

## The Fortnightly Rant

# Can't Anybody In That Party Play This Game?

Will Rogers once said "I don't belong to any organized party. I'm a Democrat." Rogers has been dead for 72 years now. The Democratic Party is still here—and it hasn't changed a bit.

In six months, voters will choose between a Democrat and a Republican to run the Executive Branch of our federal government. The Executive Branch has been in the hands of Republicans since 2001.

During that time, al-Qaeda hijacked four planes, attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and killed about 3,000 people. The Bush administration, meanwhile, has operated the Executive Branch with all the the restraint, caution, and wisdom of a teenager full of Red Bull and tequila, behind the wheel of a Maserati. Which group did more damage to the country?

With their record, the GOP's chances of hanging on to the White House ought to range somewhere between slim and "Are you nuts? What's next? Willy Sutton in charge of the Federal Reserve? Michael Jackson in charge of the orphanage?"

The state of the State Department is catatonic. The huge new \$736 million embassy in Baghdad, it turns out, doesn't have enough fortified housing for hundreds of diplomats and other workers, so, they're sleeping

in trailers. The roofs of the trailers aren't protected against mortars because the trailers are only "temporary." Nothing gives a person a better understanding of "temporary" than living in a tin can during a mortar attack.

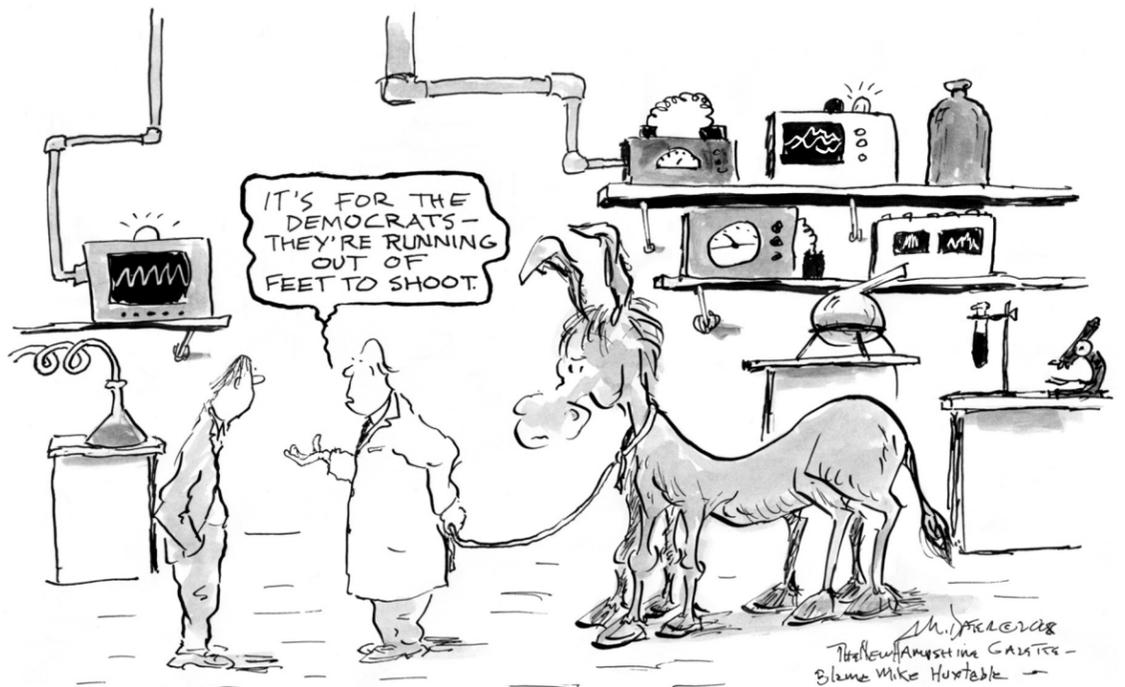
The Defense Department, meanwhile, is so overworked that it would be hard-pressed to hang onto Coos County if the *Quebecois* up in Coaticook started feeling frisky.

There's not much left of the Treasury Department other than a smoking crater. Kids wearing diapers today will have grandchildren paying off this administration's debt.

The Justice Department has been around since 1870, but judging from its *modus operandi*, you might think it had been created under one of those Bush administration bills that are named for what they don't do—or for what they take away.

With Republicans responsible for a swath of wreckage surpassing General Sherman's March to the Sea, it stands to reason that competing Democrats would fight like hell through the Democratic primaries. The Democratic nomination ought to be the final hurdle in the race for the White House.

But, Democrats are Democrats. And, if that weren't bad enough, this presidential elec-



tion is apparently being held in an asylum.

By now everyone in America surely knows that Barack Obama's former pastor Rev. Jeremiah Wright once uttered the words "God damn America," along with a few other intemperate things. Politics being the farthest thing from beanbag, those things have been taken out of context, interpreted in ways that suit his opponents, and used like clubs to beat on Obama like a rented mule.

John McCain, meanwhile, has sought and received the endorsement of fundamentalist preacher John Hagee, who is on record calling the Catholic Church a "cult," and "the great whore." Hillary Clinton, for her part, regularly attends prayer meetings run by a secretive, conservative Christian organization calling itself "The Family," run by Douglas Coe, who exhorts Christians to

follow Jesus Christ the way Nazis followed Adolph Hitler. But judging from the relative volume of coverage in the media, neither Hagee nor Coe has the Wright stuff.

In response, Obama first distanced himself from Wright's statements, then renounced the man himself. Any further escalation of his expressions of disapproval might require assault and battery.

By Monday morning the Wright flap seemed to have largely burned itself out—at which point: cue the Democrat.

It seems that one member of the National Press Club is the Rev. Dr. Barbara Reynolds. Dr. Reynolds was instrumental in arranging the invitation for Reverend Wright to speak. Wright, predictably, threw mass quantities of combustibles on the fire.

Reynolds, as it happens, is a supporter of Hillary Clinton. But

surely that is a coincidence.

The Press Club has denied any political motivation, saying that Wright was invited because he is "newsworthy." Perhaps if the Press Club put John Hagee or Douglas Coe in front of a microphone, they would be newsworthy too.

It remains to be seen whether the Clintonista wing of the party has succeeded in wounding Obama badly enough to deny him the nomination. As the delegate count now stands, that would seem to require a Reaganesque level of "fuzzy math."

If Hillary is the last Democrat standing when the Democratic convention ends in August, it still ain't over. The fat lady sings in November, not August. If her husband's "purple-faced, squinty-eyed, finger-shaking tirades"\* backfire on her, President #44 could well be McBush.

\* *New York Times*, April 29.

## News Briefs

# A Debacle Partially Explained

### Former Rumsfeld Aide Calls Iraq War a "Debacle"—Nobody Listens

A scathing report titled *Choosing War: The Decision to Invade Iraq and Its Aftermath* was published last month. "Measured in blood and treasure," the thirty-seven-page paper begins, "the war in Iraq has achieved the status of a major war and a major debacle." And then it gets *really* critical.

The report's author begins by tallying—conservatively—the war's cost in American and Iraqi dead and wounded. He then notes the half-trillion in debt the nation has assumed so far. He assesses the current state of our armed forces and finds them wanting because of the war. He goes on to argue that our global moral standing has fallen because of "the war, the subsequent occupation of a Muslim nation, and various issues concerning the treatment of detainees."

"Compounding all of these problems," this critical gentleman states, "our efforts there were designed to enhance U.S. national security, but they have become, at least temporarily, an incubator for terrorism and have emboldened Iran to expand its influence throughout the Middle East."

It seems that no aspect of the war was handled competently or correctly, and the outcome was the opposite of what was desired. A litany of criticism as harsh as this would be no surprise coming from a Birkenstock-wearing vegetarian, or perhaps even a short-statured, disgruntled Congressman from Ohio. But this scathing indictment was written by Joseph J. Collins, who served as an officer in the U.S. Army from 1970 to 1998, and later served as a special assistant under Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz. It was published by the Institute for National Strategic Studies, part of the National De-

fense University which operates under the auspices of four gentlemen known collectively as the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They run the Pentagon.

One might reasonably expect, in a country where a political candidate's use of the term "bitter" can generate thousands of news stories, that an admission by the Pentagon that its war in Iraq is a debacle ought to receive some notice.

To be reasonable these days is to be foolish. A Google search for the report, by its title, turned up exactly five hits. A similar search for its author, "Joseph J. Collins," turned up two more.

### Pentagon Puppets

Five years ago the Pentagon was led by a brilliant and innovative *über*-manager named Donald Rumsfeld. Unshackled from the stodgy, plodding thought patterns of old, he was "transforming" the armed services. A military genius, he was so force-

ful and quick-witted that at press conferences, reporters were superfluous—Rumsfeld didn't just answer the questions, he asked them as well. And sure enough, Saddam Hussein's once-vaunted Republican Guard folded up like a cardboard suitcase. A peaceful Middle East was right around the corner. Or so it seemed.

Surprisingly, after the war had dragged on for several years Rumsfeld turned out to have been an arrogant, pig-headed cretin and the war, as previously discussed, was a debacle.

America's profit-oriented news media deserve their own full measure of credit for having turned Rumsfeld into a silk purse, and making the Iraq War look plausible to a great many people. But this past fortnight, it was revealed the media had had a valuable assist—from Rumsfeld's Pentagon.

The *New York Times*'s David Barstow reported on April 20

that the authoritative, independent retired military analysts the media had relied on were in fact a succession of military muppets, carefully cultivated by the Defense Department to inject Rumsfeld's wisdom into the minds of the American public. In a program run by Assistant Secretary of Defense Victoria Clarke, retired generals were courted, interviewed, and briefed. Talking points were developed and distributed. And televised performances were monitored to make sure the Pentagon was getting the taxpayers' money's worth.

That last point may eventually pose a slight problem for someone, because it is illegal for government entities to use taxpayers' money to propagandize the public. Of course, for that illegality to actually create a problem, the Justice Department would have

*News Briefs, Continued*

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to enforce the law. Your mileage may vary.

**Secretary of State Rice Mocks a (Foreign) Chickenhawk**

The day after our April 18 paper was published, Moqtada al-Sadr the Firebrand Cleric™ threatened “open war” on the Iraqi government and U.S. forces. (Times being what they are, we would like to stipulate preemptively that, in so far as we know, there was no causality in this sequence of events.)

“If they don’t come to their senses and curb the infiltrated militias,” Reuters quoted al-Sadr saying, “then we will declare an open war until liberation.” The clergyman/military commander’s ire had been raised by attacks on his forces in Basra.

In a mocking response to al-Sadr’s threat, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said “I guess it’s all-out war for anybody but him. His followers can go to their deaths and he’s in Iran.”

Rice was in Baghdad when she made that statement. As far as we have been able to determine, George W. Bush was in the White House, surrounded by Secret Service.

**Bush Mocks “His” Office**

“[W]hen I put my hand on the Bible” to take the oath of office, George W. Bush said at the Republican National Convention on August 3, 2000, “I will swear to not only uphold the laws of our land, I will swear to uphold

the honor and dignity of the office to which I have been elected, so help me God.” Despite that pledge, Bush appeared April 21 on the NBC game show *Deal Or No Deal*.

The ostensible purpose of the appearance was to thank a contestant, U.S. Army Captain Joseph Kobes, for his three tours of duty in Iraq. The actual attraction was probably access to an audience primed to cheer and clap, rather than heave rotten fruit.

Bantering with the show’s host in an obviously scripted way, Bush talked about trying to get a budget through Congress.

“How would you like to host a three trillion dollar *Deal or No Deal?*” the Leader of the Free World asked of bald-headed, soul-patched, earringed, germo-phobe Howie Mandel. Many Americans would gladly have seen the two swap jobs, but Mandel was born in Canada, and is ineligible for the position.

Bush told Mandel he was “thrilled to be anywhere with high ratings these days.” As the *New York Post* pointed out, the episode in which Bush appeared scored its lowest Monday night rating ever, down about 27 percent. Kobe’s prize money took a hit, too, dropping from \$144,000 to \$78,000.

**Let’s Play Name That Epidemic**

A series of epidemics swept the country recently. A similar thing happened about fifteen years ago. Maybe there’s a pattern. It begins with the sound of droning voices, endlessly repeating the same phrase. The overall effect is much like that created by the Hare Krishnas who once annoyed people at airports: “Support the troops. Support the troops. Support the troops. Support the troops.”



IF POLAR BEARS COULD VOTE

“North Pole Could Be Ice Free in 2008”—ABC News, April 27

“I support the troops. Do you support the troops? Does she support the troops? Do they support the troops?”

“I support the troops. We must support the troops.”

Repeat.

The aural phenomenon is invariably accompanied by a rash of red, white, and blue hallucinations. Yellow ribbons also appear, tied around old oak trees, telephone poles, fire hydrants, slow-moving mall-walkers, &c.

This phase is followed by a period of brutal violence occurring somewhere else. Significant numbers of people leave this country during this stage of the epidemic. Most return, some do not. Some are all right, some are not.

Finally, general amnesia sets in, exacerbated whenever former soldiers, airmen or marines attempt to obtain medical care, disability payments, or a college education. Efforts to recall spe-

cifics of the formerly-ubiquitous droning noise are marginally-successful at best.

“How did it go? ‘Support the troops, within the bounds of fiscal responsibility?’ Or ‘Support the troops, no new taxes?’”

**Local Veterans**

**Rally for New GI Bill**

On Tuesday, more than 200 veterans from around the country joined Senator Jim Webb (D-VA), Senate Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) in Washington D.C. to rally in support of Senator Webb’s 21st Century GI Bill. The bill would expand educational benefits for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. It has gained the strong bipartisan support of 57 Senators and 240 members of the House. Nearly every New England Senator, including Republican Senators Olympia Snow and Susan Collins of Maine, has be-

come a cosponsor of the bill.

On Wednesday, three local veterans of three different wars met at Goodwin Park to urge New Hampshire’s Senators John Sununu and Judd Gregg to join them. Bill Duncan, a Vietnam veteran from New Castle, and Elias Abelson, a Korean War veteran from Portsmouth, spoke of the role earlier versions of the GI Bill played in their lives.

Josh Denton, Portsmouth resident, Iraq War veteran, and the New Hampshire State Team Captain of VoteVets.org, spoke in detail about the substantial differences between the current Montgomery GI Bill, and two potential replacements. Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan currently receive benefits under what is called the Montgomery GI Bill.

“The Montgomery GI Bill,” Denton said, “was designed for peacetime military service, not military service in a time of



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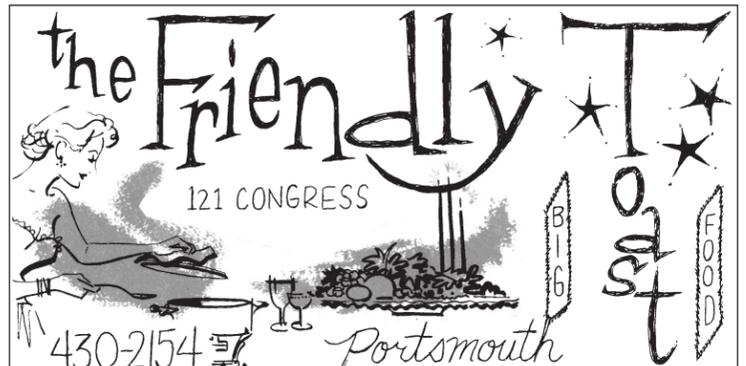
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LATE NIGHT MENU TUES-SAT



Scores of radio-active people, including the infamous Leftist Marching Band, were on hand Monday night to celebrate the inauguration of WSCA-LP FM's very spiffy new studio. Holding the ribbon for the ob-so-formal ribbon-cutting ceremony were, at left, General Manager Bjorn Turnquist and, at right, founding Board Member Tim Stone. Stylishly wielding the scissors is Shannon Darr. The new studio is dedicated to the memory of Shannon's late husband, Stanley Longstaff, who was deeply devoted to the station, and to the late Jay Smith, its first contributor.

war. This relic requires that eligible soldiers pay \$100 a month for a year to receive up to \$900 a month towards an education. This payment is commonly known as the 'combat tax.' Veterans can receive \$1,100 a month if they were able to afford to pay a higher monthly dollar amount, known as 'the kicker.'

"I was a platoon leader in the artillery. Despite my best efforts I knew it was not economically feasible for every member of my platoon to pay into the GI Bill, let alone pay into the kicker. Even if they had been able to afford it, the money that my soldiers paid into the combat tax did not even go towards the Veterans Administration.

"Due to both rising inflation and education costs, neither \$900 nor \$1,100 a month is enough money for a veteran to go to even a state school. The current G.I. Bill also does not provide money for housing, books, or lab fees."

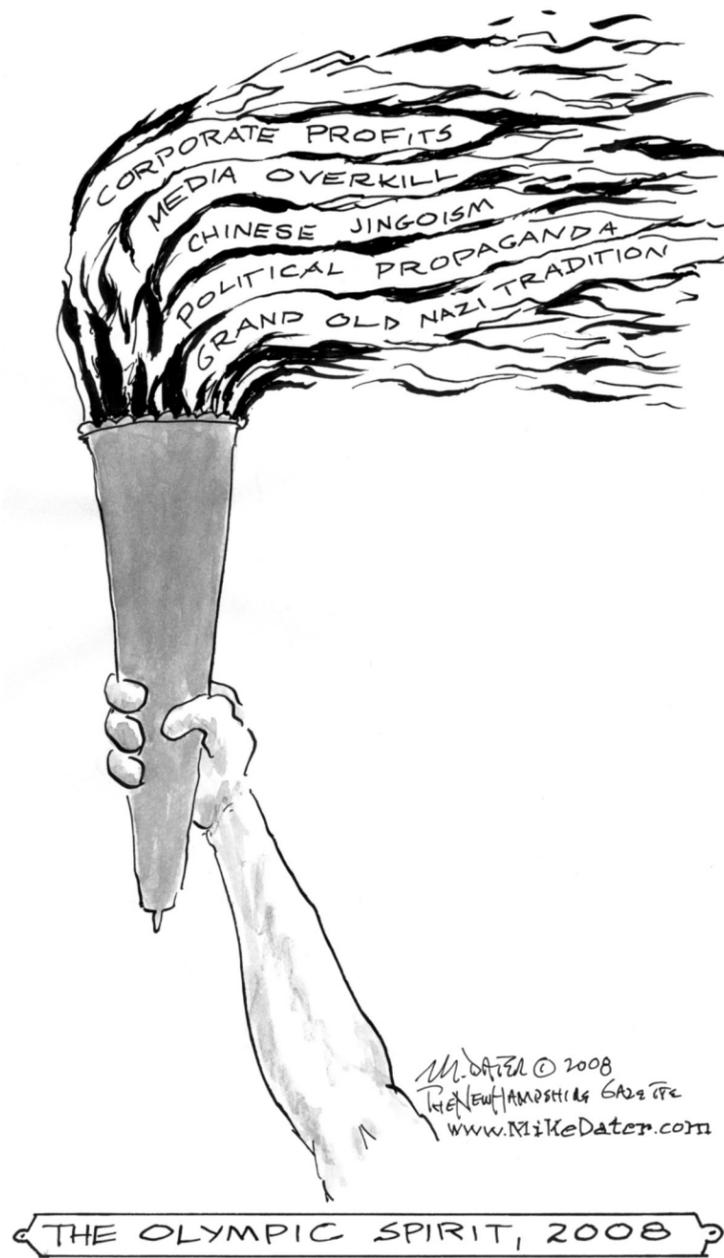
Senators Jim Webb and Chuck Hagel (R-NE) have introduced a bill in Congress designed to

make up for those shortcomings. Its formal name is the "Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act," less formally called the "Webb-Hagel Bill."

Denton says this bill is "similar to the original World War II G.I. Bill. Not only does it eliminate the 'combat tax,' it will pay the full amount of the highest state college tuition in the veteran's home state. The bill would also offer a cost of living stipend. Active Duty, National Guard, and Army reserve veterans would all be eligible for these benefits. All veterans that served on active duty after 9/11 would be eligible for benefits proportional to the amount of time they served on active duty."

"The Webb-Hagel bill now has 57 cosponsors in the Senate. Twelve of the cosponsors are Republicans. With three more supporters, this bill would be filibuster-proof, and guaranteed to get to the President's desk.

"Despite the growing momentum and strong bipartisan support for the Webb-Hagel Bill,



neither Sununu nor Gregg have said they will support it."

Competing with the Webb-Hagel Bill is the McCain Substitute Bill, aka the "Enhancement of Recruitment, Retention, and Readjustment through Education Act."

"The McCain G.I. Bill is a partisan bill that currently has only four cosponsors," according to Denton.

"Senator McCain's bill could split the Senate, undermine the common-sense legislation that Senators Webb and Hagel are offering, and in doing so, under-

mine America's veterans. As the title of the legislation suggests it is intended for the 'Retention' of veterans in the service. Senator McCain fears that improvements to a veterans education benefits will have a negative impact on military retention.

"The McCain Bill creates a flat education benefit. It does not take into account the cost of state colleges where a veteran lives. Veterans in states where the cost of education is higher than the benefit would have to go into debt to get an education, or uproot themselves and their families to

move to a place where the benefit would cover college. In many cases, the McCain bill won't even cover half the cost of college. The Webb-Hagel Bill determines the education benefit based on the highest state college tuition in the veterans' home state. This allows for veterans to return home and attend a state college of their choice.

"The McCain legislation leaves the National Guard and Reserve out in the cold. In the current conflicts, the National Guard and Reserve have served faithfully alongside their active duty compatriots, and deserve equal benefits. Yet, the McCain bill does nothing to reward our Guard and Reservists for their cumulative service. Under the McCain bill, members of the Guard and Reserves who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan would not get additional assistance towards an education once they leave the service. The Webb-Hagel Bill makes no differentiation between active duty service served by National Guard, Reserve, or Active Duty soldiers.

"Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan have fulfilled their service obligation to the country. It's time for the country to fulfill its obligation to them. Senators Sununu and Gregg have the opportunity to stand up for veterans in both New Hampshire and across the country. We are calling on Senator Sununu and Senator Gregg to flat-out reject the McCain substitute bill and cosponsor the 21st Century G.I. Bill."

**Laughter is the Best Politics**

"I was struck by how laughter connects you with people. It's almost impossible to maintain any kind of distance or any sense of social hierarchy when you're just howling with laughter. Laughter is a force for democracy." — John Cleese, on visiting Madan Kataria, a doctor in Mumbai who organizes groups of people who get together every morning to laugh.



"WHEN THE POWER OF LOVE OVERCOMES THE LOVE OF POWER, THE WORLD WILL FINALLY KNOW PEACE." -- JIMI HENDRIX



Moving Pictures

# Summer Flicks 2008

by Rodman Philbrick

The endless season of ice has finally given way to a (mostly) gorgeous spring, and we're once again ready, willing, and able to be glazed and amazed and stuffed with over-priced popcorn at our favorite theater complex.

The summer blockbuster season, those giant films with big stars and bloated budgets and the potential—if lightning strikes—to generate billions in revenue, can be roughly divided into Comics, Sequels, TV, and that handy category, Other Stuff.

In the Comics division, *Iron Man* kicks it off, starring Robert Downey, Jr. as Tony Stark, the wealthy inventor/industrialist who perfects an armored suit that transforms him into a superhero who must battle evil genius Jeff Bridges. Downey, whose previous experience with ferrous materials includes iron bars and steel handcuffs, may have his first hit as an action star. Or not—you and the hoard of mindless matinee zombies will have a say in

that. *The Incredible Hulk*, the ill-tempered green monster lurking inside Bruce Banner, has spawned a long-running comic book, a TV show, and a previous big budget flop by Ang Lee. This latest iteration stars Ed Norton (who had a hand in the screenplay) Liv Tyler, Tim Roth and William Hurt. Norton battles a monster called The Abomination, hoping that green strikes gold. Maybe *Transporter* director Louis Leterrier can make it work. *Wanted*, based on the graphic novel, stars James McAvoy as the meek and mild cubicle geek who is transformed into a deadly revenge-seeker by The Fox (Angelina Jolie). In a surprise casting twist, Morgan Freeman plays someone other than God. Our favorite cigar-chompin', butt-whoopin' comic superhero—or is he a villain?—is back in *Hellboy II: The Golden Army*. Guillermo del Toro (*Pan's Labyrinth*) again directs Ron Perlman as the demon spawn of a Nazi experiment who went from 'the dark side to our side', courtesy of the

Bureau for Paranormal Research and Defense. Hell itself is about to erupt—who you gonna call? Filmmaker Christopher Nolan continues the transformation of Batman (remember when the Batster was George Clooney?)

as *The Dark Knight*, with Christian Bale returning as the caped crusader, Michael Caine as his trusted butler and, in his final appearance, Heath

Ledger as The Joker. Things are looking grim in Gotham, and not just because real life—and death—intruded.

In the Big Sequel category, the odds—and the highly-honed pop instincts of Steven Spielberg—favor humungous blockbuster status for *Indiana Jones and The Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. It's gonna be huge, kids. With a great cast that includes (of course) Harrison Ford as the snake-hatin' hero, Shia LaBeouf

as his new sidekick, Cate Blanchett, Ray Winstone, John Hurt, Jim Broadbent, and the welcome reappearance of Indy's original squeeze, Karen Allen. And yes, it has been durn near twenty years since the last installment. *The Mummy*, *Tomb of The Dragon Emperor* is the third in the series starring

Brendon Fraser as the bumbling hero who confronts legions of snuffable (and

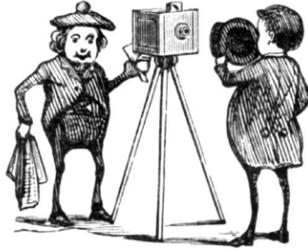
often laughable) CGI monsters, Jet Li as the latest resurrection of evil, Maria Bello replacing Rachel Weisz, and John Hannah standing less than stalwart as her cowardly brother.

The TV-spawned category has a couple of potential winners, the top pick being Steve Carell as Maxwell Smart in *Get Smart*, with Alan Arkin as The Chief. Seems like a can't miss, don't it? Whereas *The X Files: I Want To Believe* has to overcome a pop

culture sell-by date, and *Sex And The City: The Movie* may or may not look quite so intimately delicious on the big screen. Time—and tickets—will tell.

Other Stuff includes *The Happening* in which M. Night Shyamalan will attempt, once again, to induce involuntary shivers, or see dead people, or whatever he does. Starring Mark Wahlberg, who has his family on the run following a maybe-not-so natural disaster. And rumors of war sound pretty interesting—and possibly very funny—in *Tropic Thunder*. Here's the pitch: movie stars arrive in Vietnam to film a big budget action flick and then must perform as real soldiers. Sort of *Galaxy Quest* in the jungle. With Jack Black, Robert Downey, Jr., Steve Coogan, Nick Nolte, and appearances by just about every movie star who has ever met director Ben Stillier, including Tom Cruise, Tobey Maquire, and Matthew McConaughey.

Say it ain't *Zoolander*, Ben, and we'll be there.



## Inside American Royalty's Security Bubble

by Mike Ferner

Washington, DC, April 28, 2008—The First Family Security Bubble was nearly pried open for a moment last Friday; but in the end Disneyland remained blessedly undisturbed.

On a particularly warm spring evening, Laura and Jenna Bush alighted from a squadron of black SUVs at the Borders book store in downtown Washington, DC, right on schedule at 7:00 p.m. Flanked by Secret Service agents, they went inside to an area set up for authors to sign books—yes, sign books. The two

Bush women have co-authored a 32-page children's book, *Read All About It*, the story of Tyrone, a youngster who is good at everything in school but reading.

In line to have her copy signed, and more importantly, to get a moment to deliver a letter to the authors, waited Gilda Carbonaro, the mother of a U.S. Marine Sergeant who died a quite terrible death in Iraq.

After nearly an hour wait, Gilda approached the table to proffer her book for a signature. "So that they wouldn't see me as threatening, I made sure to introduce myself as a grade school teacher, like

Jenna," she said.

The moment she got her signed book back, she took her letter out from within the pages of the book and extended it to Laura and Jenna. Not 500 words long, it was laminated so it would clearly not be in something as suspicious-looking as an envelope.

"At that moment, swooping down out of absolutely nowhere, a Secret Service agent grabbed it out of my hand," Gilda explained. But before she was hustled away, she extracted a promise from the younger Bush to read it.

After her brief encounter with

American royalty, the member of Gold Star Families Speak Out ([www.gsfsso.org](http://www.gsfsso.org)) said, "If I had the chance, I would've liked to ask Laura Bush, 'What would you consider enough of a real emergency to urge your kids to enlist? If New Jersey was invaded? Your husband constantly tells us that all hangs in the balance in this war. Just what would it take for your family to really risk something?'"

You may be interested to read what Gilda Carbonaro wrote to Laura and Jenna Bush. Heaven knows they're not likely to, inside the bubble.

Laura and Jenna Bush  
c/o Borders Books  
14th and F Streets NW  
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April 25, 2008

Dear Laura and Jenna Bush,  
As you promote your new children's book, *Read All About It*, and advocate for literacy tonight I hope you will take but a few moments to read these heartfelt lines.

I write to you as one of thousands of parents and family members whose loved ones have been

Inside the Bubble  
to next page

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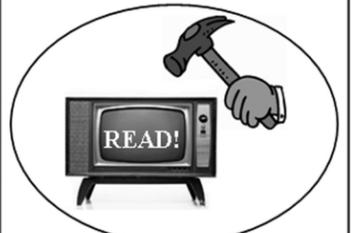
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*Northcountry Chronicle*

# Show Trials

by William Marvel

We Americans like to think we are the most just, honest people on earth. All my life I've heard my fellow citizens boast of our superiority by pointing to the inequities, hypocrisy, and corruption of other nations. It began with our indoctrination at Pine Tree School, at the tail end of the McCarthy era, when schoolmarms who had probably never been out of New England regaled us with the horrors of life in the Soviet Union. There the police could do just about anything they wanted, one domineering old biddy told us, and anyone who opposed the government would disappear into a prison where the most subtle tortures would be inflicted until a confession of wrongdoing could be extracted.

The most prominent public feature of those dreaded police states was the "show trial," in which the defendant had no chance of acquittal. This travesty was always compared to our wonderful judicial system—in which the state bore a heavy burden of proof, the defendant enjoyed nu-

merous protections, and it was always considered preferable to acquit a few guilty parties than to convict one innocent person. The Soviet Union, "Red" China, and a few other totalitarian states were said to favor show trials to maintain a facade of justice.

What Pine Tree's dominatrix of grades 5 and 6 forgot to tell us was that the United States also used show trials. They were called military tribunals, and they first came into common use during the Civil War, when the War Department imposed them on the civilian population to enforce a tyranny much closer to dictatorship than most historians have ever been willing to admit.

The first conspicuous instance of court-martialing civilian defendants arose in Ohio, in 1863, when Major General Ambrose Burnside decreed that no one could speak ill of the government, the president, or the war. Clement Vallandigham, a former congressman from Dayton, was campaigning for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination when he denounced Burnside's order as invalid, unconstitutional, and dictatorial. He was right on all



Clement Vallandigham

counts, but Burnside had enough bayonets to overrule civilian authority, and in the middle of the night he sent a company of infantry to Vallandigham's house, where they kicked in his door and seized him.

On the morning of May 5, Vallandigham's guards delivered him to Cincinnati, where he was almost immediately subjected to trial by a military tribunal. He objected that the military had no authority to arrest him, let alone try him, and he argued that the order he was accused of violating was itself illegal. Again he was correct all the way around, but

the beauty of the military tribunal was that it could ignore such constitutional niceties. Some of the offensive statements attributed to him were merely quotations from Abraham Lincoln's own speeches, but the tribunal ruled that in Vallandigham's mouth they became "aid and comfort to the enemy." He was convicted, as planned.

Military tribunals were used to assure convictions in other cases involving opponents of Lincoln's war, and they handed down numerous death sentences. A postwar military tribunal convicted all the accused Lincoln conspirators, including Mary Surratt, whom most historians have judged innocent. Another tribunal condemned Andersonville prison commandant Henry Wirz, thereby providing a scapegoat for high mortality among Union prisoners—mortality caused largely by a stubborn U.S. government policy on prisoner exchanges.

Those defendants all could, and should, have been tried by civilian criminal courts. Edwin Stanton's War Department wanted no risk of acquittal on technicali-

ties like contradictory evidence, however, for in most cases airing the evidence would have made the government itself look a lot less innocent than it pretended to be. In 1866 even the Supreme Court, which included numerous former friends and allies of Abraham Lincoln, declared his military tribunals unequivocally illegal.

Still, here we sit nearly a century and a half later, facing more of the same rigged military tribunals for the Guantanamo prisoners. Once again a presidential administration dares not reveal the weakness or outright falsity of its accusations, so the only recourse is another round of show trials, even though they will cast eternal doubt on any convictions. Civilian trials would give too many defendants a chance to prove their innocence by letting them hear and confront the evidence and witnesses against them. That might well reveal embarrassing details of executive-branch skulduggery, so those tribunals must now be rushed through—before the most likely subjects of that embarrassment have to go back to Texas and Wyoming.

killed in Iraq or Afghanistan; whose child, parent or spouse has returned blinded or deaf, armless or legless, or unable to ever move their limbs again; or perhaps have returned apparently unharmed, but with nightmares and a ticking timebomb in their minds.

You may think this a grim postscript to an evening's chat about a book for children, but when someone you love has been taken from you forever, or returned so terribly damaged you barely know them, it becomes foremost in your thoughts every

waking moment. You then begin to understand what is truly grim. And, I must add, there are those among us who still carry such unspeakable pain and anger they've become all but exhausted.

But many of us have felt exhaustion be replaced by an energy and a clarity of purpose we have never experienced before. One thing that has become clear to us is an answer to the question, "How could anyone send the youth of its nation to invade Iraq?" We see now how differently someone would answer that question if they suffered the an-

guish of a family member being killed as the result.

Your children, Mrs. Bush, are safe and I am glad for you. But I wonder, have you ever urged them to enlist in this heroic adventure? Your husband has told us many times how important this cause is. Your children appear well qualified, and as part of the First Family you've no doubt taught them the value of demonstrating leadership for the nation.

Why, then, has the price for this war been paid only by people like my son, Marine Corps Sgt.

Alessandro Carbonaro, who died May 10, 2006, eight days after being horrifically burned in an IED blast in Al Anbar Province, Iraq?

Can you not see the simple, basic unfairness of asking others to do what you yourself are unwilling to do? Have you drifted so far from an understanding of fundamental justice that you cannot see the contradictions apparent to so many of us?

These are not rhetorical questions. They are as real as the knot in our stomachs and the ache in our hearts. It is time—and past

time—that you face these questions without blinking or dodging and give us a satisfactory answer.

Most Sincerely,  
Gilda Carbonaro  
Bethesda, Maryland

Mike Ferner is a member of Veterans For Peace ([www.veterans-forpeace.org](http://www.veterans-forpeace.org)) and works part-time for DemocracyRising.US.



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**Shaheen, Sununu, and Taxes**

To the Editor:  
Like most Americans, I recently filed my tax return. And, I'm sure, like most Americans, I felt the process was much more complicated and time consuming than necessary. The Internal Revenue Service reports that we spend over \$2 billion each year preparing our taxes. Much of this is wasted money, money that families could put to much better use in these difficult economic times.  
Former Governor Jeanne Shaheen, who is now running for the United States Senate against John Sununu, has proposed a plan that will make the filing of the simplest form, the 1040-EZ, as easy as paying most bills.

Her campaign cites research that found that a third of the millions of citizens who file the 1040-EZ pay a tax preparer to complete their return. Under her plan the IRS, which already has most of the information it needs on people who file EZ returns, would send out a one-page form with the information already filled in. The program would be voluntary. All EZ filers would have to do would be to check the accuracy of the information and sign and mail the return.

With distressingly few exceptions, our two current Senators have consistently supported the failed policies of the Bush administration. Governor Shaheen's plan is creative, cost-effective, and an example of how she will work for all New Hampshire citizens as a United States Senator.

Robin Read  
Portsmouth  
Robin:

*The only downside we see is that this would take some work away from people who preparing taxes during the season, like one of our otherwise-faithful Subscription Fulfillment volunteers ... Hey—wait a minute! Then we wouldn't*

*have to do without her during tax season! OK, we're sold.*

The Editor

**Hamas & Israel**

To the Editor:

This is an open letter to our Congressional delegates:

UN resolutions on most any other country, if not complied with, result in them being bombed back into the Stone Age. Sixty-five resolutions against Israel are ignored, and nothing happens. (They were non-binding resolutions, to be sure.)

Hamas was democratically elected, but George W. Bush, who is pushing democracy everywhere, refuses to recognize Hamas.

If they destroyed all their weapons, I have a feeling Israel would create a situation for an excuse to commit genocide on what remains of the Palestinians. Even a good part of the people of Israel are against what is being done to the Palestinians.

Iran would probably be a thriving democracy by now if the CIA hadn't mounted a coup against [Prime Minister] Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953. The Cold War was just an excuse for

*Mash Notes,* **HATE MAIL,**

profit for the military-industrial complex.

The Fed creates the money out of thin air for the arms buildup, and we pay the interest. Why isn't Mohamed ElBaradei [Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency] allowed to examine Israel's Nukes?

Ask the survivors of the U.S.S. Liberty if Israel is our friend. Thirty-two Americans were killed and 171 wounded in Israel's 1967 attack on that ship. The survivors were warned that if they said anything about it, it would mean prison or worse for them. What was the "worse?"

And what about Russia and China? It disturbs me that State Document #7277, signed by JFK in 1961, says there will be Chinese and Russian troops patrolling the streets in the U.S. with Russian officers in charge.

And now we are burning our food to stop global warming, and making ethanol that is more expensive than oil and less efficient, when there is enough oil right here in our own country to last for years.

We need straight answers to these questions.

Ronald Barnes  
Rochester NH  
Ronald:

*We were with you for much of the way. The story of the U.S.S. Liberty, in particular, has never been given the attention it deserves, and it puts the rest of U.S. policy towards Israel under suspicion. But that State Document #7277 is a new one to us. It has about it a strong whiff of the unsubstantiated urban legend about it.*

The Editor

**More War Mongering**

To the Editor:

This month the *Bangor Daily News* printed a letter mongering war with Iran, the grounds for war being, in a nutshell, "oppression of minorities and women," "blatant disregard of the United Nations," "refuses to allow U.N. inspectors full access," "threat to the safety and well-being of U.S. Forces," and "unreliable and untrustworthy." The letter ended by

to next page

**Conscription: A Tragic Mistake**

by Larry Gara

If the United States continues on its path toward the militarization of society, sooner or later there will be serious calls to reactivate the draft. Indeed, the law now requires all young men to register with Selective Service at age 18, and draft boards wait on a standby basis. The military is stretched to the limit, the country is in a state of nearly permanent war, and reactivating the draft offers a tempting solution. It would be a tragic mistake.

For much of our history the United States had no national

draft. While some states had militia laws, the nation itself rejected the idea of forced military service. European immigrants often came to the United States to avoid systems of conscription at home. Among them were Mennonites and other Anabaptists whose faith rejected participation in war.

During the War of 1812 President James Madison asked for a national conscription law, but Congress refused. Daniel Webster, then a young congressman, declared that no such law could be enforced in New England. Later, to meet the military de-

mands of the Civil War, both Union and Confederate governments relied on conscription to fill their armies. In the North the law allowed a man to avoid military service by providing a substitute or paying \$300. This provision, which so obviously discriminated against the poor, provoked bitterness and contributed to numerous draft riots. In New York City a riot lasted four days and caused many deaths before the Union Army moved in to crush it.

Following the Civil War, conscription did not return until 1917. Drafting men to fight in

World War I met severe criticism, and scorn was sometimes heaped on draftees, whom Senator Champ Clark declared no better than convicts. Woodrow Wilson himself had said, prior to U.S. entrance into World War I, "Conscription is the root of Prussian militarism." To counter those sentiments, the new system was called "Selective Service," a euphemism created to sell a very unpopular concept. To avoid stigma and to negotiate for a preferred branch of military service, many young men volunteered.

With introduction of the draft came the argument that

the system was democratic because it placed an equal burden on all young men. That promise has never materialized in practice. The system is not, and can never be totally fair. Family connections, education and income will always be factors in selecting those who must serve. Furthermore, a military draft can no longer be limited to males, because women now serve with distinction in every branch of the service, and the notion that such service violates sacred concepts of true womanhood will not be tol-

to next page

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# And Other Correspondence

predicting, "If we don't preemptively strike it will strike."

Since Israel oppresses its Arab minority including women, has defied lots of UN resolutions since 1948, has never allowed UN inspectors in its nuclear weapons facility at Dimona, has killed or wounded U.S. forces in its 1967 attack on the *U.S.S. Liberty*, has attacked all its neighbors to show itself untrustworthy and dangerous, the same grounds John Morton gave could be used to wage war on it.

By coincidence, three days later the *New York Times* printed an article by Zev Chafetz, "Israel Can Stand Up For Itself," which bragged about its 1981 bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor and 2007 bombing of a building in Syria it claimed had a Korean-built nuclear reactor. The Israeli also boasted it could do the same in Iran and ended the article by saying that Israel celebrates its 60th birthday in May, a reminder that at that age, it's long past time for Israel to be weaned.

When the U.S. stops subsidizing it with tax dollars and tax deductions, and stops supporting its bloody wars and occupation,

then Israel could finally find out if it can stand up all by itself. As for John Morton, he could run for vice president with his blood brother John McCain, singing on the Scare Talk Express his campaign tune: "Bomb Bomb Bomb; Bomb Bomb Iran!" McCain/Morton might stir up voters to carry on the Bush/Cheney legacy of lunacy.

Marjorie Gallace  
Camden, ME

### Superficiality, Patriotism, Conservatism, and Hypocrisy

To the Editor:

Watching Fox News Sunday, April 20, I noticed that two panel members wore American flag lapel pins: Brit Hume and Juan Williams. The rest, including the host, had no such decoration. Did this say that the two with their flag pins were more American or patriotic than the rest of the panel members including the host? Did it imply that the one panel member, a leading conservative writer, is less conservative than the offshoots of the John Birch Society?

I doubt that. He's too intelligent for any analytical compari-

son with any of today's radio talk jockeys, aka Limbaugh, Hannity, Levin, and Savage (Weiner). They're holier-than-thou non-veterans, more cowardly than most—just blabber mouths who claim they control the voting synophants in the U.S.

I decided to do some quick background research on this piece of tin that's causing such a flap about who's truly a loyal American. There are hundreds of shapes, sizes, and configurations of flag pins available from a variety of sources, including imports from places overseas, like China. Does this say one type of pin is more patriotic than another when worn? I think not.

These pins are sheer superficiality at best, and hypocritical at worst. They go along with the post-9/11 fad of flying the American flag on vehicles. Like all fads it was soon over and done with, about six months later.

Not so, however, the outcome of these wars. The wounded and dead are real and permanent ... *not a fad!*

So, to you conservative, lapel-pin-wearing cowards: until you are ready to put your life on the

line for this country, in the manner of these military veterans and, currently, Barack Obama, I suggest you keep your hypocritically patriotic comments in the cheap seats of your cowardly conservative corner.

Bobby Buck

*Bobby:*

*We think you're a little off in estimating the demise of the flags-on-vehicles phenomenon. Around here, the shredded remnants were visible for years after 9/11. Other than that ... Give 'em hell, Bobby!*

The Editor

### UNH Hosts Hungarian Revolution of 1956 Exhibit

To the Editor:

October, 2006 marked the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution. This uprising against the domination by the Soviet Union was one of the most serious attempts to restore democracy and liberty behind the Iron Curtain. When it failed thousands had been killed and 2% of the population (about 200,000) became refugees.

If you missed the Freedom '56 exhibit at the Portsmouth Public Library last year, you have another chance to see it (until July 3) at the Dimond Libray at UNH. Historic photographs by Erich



Lessing capture both the spirit of hope and the heartbreak of the failed uprising. Eyewitness narratives accompanying the exhibit put personal faces and give voice to the events depicted. Contemporary photos by Stephen Spindler provide a contrast by highlighting the beauty and splendor of Budapest today.

For those too young to remember, or those who are unfamiliar with the history of the Hungarian Revolution, this exhibit offers a short but powerful lesson. For those who lived through that period of history, it awakens our memory of the Cold War and pays tribute to the courage that the young students, workers and academics showed to the world on the streets of Budapest.

Peter Somssich  
Portsmouth, NH

erated. Should a male-only draft be reactivated, the courts would soon be overwhelmed with litigation from young men.

In fact, a military draft is a special kind of tax on the young. It not only interrupts education and career, but sometimes life itself, and is an infringement of civil liberties laid upon only a segment of the population. One provision, for example, makes "counseling" disobedience of the draft law a criminal offense punishable by fines and imprisonment as a felon. Surely this violates the First Amendment protection of free speech.

After the Armistice in 1918 the draft disappeared as the country dealt with unemployment, the Great Depression, and strong isolationist sentiments. With war clouds gathering in Europe and the Far East, however, Congress passed, by a single-vote margin, the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940. Under that law and the demands of World War II, millions of young men were drafted into the army, or volunteered as their fathers had done in the First World War. A flood of propaganda in print, music and films arose to popularize Selective Service and the war itself. By

the end of that terrible period in human history conscription was accepted as necessary and inevitable. In 1948 Congress passed a new Selective Service Act.

The Supreme Court has rejected arguments that the draft is unconstitutional, even though the 13th Amendment specifically outlaws "involuntary servitude." Despite the fact that dictatorships inevitably impose conscription, some still insist that Selective Service is inherently democratic. Some also argue that a draft makes peace more likely because, when every family is affected, everyone resists the idea

of going to war. History and experience do not support this idea. The draft certainly did not keep us out of war in Korea or Vietnam, for example. Indeed, having a reliable and renewable supply of manpower is more likely to encourage elements in any government that support military adventures.

Instead, we need an imaginative foreign policy that emphasizes diplomacy and strengthens international agreements. We could lead the world in nuclear disarmament and research the potential for nonviolent resistance, a force Gandhi used to

win freedom in India, the people of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe used to throw off Soviet dictatorship, and African Americans used to end legal segregation in this country.

As we move into the 21st century we have many options. We can bring back the draft to support 20th century militarism and preemptive wars, or we can look to the future and build a livable, clean and peaceful world for generations to come.

Larry Gara is Emeritus Professor of History at Wilmington College of Ohio.

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## ADMIRAL FOWLE'S PISCATAQUA RIVER TIDAL GUIDE (NOT FOR NAVIGATIONAL PURPOSES)

Portsmouth is bounded on the north and east by the Piscataqua River. Depending on which tour boat captain you believe, it's the second, the third, or the fourth fastest-flowing navigable river in the country.

The Piscataqua's remarkable current is caused by the tide which, in turn is

caused by the moon. The other major player is a vast sunken valley, about ten miles upriver. Twice a day, the moon drags roughly seventeen billion gallons of salt water from the ocean, up the river, into Great Bay. (If the moon ever stopped moving that water for us, it could be replaced with 2,125,000

tanker trucks.)

The moon's meddling creates a roving hydraulic conflict as incoming sea and outgoing river collide. The skirmish line moves from the mouth of the river, past New Castle, around the bend by the old Naval Prison, under Memorial Bridge, past the tugboats,

and on towards Great Bay. This spectacle can best be seen when the chart below shows the tide rising. A good place to watch is the little deck near the sterns of the tugboats, off Ceres Street. Twice a day, too, the moon lets all that water go. All the salt water that just fought its way upstream goes back

to rejoin the ocean. This is when the Piscataqua earns its title for xth fastest current. A good place to observe this is from Bow Street, up by St. John's church. Look up the river, from one of the little parking lots between the buildings. (Don't try to drive or park there, that won't work.) You'll see a red

buoy, at the upstream end of Badger's Island, bobbing around in the current. That buoy weighs several tons, is nine feet wide, and it bobs and bounces in the current like a cork! The river also has its placid moments, around high and low tides. Often when the river rests, its tugboats and drawbridges

work their hardest. Ships coming in heavily laden with coal, oil, and salt generally do so at high tide, for maximum clearance under their keels. When they leave empty, riding high in the water, they tend to go at low tide, for maximum clearance under Memorial Bridge.

Sunday, May 4	Monday, May 5	Tuesday, May 6	Wednesday, May 7	Thursday, May 8	Friday, May 9	Saturday, May 10
<p><b>1989</b>—Col. Oliver North, U.S.M.C., is convicted of four felonies in the Iran-Contra scandal. He later escapes punishment due to Congressional ineptitude.</p> <p><b>1970</b>—National Guard troops shoot and kill four students at Kent State, Ohio.</p> <p><b>1961</b>—Freedom Rides begin throughout the south.</p> <p><b>1948</b>—Norman Mailer's <i>The Naked and the Dead</i> is published.</p> <p><b>1942</b>—The <i>U.S.S. Lexington</i> sinks during the Battle of the Coral Sea.</p> <p><b>1940</b>—Nora Joyce says to James, "Well, Jim, I haven't read any of your books but I'll have to someday because they must be good considering how well they sell."</p> <p><b>1926</b>—A nationwide General Strike begins in England.</p> <p><b>1896</b>—In Cripple Creek, Colo., a grease fire ignites a ton of dynamite.</p> <p><b>1886</b>—In Chicago's Haymarket Square, demonstrators protesting yesterday's police brutality at the McCormick Reaper plant are attacked by—what else?—more police. A bomb explodes, killing seven officers.</p> <p><b>1852</b>—Birth of Alice Lidell, muse of Lewis Carroll.</p> <p><b>1814</b>—The former Emperor Napoleon arrives at Elba.</p> <p><b>1702</b>—Queen Anne's War begins (it will last 11 years).</p>	<p><b>1994</b>—Screaming Lord Sutch, 3rd Earl of Harrow, of the Official Monster Raving Loony Party, achieves his highest percentage of the vote—4.2 pct.—in British Parliamentary elections.</p> <p><b>1987</b>—Televised Congressional hearings on the Iran-Contra scandal begin.</p> <p><b>1985</b>—President Reagan lays a wreath at a cemetery full of Nazi soldiers at Bitburg, Germany.</p> <p><b>1981</b>—In Ireland's Maze Prison, Bobby Sands dies of starvation.</p> <p><b>1961</b>—New Hampshire's own Alan Shepard recites a prayer, "Please, dear God, don't let me f_k up," moments before becoming America's first man in space. His prayer is answered.</p> <p><b>1960</b>—Number of U.S. "advisors" at MAAG, Saigon nearly doubles to 685.</p> <p><b>1960</b>—U.S. announces that Gary Powers's U-2 was a "weather search plane" and its pilot a "civilian employed by Lockheed."</p> <p><b>1925</b>—John Scopes is arrested for teaching evolution.</p> <p><b>1916</b>—To "protect American interests," U.S. Marines invade the Dominican Republic.</p> <p><b>1886</b>—In the Bay View neighborhood of Milwaukee, Gov. Jeremiah Rusk orders 250 National Guard soldiers to fire on a crowd of strikers. They comply, seven die.</p>	<p><b>1982</b>—Explaining why so many blacks have died in LAPD chokeholds, Chief Darryl Gates explains it's because "in some blacks ... the veins or arteries do not open up as fast as they do in normal people."</p> <p><b>1981</b>—Maya Ying Lin's controversial design is chosen for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.</p> <p><b>1973</b>—FBI besieges Native Americans at Wounded Knee.</p> <p><b>1970</b>—At Jackson State University in Mississippi, two black students are killed by soldiers.</p> <p><b>1967</b>—Top ranking U.S. Marine Gen. Wallace Greene, Jr., announces in Manchester, NH, that America is winning the war in Vietnam, "and I say that without any doubt whatsoever."</p> <p><b>1965</b>—The first two Marine divisions arrive in Vietnam.</p> <p><b>1937</b>—A huge bagful of flaming Nazi gas ignites over Lakehurst, New Jersey, 14 years before Rush Limbaugh was born.</p> <p><b>1864</b>—During the second day of the Battle of the Wilderness, five generals are killed in action.</p> <p><b>1856</b>—Birth of Sigmund Freud; thinker, shrinker, coke sniffer.</p> <p><b>1794</b>—Toussaint L'Ouverture leads the Haitian Revolution.</p> <p><b>1626</b>—Peter Minuit "purchases" Manhattan Island from the Manhatta Indians for \$24 worth of tchotchkes.</p>	<p><b>1999</b>—A U.S. stealth bomber hits the Chinese embassy in Belgrade: 3 dead, 27 wounded.</p> <p><b>1992</b>—Pesky reporters reveal that Ross Perot's fervor to aid U.S. POWs in Vietnam was motivated largely by a desire to bolster Richard Nixon's presidency.</p> <p><b>1985</b>—Tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans march in a ticker tape parade in New York City. Better late than never.</p> <p><b>1984</b>—Vietnam veterans' suit seeking damages from chemical companies which sold Agent Orange to the U.S. is settled for chump change.</p> <p><b>1964</b>—Francisco Gonzales, a former Olympic yachtsman, shoots the pilot and co-pilot of Pacific Air flight 773, which then crashes killing the other 41 people on board.</p> <p><b>1960</b>—After lying for some time, and only after Nikita Khrushchev reveals the Soviets have both pilot and plane, the U.S. admits that the U-2 is a spy plane.</p> <p><b>1954</b>—Viet Minh forces overrun the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu.</p> <p><b>1942</b>—More than 100,000 Japanese-Americans are assigned to detention camps.</p> <p><b>1896</b>—Gilmanton-born Herman W. Mudgett, aka "Dr. H.H. Holmes," is hanged in Chicago for murdering 100 women.</p>	<p><b>2006</b>—CNN's Headline News commits moral suicide by adding Glenn Beck to the lineup.</p> <p><b>2003</b>—The cargo door of a Russian built cargo plane flown by a Ukrainian crew over the Congo pops open. As many as three-fourths of the 200 aboard are sucked from the plane.</p> <p><b>1979</b>—Salvadoran police maintain order by killing 23 and wounding 70 at a cathedral.</p> <p><b>1972</b>—Nixon bombs Haiphong Harbor.</p> <p><b>1970</b>—Richard Nixon fires draft boss Gen. Hershey.</p> <p><b>1970</b>—In New York, "hardhats" beat up antiwar demonstrators.</p> <p><b>1970</b>—Eleven students at the University of New Mexico, while protesting the Vietnam War, are met by National Guardsmen and stabbed with bayonets.</p> <p><b>1967</b>—Muhammad Ali is indicted for refusing to be inducted.</p> <p><b>1919</b>—The first successful trans-Atlantic airplane flight begins at Rockaway, NY.</p> <p><b>1781</b>—Ethan Allen and his brothers quietly discuss with British representatives the potential for making Vermont a province of Canada.</p> <p><b>1725</b>—John Lovewell, who had marched into Boston a month earlier wearing a wig made of Indian scalps, is killed by an Abenaki near Pequawket.</p>	<p><b>1980</b>—The Liberian-flagged freighter <i>Summit Venture</i> slams into the Sunshine Skyway Bridge near St. Petersburg, FL. A large chunk of bridge and a Greyhound Bus plunge into Tampa Bay, killing 35.</p> <p><b>1974</b>—Congressional hearings on the impeachment of Richard Nixon begin. Finally.</p> <p><b>1961</b>—Newton Minow, FCC chair, calls American television "a vast wasteland."</p> <p><b>1969</b>—<i>The New York Times</i> exposes the secret U.S. bombing of neutral Cambodia.</p> <p><b>1967</b>—Muhammad Ali is stripped of his heavyweight boxing title for refusing induction.</p> <p><b>1960</b>—"The" Pill is approved.</p> <p><b>1947</b>—Louisiana successfully electrocutes seventeen year old Willie Francis. A year and six days earlier, it tried and failed.</p> <p><b>1926</b>—Admiral Byrd flies over the North Pole, he says. Maybe.</p> <p><b>1879</b>—Wilbur Trafton wires Portsmouth's first telephone.</p> <p><b>1843</b>—Birth of Belle Boyd, one of the Confederacy's most successful spies during the Great Rebellion, who married Portsmouth's Samuel Hardinge.</p> <p><b>1671</b>—Col. Thomas Blood tries to steal the Crown Jewels but fails because he's drunk. He is captured but is mysteriously pardoned by King Charles II.</p>	<p><b>2001</b>—In a bold attempt to solve the problem of budget surpluses forever, Congress passes G.W. Bush's biggest tax cut yet.</p> <p><b>2000</b>—"I think we agree," George W. Bush says to John McCain, "the past is over."</p> <p><b>1973</b>—Nixon cronies John Mitchell and Maurice Stans are indicted along with Robert Vesco for Vesco's illegal \$200,000 campaign contribution.</p> <p><b>1967</b>—Capt. Howard Levy is jailed for 3 years for refusing to train U.S. soldiers for Vietnam.</p> <p><b>1933</b>—Germans backing Hitler's plan to limit freedom of the press and individual thought burn books in public squares.</p> <p><b>1924</b>—J. Edgar "Mary" Hoover is appointed head of the FBI.</p> <p><b>1863</b>—Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson dies of wounds inflicted by his own Confederate troops.</p> <p><b>1849</b>—In the Astor Place Riot, 31 die and over 100 are injured in a melee begun by fans of actor Edwin Forrest angered by the appearance of a rival.</p> <p><b>1777</b>—The Continental Sloop <i>Ranger</i> is launched from Badger's Island, ME.</p> <p><b>1775</b>—Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys take Fort Ticonderoga from the British "[i]n the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!"</p>
Sunday, May 11	Monday, May 12	Tuesday, May 13	Wednesday, May 14	Thursday, May 15	Friday, May 16	Saturday, May 17
<p><b>2003</b>—In a rare display of honesty, <i>The New York Times</i> publishes a four page confession that one of its reporters had been writing fiction.</p> <p><b>1997</b>—Chess champion Gary Kasparov is defeated by IBM's Big Blue.</p> <p><b>1981</b>—RIP Bob Marley.</p> <p><b>1975</b>—80,000 celebrate the end of the Vietnam War in Central Park.</p> <p><b>1969</b>—The British comedy troupe Monty Python forms.</p> <p><b>1968</b>—In France, the three largest labor federations turn out in support of student protests.</p> <p><b>1966</b>—"It appears," says Sec. of Defense Robert Strange McNamara, "that the Viet Cong is [sic] losing what support it had from the rural population."</p> <p><b>1960</b>—In Buenos Aires, Mossad agents snatch Adolf Eichmann.</p> <p><b>1933</b>—In the central U.S., dust storms begin.</p> <p><b>1894</b>—The Pullman Railroad Strike begins.</p> <p><b>1886</b>—Under the headline, "No Poles Need Apply," the <i>Milwaukee Daily Sentinel</i> publishes an article praising the railroads for firing Polish immigrants.</p> <p><b>1854</b>—Birth of Linotype inventor Ottmar Mergenthaler.</p> <p><b>1811</b>—In Siam, twin brothers Chang and Eng are born; they prove to be inseparable.</p>	<p><b>1996</b>—On <i>60 Minutes</i>, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright tells Lesley Stahl that the deaths of 500,000 children in Iraq due to sanctions is "a very hard choice, but the price—we think the price is worth it."</p> <p><b>1984</b>—The No. 2 man at HUD says Hispanics live in crowded homes, not because of poverty, but out of "cultural preference."</p> <p><b>1975</b>—Thirty-nine members of the crew of the U.S. merchant ship <i>Mayaguez</i> are seized by Khmer Rouge off Cambodia.</p> <p><b>1968</b>—VC and NVA troops overrun a U.S. Special Forces camp at Kham Duc.</p> <p><b>1963</b>—Bob Dylan walks out on the Ed Sullivan show. Ed won't let Bob sing the "Talking John Birch Society Blues."</p> <p><b>1958</b>—Future Defense Secretary Robert Strange McNamara suggests Americans eat lots of cabbage and broccoli to withstand atomic fallout.</p> <p><b>1947</b>—Trunk murderess Winnie Ruth Judd escapes from the Arizona State Insane Hospital for the 3rd time.</p> <p><b>1916</b>—Too weak to stand, James Connolly is shot sitting down for his part in the Easter Uprising.</p> <p><b>1854</b>—The steeple of the old North Church is pulled down in Market Square, to clear the way for the present building.</p>	<p><b>1985</b>—To end a stand-off, Philadelphia bombs MOVE headquarters, killing 11 and leaving another 250 homeless.</p> <p><b>1981</b>—Switchboards are jammed at TV stations across the country by callers complaining their soap operas have been pre-empted with news that Mehmet Ali Agca has shot the Pope.</p> <p><b>1968</b>—In Paris, alleged Peace Talks begin between U.S. and North Vietnam.</p> <p><b>1960</b>—Berkeley students protest a visit from HUAC.</p> <p><b>1958</b>—Richard Nixon gets stoned in Caracas—literally.</p> <p><b>1893</b>—Birth of "Shipwreck" Kelly, champion flagpole-sitter.</p> <p><b>1888</b>—Brazil abolishes slavery.</p> <p><b>1862</b>—Robert Smalls, enslaved helmsman of the Confederate military transport <i>Planter</i>, commandeers the vessel, pilots it out of Charleston harbor, and turns it over to the U.S. Navy.</p> <p><b>1846</b>—Congress declares war on Mexico.</p> <p><b>1842</b>—Dorr's "Peoples' Government" fails in an attempt to seize an arsenal in Rhode Island.</p> <p><b>1828</b>—The Tariff of Abominations, begun as a ruse by Jackson supporters, is passed by Congress and proceeds to wreck the economy.</p> <p><b>1794</b>—The Whiskey Rebellion begins in western Pennsylvania.</p>	<p><b>1992</b>—Bush I administration opens up 1,400 acres of spotted owl habitat for logging.</p> <p><b>1980</b>—Jimmy Carter changes his policy on the Mariel boatlift in mid-stream.</p> <p><b>1970</b>—The Red Army Faction is formed in Germany.</p> <p><b>1969</b>—Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas resigns in disgrace, a promising precedent which, sadly, has not been followed.</p> <p><b>1960</b>—A.J. Lieblich writes in <i>The New Yorker</i>, "Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one."</p> <p><b>1939</b>—In Lima, Peru, Lina Medina gives birth to a son. She is five years and seven months old.</p> <p><b>1856</b>—President Franklin Pierce unofficially recognizes the Nicaraguan "government" of American adventurer William Walker. Walker is later deposed for interfering with Cornelius Vanderbilt's transportation schemes.</p> <p><b>1856</b>—In San Francisco, the editor of the <i>Evening Bulletin</i> is killed by a rival newspaperman, who is hanged by vigilantes.</p> <p><b>1856</b>—Camels are imported into Texas for use as pack animals.</p> <p><b>1787</b>—In Philadelphia, delegates meet to write a new U.S. Constitution.</p> <p><b>964</b>—John XXII's papacy is abruptly ended by a jealous husband.</p>	<p><b>1991</b>—The Defense Department releases documents confirming that Manuel Noriega used to be on the CIA's payroll.</p> <p><b>1975</b>—In the last combat action of the Vietnam War, 18 men, mostly Marines, die during the <i>Mayaguez</i> rescue operation off Cambodia.</p> <p><b>1969</b>—Saying, "If there has to be a bloodbath then let's get it over with," Governor Ronald Reagan sends the National Guard to take Peoples' Park from the hippies.</p> <p><b>1964</b>—U.S. begins bombing Laos.</p> <p><b>1957</b>—Betraying their post-war insecurities, the British fire off an H-bomb.</p> <p><b>1951</b>—Gen. Omar Bradley tells Congress that Gen. Douglas MacArthur's plan to take the Korean War into China would be "[t]he wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy."</p> <p><b>1935</b>—Workers in U.S. get right to organize as National Labor Relations Act passes Congress.</p> <p><b>1886</b>—Emily Dickinson, who hasn't left the house in 21 years, dies in Amherst, Mass.</p> <p><b>1872</b>—Julia Ward Howe declares the first Mothers Day—as an anti-war holiday.</p> <p><b>1756</b>—Seven Years' War begins.</p> <p><b>1602</b>—Bartholomew Gosnold sights Cape Cod.</p>	<p><b>1972</b>—Nixon crony Chuck Colson orders E. Howard Hunt to break into Arthur Bremer's apartment. Hunt refuses the job as too risky. Nixon wanted to tie Bremer to left-wingers.</p> <p><b>1969</b>—The <i>U.S.S. Guitarro</i>, being fitted out at San Francisco Bay Naval Shipyard, sinks in 35 feet of water, causing an estimated \$25 million in damage. Congress blames shipyard workers.</p> <p><b>1954</b>—"Using U.S. ground forces in the Indo-China jungle," says Sen. Wm. F. Knowland, (R-CA), "would be like trying to cover an elephant with a handkerchief—you just can't do it."</p> <p><b>1918</b>—Congress passes the Sedition Act, making it illegal to criticize the government.</p> <p><b>1881</b>—In a power play against President Garfield, NY Senators Roscoe Conkling and Thomas Platt resign, betting on speedy reelection by the NY legislature. They lose.</p> <p><b>1866</b>—In a fit of productivity, Congress eliminates the half-dime, replaces it with the nickel.</p> <p><b>1836</b>—Edgar Allan Poe marries his cousin Virginia Clemm, 13.</p> <p><b>1717</b>—Voltaire is thrown into the Bastille for writing satire.</p> <p><b>1691</b>—Jacob Leisler, the rebel governor of New York, becomes the first American colonist hanged for treason.</p>	<p><b>2004</b>—Same-sex marriage is legalized in Massachusetts, to the delight of Karl Rove.</p> <p><b>1996</b>—The House Ethics Committee charges that serial groper Bob Packwood (R-OR) fails to meet even its own oxymoronic standards.</p> <p><b>1995</b>—Army veteran and de-ranked meth addict Shawn Nelson steals an M60 Patton tank from a San Diego Army armory and goes on a vehicle crushing rampage before being shot by police.</p> <p><b>1987</b>—Thirty-seven sailors aboard the <i>U.S.S. Stark</i> die when the ship is hit by an Exocet missile fired by an Iraqi jet fighter.</p> <p><b>1968</b>—In Catonsville, MD, nine people break into a draft board and burn over 600 files.</p> <p><b>1954</b>—The Supreme Court gets one right, rules that "separate but equal" education won't do.</p> <p><b>1903</b>—Birth of "Cool Papa" Bell, the fastest baseball player who ever lived, though somehow it took him until 1974 to make it into the Hall of Fame.</p> <p><b>1872</b>—Five <i>San Francisco Examiner</i> reporters form the Bohemian Club to "elevate journalism to that place in the popular estimation to which it is entitled." Nowadays reporters are barred, and plutocrats run the club.</p> <p><b>1792</b>—The New York Stock Exchange is formed.</p>

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