraq are the people themselves," he said. "Our government is supposed to be of the people and by the people. If a majority of our people think [a withdraw from Iraq] needs to happen, then let's make that happen. Let's put our people in control of our government again. We ought to make this happen."

A man in green and black camouflage, sporting a sign on his chest and back and wielding an upside-down American flag, walked to the north-east corner of the courthouse square. He stood practically motionless for 20 minutes as cars passed by honking and flashing their lights at him. His sign read, "I.R.A.Q. - I Remember Another Quagmire. Vietnam Veterans Against the War. VVAW.ORG"

"Something needs to be done about this administration," said protester Michael Bono of Ft. Worth. "Too many of our troops are dying. Too many innocent

Iraqis have died. And now, he wants to go into Iran. I fear if we go into Iran, we'll be starting World War III. I am so afraid for this country. We keep giving Bush and Cheney billions for their illegal war, and less for the American people. [...] George W. Bush committed a high crime by letting us come under attack on 9/11. He was told, very clearly, about terrorists training to fly airplanes into targets in America, but he did nothing. And in response to that attack, he went to war the wrong country. That is shameful. We are the patriots of America. We want our country back."

A brown and tan Dodge truck with a Bush/Cheney '04 sticker parked next to this reporter's car about 10 minutes after the start of the protest. At times, the truck could be seen driving very slowly around the square. The man in the driver's seat was bald, in his late 40s or early 50s, wearing a red and black flannel shirt. Around his neck hung a pair of binoculars; in his hands, a pen and yellow legal pad with at least one full page of license plate numbers written on it. He remained parked on Elm Street, directly across from the courthouse, for at least half the duration of the rally.

"I went through this with my brother during Vietnam," said a Flower Mound woman who would only identify herself as Susan. "I cannot believe it is happening all over again. Where's the Christian ethic in this?" As she stood in the rain, water trickled down her yellow raincoat and into the eyes of a small, black dog wearing a matching raincoat. "This is Marty. He's not for the war either," she said. The dog barked and strained against its leash as a girl of about five years in a purple raincoat ran by, a boy of the same age in a red jacket with the logo from Disney's "The Incredibles" on the back, giving chase. They screamed and laughed as they dodged back and forth between the adults' legs.

"If I hadn't been through this before, I would not be out here. But it isn't just for me. It's for them too," said Susan, motioning to the children who had disappeared into the crowd. "What are we going to do if Bush starts World War III by going into Iran? That isn't a future I want to cope with. I don't think anyone does. Isn't that right, Marty?" The dog shook itself and continued panting. "I think he agrees," she said.



A woman who would only identify herself as "Susan of Flower Mound" poses with her dog, Marty, at Saturday's protest.

— Photo by Stephen Webster



Gary R. Page, Democrat running for the House of Representatives in Texas District 24, spoke at the protest.

— Photo by Stephen Webster



This man's sign reads "Other casualties of war - Births caused by depleted uranium. W - THE LIAR."

— Photo by Stephen Webster