



CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington

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Complete Victory in Iraq?

by Donald Devine

"I am sick and tired. Sick and tired of how some in this country are turning their backs on our troops at a time when they need our support the most! This is why I am taking action to speak up, and in particular, why I am helping to lead the "THESE COLORS DON'T RUN" national pro-troop/patriotic caravan being organized by Move America Forward."

That is self-identified "Marine Mom," Deborah Johns, talking about her tour beginning tomorrow, March 8 in San Francisco and ending with a giant a pro-troop rally in Washington, D.C. March 17, 2007. She explained:

I know the American People want change in Iraq, our military wants change and so do their families. The change we want is for everyone to stop undermining the war effort and support our troops so that they may achieve a complete military victory in Iraq and Afghanistan alike. Please, as a Mother of a Marine serving his third tour of duty, on his behalf, on the behalf of his brothers serving along side him, our troops, and their families, lay down your anger towards one another and do what is right and in the best interests of our Military. God Bless them until they come home, God Bless those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice, God Bless their families who are Always Faithful and God Bless this Country.

How could anyone not be sympathetic? After three tours of duty, she deserves her frustration against accepting less than complete military victory. The nation could not survive without the deep patriotism so magnificently expressed by her and her son's sacrifice, to say nothing of those killed and wounded shouldering the nation's burden. Our nation can never repay them. But do we not owe our heroic Marines and soldiers the duty of asking, what is "complete military victory"?

The original plan for victory in Iraq was to draw down troops by the end of the first year, 2003. When I visited Iraq that November (<http://acuf.org/issues/031204news>), the generals were up-front about withdrawing to isolated forts or even leaving by mid 2004 and President George W. Bush mentioned possibly drawing down troops by spring. Four months before there was a war to undermine, I had urged action against Saddam Hussein but not nation-building in such a violent country, citing candidate Bush's opposition to the idea. I warned that "Since Iraq was drawn on the maps of a faraway colonial office in 1921, it has generated dozens of coups, eight Kurdish revolts, nine Shi'ite uprisings and three pogroms," before Saddam, while "revolts since then have killed 100,000 Iraqi Kurds and 30,000 Shi'ites. Playing well with others is not a high priority in old Mesopotamia. While of pluralism there is aplenty, it is not the benign type required for a democracy." (<http://www.conservative.org/columnists/divine/021120dd.asp>)



After initially achieving a military victory, the generals' plan to withdraw was replaced by the idea that Iraq could be made into a democracy by adopting a Western constitution and elections to become a model to spread to the entire Middle East. The soldiers had won but military victory was not proclaimed. Rather, the mission was expanded beyond the capacity of the troops available. As a result of the experience on the ground since then, the president subsequently narrowed the goal to the more

achievable one of stability. But much had happened between 2004 and 2006 that deepened sectarian divisions and fed expectations in each faction that it could gain from violence. By 2007, Iraq was nearing civil war.

In response, the president proposed a surge of 21,500 troops to force security. Johns is correct to disdain opposition to the surge. Nothing can stop it. By the time Congress could act, the surge will be completed—the forces will be in place by May. The only issue is what happens at the end of 2007. Perhaps the biggest military hawk in Congress, Sen. John McCain, has reluctantly concluded that although he would like to keep fighting until complete victory, if the surge fails nothing could stop a U.S. troop withdrawal imposed by Congress. No less a tough guy than former UN ambassador John Bolton agreed that late 2007 is the endgame. There will not be a second chance.

What is possible by then? Certainly, the 1,400 year Sunni-Shiite conflict will not be healed. The equally long Arab-Kurd divide will not be solved. A nation that has only lived in peace under dictatorial government will not become democrats. At best, a rough order can be set that allows U.S. troops to take advantage of the lull and withdraw to remote fortified positions and begin reducing the number in the country, leaving policing and insurgent control to the Iraqi government. Renewed conflict is inevitable but American soldiers can be out of harms way. Why could this not be called a victory?

What would constitute a “complete” military victory? Even the neoconservative optimists say a 20 year occupation would be necessary. Or would it take longer? Should the U.S. ally with the Shiites to beat down the Sunnis once and for all, whatever it takes? What about the secular and Sunni Kurds if they demand to “keep” the northern oil or Kirkuk against Shiite demands? Will the American people accept the ruthlessness required? What happens if the surge does not work to quell the violence? Should the president send more troops even if Congress tells him not to? What would that do to the troops caught in the middle? Are there any circumstances when the troops could leave with less than complete victory?



Kim Jong-il

When is victory ever complete? The Soviet Union was defeated in the Cold War but has not become a true Western democracy and now Russia sometimes votes against U.S. actions in the U.N. Should we knock down the only nation in the world that actually has the nuclear missile force to annihilate America? What regime could be worse than North Korea? Yet, the president just concluded a deal with Kim Jong-II that just might buy him off from flattening our allies in the region, even if it is less than perfect and will need constant supervision—which it will. Serious foreign relations are never resolved once-and-for-all but require persistence. Iran? Actually, it does not have the capacity to strike American soil but if we or Israel hit its nuclear sites, the large Iranian army would have a great advantage—at least in the short term--over the now surge-disbursed American forces.

What about the rest of the Middle East? Even Bolton says the goal is to assure terrorists cannot have a safe haven there, not to bring democracy or even to insist on one as opposed to three governments in Iraq. After three years of intervention and democracy-building, a Zogby Poll last year of six countries considered friendly to the U.S.—Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates—found 65 percent not believing building democracy was America’s real goal in the region but that it was to gain U.S. advantage there. Asked what countries had democracies only 14 percent said the U.S. had one, way behind France and Germany. Only 12 percent had over-all favorable views of the U.S. and when asked who was the world leader they disliked most even Israel’s Ariel Sharon (at 11 percent) and Ehud Olmert (at 7 percent) were less most disliked than George Bush, at a worldwide high of 38 percent most disliked.

It is necessary to control terrorism but it will never be complete. Insurgency control is not a war that begins and ends at a point in time. Attempts to escape the continuing challenge are utopian. Even a



Germany democratized after World War II often defies American desires. We need to work with other countries to handle their own extremists and we need to control cross-border movement. Otherwise, we must manage the worldwide insurgency patiently, and keep the big stick of our massed forces in reserve for rapid in-and-out strikes, not nation-building. There is nothing Iraq can do to really hurt the U.S.--and Iran can do little more—unless we place our own troops at risk within their grasp.

By all means have a patriotic, pro-troop celebration but do it confident in our beliefs by not demanding “complete” victory when those values teach nothing is complete in this world. These colors don’t run but they maneuver. After some mistakes, U.S. policy is turning toward the only resolution possible given world realities and that should be considered a victory of sorts.

We must honor the sacrifice and bravery of our troops first by leading them well.

Donald Devine, the editor of Conservative Battleline Online, was the director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management from 1981 to 1985 and is the director of the [Federalist Leadership Center](#) at Bellevue University.

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Editor**

Freedom and Security

by Bob Barr

While probably more often remembered for his prescient warning that America must beware the too-powerful "military-industrial complex," former five-star general and president of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, also possessed a deep understanding of the folly of over-reliance on government power to deliver security to a populace.

In 1949, three years before his election to the presidency and while serving as president of Columbia University, Eisenhower dryly remarked that if security were the ultimate goal of Americans, then "prison ... [where] they'll have enough to eat, a bed and a roof over their heads," should be their abode of choice. While not as memorable as Patrick Henry's "give me liberty or give me death" speech in 1775 that helped spark a revolution in freedom that echoed through the ages, Eisenhower, too, clearly understood that complete security -- if it ever might be secured -- could only be attained at the cost of freedom itself.



Bob Barr

America, for its first two and a quarter centuries, inherently understood that a measure of the price paid for freedom is a certain lack of security -- a degree of risk, as it were. While in prior times of peril our nation back slid in its understanding of this principle of liberty, and allowed government to seize power to the extent fundamental freedom was threatened -- the Alien and Sedition Acts early in the 19th century, the suspension of habeas corpus in the Civil War era, the "Red Scare" and the "Palmer Raids" in the time of World War I, the internment of Japanese Americans in World War II -- in each instance, corrective action was taken.

The terrorist attacks of 2001 and the resulting and unprecedented power grab by the federal government in its drive to bring "security" to an America frozen with fear over another such attack, for the first time in our nation's history threatens to permanently enshrine the notion that security trumps freedom.

In no sense is the big hand of government power more apparent than in the incessant drive by Washington to abolish any vestige of privacy enjoyed by our citizens. The mantra is a familiar one: "you must be prepared to give up a little privacy in order to have security." The question is often posed, "if you have nothing to hide, why should you be concerned if the government listens in to your phone calls or reads your e-mails?" Ultimately, the administration falls back on the refrain that "we are fighting a new and dangerous enemy, of the sort never contemplated by those who drafted the Fourth Amendment many decades ago, and we need new powers to do meet these grave threats."

The fact is, of course, our Founding Fathers, those geniuses in gray wigs, knew exactly what they were doing. They knew that power corrupts and that the power of the government to invade a person's property, belongings and beliefs constitutes the power to control. They understood that if government enjoyed absolute power to invade or take away a person's privacy, then the government enjoyed absolute control over that person, who therefore had no liberty or freedom. It's that simple.

At the time the Bill of Rights was being debated and adopted, and in the first few years thereafter, the United States faced a threat far greater than that posed by potential terrorist cells today. We faced invasion and conquest by the most powerful nation on the face of the Earth: Great Britain.

Yet, in the face of such a threat, our framers deliberately and knowingly limited the ability of the government to invade people's privacy and gather evidence against them. The Fourth Amendment

allows government to do so only in those instances in which it has good reason to suspect the person of criminal acts (yes, that includes suspected "terrorist" conduct). To claim that the limitations in the Fourth Amendment do not apply in the year 2007 because the threat we face is somehow different from or worse than the threat we faced two and a quarter centuries ago is at odds with historical reality; it is mere sophistry.

Why is this so important? Is it simply because we don't want the government to learn our bank account balance ... or our medical history ... or our travel patterns ...or whatever? Yes, but not really. It is vitally important that we rectify this frightening erosion of our constitutional underpinning because, as philosopher Ayn Rand correctly concluded in her 1943 novel, "The Fountainhead," privacy is the very foundation of freedom. "Civilization," she said, is the "progress toward a society of privacy." It is after all, "the process of setting man free from men."

Our Founding Fathers understood that. The Bill of Rights and the Fourth Amendment protect it. And the American people truly must re-establish it, if our very notion of a society based on freedom is to survive.

Bob Barr formerly represented the Seventh Congressional District of Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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Editor**

Islam and 9/11 Terrorism

by Joseph Morris

On the Muslim sabbath, Friday, September 14, 2001, I spoke by invitation in the pulpit of a mosque in suburban Chicago. Here is what I said:

It is important for Americans to understand why some Muslims felt it necessary to attack and murder us.

If these attacks were in retaliation for America's opposition to aggressive wars waged by others, then the attacks were wrong; they must be condemned; and war must be waged on those who attacked us, because the attacks were an extensions of the aggression that we have rightly resisted. All Americans, including Muslim-Americans, should join in the condemnation and should join in the resolute prosecution of a just war of self-defense.

Perhaps, however, the attacks were motivated, not by our foreign policy, but by the character of our civilization. Perhaps those who attacked us are offended by our culture and our mores; they see that our culture and our mores are attractive to people in other lands, including those that are historically Muslim; they believe that the spread of our culture and our mores must be resisted; and they conclude that the only way to stop the spread of our culture and our mores is to attack us in our own land.

Now, if the aim of the attack was to move us to reform ourselves, then any logic and morality of the attackers' critique of America were entirely overwhelmed by the illogic and immorality of the attacks. Some aspects of our culture and our mores do, indeed, merit criticism, and among them are attitudes prevailing in important segments of our people regarding abortion, marriage, homosexuality, and sexual promiscuity in general. Those topics are worthy of debate among ourselves. Criticism of our culture and mores from persons whose views are grounded in other cultures may be useful and, by our own lights -- the vaunted openness of the Western mind to truth, regardless of its source -- it should be welcomed. Muslims, Christians, and Jews of goodwill would resolve to work together to prevail upon the world to reform itself. But warfare and murder are not acceptable modes of inducing reform, let alone of argument. As grave as I believe such sins as abortion and homosexual conduct to be, they pale in comparison with the sins of murder and aggressive war as committed by those who attacked us on September 11th.

What is more, some aspects of our culture and our mores are highly defensible and we should never apologize for them. Among these are our political liberties, our tolerance of all religion and of irreligion, our evolving mechanisms of interfaith consultation and cooperation, and our recognition and protection of the individual liberties of women. To the extent that those who attacked us reject these aspects of our civilization, it behooves every American, regardless of religion, to unite in defiance.

In the alternative, the aim of the attacks may not have been to stimulate us to repentance or reform, but to make our culture and our mores appear less attractive to people in Muslim or other lands by making us seem vulnerable or irresolute. If that is the case, then the grievance of the attackers is not really with us, but with their own people -- that is, with people whose cultures and mores they would presume to dictate, but who, it would seem, find aspects of our civilization more attractive than the worldview of the attackers and those who inspired and guided them. To commit murder and to wage war as a means of instruction is a profound offense against all logic, against all morality, and against God. All Muslims, all Christians, all Jews, all Americans, and, indeed, all



civilized people must condemn such motives and must rally together in resistance -- armed resistance, as it appears will be necessary -- to those who perpetrate such extraordinary wrongs.

In the midst of all this, we must not lose sight of three things.

First, that the attackers of September 11th may have been critics of Western mores does not mean that Western mores are above criticism.

Second, that Western mores may deserve criticism does not justify the attacks of September 11th.

Third, war has been declared, and is being waged, upon our nation by people who claim to be acting in the name of Islam. If they are to be denied the right to fly the flag of Islam, then it is Muslims who must deny it to them. It is Muslims who must be in the lead in condemning the attacks and in showing their false logic and utter immorality. It is Muslims who must be in the lead in calling for the American people to unite and to defend ourselves.

Finally, all tools of national power must be applied to the work of self-defense. To the extent that the criminal justice system can bring perpetrators of these acts to account, it should be employed against them. To the extent that diplomacy and political means can rally other nations and peoples to our cause, then they must be pursued. To the extent that it is necessary to wage war in foreign lands against those who planned and executed these attacks and who may plan more of them, then war must be waged. These various means should not be confused with each other; neither should any be ignored. We may not know today the identities of all our enemies; they may be formless, shadowy movements; they may be nation-states; they may be coalitions of evil people who have little in common with each other, hating us for reasons that are contradictory but, all the same, and of ultimate importance, hating us more than they hate each other and hating us nonetheless.

The times ahead will not be easy. But we have made a good start today, joining together in this sacred space, Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike, Americans all, to remind ourselves that, in the spirit of the American founders, we have pledged to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

Joseph A Morris is a partner in Morris & De La Rosa in Chicago and is a member of the American Conservative Union Board of Directors.

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Editor**

Hardaway Free Speech?

by S. T. Karnick

Retired NBA great Tim Hardaway was asked about homosexual former player John Amaechi on a radio program. Host Dan Le Batard inquired how Hardaway would react if he knew that he had a homosexual teammate. Hardaway's response has raised a storm of negative reactions.

Here is a direct transcription of the excerpt broadcast on ESPN:

Le Batard: How do you deal with a gay teammate?

Hardaway: [pause] "Whoa! Uh, first of all, I wouldn't want him on my team. And, uh, second of all, if he was on my team, uh, I would, you know, really distance myself from him because, um, uh, uh, I don't think that's right, and you know, I, I, I don't think that, you know, he should be in the locker room while we are in the locker room, and it's just a whole lot of other things, so I, I wouldn't, I wouldn't even be a part of that; but you know, there's stuff like that going on and there's a lot, uh, of other people, I hear, like that, people in the closet and don't want to come out of the closet, but you know, I just leave that alone."

Le Batard: You know that what you're saying there, though, Timmy, is flatly homophobic. Right? It's just flat, it's just bigotry.

Hardaway: Well, you know, I, you know, I hate gay people. So, uh, uh, you know, I let it be known. I don't like gay people; I don't like to be around gay people. I don't, you know, uh, I yeah, I'm, I'm homophobic. I don't like it; it shouldn't be in the world today or in the United States for it, so yeah, I don't like it.

That's all transcribed exactly from the ESPN clip. Regarding prevailing attitudes in the NBA, the following exchange occurred, according to multiple print sources:

Hardaway: The majority of the players would ask for him to be traded or they would want to get traded.

Le Batard: But you'd be trading him to a team where he probably wouldn't be wanted there either, I would imagine.

Hardaway: Right, that is true. Just buy him out his contract and let him go (laughs). You know, something has to give. If you got 12 other ballplayers in your locker room that's upset and concentrate and always worried about him in the locker room or on the court or whatever, you know, it's gonna be hard for your teammates to win and accept him as a teammate.

Clearly Hardaway was sandbagged by the questions, as indicated by the number of "uhs" in his response (which I have retained in my transcription in order to convey this discomfort, not to suggest that Hardaway is inarticulate, which he is most certainly not; he has, on the contrary, always come off in interviews as quite intelligent).

Hardaway was obviously not expecting to be asked about homosexuality in a radio conversation about basketball—ordinarily a reasonable expectation, but one that no longer applies now that former NBA player John Amaechi has publicly declared his homosexuality in an attempt to sell more copies of his autobiography which went on sale recently.

Confronted later in a telephone interview with a Fox affiliate in Miami, Hardaway retracted his use of the word hate:

Yes, I regret it. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said I hate gay people or anything like that," he said. "That was my mistake.

Some observations:

The use of the word hate was wrong and intemperate on Hardaway's part. He was right to apologize for that. (Of course, there are degrees of hatred, and not all of them are toxic, but that is a discussion for another time. Hardaway's use of that word was definitely inflammatory and poorly conceived.)

Clearly Le Batard was trying to distance himself from the unexpected anti-homosexuality comments of a revered former NBA player, to save his own reputation in addition to stating his own position. The host's invocation of cant terms such as "homophobic" and "bigoted" shows that he knows what is and is not socially acceptable to say, and that this is all about power, not logic.

Hardaway's statement that he doesn't want anything to do with homosexuals may or may not be a reasonable preference, but it's certainly something people should be allowed to talk about in public. If we're truly going to have a free society, we're going to have to hear things we disagree with once in a while. And we're going to have to answer them with reasoned arguments, not attempts to suppress the discussion.

If people are going to be logically consistent (an unlikely premise, to be sure), Hardaway could stop all the controversy in a moment by simply asserting that he is genetically predisposed toward disapproving of homosexual behavior. Hence, he could argue, he cannot be held responsible for, or even criticized for, this genetically programmed behavior.

The fact that no one has identified such a gene is immaterial; nobody has looked for one yet. Surely one must exist, Hardaway could argue, given that so many people so strongly disapprove of homosexual behavior and that such attitudes have been so prevalent and persistent throughout human history. It is actually a highly plausible argument, he could say, given the evolutionary imperative for heterosexual behavior in creating children. Certainly the idea of an anti-homosexuality gene is every bit as plausible as the notion that there is a gene predisposing people toward homosexual behavior, he could argue. In fact, he could point out, it makes rather more sense in evolutionary terms.

And if it is wrong for society to seek to thwart or even disapprove of homosexual behavior because it is genetically programmed, he could observe, it must also then be wrong for society to attempt to thwart or even disapprove of people's dislike for homosexual behavior, because that, too, is genetically programmed.

Hardaway could argue that the two positions—approval or disapproval of homosexual behavior—are clearly on equal footing, as far as both genetics and political-social freedom are concerned.

The real difference between the two positions is that one is politically powerful at this point and the other is not.

S. T. Karnick is an Associate Fellow of the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research. He writes about popular culture and other topics for numerous publications and his [website](#).

Climate Journalism

by Alan Caruba

As a very young man, fresh out of college and the army in the mid-1960's, I found myself employed as a rookie reporter on a weekly newspaper in New Jersey. I had never taken a course in journalism in my life, but I could write. The managing editor of the newspaper group that serviced a number of communities taught me all I ever needed to know about journalism. He taught me to be skeptical of everything and everyone.



Alan Caruba

Not distrustful. *Skeptical*. People will tell you the truth they believe or want you to believe. They may be wrong. Or they may be deceitful. There's a difference. However, when error and deceit combine, there is a purpose, an agenda, and it exists, as often as not, to acquire wealth and power despite the harm it will leave in its wake.

At the heart of what is wrong with journalism today is that legions of journalists will stand shoulder to shoulder for the sole purpose of deriding any "global warming skeptic" rather than wonder for a second how the "news" of a coming Ice Age in the 1970s became the "news" of Global Warming in the 1980s.

I am reminded of this daily as I read newspapers and news magazines in which various reporters blithely and deliberately inform the reader that all questions regarding the existence of global warming have been answered, that the science is beyond doubt, and that the cause is the production of greenhouse gases, largely from industry, transportation, and other human activities.

This is not merely an error. It is a complete deception the journalists have joined. They have ceased to be skeptical. They want you to stop being skeptical despite all evidence to the contrary.

"Global Warming, as we think we know it, doesn't exist," says Dr. Timothy Ball. He has Ph.D. in climatology, having earned his degree from the University of London, England, and taught for many years at the University of Winnipeg. A Google search of his name turns up a plethora of posts attacking him, always a sure sign that the Greens feel threatened by an outspoken scientist. The quote below explains why:

"Believe it or not, Global Warming is not due to human contribution of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂). This in fact is the greatest deception in the history of science."

Dr. Ball is hardly alone in his views. Dr. Richard Lindzen, an atmospheric physicist and a professor of meteorology at MIT, as well as a member of the National Academy of Science, has said of Global Warming that, "the consensus was reached before the research had even begun."

Increasingly, not just climate scientists, but people in leadership positions around the world have joined in rebuking the Global Warming hoax. Czech President Vaclav Klaus is only the most recent, joining Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper who, in 2006, received a letter from sixty prominent scientists expressing opposition to the theory of Global Warming. The list is growing as other scientists in France, Denmark and around the world speak up.

There is something quite horrible about the complete failure of America's journalists to even acknowledge there might be something terribly wrong about the theory of Global Warming. So far the published science that purports to support the theory has been severely challenged and even disproved to the point of having deliberately falsified data.

Too many journalists have remained steadfast to this greatest hoax of our times, publishing the most astonishing nonsense about the North Pole melting or all the polar bears disappearing. Anything can be attributed to Global Warming, but the premise of a rapidly warming Earth is baseless. The Earth warmed barely one degree Fahrenheit from 1850 to 1950 and there is no evidence of further warming.

Anyone who challenges the "truth" of the global warming charlatans is demonized and compared to Holocaust deniers. Others are routinely accused of being in the pay of corporate interests. My own background as a public relations counselor has been cited as "proof" that I cannot be trusted. However, in nine years of writing a weekly commentary, my credibility would be in shreds if my facts were wrong.

Is this new generation of journalists indifferent to the truth? Do they arrive at their job imbued with a mission to save the world? Do they believe that inconvenient facts can and should be ignored? This is not journalism. It is advocacy. The former belongs in the news columns, the latter on the editorial and opinion pages.

For the week leading up to and following the recent release of the United Nations climate report summary, the front pages of America's newspapers proclaimed that Global Warming was real, millions would die from starvation, and the fresh water resources of the world would go dry by 2080.

The final report is not due out for months and, like previous reports, what "science" is cited to support this balderdash will be thoroughly encumbered with words like "could", "may", "might", "is believed", or "is predicted." These are mushy words that scientists abhor. They want *proof*.

The final report will actually be altered to reflect the initial summary. That is not science. It is propaganda.

We look to journalists to present facts as accurately and dispassionately as possible. When they tell you the Earth is doomed, look for an alternative source of information.

Alan Caruba writes a weekly column, "Warning Signs", posted on the Internet site of The National Anxiety Center, www.anxietycenter.com. His book, "Right Answers: Separating Fact from Fantasy", is published by Merril Press. © Alan Caruba, 2007. He is a longtime member of the Society of Professional Journalists, the American Society of Journalists and Authors, and the National Association of Science writers.

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Editor**

Sad Tale of Lisa?

by Carey Roberts

It was one of those stories that not even a Hollywood scriptwriter could dream up: A NASA astronaut stows a steel mallet, 4-inch knife, rubber tubing, gloves, and trash bags in her car. She straps on an astro-diaper and drives 900 miles to Orlando. During the wee hours of February 6, she disguises herself with a wig, glasses, and trench coat. Confronting her romantic rival in the airport parking lot, she douses Colleen Shipman with pepper spray.

An outrageous deed, for sure. Have you noticed that the more bizarre the crime, the more persons lean over backwards to make excuses for the perp?

Like school teacher Debra Lafave who raped a 14-year-old student in Florida. Her lawyer claimed, "To place an attractive young woman into that kind of hellhole is like putting a piece of raw meat in with the lions." That raw appeal to judicial chivalry relieved Lafave from the inconvenience of a single day of jail time.

And remember the Clara Harris case? In 2002 she repeatedly mowed down her husband, David, with her Mercedes-Benz. Both of them had been involved in extra-marital affairs. Now serving a 20-year sentence in a Texas prison, she was ordered last month to pay \$3.75 million in restitution to her ex-husband's family.

But guess who the media portrayed as the "lying, cheating scumbag" who "deserved what he got"? Hint: CBS portrayed Mrs. Harris in a 2004 movie as the betrayed wife and pitiable victim. [www.glennsacks.com/suppose_roles_had.htm]

So back to Orlando, Florida, where we discover that literally within hours of the crime, the rehabilitation of Astronaut Lisa Nowak is set to begin.

Initially the prosecutor charged Nowak only with attempted kidnapping. Excuse me, Mr. Prosecutor, but exactly how do you kidnap a person with a steel mallet, latex gloves, and trash bags?

Soon two fellow astronauts flew to Orlando. No, not to conduct an inquiry or make sure the victim was recovering from the attack. Rather, "Our primary concern is [Nowak's] health and well-being, and that she get through this," according to Steve Lindsay.

The first round of news coverage was objective, featuring photos of Nowak being lead into the courtroom in handcuffs, her head hanging in shame. But the very next day, the public rehabilitation of Lisa Nowak would begin in earnest.

On Wednesday, media coverage turned jocular. Newstands were filled with headlines about Astronaut Nowak, Lust in Space, and the Dark Side of the Loon. Anything to keep persons' minds off the sobering reality of an innocent person being bludgeoned with a hammer.

And drooling over the high-profile story on Valentine's Day, newspapers speculated whether Nowak had caused the break-up of the marriage of her love object two years before.

By Thursday, media coverage had morphed into a soap opera promo: "The sad tale of Lisa Nowak" and "Lisa Marie Nowak's life was falling apart" were the leads of two articles I saw.

Even level-headed columnists went gah-gah.



Myrna Blyth suggested the attack was not as strange as some might think, claiming in her Feb. 9 column, "There's a crazy astronaut in all of us." And John Derbyshire pooh-poohed the entire episode, saying that "women are not actually very good at this sort of thing."

Of course when *People* magazine did its front-page story, it was all about Lisa, Lisa, and more Lisa: a "naturally gifted" woman who yearned for a space career at the tender age of five, Robo-chick astronaut, and a stressed-out but "very loving" mother of three.

And what about Colleen Shipman, victim of the premeditated murder attack? In the entire 6-page spread, *People* magazine devoted a grand total of 5 *sentences* to her plight. Sorry, Colleen, your harrowing experience just didn't fit into the storyline.

The rehabilitation of Lisa Nowak has only just begun. We're still awaiting a call from Katie Couric, and of course the obligatory Oprah interview.

And soon we'll be hearing that Nowak was the heroic survivor of an abusive childhood, she waged a lonely campaign to break the glass ceiling, and her ex-husband once raised his voice in stern rebuke.

Before long we will all agree that Lisa Marie Nowak, despondent from the recent break-up of her 19-year marriage, was unwittingly seduced into a love triangle and attempted a Halloween-type prank in futile revenge. Her actions were surely more worthy of sympathy than scorn.

At that point, what need will there be for a trial?

Carey Roberts is a staff writer for the New Media Alliance, Inc. The New Media Alliance is a non-profit (501c3) national coalition of writers, journalists and grass-roots media outlets.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Bush Health Reform

by John Goodman

President George W. Bush made bold health policy proposals in his State of the Union message:

- First, he would level the playing field between individual and employer purchase of health insurance.
- Second, he would eliminate provisions in the tax law that reward waste and penalize economy in the purchase of health insurance.
- Third, he would allow the states to redirect federal funds used for charity care and use them to subsidize private insurance instead.



John Goodman

Attached is an NCPA brief analysis (BA) analyzing the plan. A second BA answers these questions in response to the critics:

- Is the Bush Plan a Sop to the Rich?
- Would Employer Coverage Erode?
- Would Employers Drop Their Health Plans?
- Would the Plan Increase the Number of People with Health Insurance?
- Would the Plan Cripple Safety Net Hospitals?

The short answer to each question: No

For the long answer, click on: <http://www.ncpa.org/pub/ba/ba578/> and <http://www.ncpa.org/pub/ba/ba579/>

John C. Goodman is President of the National Center for Policy Analysis.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Bush Postal Progress?

by Don Soifer

As the 109th Congress concluded, President George W. Bush signed a measure aimed at reforming the U.S. Postal Service.

Described as "a huge win for everyone who uses stamps" by such prominent supporters as Rep. Tom Davis (R.-Va.), many proponents of the measure believe it will bring the Postal Service into the 21st Century.

The legislation gives USPS more leeway to outsource work to the private sector in exchange for fair mailing discounts. It gives the Treasury Department the opportunity to build a firewall between competitive and monopoly-protected services. And it tasks a strong regulator to protect individual consumers from being saddled with the costs of excessive discounts to business mailers.

Despite the new legislation's good intentions, however, it will be up to the Postal Service's leaders to effectively safeguard consumers from subsidizing big mailers, as we are doing now.

That's a critical concern because Aunt Minnie -- the individual first-class-stamp buyer -- is the only major USPS customer who did not have heavy-hitting lobbyists angling on her behalf during all the legislative horse-trading.

Unfortunately, all monopolies -- especially government ones -- have a strong incentive to raise prices excessively on captive consumers. There is evidence that USPS is doing just that to Aunt Minnie. The Post Office also appears to be using its first-class-mail monopoly -- and the price of stamps -- to subsidize areas of its business where it competes with private industry.

"The most recent data -- from 2005 -- indicate that the Postal Service's monopoly has pushed up mail rates and markups over cost for those within the monopoly, especially first-class-mail users," according to Michael Schuyler, senior economist at the Institute for Research on the Economics of Taxation.

Schuyler goes on to note that "while first-class and standard [bulk] provided 78.8 percent of sales, they made 90.3 percent of the overhead contributions generated by mail and services. Meanwhile, all other products and services furnished only 21.2 percent of revenues and just 9.7 percent of overhead contributions."

It's also worth noting that a single piece of first-class mail has a cost coverage of 171 percent. That's higher than most other categories of mail, including catalogs and magazines, which have a cost coverage of 116 percent. It's also higher than bulk mail, which has a cost coverage of 159 percent. (Cost coverage is the revenue from a given product divided by the cost that the USPS pegs to that product. So if attributable costs are \$100 and revenue is \$171, then cost coverage is 171 percent.)

That means that Aunt Minnie certainly seems to be paying more than her fair share. Are postal players with more clout -- i.e., unions, bulk mailers, newspapers, and catalog retailers, et al. -- getting a deal at the expense of individual consumers?

With roughly 40 percent of costs attributed to institutional overhead, the Postal Service's accounting is too murky to know for certain. But it's something consumers need to watch closely.



Another problem is that the new legislation -- despite many positive aspects -- makes it easier for USPS to raise first-class-stamp prices, provided it stays within the rate of inflation. Even before the legislation was passed, rates were already racing upwards.

It has been less than a year since stamp prices increased to 39 cents. And USPS has already requested a new increase to 42 cents. USPS is expected to begin hiking prices annually as of 2009. That does not bode well for the ordinary consumer, who cannot negotiate work-sharing deals like the bulk mailers.

To its credit -- under the direction of Postmaster Gen. John Potter -- the Postal Service has implemented a number of smart reforms that make it easier to keep costs down. USPS management has shrunk the workforce through voluntary retirements, and started to rebuild its postal sorting and distribution network, which will save money by consolidating some processing centers into fewer, larger facilities.

In light of these reforms and the new postal legislation, the USPS appears to be starting down the right track. From the White House to Congress, from the unions to the junk mailers, everyone seems satisfied with the way things are going.

Let's just remember to look out for Aunt Minnie.

Don Soifer is executive director of the Consumer Postal Council, based in Arlington, Virginia.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Punishment Without Criminal Trial?

by Marion Harrison

In a five to four decision the Supreme Court of the United States recently decided Philip Morris USA v Williams. Media coverage isn't as pervasive as that of Anna Nicole Smith's death but it is extensive. Therefore, anybody interested in dramatic high-dollar litigation knows that the Supreme Court of the United States reversed the Supreme Court of Oregon. The Oregon court of last resort had upheld an award of \$ 821,000.00 in actual damages and \$ 79.5 million in punitive damages to the widow of a gentleman whose death was caused by heavy smoking. A jury found that Philip Morris had advertised in such fashion as to cause the decedent to believe it was safe to smoke.



This is not the forum to analyze the merits of the case. This column has discussed aspects of tort fiasco and they are posted on the website, www.freecongress.org. Suffice it to say that the plaintiffs' contingency-fee attorneys or "trial lawyers" - the John Edwards and his colleagues type of attorneys - litigate these kinds of cases. The cases typically are long on emotion, of questionable substance, and very often far-fetched on the facts. For example, in this case, assuming the company misleadingly advertised, should not the chain smoker have had the common sense to mention to his physician that he chain-smoked or to read the widely publicized material on the subject? If the facts warrant judgment for the widow, isn't \$ 79.5 million in punitive damages, roughly a 100 - 1 ratio over actual damages, out of line?

The Opinion of the Court and the three Dissenting Opinions are interesting but none addresses what might be termed the underlying issue: Should a civil trial behave like a criminal trial and award punitive damages?

The applicable state of the law is such that all four Opinions properly refrained from discussing that subject. All four discuss the controlling issues. The key issue among them essentially is whether the widow of the unfortunate gent is entitled to punitive damages based not upon punishing the cigarette manufacturer for falsely advertising to that gentleman but rather for falsely advertising to some unquantifiable and mostly unknown number of other smokers, none of them a party to the litigation.

As noted above, no Justice wrote about, or under the state of the law should have written about, the underlying, or sine qua non, issue: Are punitive damages allowable in a civil action?

By definition "punitive" damages are punishment. The immediate purpose of a criminal trial is to punish when there is a conviction. The purpose of a civil trial should be to award damages if the plaintiff prevails. The burden of proof dramatically differs. For a criminal trial, it's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt; for a civil trial, it's a preponderance of the evidence (in other words, greater convincing and reliable evidence than the other side offers).

Our American civil litigation, almost uniquely in the world, is confused in that a civil defendant can be (in effect) convicted by merely a preponderance of the evidence whereas a criminal defendant only can be convicted by evidence beyond a reasonable doubt.

A variation of punitive damages derives from English law (known there as exemplary damages). The state of our law is a matter for federalism. That is, each State has authority to abolish punitive damages in civil litigation. New Hampshire has done so. Some others have limited the quantum or otherwise legislated restrictions. Any State legislator or governor who attempts to abolish or to limit punitive damages is besieged by contingent-fee or "trial" lawyers, their lobbyists and their gigantic

bankrolls. In short, rectifying the law is no easy sell. But every State seriously should consider its law.

Meantime, the Federal Trade Commission does have jurisdiction over significant false and misleading advertising in interstate commerce. More important, all of us should be more skeptical of, and enquiring about, the mass of superficial, irrelevant and often false advertisements which permeates all forms of our media.

Marion Edwyn Harrison, Esq. is President of, and Counsel to, the Free Congress Foundation.

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Editor**

Radicalizing Conservatism

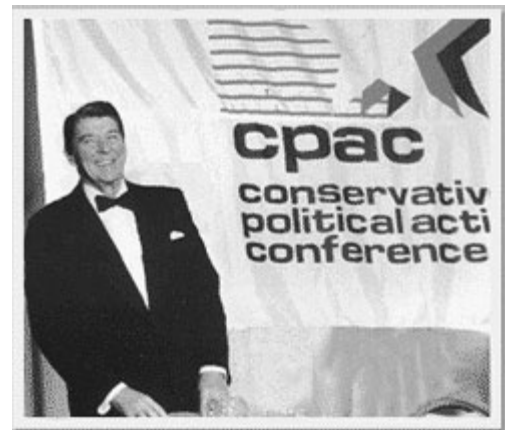
by Joseph Farah

"Conservatism" is dead. It died of natural causes, which I will explain.

I can approximate the time of death.

It was some time after the "Republican Revolution" of 1994, and prior to the 1996 presidential election.

But the truth is conservatism as an ideology was never really viable from the very start. It was artificially animated for a period of time by the inspired political leadership of Ronald Reagan.



Reagan's gone. He's not coming back. It's time for conservatives to rethink their strategy – their very identity.

Let me begin my observations with a little personal history.

I always was, am and always will be a newsman. The best newsmen, and I like to think of myself as one, seek the truth, no matter where it leads.

In the 1980s, my search for truth led me to accept the basic tenets of conservatism. The policies President Reagan promoted and pursued worked. It was that simple. America was in steep decline when he was elected president. His force of personality, combined with wise decisions and determination reversed that decline – economically, culturally and with regard to America's position in the world.

To put it as simply as possible, he advanced freedom.

But as soon as Reagan left office, the inertia of decline resumed. We still benefited as a country and as a people from some of his policies. The final glorious act – the disintegration of the Soviet Union – would come after he left the political stage. Yet, it was Reagan who wrote the script.

By 1994, conservatives tried to re-establish the magic by laying out a legislative agenda for change – the Contract With America – in a bid to recapture the magic and to capitalize on the way Reagan had popularized their ideals and values.

It worked as a political strategy, and Republicans assumed control of Congress for the first time in decades. It even appeared that these Republicans who had taken power were Republicans in the mold of Reagan, not Rockefeller.

But, alas, the Republican Revolution failed. Now it's time to recognize why it failed and why conservatism died with that failure.

First, one must understand that conservatism is, by definition, a defensive agenda. When one's goal is simply to "conserve," or preserve, or to hold onto what is good and right, you have abandoned the idea of advancing. In military terms, your objective would be holding on to turf, rather than attacking, defeating the enemy, taking new ground.

That is essentially what happened after Reagan was gone. Reagan, despite his embrace of the "conservative" cause, intuitively understood that defeat was certain if your fight is limited to defending. To give you a contemporary illustration of how this works in the real world of conflict, the U.S. won the first part of the war in Iraq, when it fought aggressively to defeat the defined enemy. After that, the focus shifted to defending. And the result should be obvious to all.

Reagan was on offense – in his domestic agenda and, especially, in his foreign policies.

The fundamental flaw of conservatism is its tendency toward defense. It is simply a natural law that you don't win conflicts this way. And, make no mistake about it, politics is about conflict.

Reagan overcame that fundamental flaw in his adopted ideology by fighting, uncharacteristically for conservatives, on offense. He took the fight to his adversaries and put them in the unusual position of adopting a defensive strategy.

At its essence, the success of the Reagan Revolution was really that simple. But to make it work, it required a unique personality driven by uncompromising values. Even then, with that, perhaps, once-in-a-lifetime kind of leadership, it was often beset by losses.

Conservatism is also hopelessly inadequate as an agenda because of its near total reliance on "politics" as the battle ground. The real battle for the hearts and minds of the people doesn't take place in election cycles. It takes place every day when they watch television, when they read their newspapers, when they go to church, when they go the movies, when they send their children to school, when they listen to music, when they go to college.

Those are all battlegrounds where core values are shaped. Those cultural institutions are almost totally out of the control of conservatives. They will not be won back because of any election victories. At the same time, election victories become tougher and tougher for conservatives because of the power their adversaries have over the culture.

Let me give you some illustrations of how this works.

In 1984, during the height of the Reagan Revolution, a friend of mine, Phyllis Schlafly, led a heroic victory over ratification of the federal Equal Rights Amendment. No one really expected it to turn out that way when Phyllis first got started. The ERA was seen by the cultural elite as a no-brainer. But Phyllis waged a relentless, tireless, courageous political fight against it that culminated in the ERA's defeat.

Yet, in the succeeding 23 years, many of the worst nightmares ERA opponents predicted if it were ratified have become realities. That's because conservatives' adversaries are always on offense and don't limit their combat to one field of engagement. Who could have imagined, for instance, 23 years after the defeat of the ERA that we would have same-sex marriage in its wake? What they couldn't accomplish in the world of politics, they accomplished in the world of culture – a world in which they face little or no opposition.

As sure as you are reading this column today, the culture will lead America into tyranny. It's not that conservatives' opponents knowingly seek tyranny. What they seek is government's intrusion into every part of our lives. It just so happens that is the definition of tyranny.

There are basically two worldviews in conflict here: One is a socialist vision in which government plays god. The other is a freedom vision in which government is subservient to God.

Man's world is not worth conserving. But God's ideals for our world are worth a fight.

When I tell you conservatism is dead, I speak from personal experience. I adopted the conservative label in the 1980s because of the advances in freedom I witnessed during the Reagan years. As a newspaperman, in those days, I was content, even privileged, to direct the editorial operations of conservative newspapers.

But I noticed a couple things about the world of newspapers during those years.

My adversaries fought a war of extermination against my newspapers. They couldn't accept the idea that a few conservative voices could even be permitted to exist in their cultural stronghold of the media. While my newspapers were always labeled by my colleagues as "conservative," I noticed no such labeling was done when liberal papers were mentioned. Boycotts were launched. News racks were vandalized. Once, my entire newspaper building was surrounded by demonstrators demanding my head on a platter.

When all else failed, those newspapers were purchased by media conglomerates.

But notice what conservatives did while this war raged – nothing. They didn't buy newspapers. They didn't infiltrate the culture to ensure their ideas could compete on an even playing field. They just kept looking for the next political messiah to lead them to the Promised Land. In other words, they played defense.

They can't help it. It's their nature. There are exceptions, as I mentioned. Reagan was one. Ann Coulter is one. Rush Limbaugh is another.

Yet, none of them figured out the fatal flaw of conservatism. It is a recipe for slow defeat. It is a blueprint for losing ground. It is a roadmap for perpetual retreat.

There's another fundamental problem with conservatism. No one can really define it. It means different things to different people at different times. Therefore, the term itself is subject to abuse. Notice that the socialist dictators in Beijing are sometimes called "conservatives." Iranian mullahs who offer the world jihad are "conservatives." In the days of the Soviet Union, those running the Kremlin were "conservatives."

What many Americans do not understand is that the conservative movement is a very new thing – less than 50 years old. It served a purpose during the last five decades, but I suggest it is time to rethink identity and strategy. You know what they say about the definition of insanity – doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

The contributions and leadership of Ronald Reagan, so closely identified with the conservative movement, cannot be overstated. But it's time for conservatives to reinvent themselves. At some point, you have to look around your world and determine whether simply "conserving" what's left is enough of a goal – a worthy objective.

I'm hoping that now, after six years of George W. Bush and the midterm elections of 2006 and the continued retreat of American values and the betrayal of our way of life, that conservatives are going to stop being conservative and at least consider a new way.

I bring you this well-considered message in the spirit of love. It has been more than a decade since I called myself a conservative. Personally, I rejected the label long ago.

How we see ourselves helps define what we do. If you see yourself as a conservative, chances are you won't do much more than complain. And you will have plenty to complain about as your world slowly degenerates and your enemies increase.

So how should we see ourselves? How should those of us who seek to advance freedom at home and around the world see themselves?

It's time to consider who our real heroes are. I love Ronald Reagan. I admire Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan was a great man. But he didn't invent this great experiment in freedom we call the United States of America. He merely recognized what a great experiment it was and sought to continue it.

We need to read our history. We need to rediscover our Founding Fathers. We need to recognize what a unique breakthrough in liberty they inspired. It's their vision to which we need to rededicate ourselves. It's the biblical values they held that caused the greatest outbreak of freedom the world had known.

By the way, they weren't conservatives.

They wouldn't even know the term.

Instead, they laid out a radical break from the past – a new way of thinking about freedom and independence and strict limits on government.

George Washington and Thomas Jefferson and James Madison and John Adams were not conservatives. These men risked everything in the hope of changing the status quo. They fought a War of Independence from the Old World. They fought a revolution against the assumptions of the past.

They did this, by the way, at a time when life was not so bad. But they were wise enough to see a better way for themselves and their posterity. Thank God they did.

It's time for conservatives to stop being conservative. It's time to get radical. It's time to remember our heroic heritage. It's time to take risks. It's time to stop business as usual. It's time to stop repeating the mistakes of the past. It's time to see we're losing ground.

It's time to fight for something worthwhile – not just the preserving of freedom, but the expansion of freedom.

Joseph Farah is founder, editor and CEO of WorldNetDaily, which originally published this article. He is a nationally syndicated columnist with [Creators Syndicate](#). His latest book is "[Taking America Back](#)." He also edits the weekly online intelligence newsletter [Joseph Farah's G2 Bulletin](#), in which he utilizes his sources developed over 30 years in the news business.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Bring Back Streetcars

by Paul Weyrich

Streetcars? What could conservatism have to do with streetcars? Some of you may be wondering if I have slipped my trolley.

Maybe I have, but wanting to bring electric streetcars back to our cities is no sign of it. In an earlier essay on the next conservatism, number ten in this series, I argued that conservatives should want to bring our cities back. Too many of them have become cold, hard, empty places, devoid of life and unable to perform the important functions cities have in any culture. Well, it turns out that if you want to bring cities back, you also want to bring back streetcars.



Paul M. Weyrich

A great new book, *Street Smart: Streetcars and Cities in the 21st Century*, explains why. Streetcars, it seems, are one of the most powerful tools for reviving cities. Several American cities have already brought the streetcars back, with tremendous positive effects on re-development. Kenosha, Wisconsin, brought streetcars back for just \$6.2 million, and the new streetcar line has already brought \$150 million in development, for a return on investment of 2,319%. Portland, Oregon, put in a downtown streetcar loop 4.8 miles long for \$55 million; it generated over three billion dollars in new development. A 1.2 mile extension of the original loop brought in another \$1.35 billion in development.

Why do streetcars bring new development? There are several reasons. First, middle-class people with significant disposable income like riding streetcars. That is not true of buses. Second, streetcars are "pedestrian facilitators." People who ride through a city on a streetcar tend to get off and on, walking for a while, then riding some more. While they are walking, they go in stores, stop in restaurants for something to eat, maybe see a movie or get tickets for a show. In other words, they spend money downtown. Middle-class pedestrians are the life blood of a city, and streetcars make it easy for them to get around.

Third, from a developer's perspective, a streetcar line is a guarantee of high-quality public transportation that will be there for decades. That is not true of buses; a bus line can be here today, gone tomorrow. The investment in track and overhead wire streetcars require means their routes don't get up and move. Not surprisingly, bus service does little or nothing for development.

Beyond their positive effects on re-development, there is another reason the next conservatism should want to bring back streetcars, and passenger trains for that matter. Thanks to trains, streetcars, and interurbans (which were big, fast streetcars that ran from cities far out into the countryside), travel in America used to be a lot more enjoyable than it is now.

Today, we don't really travel. Instead, we are just packaged and shipped. That is true of air travel, which has become an ordeal, and also of much driving. One interstate highway is much like another and driving in or around cities often means getting caught in traffic congestion, which everybody hates.

The next conservatism's theme of Retroculture wants to bring back good things from the past that we have lost. Pleasure in travel, in the journey itself, should be one of those good things. Life is too short to make travel into misery, when it can be fun.

Yes, riding streetcars is fun. Our grandparents used to enjoy riding the streetcars. They have a feel to them that is completely different from a bus. You can take my word for it. I have ridden streetcars all over the world. Better, the next time you are in a city that has streetcars, or Light Rail, take a ride. You will see the city in a whole different way. And I think you will enjoy the experience.

A few years ago, I was in Denver with a friend, a United States Senator, who was a strong opponent of rail transit. Denver has a Light Rail system. I asked him if he would take a ride on it with me, and he agreed. About half way through our ride, he turned to me and said, "This is nice."

Our cities, if they are to be living cities, need streetcars. The next conservatism should work to bring the streetcars back, as one of many nice presents the past can offer the future. Resurrecting good things from the past is what conservatism should be about.

Paul M. Weyrich is Chairman and CEO of the Free Congress Foundation

**E-mail the
Editor**

Farming Property Rights

by Bill Sizemore

One would think that of all people farmers, who make their living off the land, would respect private property rights and want to protect them. For many farmers that may be the case, but it would be naive to think that it is true of the Oregon Farm Bureau. In recent news stories, it has been reported that the Farm Bureau supports efforts by Democrat Governor Ted Kulongoski and Democrat leaders in the state legislature to suspend voter-approved Measure 37, which is arguably the most important property rights measure to pass in this country in decades.



Bill Sizemore

The Farm Bureau says it wants to limit development in rural areas to make more land available for farming. Well, that's part of the story. However, like with most issues, it is really just about the money.

When I was the Republican nominee for governor in 1998, I met with the Oregon Farm Bureau at their state headquarters in Salem, hopelessly seeking their endorsement. In that meeting, I talked to them about property rights and about changing Oregon's land use laws to allow people who own property in the country to build a house on their land. The leaders of the Farm Bureau made it crystal clear to me that day that they did not support such a move.

Frankly, I was shocked by their response. They informed me that if someone owned 10 or 20 or 40 acres in the country, and the laws were changed so they could build a home on their land, that 10 or 20 or 40-acre parcel would instantly be worth a lot more money than if no home could be built on it. Their expressed position was: Farmers have a right to expand their business just like any other businessman does. They told me that if people could not build a house on their land, then farmers could buy it from them cheaper, because there really isn't much else the owners could do with it, except sell it.

From a ruthless business perspective, I am sure the Oregon Farm Bureau is exactly right. Morally, however, their position is reprehensible.

Even to this day, I remember clearly how I responded to their stated position. I asked them if I understood their position correctly, that indeed what they wanted to do was to use the power of government to stop other people from being able to use their land, so farmers could buy it cheaper. Incredibly, they acknowledged that I had correctly stated their position.

The Oregon Farm Bureau may claim they want to preserve farmland, but what they mean by that is they don't want people to be able to build a house on their land, because then farmers can't buy it for an artificially low price. Pretty much everyone familiar with real estate knows that a 10-acre parcel that you can build a house on is worth probably two to five times as much as a 10-acre parcel that you can't.

It should be noted that Oregon has a Right to Farm law that prohibits people, who choose to build a home in a farm zone, from suing over such things as farm noise, too much dust, or the spraying of pesticides. Therefore, avoiding such complaints cannot be the primary reason why the Farm Bureau wants to keep people from building a residence in the country.

In all fairness, it should also be noted that not all farmers are working to undermine private property rights. In fact, some of the county farm bureaus enthusiastically supported Measure 37 and unlike the state bureau continue to do so.

As the author of Measure Seven, the voter-approved 2000 measure that started the modern day property rights revival in Oregon, I can say with conviction that the problem with Measure 37 is not that it is all that ambiguous. The problem is this: The powers that be, the governor, most of the Democrats in the legislature, most of the judges on our appellate courts, and most of the cities and counties in the state don't like the measure and are throwing out every red herring and setting off every smokescreen they can to stall implementation of it until they can find a way to get rid of it.

The people spoke, twice in fact, and the politicians are still saying they aren't sure what the people intended. They understand, alright. They just don't like what they heard. You can rest assured the powers that be wouldn't be so "confused", if they liked what the people had said, when they passed Measure 37 by an overwhelming margin.

Bill Sizemore is president of the Oregon Taxpayers Union.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Democratically Elected?

by Thomas E. Brewton

Former President Jimmy Carter and presidential candidate Christopher Dodd believe that the mechanics of the ballot box sanitize a victorious dictator.

The Wall Street Journal editorialized, in its January 17, 2007, edition, about the worrisome economic and political coalition of Iran, Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Cuba.

In passing they noted, "All the while, [Venezuelan dictator] Mr. Chávez has had American enablers who excused his growing repression, or blamed it on a reaction to U.S. policy. Foremost among them has been Mr. Dodd, who has defended Mr. Chávez as "democratically elected" despite his clear trend toward authoritarianism. In 2004, the circumstances surrounding a recall referendum were so anti-democratic that the European Union refused to act as an observer. Jimmy Carter nonetheless blessed the outcome amid heavy irregularities, and the U.S. State Department endorsed the process."



Hitler's National Socialist German Workers Party, let's remember, came to power via the democratic and legitimate process of winning enough votes to gain control of the Reichstag.

The point is that the truly important determinant of a good political society is, not the mechanics of electing leaders, but the moral culture that shapes citizens' understanding of the right thing to do. And the atheistic materialism of liberal-socialistic-progressivism has failed miserably in sustaining a public philosophy of individual right conduct.

This readiness of liberal Democrats and Republicans to endorse leaders who oppress their own people and openly avow their enmity toward the United States is explainable as a facet of their liberal-progressive paradigm of social justice.

Beginning in the late 19th century, Progressive politicians and academics became dissatisfied with the state of American society and looked longingly toward the giant strides of Bismarck's German Empire in education, chemistry, physics, and medicine. Progressives attributed Germany's rapid progress both to its strong leadership by Bismarck, and to the dominance of the German Socialist party, which was the largest and most influential in Europe.

Progressivism in this country was an amalgam of socialistic doctrine transplanted from Europe and a widespread confidence in the science and engineering that had transformed the United States after the Civil War into the world's largest and fastest growing economy. In politics, Progressives were preoccupied with structural reforms, ranging from secret ballot in elections, to citizens' referenda on tax and policy matters. They also believed that businesses and government ought to be run by professional managers.

Progressivism was an odd combination of this faith in civil and social engineers as the experts competent to run government, coupled with a misreading of the French Revolution as an upwelling of democracy achieved by eradicating existing government, religion, and social customs. These elements were, and remain, incompatible. To the extent that government is ceded to liberal social engineers who aim to regulate all aspects of citizens' economic choices, it moves inexorably along the road to tyranny.

Progressivism's rationalization of this contradiction has been that the role of the masses, empowered via the ballot box, is to elect expert social engineers. Then governing is to be left to the state planners, who know better than the ordinary citizen what is good for him.

Thus we find Messrs. Carter and Dodd sympathetically inclined toward socialistic leaders ratified by the mechanics of the ballot box by voters who have no historical tradition of a society of laws, but only of government by men who dictate the law.

Thomas E. Brewton is a staff writer for the New Media Alliance, Inc. The New Media Alliance is a non-profit (501c3) national coalition of writers, journalists and grass-roots media outlets. His weblog is THE VIEW FROM 1776 [<http://www.thomasbrewton.com/>]

Lousy Job

by Thomas Lindaman

I will not seek the Presidency in 2008.

That sound you hear is a collective "Whew!" coming up from around the world. Sure, I have more charisma and common sense than Joe Biden and I've done as much as Sam Brownback, who we all know is famous for...that thing he did that one time with that other guy. You know, the guy who always wore pants? But after careful reflection, I've decided that I'm not qualified to be President in 2008.

The minimum age to be President is 35. Right now I'm 37, so I meet the age requirement, but I don't meet an important requirement: I don't want the gig.

What separates me from a Hillary Clinton or a John McCain is that I don't have a burning desire to be President. (That, and I look horrible in pantsuits). Having the press hound my every decision, having my opponents call me everything from evil to dumb to Dennis Kucinich's love child, and the ever-present stress of being able to launch a nuclear attack with a mere press of a button? You'd do better to let a potted plant run the country. Then again, we almost did elect Al Gore.

Another reason I wouldn't be a good President is that I'd get a lot of people mad at me. I'm not strictly a party guy. I prefer to take a stance based not on what looks good to the base, but what is good for the country. Abortion, illegal immigration, the war on terrorism, every issue that could possibly come across my desk would turn into a public relations headache. And after Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, I'd prefer to give the White House spin doctors a break.

I wouldn't be a very good campaigner for that same reason. I can just picture the rally where I'd announce my intention to run for President.

My fellow Americans, John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." I want to restore that ideal to America by being your next President. It's going to require every American to pitch in and work hard to improve the world around them...[Sound of people stampeding out of the venue and driving off as quickly as they can] Hey, where is everybody going? I have punch and cookies in the back...

I guarantee it would be the first time in American political history that a candidate announced his entrance and his withdrawal from the Presidential race within minutes of each other.

There is one final reason that I wouldn't ever seek the Presidency. As I noted on my blog [<http://thomaslindaman.blogspot.com>], the quality of people running for President has declined significantly, as have the people who have won it in recent years. Since the rise of "Camelot" with John F. Kennedy in the 60s to the fall of John F. Kerry in 2004, we've been lucky to score one or two Presidents worth much. Sure, the watered down quality of Lyndon Johnson to Jimmy Carter made us appreciate Ronald Reagan that much more, but since Reagan, we're hard pressed to find a President who is worthy of our respect.

And you think electing me would change that? I'd be lucky to last a week as President without being impeached for being mentally incapable of fulfilling the duties of President. Fortunately, I'm sure my Vice President, Dustin "Screech" Diamond, will bring dignity and honor back to Washington, DC. I'm not sure how, exactly...



So, you won't have to worry about me leaving my home office for the Oval Office anytime soon. It's not that I don't want to help the country. It's just that I think I'd do better helping the country by being nowhere near the halls of power except as a tourist. Even then, I'd insist upon having a security detail follow me around to make sure I don't do anything crazy, like giving a stump speech about the need for better schools, a stronger national defense, and Hooters Girls as White House Interns.

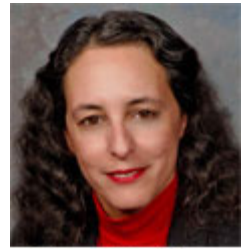
Thomas Lindaman is a Staff Writer for the New Media Alliance, Inc. and NewsBull.com. The New Media Alliance is a non-profit (501c3) national coalition of writers, journalists and grass-roots media outlets. He is also Publisher of CommonConservative.com.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Rudy Issues

by Lisa Fabrizio

Many of the emails I received regarding my recent column on Rudy Giuliani agreed with my premise that the problems with his social liberalism outweigh his positive stances on national defense and fiscal conservatism. Still, many more are willing to overlook this; they remain convinced that Rudy is their guy, based mainly on his promise to appoint originalist judges and the "fact" that no other candidate can beat Hillary Clinton.



Lisa Fabrizio

As to the first, what, besides his say-so, gives so many conservatives the idea that he'll appoint strict constructionists? One reader lauded Giuliani's "consistency of sticking to his views" as one reason. But consistent or not, his [view](#) of Second Amendment rights is surely not that of someone with an "originalist" mindset:

[I]'s part of the Constitution. People have the right to bear arms. Then the restrictions of it have to be reasonable and sensible. You can't just remove that right. You've got to regulate, consistent with the Second Amendment.

Besides his disingenuous use of the word "regulate," the notion that he favors restrictions on the liberties enumerated in the Bill of Rights--from which governmental interference is strictly prohibited--is disturbing. Worse yet, what sort of originalist would make this compromise:

I was in favor of it (the Brady Bill) because I thought that it was necessary both to get the crime bill passed and also necessary with the 2,000 murders or so that we were looking at, 1,800, 1,900, to 2,000 murders, that I could use that in a tactical way to reduce crime. And I did.

It seems to me that he is open to adjust the U.S Constitution in order to serve a 'greater good'. I suspect that the overwhelming majority of conservatives would agree that when the supreme law of the land is at stake, the end can never justifies the means.

Also, someone who suggests that there is a "right" to abortion, is clearly not thinking along originalist lines either. But for this stand he is lauded by the liberal media as a mainstream Republican who is independent from the religious fanatics of the party's far-right wing. Are they correct? Here's a little quiz. Whence comes the following quote?

We must keep our pledge to the first guarantee of the Declaration of Independence. That is why we say the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution and we endorse legislation to make it clear that the 14th Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. Our purpose is to have legislative and judicial protection of that right against those who perform abortions.

Was it uttered by Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell or some other "kook" member of the dreaded "religious right?" No, it is simply a plank from the Republican Party [platform](#). The point being, that attempts to paint those who do not endorse Rudy as some kind of fringe group, are way off the mark and only meant to divide the GOP as a means to pave the way for the future coronation of you-know-who.

And it doesn't have to be that way. This is a choice which need not be made. Let me repeat, the only people who can give us Rudy vs. Hillary are Republicans. This win-win scenario is one slyly crafted by the media in order to terrify those of us for whom the words "President Clinton" are a recurring nightmare.

Liberals and their media wing long for the days of the sweet sounds of GOP discord, like the fractious Harriet Miers flap or a Pat Buchanan candidacy. So they've abandoned former darling John McCain for one who is much closer to their idea of the ideal Republican. For a good indication of once and future candidates who are utterly unloved by the left, consider the attacks on the "racist" George Allen, "Mormon" Mitt Romney or Newt "the Grinch" Gingrich.

No, the media never trash those they do not fear, and their mendacity should be apparent to all who are paying attention. For a group who howls every time President Bush mentions 9/11--remember the indignation registered when the 2004 GOP convention was held in New York City--the media can't write enough about the valor of " America's Mayor."

Rudy Giuliani surely deserves kudos for his handling of what was arguably the worst day in American history and he certainly displays some admirable conservative qualities, but why must anyone commit now? Doing so at this early date is playing right into the enemy's hands; divide and conquer.

[Lisa Fabrizio](#) is a columnist who hails from Connecticut.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Veteran Reflects On Iraq

by Larry Gill

As a young Marine, the most difficult obstacle to overcome (besides my Drill Instructor!) was not the hard training to prepare for every mission detail. That military training was literally drilled into me where mission details included the three B's: Beans, Bullets, and Bandages. What was the most difficult obstacle to overcome then as a young Marine (and now as a disabled Iraqi War Veteran) is that some Americans don't support our Military Mission. It seems especially that many Democratic Party "Leaders" from this recent election don't support our Military Mission in this war on terror.

I entered into the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) during the year of a Democratic President. As a young Military Policeman, I enjoyed my work issuing summons, filing reports and apprehending the occasional drunken and pugnacious sailor (Marines never drink or fight!) I remember one occasion when I went to my supply sergeant to get some pens to write an arrest report. How shocked I was to be told, "We are out of supplies until the next fiscal year!" "What the Hell," I thought! How can we plan the three B's for a military mission, when there wasn't enough funding and support for ordinary supplies?

Today is no different. Do our newly elected Democratic leaders really care about funding and supporting our military mission in this war on terror? To the ordinary military man and women on the ground, that question is literally one of life and death.

With the recent change in the balance of political power among our elected officials in Washington, I fear history is about to repeat itself. You see, unlike many of today's men and women in this War on Terror, I have seen first hand the military funding and support transitions from the Democrats to Republicans, back to the Democrats, then to the Republicans, and now going back again to the Democrats. After 22 years in the military and seeing these troubling transitions to Democratic power, I question the commitment of Democrats to fund and support our military mission in this war on terror.

In each of these political transitions instances under Democratic rule of Congress, men and women in the military had to scrape the bottom of the barrel for the most basic mission supplies. We lost funding for equipment, essential weapons programs, and a huge portion of our forces under Democrats. The Democrats called it "Downsizing." In today's world with fiercely and fatalistic terrorists around the world to fight, we cannot afford to "downsize" our military. We as a Nation cannot afford to have these self-styled Democratic Liberals direct our Nation's military mission against terror.

The irony is that these same Democrats who desire to "downsize" our military, are the same Democrats screaming and shouting, pointing fingers and ridiculing my President, my Commander and Chief, saying, "Our military is stretched too thin!" Well, no kidding Mr. and Ms. Democrat!

Never have I heard such a public display of disrespect and contempt for our Commander-in-Chief as from our now elected officials as I heard in this recent 2006 Election. While I have personally served in the military for twenty-two years to keep these folks free (earning two Purple Heart Medals along the way, the first one in Beirut and the recent one in Iraq) so Democrats can exercise their free speech and other rights, here is what these Liberal Democrats do not understand. These screaming and shouting politicians are feeding our enemies and making them stronger. These "loose lips" in



**Sketch of First Person
Staff Sergeant Larry Gill**

opposition to our President are putting our military in the Middle East in mortal danger. The fight against terror must be won not only in the Arab Street, but in America on Main Street where both Democrats and Republicans live. Here is why.

The only English speaking television channels our troops are now able to watch while in Iraq or Afghanistan are the American news channels. Almost all of these channels have regular and outspoken contempt of our Commander-in-Chief from Democratic "leaders" used in this media driven anti-war on terror effort. This lack of support causes our military men and women overseas to second-guess what they are doing. And when they begin second-guessing, they begin hesitating. And when our troops are hesitating, their responses are slowed leading to more injuries and death. Democrats are changing the supply of our military mission from Beans, Bullets and Bandages to "Backstabbing, Berating and Bereavement".

Enough is enough! We are all Americans fighting this war on terror! The only way to eliminate this disrespectful, anti-military mission thinking of our politicians (usually Democrat, but sometimes Republican) is for our already elected "leaders" to consider how the war against Nazi terror in WWII would be hindered by speaking out against then Democratic President Roosevelt as Commander-in-Chief. As for our newly elected anti-military mission politicians, instead of spending time and money for these new members of Congress and the Senate to decorate their offices and have receptions, send them through thirteen weeks of training at Paris Island, South Carolina!

Until it is required that our elected officials have respect for our military (who protects all our rights including the right to vote for them) prior to being eligible for elected office, then and only then will America remain a force for freedom to be reckoned with in this war on terror. The patriotism, determination, work ethic, and commitment to God, Country, and family of our military are clearly unappreciated by those who take our freedoms for granted. Americans generally and Democratic "leaders" particularly need to support our Military and their mission in this war on terror. "Cutting and running" (whether fancied up as a "Phased Redeployment"), denouncing our Commander-in-chief and not supplying our military needs are truly anti-military and anti-American. Freedom has never been free as our military families who support this mission well know.

Larry Gill is a 22 year military veteran with multiple military decorations. Former Staff. Sgt. Gill lost part of his leg in Iraq and now is President of First Person, Inc. a company that provides Speakers supporting our war on terror. For more information, visit the First Person-War on Terror website www.firstperson-waronterror.com.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Spanking Social Engineers

by B. Friend

Regarding the currently proposed California Law that would prohibit parents from spanking their children under 3 years of age and Bob Barr's "Anti-Spanking Silliness", I will be brief.

History..... History..... History..... Our generation suffers from Historical/Cultural Alzheimer's. Our country is over 200 years old. The RULE at least 150 of those years, more often than not, has been "spare the rod (read: don't spank) and spoil the child. During all of those 150 years (prior to Dr. Spock and company) our country has produced some (heck most) of the world's greatest inventors, entrepreneurs and genius'. Out of the "culture of spanking" has come some of the greatest statesmen, stateswomen, presidents, philosophers and the greatest and most prosperous country on earth in known history.

A culture of violence was not the outcome of those 150 years of spanking any more than a culture of violence is a product of the ownership of guns or the culture of capitalism. When I was growing up in the Mid-west, every boy I knew who was over the age of 12 owned a gun. People rode around with rifles hanging in the back windows of their trucks. Anyone over 16 could walk into the local store and buy a rifle (had to have parents permission if under 16 or to buy a handgun). Yet, no one ever committed a Columbine and incidents of kids killing anyone with guns were, as they say, "rare as hen's teeth." Wars? Wars have been the rule of history instead of the exception since as far back as history can record. But domestic violence in our time has become pandemic.

The fact is that our present Culture of Violence did NOT exist during those previous 150 years while Americans were spanking their kids. The fact is that it DOES exist now. Our present culture of violence must, therefore (via simple deduction) be due to something or some things other than spanking.

The one thing that HAS changed in the last 50 years is that many Americans now believe that they should NOT spank or discipline their children and a whole army of well-intentioned social workers and social engineers have decided that what worked for 150 years and produced so many fine and upstanding men and women is no good any more. These same folk believe that the almighty State knows better than parents and that The State (de facto) and not parents owns children and that the state should have primary control over children. They have, increasingly, proposed and enacted laws to this effect, this latest one being the culmination of these beliefs. Also, these same folk have come to believe that we - as a country and as a culture MUST tolerate - well - everything.

The conclusion would seem to be that we should return to doing some of those "awful" things - liike disciplining our own children and, maybe spank some social engineers while we are at it. The principle is DO WHAT WORKS - STOP DOING WHAT DOESN'T WORK. That principle worked fine for 150 years, why stop following it now?

Reverend Bhagavan Friend

**E-mail the
Editor**

Reader Comments

Editor: This is a great piece on "Reagan Un-Will-ing To Say No?" I was furious at Will's delusions and encouraged Pete Hannaford to write a "Taking Exception Piece." I am going to send this to him. It would be great if this could be cut to a size that the Post would run. Of course it would also have to be written in a little less academic/intellectual style so as not to confuse them. Way to go. Chip Dent

Editor: Your recent article on President Reagan, "Reagan Un-Will-ing To Say No?" is clear, articulate and excellent reading. Congratulations and gratitude for all that you do for the conservative cause. Nothing is more impressive than your first hand knowledge of Ronald Reagan--not only as president but also as a thoughtful, graceful human being. Best regards, Rich Byman

Editor: In your "Reagan Un-Will-ing To Say No?" you end by asking what the two authors George Will and John Patrick Diggins are doing in misrepresenting Ronald Reagan. What these two men are doing is creating a division of classes between the public. Not a division of rich and poor (economic divide) but a division or distinction of the high intellectuals and the masses—or the norm. They do not believe the average man has the aptitude to know right from wrong and therefore must be governed by the higher class of the intellectual. What they fail...or fear to recognize is that the ability to determine right from wrong doesn't come from the highly evolved mind but from the knowledge given to every man by the Creator. If this were not so this great experiment in democracy would have failed two hundred years ago. Ronald P. Garbacz

Editor: The new issue of ConservativeBattleline is terrific. As far as "Reagan Un-Will-ing To Say No," all I can say is George Will's best writing is on baseball. As for political theory in general, I sort of get Bertie Woosterish and the mind boggles. Yet I enjoy, within limits, the Socratic method and admire Antisthenes because I agree that the reason to study is to "converse with myself." Spencer Warren's "Letters From Iwo Jima" is outstanding. I read a good book of Japanese memoirs about the war where they admit to using civilians for bayonet practice to "harden the troops," One former officer tells when he reported to duty in China as a lieutenant just out of OCS, his commanding officer ordered him decapitate a Chinese man in front of his platoon. As a boy, I saw films of the rape of Nanking in the local Trans Lux newsreal theatrer. It was somewhat censored but I still remember the Japs throwing babies into the air and catching them on their bayonets. The obverse of these memories is the Japanese Movie, "The Burmese Harp" where a Japanese soldier tries to convince his comrades to surrender to the Aussis and fails. He then spends his time in Burma as a monk burying the Japanese war dead. I also saw Flag of Our Fathers and the book was much better. The use of computerization for the landings, the naval task force and the beachhead was at best jarring. Tim Sullivan

Editor: Thanks for your enlightened views of a radical paper in "Reagan Un-Will-ing To Say No?" Thanks also to Spencer Warren for the true story of what happened at Iwo Jima, not the "enlightened" version portrayed in the movie (which I do not intend to view). It is a typical

Hollywood stunt. Our far left media I am sure would not print Warren's review. But we thank you for your efforts and applaud you for having the courage to do so. Tom & Lois Kerr, West Jordan, Utah

Editor: As a survivor of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, and especially, of Admiral Iwabuchi's orders to kill all civilians on the battlefield (of Manila), I was most gratified to see Spencer Warren's "Letters From Iwo Jima". I saw both of the Eastwood movies in question and I agree with the thrust of his comments. Where I think he was off the mark, however, was where he essentially reduced the argument to simply one of an "American" behavior versus the "Japanese" behavior. Japanese are humans identical to ourselves and all others and, notwithstanding all the horrors I saw and personally experienced (I lost 13 members of my immediate family including my grandfather, father, brother, aunt and cousins). I personally also saw or know of rare examples of humanity and kindness by Japanese soldiers even though such acts of kindness would have been viciously punished by their superiors had they been witnessed. It was not because the "Japanese per se" were cruel or brutal but that their society was ruled and dominated by an elite with a cruel and brutal philosophy and which in turn inculcated this culture into the general society: the cult and philosophy of the Samurai and their code of Bushido. And yet we recently were exposed to the ridiculous glorification of this Samurai culture and its Bushido code of ethics with the hit movie "The Last Samurai". I doubt that as high as 10% of the populations of Japan or Germany or Russia or China or Cambodia adhered to the brutal and inhumane philosophies of their leadership and yet look at the horrors perpetrated by those societies on their own people and on those they conquered. We will not be able to effectively deal with the problems of the Middle East today until we identify the real threat: the Islamo-Fascists that dominate those societies and the poisonous cult with which those societies are being inculcated. Agents of those same Islamo-Fascists are already here in the US spreading their totalitarian and hateful views onto their congregations within their protected (by us) mosques and they must be stopped or we will soon see a cataclysm on a scale in its horror with what we saw during WWII. Sincerely, Luis de Amechazurra

Editor: I am no film critic. I am a high school history teacher. Spencer Warren's "Letters From Iwo Jima" is right on target. There were unnecessary brutalities committed by American troops in WWII. However, that was not sanctioned government policy. The Japanese military set about to murder, brutalize and prostitute whole populations. That is the distinction that should be made in taking individual actions and trying to characterize them as being equal. My Dad was with the 1st Marine Division on Guadalcanal. He would have appreciated your defense of why he had to do what he did there. Jim Blackburn, History Chairman, La Vernia H.S.

Editor: Spencer Warren's "Letters From Iwo Jima" is exactly the same argument I made in a local newspaper that cried about how the U.S. used the atomic bomb on "innocent Japanese". I am not a veteran but I do have a degree in History & Political science. I can't tell you how the veterans from my church came up to me the next Sunday and congratulated me for writing the article. Well Done! Joe Zaffino

Editor: I find agreement with Spencer Warren on a lot of points about the two movies, "Flags" and "Letters". The movie about the flag raisers was so removed from the book it was like seeing a different War. The portrayal of our government as avaricious and the suggestion that the Victory Tour was wrong and caused suffering to all the flag raisers is just nonsense. The failure to show the

Japanese atrocities and to explain what happened to Iggy was despicable. We did not do that to the Japanese soldiers and I doubt that any U.S. soldiers shot two prisoners because they did not want to watch them. Where did that come from? Political correctness in Hollywood is my guess. "Offend no one even if you have to lie to do it." I enjoyed "Letters" much more as a vehicle about Iwo Jima,. But I too wondered about the validity of these "Letters" home and if this was just another "created out of whole cloth" Hollywood misrepresentation of fact, or as they say to create new facts: "based on a true story." The one thing that is clear is that "Letters" does try to portray the Japanese on Iwo Jima as being "just young guys, like ours." I don't know what is true but the men who were there do and they know the leaders of the Imperial Army were clearly savage murderers and torturers. It came from the top down and that is not true of our military, then or now. A few rogue soldiers can cause a lot of military embarrassment as we have seen in Iraq through Haditha and the few problems at Gitmo. But the comparison of cutting off heads for video as the terrorists have done, and our fraternity- atmosphere romps in a prison should not be mentioned in the same sentence. Nor should the conduct of the war by the Allies be compared to that of the Japanese. That is factually false. Gerald S. Davee, San Diego, CA

Editor: Great article by Spencer Warren on "Letters From Iwo Jima". I grew up during World War II and studied the Asia Pacific campaign in great detail. It amazes me how our media has been so soft on the Japanese Imperial forces and their treatment of our military prisoners as well as civilians in captivity. Mike Woodward

Editor: I am a 58 year old woman, married for 34 years with four grown children. I graduated from college in 1971 with a BA in business. After years of procrastination I decided I wanted to take some history classes so this term I have returned to school to take two classes, one on World War II and one on the following years in Europe. I am appalled at how little I know on these subjects although I consider myself somewhat well read and aware. I loved Spencer Warren's column on Iwo Jima because it disturbs me that so many are willing to believe and follow these Hollywood "leaders"--be they protesting or making movies--many of whom have not even graduated from high school. The more I learn, the more I know I do not know. These types of movies and anti-war protests show ignorance and should be portrayed as such. Good for you for doing so! I just wish more people were listening. My classes happen to be taught without a liberal slant--which surprises and pleases me and it is a public university at that! Keep writing - keep writing - keep writing. Bonnie Jones, Delray Beach, Florida

Editor: As a veteran of Iwo Jima, I commend Spencer Warren for "Letters From Iwo Jima." Hollywood can never get it right even with Clint Eastwood, whom one would think could get it right. John Connors

Editor: Clint Eastwood was once much admired for his roles in the western movies, and as Dirty Harry. He should have quit when he was ahead. I have not seen either of these movies reviewed by Spencer Warren and will not waste my money on any of his future movies. My father fought in WWII in the European Theater and even though he was not in the South Pacific, these films denigrate his and every soldier's participation. Merrick Ales

Editor: I agree with Spencer Warren on his account of the movie, "Flags of Our Fathers" I saw it without reading the book, now I will purchase one and read it. My cousin was Franklin Sousley and was in the second group. In real life he was a red head and they had him portrayed as a brunette. Granted he was just a country boy that came from an area that has not changed much. People are still farmers and go to church on Sundays and live the simple life. Like so many countless others he was thrust into something that many could not ever imagine such as today in Iraq. I would like to tell Mr. Eastwood, I did enjoy his movie and I did to the point that at least Franklin was mentioned. However, I would have liked to have seen a little background on all the boys before the war as well to give the audience a "feel" from not only their lives, but so many were just everyday people. Like with Audie Murphy, they gave you insight to his life before, during and after the war. I would love to see Mr. Eastwood do a movie now and break it down to each of their lives before as well as the first group that went to the top of that mountain. They were pushed aside. I thank you for you article and it was a pleasure to read. I check Conservative Battline Online every now and again for updates. Hazel Hawkins

Editor: Leftist adherence to and propagation of radical egalitarianism is best described as religious piety toward its god. The film "Letters from Iwo Jima" as described by Spencer Warren is nothing more than a sacrificial lamb offered to the god of multiculturalism and all that the religion entails. Brad Hodge

Editor: I really appreciated Bill Sizemore's article "Union Bribery." I have personally known of four unions that are so corrupt that it is unbelievable. The poor members are between a rock and a hard place, and are really stuck with forking over more and more of their hard-earned money. Years ago, say in the thirties and the forties, the unions represented the workers, but not now. Their primary focus is to do everything they can do to put liberals in total control so the unions can go on to get rich and run the country by proxy. Keep up the good work!!! Marilyn McCracken

Editor: Bill Sizemore's article "Union Bribery" is very true. Replace Oregon in his story with any State, City, Town, or County, and it will still be true. In other words, "It's the same old story, wherever ya go." Thanks. Budd

Editor: Keep up the good work, Bill Sizemore! And if I'm ever fortunate enough to make it back out west, I'd work for him for free! Alex Pinsdorf

Editor: Vincent Fiore in his "Super Bowl: Race or Talent" has the courage to say what we are all thinking. Well done! Ronald S. Egut, Norwalk, CT

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Editor**