

The Stony Brook Patriot

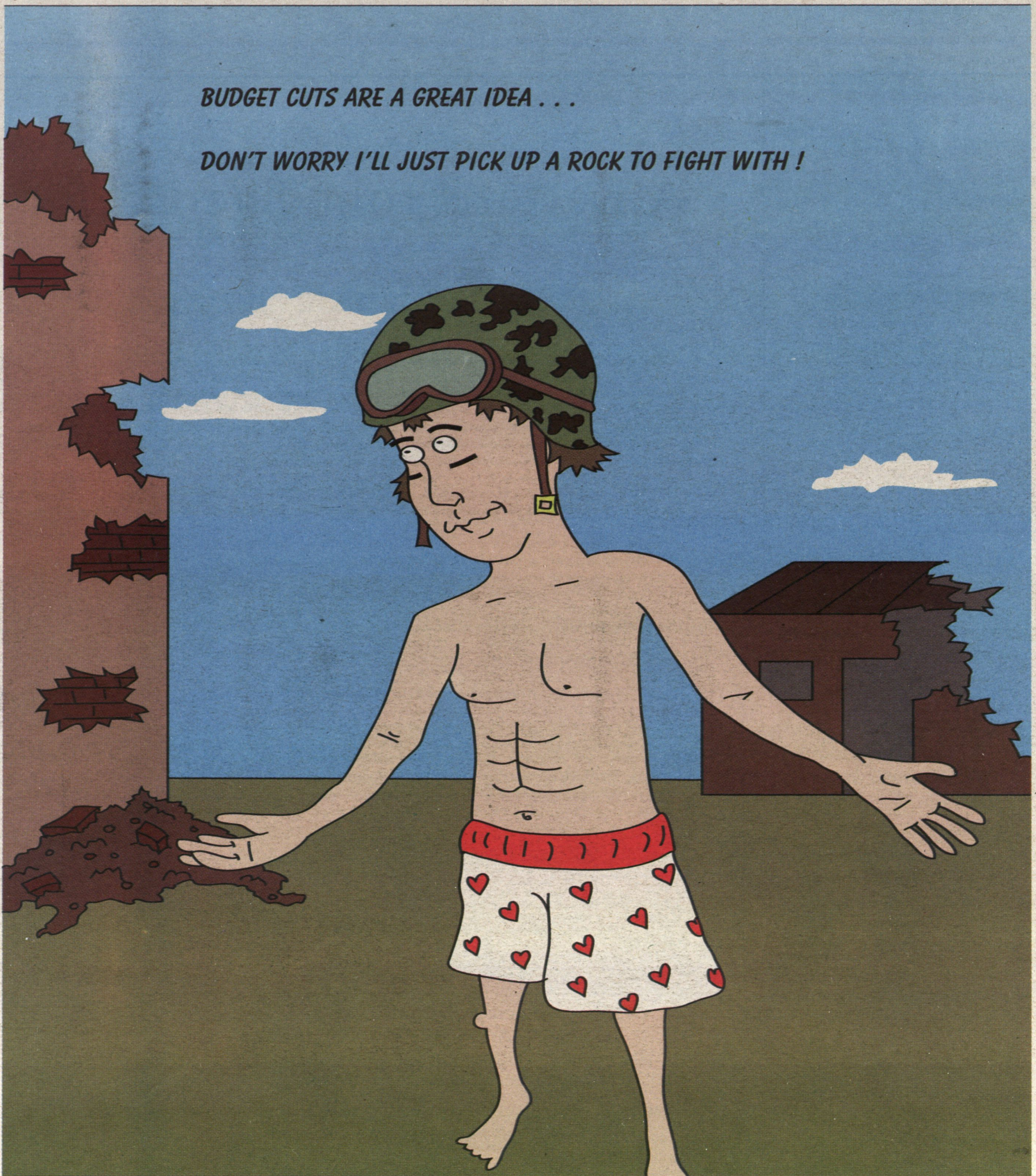
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September 2008 Edition

BUDGET CUTS ARE A GREAT IDEA . . .

DON'T WORRY I'LL JUST PICK UP A ROCK TO FIGHT WITH !



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Our Mission: The goal of *The Patriot* is to offer an alternative point of view to the students of Stony Brook University. It is a paper dedicated to raising awareness of student issues on campus, and conservative/libertarian issues on the national scene. While it does not actively seek controversy, *The Patriot* strives to offer opinions and news that will encourage the students of this campus to ask themselves what their true values are. It is dedicated to building upon and fostering the conservative and libertarian views that are strong among so many of us, yet suppressed in our community. But ideology aside, all of our news will be bound to three standards: we will always be *factual, sensible, and reasonable.*

Alexander Chamesian
Editor-In-Chief

Gregory Bernardi
Managing Editor

Gaby Jusino
Opinions Editor

Christine Frank
Advertising Editor

Drew Art

David Fishman

Conor Harrigan

Zachary Kurtz

Sarah Marshall

Christopher Jay Mojica

Derek Mordente

Rebecca Newman

Jonathan Pu

Contributors

A Letter From The Editor

Long and drawn out as it is, the Presidential Election is an important and necessary exercise for all Americans because it isn't just about picking our next president. It is more. It is a process, an experience that forces us to look within and define our politics, to answer the all important question: "What is the proper role of government?"

In Barack Obama and John McCain we can identify two very different answers to this question.

Stripped of the talk of hope, change, and such unctuous proclamations, as 'We are the ones we've been waiting for,' Barack Obama's prescriptions for America are not very different from those of his liberal antecedents. In his and his followers' eyes, there is no limit as to what government should and can do. The deeply-rooted fear of power in the hands of the few that so strongly influenced our Founders is no where to be found in the vision of Barack Obama. Indeed, in his acceptance speech at the Democratic Convention, he asked us to 'Shed our cynicism of government,' and if we do this, all will be provided: cheap gas, free healthcare, retirement pensions, high quality education and more. All this with only the minor caveat that in order to pay for all these wonderful promises, the federal government will have to penalize successful and industrious individuals for their hard work. That these things are not once mentioned in the supreme law of the land, the Constitution, is of little important to high minded politicians such as Barack Obama, so long as the ends they bring are desirable and opportune. This, dear readers, is the left's answer to our central question.

Less an exemplar of American conservatism than Barack Obama is of liberalism, John McCain's view of the role of government is still far more limited in size and scope than Senator Obama's. The program that Senator McCain offers is consistent with Ronald Reagan's maxim: 'Government is not the answer to our problems. Government is the problem.' And so, we hear Senator McCain speaking not of spending and giving more, but of diminishing the ways in which the federal government encroaches on the lives of individual citizens and American enterprises. Such an approach would include lower taxes for individuals and businesses, increased market competition in healthcare and education, and a respect for and commitment to protecting the rights granted to us by the Constitution, i.e., the right to bear arms, freedom of speech, etc.

See the difference?

I offer these two illustrations not to persuade you that one candidate is better than the other, but to encourage you to use them and this election to do some serious political soul-searching. Don't just look to the issues. Get to the core questions that inform the issues. Ask yourself, do you think the federal government should be large and unconstrained, or do you think the things government should do are few and limited in scope? And, when you answer this question, then ask yourself why you think one way or the other. Is it that you think politicians uniquely have the foresight and wisdom to arrange our affairs and orchestrate our lives better than we can ourselves? Or, do you think that our society runs better when people are left free to choose how to live their own lives, unfettered by the meddling of political elites? What is your rationale?

I hope that these questions help you to identify what it is you believe, and that come November, the result of your efforts will be a confident, informed vote cast at the ballot box. Beyond that, I hope that seeking answers to these questions will be an exciting, rewarding and formative experience.

Good luck.

Sincerely,

Alex Chamesian

Send questions and comments to sbpatriot@gmail.com
The Patriot is a paper of the Enduring Freedom Alliance:
<http://stonybrookpatriot.com/dotnuke>

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Presidential Commentary

Presidential Candidates on the Issues: Barack Obama

By: Gaby Jusino

Note: The stringent objectivity of this article should not be an indication that the author, nor The Patriot newspaper, is supportive of Senator Barack Obama's positions.

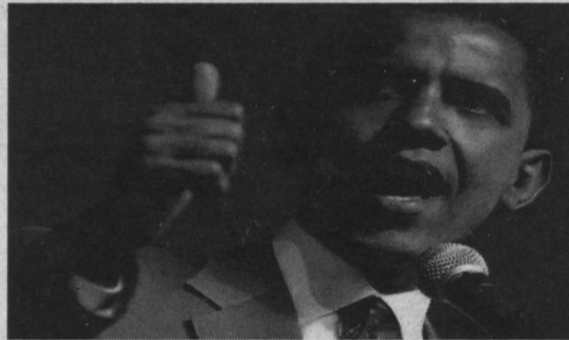
During this year's election campaign, Barack Obama, the junior senator from Illinois, has come from being relatively unknown on the political scene to emerging as our potential next president. A new face in American politics, Obama naturally has more explaining to do concerning his stances than does Senator John McCain, who has been in the Senate for over twenty years; McCain's voting history and positions are thus well-documented. But what about Barack Obama's? Where does Obama stand on the issues that are most important to you? Is Obama against the Iraq war? Has he pioneered tax cuts? Let's take a look at the Democratic presidential candidate who was voted the "most liberal" in the Senate in 2007 and examine his positions on a slew of topics, ranging from economics to foreign policy to gay marriage.

Let's start with abortion. Obama is supportive of the Roe v. Wade decision that granted a "woman's right to choose" abortion. He so staunchly supports abortion that, at a Planned Parenthood Action Fund event last July, he said, "The first thing I'll do as president is sign the Freedom of Choice Act." The Freedom of Choice Act, according to Senator Barbara Boxer, who co-sponsored the bill, "supersedes any law, regulation, or local ordinance that impinges on a woman's right to choose." Obama co-sponsored the Prevention First Act in 2007, which sought to disseminate contraception information and allow wider access to it. He also received a 100-percent rating from the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) for his votes from 2005 to 2007. When asked recently at what point "a baby gets human rights," Obama replied, "Well, I think that whether you're looking at it from a theological perspective or a scientific perspective, answering that question with specificity, you know, is above my pay grade." Obama also voted against a ban on a controversial type of late-term abortion called partial-birth abortion. On a related issue—embryonic stem-cell research—Obama has been continuously supportive. Like others who support the research, Obama cites the potential it has for curing diseases such as cancer and Parkinson's.

Barack Obama sees problems in the civil rights area of American life. He points out that hate crimes increased by 8 percent in 2006. Obama also believes that pay inequities persist for people of different ethnicities and women, that minority votes continue to be suppressed, and that crimes are unequally assigned to blacks and Hispanics. In order to transform this hostile environment into a benevolent diverse setting, Obama believes that affirmative action policies should be put into place. He holds a 100-percent rating from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He has also supported the Equal Pay Act which allows women and minorities to receive equal salaries. Obama strongly supports gay rights as well. He aims to reduce discrimination in the workplace and in life against gays. However, his position on gay marriage is a bit perplexing. He is forthrightly against gay marriage, and he supports civil unions, but he believes that individual states do have the right to decide if gay marriage should be legal. All in all, Obama believes that gay rights advances should come in the form of anti-discrimination laws, not marriage.

Obama holds strong views on the topic of crime. He remains strongly against racial profiling, and, if elected, proposes to ban it at the federal, state, and local levels. Obama also prefers that ex-criminals be "provide[ed] [with] job training, substance abuse and mental health counseling," and then reintegrate them into society after recovery. He believes this method of rehabilitation will lower the recidivism rate among offenders and is more effective than putting them in prison. Barack Obama supports the death penalty for crimes "so heinous, so beyond the pale, that the community is justified in

expressing the full measure of its outrage by meting out the ultimate punishment," but he generally believes that capital punishment does not deter crime. Obama is particularly potent on the issue of drugs inasmuch as he himself dabbled in marijuana and cocaine in high school and college. He cosponsored the Combat Meth Act, which "provides more money for fighting methamphetamine (meth), tightens controls on the sale of meth ingredients, and provides assistance to the children of meth abusers." Obama wishes to employ the use of drug courts for non-violent drug addicts to help them change their behavior. As for alcohol, Obama believes that the drinking age should stay at twenty-one and not be lowered to eighteen. Additionally, Obama is a supporter of gun control, and aims to keep guns out of inner cities especially. He was a board member of the Joyce Foundation, which supported "efforts to bring the firearms industry under comprehensive consumer product health and safety oversight as the most promising long-term strategy for reducing deaths and



injuries from handguns and other firearms." Obama has also proposed laws which would make child-safety locks on guns mandatory, restrict the purchase of weapons and ammunition at gun shows, and create a nationwide database that records bullet imprints. He also supports a permanent reinstitution of the assault weapons ban.

What are Barack Obama's views on economics and taxes like? Well, Obama has a 100-percent rating from Citizens for Tax Justice (CTJ), an organization that supports progressive taxation. Obama has voted against tax cuts on capital gains and dividends (the more money you earn, the less your taxes are). He voted against repealing the estate tax (or "death tax"), against the repealing of the alternative minimum tax, and voted in support of increasing the tax rate for people making over \$1 million a year. Obama contends that cutting these taxes only benefits the wealthiest in the country and states a desire for President George W. Bush's tax cuts to expire so that more attention and money can be given to areas such as health care. Obama claims that he will provide tax relief to working families: in a program called "Making Work Pay," a person will save up to \$500 and a working family will save up to \$1,000. He maintains that this plan will completely eradicate income tax for ten million Americans. Obama also hopes to boost the economy by creating new jobs in the field of alternative fuels and green technologies.

Education is highly important to Barack Obama inasmuch as he has two daughters of his own. He believes that children should get a head-start early on their lives under his "Zero to Five" plan. Yes, children will be schooled under this plan from infancy until they reach kindergarten. Obama hopes that this program will push all states to adopt universal preschool education. Obama would also increase funding by four times what it is now to the Early Head Start and Head Start programs. He will amend and subsequently increase funding to No Child Left Behind and give more money to struggling schools. Obama claims he will improve math and science education by having professionals in those areas serve as teachers. Senator Obama also plans to reduce high school dropout rates and increase after-school activities options. He will reward public school teachers who go above and beyond by increasing their salaries. Although Obama is clearly focused on improving public education, he endorses private

and charter schools as well. As for higher education, Obama states that he will create an American Opportunity Tax Credit which will make "the first \$4,000 of a college education... completely free for most Americans, and will cover two-thirds the cost of tuition at the average public college or university and make community college tuition completely free for most students."

Obama believes that our country's health care system is in a crisis that has left, he says, 47 million Americans uninsured or under insured—including almost nine million children. He notes that the costs of health care are increasing more rapidly than wages and that not enough money is spent on preventing modern plagues such as obesity and other diseases. If elected president, Barack Obama plans to nationalize the health care system in order to make it available to all Americans. He claims that his plan will be simple to enroll in, that it will contain benefits similar to those that members of Congress receive, and that the quality and administration of the health care will be mandatorily reported. Obama's plan would create a National Health Insurance Exchange, which would aid Americans who want to use a private health insurance plan. The Exchange will evaluate these private insurance plans to make certain that their practices are fair and that the health care is just as effective and efficient as the Exchange's is. The plan is highly extensive and will also give young adults twenty-five years old and younger the option of continuing coverage under their parents' plans. Obama has fought to extend children's health coverage: he co-sponsored both the Healthy Kids Act of 2007 and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization Act of 2007.

Barack Obama realizes that there is also a crisis in our immigration system. He says that the number of illegal immigrants in the United States has increased by over forty percent since 2000. Obama supports a guest-worker program that would put illegal immigrants now living in the U.S. on a path to citizenship, a plan otherwise known as "comprehensive immigration reform." He voted for building a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border, but voted against making English the official language of the United States. He also voted for continued federal funding of "sanctuary cities," which harbor illegal immigrants. Obama is against the use of immigration raids and believes that the deportation of the over-12 million illegal immigrants already here would be ineffective. He claims that the solution to ending illegal immigration lies in punishing employers who hire illegal immigrants and increasing the efficiency of technology and surveillance on the border. He agrees that these immigrants should be learning English in order to function in American society. However, he said, "Instead of worrying about whether immigrants can learn English—they'll learn English—you need to make sure your child can speak Spanish. You should be thinking about how can your child become bilingual. We should have every child speaking more than one language." Obama thinks that we should also work with Mexico to improve the economic situation in that country. His rationale is that most illegal immigrants come from Mexico, so if their country's economy were in better shape, they would have less of an incentive to come here illegally. Our relations with Mexico and other Latin American nations also call upon another important issue: trade and specifically, the fate of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Speaking about NAFTA, Barack Obama said, "I don't think it's realistic for us to repeal NAFTA" because repealing it "would actually result in more job loss... than job gains." However, Obama is no supporter of NAFTA. He claimed in February of this year that "one million jobs have been lost because of NAFTA... I don't think NAFTA has been good for America—and I never have." Obama believes that NAFTA should be amended and that it should include strict labor and safety standards. He takes the same position with respect to trade with China: strong safety standards should be put into place to keep us protected from recent Chinese scourges, like lead in children's toys.

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My, How the Narrative Has Changed: A Story of Hypocrisy

By: Conor Harrigan

Over the past few months, the Obama-pologists in the media have given the esteemed, god-like Senator a pass on his lack of executive and foreign policy experience. Senator McCain's pointed arguments about Obama's lack of executive credentials have been labeled as aggressive "attacks." The narrative from the Obama campaign, and their media co-ops has been that although Obama does not have the "experience" McCain does, he has the foresight, wisdom, and intellectual capability that McCain is without.

Enter Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska. On Friday, August 29th, 2008, the McCain campaign announced the senator's choice for a vice presidential running mate. Palin is a lifelong NRA member, a pro-life candidate who, in the era of modern leftist eugenics, gave birth to her baby (not fetus) with Down Syndrome, an environmentalist, pro-drilling, anti-tax, anti-corruption politician from simple roots. The conservative movement immediately went crazy over this beautiful, young, lively woman. It is easy to see why.

In terms of timing and secrecy, it was a bold and effective move by the McCain campaign. The announcement was completely hidden, with no one knowing until the hourly eve of the official announcement. Such a head-fake from the McCain campaign left the Obamanites scrambling for a response, as they were probably expecting a Romney or Pawlenty pick for vice president. In addition to the sweet head fake, the McCain camp sucked the oxygen out of Obama's post-speech at the Greek Pantheon afterglow with its timing of the announcement. Less than twenty-four hours after the Messiah's speech, the McCain campaign came out with their vice presidential pick. This took the media attention off the Invesco field event, and put it squarely on the shoulders of the McCain camp. What an effective move.

And what said the media? Seeing as the media has been loyal in their role as the lapdogs of the left, it was not surprising that immediately after John McCain announced his choice, the "objective journalists" in the mainstream media began their narrative of Governor Palin's inexperience. This narrative is a fallacy. Sarah Palin was elected to her first public office five years before Barack Messiah Obama. Palin was elected to Wasilla City council in 1992. In 1996, Palin knocked an incumbent off of his throne for mayor of Wasilla City, Alaska. Enter 2003, when Palin was appointed to another executive position in the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission. She served until 2004, when she resigned in protest, exposing the corruption of the Republican chairman of the commission. In 2006, Palin was sworn in as governor of Alaska, and in 2007, Palin vetoed three hundred spending bills. Governor Sarah Palin has more executive experience than Barack Obama.

As usual, the facts did not matter to our esteemed "journalists" in the mainstream media. Why bother with those when you can create a narrative of inexperience and ignorance? Immediately after the announcement of McCain's vice-presidential pick, the media began its false narrative. CNN's John Roberts questioned Palin's commitment to Alaska because of her acceptance of McCain's vice presidential invitation. He quizzed: "The fact that she's leaving it behind after

just two years in office, what does that say about her commitment to politics at least on the state level?" However, in 2003, Roberts praised Hillary Clinton's ability to bring name recognition to a possible Hillary ticket in 2004. Even though this possible run would come halfway into Hillary's first senatorial term, Roberts said nothing of her commitment to New York. In a previous broadcast, John Roberts also droned on about Palin's supposed lack of experience, noting that all of her supposed experience does not "add up to broad experience, particularly the type of broad experience that you think should launch you to the national level." The washed up loser also had the nerve to question whether or not Palin would be able to dedicate time to her child with Down syndrome. The day of McCain's invitation to Palin, MSNBC ran a video of the duo at the rally, with a tag line under that read: "How many houses does Palin add to the Republican ticket?" The nerve of these "journalists" is simply astonishing.

The Chicago Sun Times, one of Barack Obama's hometown papers wrote about the "little known governor" of "less than two years." No mention of the "little known senator" of "less than two years" when Obama began his journey. Matthew Lauer of the largely unwatched "Today Show" spoke of the "stalwart conservative" Palin as being a "heartbeat away from the Presidency," asking NBC political director Chuck Todd how people are "going to feel about Sarah Palin in that situation?" What is puzzling is why the media never labels Barack Obama as a "stalwart liberal," or a "staunch liberal" as Lauer did to Palin. The morning after McCain's announcement, Chip Reid of CBS labeled Palin as "reliably conservative," ABC's Kate Snow labeled Palin as "quite conservative," and NBC's Amy Robach tagged her as a "staunch conservative." How the leftist media loves the label game. You do not hear such labels for Obama/Biden '08. CNN's political ticker blog quoted Palin as saying "I tell ya". Have we ever seen Obama or McCain transcribed phonetically? Thus began the hick meme. Jim Cafferty insulted Palin on the same day as the announcement; mocking Palin by stating Alaska has "13 people and some caribou."

Despite the fact Sarah Palin has more executive experience than both Senators Obama and Biden combined, the Obama campaign and it's media lapdogs have been doing their best to create a narrative of a woman who is an inexperienced, backwater hick. This is not to come as an unexpected turn of events. What else are we to anticipate? The media has been, and will be in the tank for Barack Obama. This is abundantly clear. However, the depths of hypocrisy are still surprising. Just when you think they cannot lower their behavior any more, they somehow manage to pull it off. What else is there to say? When organizations such as ABC, NBC, CBS, the New York Times, L.A. Times, Boston Globe, et. al are controlled by moronic, left wing ideologues, the outcome is always the same. The garbage they produce always smells and the "journalists" always stink. Lies become the truth; distortions become reality. These are the things you aren't told in Stony's News Literacy class.

Is John McCain the Next Bob Dole?

By: Aaron Burr

Already we can see the adulation surrounding the so-called "wunderkind" of Barack Obama. However, keep in mind that "wunderkind" translates into English as "wonder child," which precisely defines this Senator's experience: that of a mere child. Unfortunately, many in the media have already started drooling over Mr. Obama, in both a good and bad way. They've started to realize, perhaps a bit late, that maybe he isn't as articulate as they were lead to believe, while he ran against Hillary Clinton, someone definitely on the receiving end of a great deal of sexist language and unfair coverage.

Even this realization hasn't spawned the second, more obvious one: there is another candidate running. His name is John McCain. Any coverage you see of him revolves around the Senator's oldness, some other humorous scene of him in front of Schmidt's Sausage House, or watching cans fall in a supermarket. Thankfully McCain's been game enough to at least understand that his age would be a certain sticking point with some people, going so far as to proclaim his qualification for the Presidency, stating, "I have the oldness" on the season finale of Saturday Night Live (his little poking fun remained the best part of the show, which otherwise was not worth watching).

Some have started commenting on his campaign's faltering; even going far enough to notice the cans in the supermarket behind him say "Dole," as pointed out by the observant Jon Stewart. Is McCain Bob Dole? Does he act as a self-parody by saying his name all the time, by napping during George W. Bush's State of the Union address, by fumbling his words every now and then? The answer should be a resounding "no."

Despite the fact that several news anchors went with Obama to his backpacking tour through the Middle East and Europe, no folly or failures were committed by him. Yet these same journalists have no problem tearing apart McCain for every little thing he does wrong, including flies landing on him, him acting uncomfortable while shaking the Dalai Lama's hand, even him being in a supermarket. We appear to be on repeat. I seem to remember a certain someone having every little thing over-analyzed and ridiculed. Who could that be? Oh yes, it was our current President. Everything, even being unable to find the door, got front-page treatment. I'm not even a huge fan of Mr. Bush, I'm just not that type of Republican. After a while though, even I got annoyed with the "look at our doddering idiot of a President" jokes. The jokes got old, and they aren't funny anymore. It is a sad testament to our media's prowess if they need to recycle this old material for more spin.

Obama doesn't receive this treatment; sure, his speeches are fine and dandy. Off the cusp, though, he starts stuttering. Yet Obama tries to show that he's above the McCain "mud-slinging" tactics, like the negative ads. McCain's ads are there for a reason though; he doesn't have the media championing his cause, doesn't have anyone asking the same questions of him that they do of Obama. No, Obama's attacks are far more subtle: he accuses McCain of being "too cynical." Basically think of a passive aggressive teacher, that same one that told your parents that you "weren't working up to your full potential."

McCain's been around for quite a while so perhaps maybe he's earned the right to be a little cynical. He fought in Vietnam, he was a POW, and for a long time he got ostracized for simply being a different type of Republican. One who disliked pork barrel spending, one who wanted to reform the system, you know, things Republicans are supposed to believe in. So when I hear that Republicans are complaining about him, that he's not conservative enough, I have to ask, why should he be? Hasn't his career been about being a bit different, about being the sort of maverick independents love? Obama can easily say someone else is more cynical than him; he gets a ridiculous amount of adoration with or without some supposed "liberal media bias." There's no way Obama could be cynical about the way things are for him, he defeated Hillary, a strong opponent, and has a large war chest.

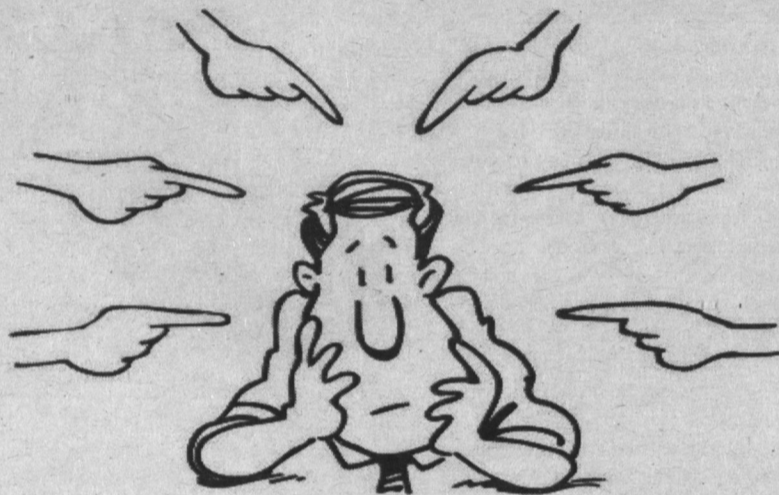


Presidential Scapegoating

By: Gregory Bernardi

In any major election year, it is necessary to gather as much useful information about the relevant candidates as one can obtain. However most, if not all, of this information will later become useless as our opinions of those respective candidates is seemingly predetermined. During campaigns and in the weeks preceding the election, the candidates will make promises and tell us exactly what they plan to do with the country over the ensuing four years. The problem with this approach is that most people know these promises will go largely unfulfilled. Most elected officials in national positions leave office less popular than they were upon entering. It is always curious when people blame the most powerful elected official, the president, for the problems in their own lives. This is textbook scapegoating, and George W. Bush is merely the most recent example of an American president leaving office amid a wave of controversy, despite an otherwise solid presidency.

When reflecting on the term of any president, one is most likely to turn their attention first to that president's biggest and worst screw-up. The lasting legacy of George Bush is sure to be the Iraq War and the misconceptions surrounding it. Think of any president in the last half-century and your first thought is guaranteed to be his biggest mistake. Let's examine this theory president-by-president.



To begin with perhaps the most difficult president to criticize, John F. Kennedy is an interesting case. Most people remember only one November day out of his more than two years in office. But I don't think about that at all. His assassination, as far as I am concerned, has no connection to the quality of his term of office. I think about the Cuban Missile Crisis and two nuclear powder kegs on the brink of all-out nuclear war. And yes, who doesn't think about Marilyn Monroe popping out of a birthday cake? But I fail to remember the fact that we never went to war with the Soviets during those 14 pressure-packed days. It's no accident that no missiles were fired from either side—just good-old diplomacy and foreign relations. Great presidential work helped avoid war. But this memory

is clouded, at least in my head, by a failed invasion in Cuba and a few midnight liaisons in the White House basement. Doesn't sound like a fair shake.

Lyndon Johnson first took office amid the tragedy of JFK's assassination. He inherited a country in shambles, still shaken from the brutal slaying of its savior, and turned it into the Great Society. He brought about benefits for the poor, enacting welfare policies and health care for people in need. Blacks in America experienced arguably their biggest leap forward owing to the civil rights legislation Johnson pushed through Congress, and Executive Order 11426, which established equal employment opportunity for minorities. And yet it remains that President Johnson will forever be remembered for the farce that was the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and the Vietnam War. Anyone who's seen *Forrest Gump* can tell you that Johnson is, "that lyin' son-of-a-bitch." But these are also the same people who fail

to acknowledge the success and legacy of his presidency.

It is hard for the average person to get past Watergate when thinking of Nixon. It was and remains the biggest presidential scandal of all time and led to Nixon's resignation and the imprisonment of several others. But one must recall that Nixon's presidency was very successful, regardless of what people thought of him. The world

witnessed the first moon landing under Nixon. The first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT 1) was signed by Nixon in efforts to reduce the stress of the Cold War. Social Security Income, the EPA, and the Occupational Health and Safety Administration were all established under Nixon. And still Nixon is regarded by the majority of Americans as the worst president in modern history. Notice the trend yet?

The same pattern follows with every president since. In spite of all the good that presidents accomplish during their stays in office, people cannot seem to look past their mistakes. Ford, the unwilling president, was plagued by his pardon of Nixon. Carter had to endure the Iran hostage crisis and a failed attempt to rescue them.

Reagan made his major mistake in Nicaragua and was a lame duck in office until he left. George H.W. Bush created new taxes after he promised he wouldn't. And as for that guy Clinton, Paula, Linda, Monica and an impeachment spelled the end for an otherwise revered presidency.

So why is it that we get hung up on the bad? Why do we fail to acknowledge the successes of each president? While I don't have an answer, I do have a theory. We hold the highest elected official to higher standards. A sort of 'he's the president so he'd better not screw up' mentality. We are so quick to thank the president when things are going well (as in the 90s and the reverence that Bill Clinton received when there was a budget surplus) and so quick to dismiss him when they aren't (like in 2008) that sometimes we don't realize that things aren't his fault.

George Bush's presidency will be forever marred by the Iraq War and by the down-turning economy. But the blame belongs to many others besides just him. Big oil companies set gas prices, and the supply is determined by foreign organizations. While the president can help the situation by suspending the gas tax, as suggested by John McCain, the savings is only approximately 18 cents per gallon. Gas costs will still be exorbitantly high, regardless of the action the president takes.

The economy is seemingly in shambles, people are losing their jobs to the lowest overseas bidder, and the value of the American dollar is lower than it has been in a decade. However many of the problems we are experiencing were problems set up during the presidency of Bill Clinton. Clinton signed into law NAFTA, a free trade agreement that allowed American corporations to find cheaper labor and materials outside American borders. NAFTA caused millions of jobs to be lost in the United States, and millions to be created elsewhere. Meanwhile George Bush shoulders the blame for the job loss when, in reality, it is Clinton's doing.

Regardless of your personal opinions on the Iraq War, you cannot argue with what we have accomplished there. For starters, we deposed a ruthless dictator and liberated millions of people from his brutal rule. We installed a democratic government, oversaw their elections, and helped guide their oil bolstered budget to a near \$80 billion surplus. Every war has its casualties, but progress is never made without bloodshed. Al-Qaeda is losing power and victory in the war is in our sight.

No matter what you think, it is impossible to argue with the progress we have made in the last eight years. America is a much safer place. People no longer leave for work fearing a terrorist catastrophe. You can open envelopes without gloves and a mask, and our borders are safer than ever. So in a few years when you reflect on George Bush's presidency, please try to focus on all the good he did for his country and its citizens.

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The war on terrorism has undoubtedly been the most prominent modern foreign policy issue. At the forefront of the war on terrorism is the Iraq war—a war that Barack Obama is firmly against. He believes that the war in Iraq has put a considerable strain on our military. The United States had initially put its military resources into a war in Afghanistan to fight Osama bin Laden, Obama argues. Now, he says, we have diverted interest from Afghanistan to Iraq and our military is unable to suffer the consequences. Obama also feels that Iraq cannot be solved simply militarily; he believes in implementing a political solution to help Iraq become a sovereign nation. If elected president, Obama would begin a "phased withdrawal" of U.S. troops from Iraq that is estimated to take about sixteen months. A minimally-sized "residual force" would remain in Iraq to combat terrorists. He believes in a robust diplomacy in the region at large. Obama has stated that he would willingly meet with dictators such as Fidel Castro, Kim Jong-Il, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and Hugo Chávez without pre-conditions. On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Obama maintains that he would work with both sides to create both a Jewish state and a Palestinian state coexisting peacefully. Obama hopes to fight poverty in Africa and the continuous conflict in Darfur. He also wishes to toughen up NATO forces by "urging them to invest more in reconstruction and stabilization operations."

Now, what does Obama plan to do about homeland security? He believes that we are no safer now than we were

before 9/11. Continuing with the issue of the war on terrorism, Obama thinks that Guantánamo Bay should be closed down as, he says, its existence has put the writ of habeas corpus at serious risk. He strongly advises that we listen to the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. Obama feels that chemical plants are "attractive terrorist targets because they are often located near cities, are relatively easy to attack, and contain multi-ton quantities of hazardous chemicals." Obama and Senator Frank Lautenberg introduced a bill that would put all chemical plants under strict federal regulations. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, much rethinking on the government's part was done to figure out how to respond to another natural disaster in a safe fashion. Obama claims that he would make certain that populations such as "low-income families, the elderly, the homeless, and disabled Americans" would receive immediate help as they are more susceptible to abandonment than others. Additionally, after natural disasters, Obama would implement "a centralized, federal database to allow individuals displaced by an emergency to call one phone number or go to one website and post their location and condition." He has already passed legislation which would make this system possible. Other aspects of Obama's homeland security plan include improving the safety of drinking water and mandating that nuclear power plants report to public officials if there are radioactive leakages.

Barack Obama believes that the United States has a serious addiction to oil that must be curtailed with the

discovery of new, alternative energy sources. He does not believe that we can "drill our way out of our addiction to oil," but he recently expressed some support for off-shore drilling. "My interest is in making sure we've got the kind of comprehensive energy policy that can bring down gas prices. If, in order to get that passed, we have to compromise in terms of a careful, well thought-out drilling strategy that was carefully circumscribed to avoid significant environmental damage—I don't want to be so rigid that we can't get something done." Obama wants to raise the CAFE standard in order to increase the amount of miles per gallon that every vehicle gets. He came out in support of nuclear power options provided that there are safety regulations put into place. Obama plans to implement a cap-and-trade program to reduce carbon emissions by eighty percent by the year 2050. A reduction in energy consumption, for Obama, would mean less severe consequences from climate change and more respect for the environment. He enthusiastically supports recycling, preserving national parks and forests, eliminating dangerous mercury and lead in communities, and protecting endangered species and animal rights.

Well, there you have it, folks! Go to town! And, if you haven't already, please take the time and examine Senator John McCain's positions on these issues in order to make a completely well-informed decision this November in that voting booth.

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On The Economy

Bad Credit

By: Zachary Kurtz

In times of economic and political crisis, politicians feel that it's the government's job to step in to fix our problems. It's easy to forget about the constitution when the government promises easy solutions to our credit worries. Presidential candidates are promising that only they can fix our economy and vow to 'do more' in fixing these problems. Congress's abysmal approval rating is encouraging them to increase their meddling, thinking that by passing more bills they can foster the appearance of positive action (and secure re-election).

However, we must remind ourselves this election season that the old adage "less is more" is true. Even though fiddling with market economics may ease temporary concerns, in the long term we will be worse off for it. Factors that are making life more expensive, such as the price of oil, are not going to get cheaper by the Federal Reserve lowering interest rates. Restricting speculators may stop future effects of bad credit, but bailing out banks that are issuing bad credit is not going to stop bad credit practices, naturally.

Let's say we're talking about a person who's just lost his job and has some money put in the bank. Now, if this person opens up a line of credit, he can continue his usual lifestyle until he can find a new source of income. This seems like a sound financial plan, except it ignores a property of human behavior, in that we don't plan well for the future. If you have a credit card, chances are this person could get caught up in purchasing unnecessary luxuries which he is not going to be able to pay back if he doesn't find another well-paying job soon.

Similarly, operating the federal budget at a \$10 trillion deficit is a sure way to mess up our economic futures. We simply can't predict what the future state of the economy will be like, especially since the current problems are caused in part by bad

credit practices in the first place.

What Washington politicians are offering is basically more of the same. They want to fix problems caused by bad credit with more bad credit. These giant investment banks which are going under because they thought they could take advantage of people who wouldn't be able to pay their credit card bills are now being saved by Congress and the Federal Reserve. And how does the Fed bail them out? By borrowing and printing money, which causes inflation and devalues the dollar.

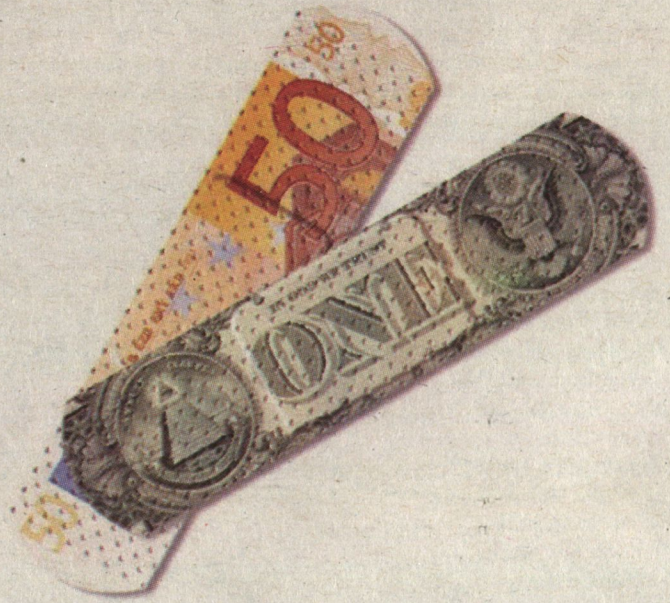
The Fed is opening a line of credit through the American dollar and isn't providing a deadline in which it'll pay us back. Instead, congress is giving the IRS permission to survey every credit card transaction Americans make, and expects the IRS to be able to solve our problems. As far as I'm aware, the IRS has created more problems than it has solved. While I do like new laws that protect consumers from being defrauded by creditors, the problem isn't going to be solved by giving the IRS more power and fingerprinting federal employees (yep, that's in the new "Housing" Bill too).

At some point, we're going to have to realize that more protectionism and spending isn't going to fix problems caused by bad credit. Consumers need to realize that there's no such thing as free credit. Investing in yourself, or in your future, has associated risks. Just like investing in the stock market. If a market fails, or if you can't pay their credit card bills, the government taking care of your investments is only going to create weaker markets, untrustworthy consumers, and a weak economy.

A poor economy will only be fixed in the long term by tightening your belt, cutting out luxuries, saving money, and making safe investment decisions. The beauty of the free market is that while companies may go under from time to time, that will

ultimately strengthen the economy because it is the weak ones that are going under.

A good investor wouldn't buy stock in a company that's about to declare bankruptcy, so why should the government weaken the dollar in order to do the same?



The Economy, The Candidates, and You

By: Jonathan Pu

America has been a nation of military and economic might for nearly a century so it comes as no surprise that both are major topics in this year's Presidential race. While the positions concerning the use of America's military are clear and more or less easy to understand, it seems to be the case that the two candidates' positions on the economy are less easy to grasp.

To start, let's take a look at Senator Obama's basic plan. Like most modern Democrats, Senator Obama believes that higher taxation, especially of the rich and of businesses, will lead to a redistribution of wealth via social programs. Considering our tough economic times, it would be most unwise to increase taxes on those who drive our economy. Big business is, whether you like to believe it or not, the very basis of our striving economy. Higher taxes would cause not the redistribution of wealth as hoped for in the Democrats' plan, but rather the outsourcing of wealth. One must bear in mind the relative ease of moving one's business in today's international economy. Having rough economic conditions to work with is already a difficulty that businesses here must work with, so why would they choose to remain if their host country decides to increase their burden? Taxes might provide the funds to create social programs, such as universal health care, to alleviate problems at first but once our nation's wealth has been outsourced, it's not rocket science to know that the funds for such programs will

have left as well. The problem doesn't end here. Once businesses outsource their operations, jobs will leave as well. Without jobs and without wealth, where can this nation go?

The alternative plan is the one posed by Senator McCain: the continuation of President Bush's tax cuts. President Bush's tax cuts are unpopular amongst many because of the accusations that they provide higher returns for businesses and for the rich. Let us assume that this accusation is false first. If the present tax cuts are putting more money into the pockets of consumers, then the economy will flourish because of the increased flow of money in the economy à la the Keynesian economic model. Now, let us assume that the tax cuts are putting more money into the hands of businesses and the rich. While this might not be a fair system, one must consider the economy as a whole. The trickle-down method gives companies and big investors more capital to work with. Added with financial incentives for companies to remain in the US rather than move abroad, there's no reason why companies would move overseas unless labor was cheap enough to offset the loss incentives and the costs. More domestic capital means more expansion of operations and the opening of new jobs. The question of our national debt might come into question here, but looking back on how our country has handled previous economic recessions and depressions, one would think it futile to

argue the effectiveness of deficit spending. Whether or not tax cuts put money into the hands of producers or the hands of consumers, it is safe to say that tax cuts, not tax increases, will keep more capital within national boundaries.

Despite Senator McCain's claim that he does not understand the economy, it is apparent that his economic policy is better adjusted to cure our ailing economy than Senator Obama's is. To be fair, perhaps Senator Obama's plan is not designed to save the American economy, but rather for some greater scheme. Perhaps its main goal is to create a massive federal government and an all-encompassing social safety net under which all citizens are obliged to participate. At first glance it seems that there are many citizens who agree that a failing economy signals the need to abandon capitalism, the system which has sustained this nation for centuries, and start anew with an entirely new system. Or perhaps the majority of Obama's supporters either don't care enough about the economy or don't seek to understand the repercussions of applying his tax increase policies. Whatever the case may be, the basics of the opposing policies have been explained to you so you cannot feign ignorance. Now we can only wait until November to see whether or not this nation will follow along its natural path or if we, its citizens, will steer it towards, dare I say, socialism.

President of the United States: Commander-in-Chief, But Not Commander of the Economy

By: Publius

By all accounts, the economy has become the central focus of the 2008 Presidential Election. Voters from both sides of the aisle say that the economy is the most important issue they want to see addressed by the incoming president.

With gas prices hovering around \$4.00 and with many Americans facing the frightening reality of losing their homes, it is no surprise that the electorate is clamoring for action. But what exactly

can and should the president do to ease the economic woes that are afflicting our country?

If one looks to the economic platform of Barack Obama, one would think that the POTUS is supposed to double as Santa Claus. And John McCain? Well, we can call him Santa's Helper.

The all-encompassing economic plans proposed by these two candidates are reflective of the ever-increasing scope of the

Presidency. This is not a new trend. In fact, it began over a century ago with progressives such as Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.

Since then, a long line of presidents, both Republican and Democrat, has continued to expand the job description of the president to include nearly everything under the sun. But they are not fully to blame. A growth in the reliance on government to

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Continued from page 6

'fix' the problems that beset our daily lives has been the catalyst for the increase in the scope of the presidency. In other words, the job description has increased in step with the swelling of our expectations. As Gene Healy, author of *The Cult of the Presidency* and scholar at the Cato Institute puts it, "presidential candidates talk as if they're running for a job that's a combination of guardian angel, shaman, and supreme warlord of the earth."

If we look at the Constitution – if anyone cares about that anymore – we see that the roles that the president is to assume are few and limited. For example, Article II, Section 2., says the president commands the armed forces, makes treaties with foreign nations, nominates various officers in the government, and can veto bills that Congress puts to him for approval. That's it. No where in this hallowed document is there anything authorizing a role for the president in the economy. In fact, there is no mention of the economy at all in the entire Constitution.

Congress does, however, have the power to levy taxes and to regulate interstate commerce. The President may suggest legislation to Congress with respect to these domains, but he cannot

take immediate action in commanding the economy. This is the United States, not Soviet Russia or Red China, lest we forget.

Insofar as taxes and interest rates affect economic activity, the federal government can 'do something' about the economy, but this role is far more indirect than most Americans are seeking. Receiving rebate checks in the mail – yes, supported by President Bush – is more the kind of measure people want. And opportune politicians, even the so-called fiscal conservatives, are unwilling to deny the public what it cries for, despite knowing that their gestures to voters will do little to mollify the economic malaise that now beleaguers the country.

What then should the President do to fix our economy? No, what is he permitted to do to the economy? In short, very little. But he can do something.

The President – whoever he may be in 2009 – and Congress should make it as easy as possible for individuals to make use of their own ambition and creative energies by disentangling the federal government from the private sector. In this way, those hammered by the hard times that occur periodically will be able to

rebuild their lives and regain the economic security they enjoyed in the past.

Our country flourishes most when free enterprise is not impeded by cumbersome restrictions and heavy taxes. Therefore, the executive and the legislature (executive and legislative branches?) should act within the capacity granted to them by the Constitution to allow the private sector to recoup. Such measures would take form as a decrease in tax rates for individuals and corporations and as a diminution of onerous laws that impede business, such as Sarbanes-Oxley. More money in private hands will do far more good for the majority of struggling Americans than in the coffers of Washington bureaucrats.

In summary, if we want the President to do anything about the economy, we should be asking him to get himself and the federal government out of the way of free enterprise, not stand in the way of it.

Life, Liberty, and Property

By: Jonathan Pu

In today's day and age, we often hear about all the infringements on human rights, whether it be torture or the difference in rights between the races and genders. However, while liberals are willing to go any length to advance human rights, they are quick to attack and undermine a right that is clearly just as, if not more, paramount: the right to property. In the original draft of the Declaration of Independence, the right to property is cited after the right to life and liberty rather than "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" as seen in the final version. How much of a stretch is it for me to make this claim that property rights are just as important to liberty as human rights?

Civil rights are undoubtedly essential to political freedom, but property rights are often seen as a method to promote economic rights. This is a faulty argument. Property rights are also needed to secure political power for a population. The right to property simply states that the government cannot enact restrictions on your access to your own property. If a population is forced to submit to its government should it decide to seize property without consent, the people are not free. Simply having the security of the government not interfering with your property rights already gives a population a huge amount of power and political freedom. Without property rights, it doesn't matter how equal you are to another race or the other gender. If a government can seize your home, you're already being oppressed whether the seizure occurs or not.

Examples of infringements on property rights occur every day in our country. It may not seem it, but examples such as taxes taken for social programs are clearly cutting into our freedom to our own property. While it may not seem like much, when the government takes money from you to fund Medicaid and Social Security, it is actually depriving you of your hard-earned money and spending it in a way that you have not approved of. I am not going to directly assault social programs here (not yet at least), but it is not the right of the government to extract an extra tax upon us to fund social programs. To make a quick point, an income tax is not really an infringement on property rights as much as it is a duty citizens pay in return for the protection of the government. Citizens are required to pay a tax but it should not be a requirement to have to buy into social programs. Instead, as property rights dictate, it should be the sole decision of the individual to use his or her property for these social benefits.

In light of the focus on torture and other infringements on human rights, we often forget the importance of property rights as a fundamental human right. Much like how it is argued that cruel and unusual punishment leaves the populace in fear of its government, the government's ability to strip its citizens of their property is just as much a menace on freedom. Perhaps it is time we stop differentiating between property rights and human rights and begin combining the two. In retrospect, perhaps Jefferson should have kept his first draft after all.

On The Foreign Front If You Love Israel...

By: Sarah Marshall

In June I completed my second trip to Israel. Anybody with a drop of knowledge about politics knows how important Israel is to the US (and for that matter, how important the US is to Israel). Israel is our only reliable ally in the Middle East, and arguments that Saudi Arabia and Egypt are our buddies can be quickly shot down with a review of the last few decades. Suffering from Election '08 fever myself, I asked every Israeli I encountered for their opinions on who should be leading the free world this time next year. The vote was anonymous. Most people couldn't believe I would ASK such a question. A more official poll given by the Washington Times puts the Israeli vote for Senator McCain around 70%.

I'm not going to explain the importance of supporting Israel and voting for someone who supports Israel. From a secular standpoint, a vote for Israel is a vote for the future of America. Without any influence in a region as huge and important as the Middle East, we won't last too much longer. Now let's figure out which candidate would most help to ensure the continuing success of the only democracy in a region otherwise almost completely lacking in freedom.

Senator Obama, a man of clarity and a consistent policy in general, summed up his view just a few weeks ago on a visit to Jordan. "Let me be absolutely clear. Israel is a strong friend of Israel's. It will be a strong friend of Israel's under a McCain... administration. It will be a strong friend of Israel's under an Obama administration. So that policy is not going to change," pledged Senator Obama.

Thank you for clarifying, Senator. Honestly, I can't really find anything showing what Senator Obama really thinks about Israel. In his two and a half years as a Senator, his votes did indicate overall support for Israel. But from reading what he says and plans to do, it's clear his opinion is the exactly equal to... whatever his audience wants to hear. In 2004 he voiced his opinion for the "wall" protecting the Israelis to come down. He has close personal and political ties with George Soros, one of his biggest donors, who says he wants to break America's bonds with Israel and erode political support for Israel. Senator Obama has indicated that he wants to hire some of Carter's foreign policy team for himself in '09. I think we all know what Carter, who recently hugged a Hamas leader, did to the Middle East. To be fair, Senator Obama strongly condemned the meeting with Hamas, which he called a terrorist organization, even though they wholeheartedly endorsed him. Last week while in Israel Senator Obama met with Israeli newspaper Haaretz, which named him "candidate likely to be least supportive of Israel." In this meeting he pledged support for continuing the strong positive relationship between America and Israel. Officially, according to his website, Senator Obama says the same things he said to Haaretz. So, to sum it up, I don't really know what the Democratic nominee for President thinks about Israel, but I don't think he'd do anything too radical either way.

McCain has a clearer stance, one that hasn't changed at all since he began his career working with the house over thirty

years ago. Every statement and vote that he has made has been 100% Pro-Israel. In March on a visit to Israel he said that there was no point in negotiating with Hamas. Last summer he recognized the importance of Israel to America, asking "If we fail in Israel, where will we succeed?" When Senator McCain was asked why he is so concerned about Iran, he answered, "The United States of America has committed itself to never allowing another Holocaust." Senator Joe Lieberman urged supporters of Israel to vote for Senator McCain, saying, "If you love Israel, you'll love McCain." In an effort to be completely fair, I looked all over for something indicating that Senator McCain isn't ideal for Israel, but I couldn't find much. The closest thing I saw was his consideration to have James Baker, White House Chief of Staff for Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush, be a sort of advisor on Israel. Baker, in a conversation with a friend about Israel, reportedly made a disgusting statement about Jews, noting, "They don't vote for us anyway." The only other thing I can find, after sifting through a few hundred articles, is comparisons between Senator McCain and President Bush, saying that the latter is bad for Israel. However, I can't find any logic behind that.

All I ask is that you consider what I've said, or rather, what the candidates have said, before you cast your vote in November. Until elected, we can't be sure what either candidate will do, but, in the words of Senator Obama himself, no matter what, "Israel will be a friend of Israel's."



Save DarFOR Africa

By: Drew Art

When it comes to Africa, the conscience of America seems to be asking one question: "Why have we done nothing to help the situation in Darfur?" Yet at the same time, there seems to be a great deal of ignorance concerning what the "situation" actually is. Slogans such as "Free Darfur" and "Stop Genocide" alert a call to arms, yet fail to truly grasp the heart of the situation. Even more perplexing are the relationships drawn between Darfur, Rwanda, and even Iraq. Many of us have seen or heard the lines "Never again, again" or "Out of Iraq and into Darfur," yet few even realize the complexities in any of these situations. Beyond the belief that Darfur needs to be saved, realistic suggestions as to how to go about saving the region are rare at best. Saving the world requires more than just a blind desire to help people.

So what exactly is this "situation" which has captured the hearts of the American people? The story began early in 2003, when two rebel groups, the Sudanese Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement, began accusing the government of oppressing non-Arabs. These rebel groups, composed mostly of African farmers, began directing assaults at Sudanese army garrisons and police stations. Unable to effectively combat the insurgency and at risk of losing the capitol city of Kartoum, the Sudanese government resorted to arming discontent Arab herders. These herders had been struggling over land with these same African farmers since the 1980s and were quick to form the paramilitary force recognized as the Janjawiid. Finally given power over their rival farmers, the herders quickly seized the upper hand over not only SLA and JEM rebels, but African civilians as well.

In 2004, over 100,000 refugees poured into neighboring Chad bringing Sudan under the United Nations' scrutiny. Finally, following an investigation by the UN Security Council Commission, a report was issued on the state of Sudan. Though the Sudanese government's response was found to be disproportionate, directed on a widespread basis, and the source for numerous crimes against

humanity, it was solely based on the need for an effective counter-insurgency. Put simply, it was found that the government was not committing acts of genocide. Even more surprisingly, both the Sudanese Liberation Army and Justice and Equality Movement were found to be responsible for serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

Despite the obviously complicated nature of the conflict, media organizations have pushed a morally polarized image of Darfur as the genocide of African civilians by Arab militants. In actuality, it is a power struggle between an insurgency and a counter-insurgency, not a one-sided massacre. Civilians are dying on both sides of this war, and in spite of the nomenclature, both adversaries are composed of Black Muslim Africans. The terms African and Arab describe only localized tribal distinctions not major racial discrepancies. United Nations intervention has only served to oversimplify the power struggle occurring in Darfur. Labeling this conflict as genocide has not only detached the numerous atrocities from the war, but strengthened the zeal of rebel groups believing that international intervention is soon to come.

In our own nation, this oversimplification has led to decisive moral justifications for action, which do not exist in true conflict scenarios. The last time such distinctions were drawn, the consequences were dire. This was Rwanda. In a situation very similar to Darfur, two tribes, the Tutsi and the Hutu were involved in their own struggle for power. Following a presidential assassination by Tutsi insurgents, the Hutu controlled government initiated a campaign of "genocide" against rebel Tutsi tribes. U.S. intervention finally materialized with full support of the Tutsi based Rwanda Patriotic Front. The resulting shift in power this support provided, allowed a newly formed Tutsi government to begin its retribution against the Hutu people, driving approximately two million Hutu's from their homes.

Compared to the previously discussed conflicts, the

sectarian issues of Iraq once seemed relatively manageable. Iraq not only had an unpopular leader, but a repressed majority population. Beyond this, the struggle for power in Iraq has already been settled, and Shia forces seemed willing to accept a democratic government. Yet, Iraq struck America's conscience in quite a different way; suddenly the question was, "What are we doing fighting a meaningless war?" Unable and unwilling to view Iraq as the freeing of a suppressed Shia population, the media scrutinized the details of the Iraq war, completely losing the human elements to which it vehemently clung to in both Rwanda and Darfur. As complexities emerged, the distinctions of evil Sunni insurgents and good Coalition forces vanished. Slogans such as "If only Darfur had oil," portrayed the United States as an imperialist force intent on trading lives for monetary gain. It seems that the opponents of the war in Iraq believe that the United States should only be involved in foreign issues outside of its own interests. This makes it appear that humanitarian efforts and self-serving interests are mutually exclusive, when in reality they can be married.

Apparently we have not learned from the past. Sectarian conflicts cannot be solved through international intervention. The only peoples versed enough in African politics to truly grasp the complexities of the issue are the African people. In fact, Sudanese president Al-Bashir has vehemently argued against a UN proposal to send 22,000 troops to Sudan, yet he supports a similar force comprised of African Union soldiers. Such is the disdain for international "aide" abroad.

With this in mind, African peace should be left to African peace-keeping forces. We possess neither the cultural nor the political understanding to improve the situation, and our help is both unwanted and detrimental. If we want the rest of the world to stop thinking of us as ignorant Americans, we can no longer run around like a headless chicken trying to save humanity.

No Blood for Oil

By: Derek Mordente

It has been five years since the beginning of the war in Iraq and I find myself sitting here wondering where all those people vehemently screaming and gasping the phrase "No Blood For Oil" are now. Gas prices are through the roof with no clear sign of coming back down to Earth. In fact, they just keep going up. My only hope was the fact that it is an election year, something which has caused gas prices to drop somewhat in the past. But I'm starting to give up on that too. I guess we sure did go to war for oil.

So I ask, where are all those who were absolutely convinced we were fighting this war for oil now? For months, hell maybe years, I was bombarded with the cries of "No Blood For Oil." I haven't heard anyone use this criticism in a long time. Was it just a fad? Or perhaps it was a chic little saying that fit the bill at the time and has now fallen out of fashion? Maybe it has turned into a "foot in mouth" type of deal. We can only hope.

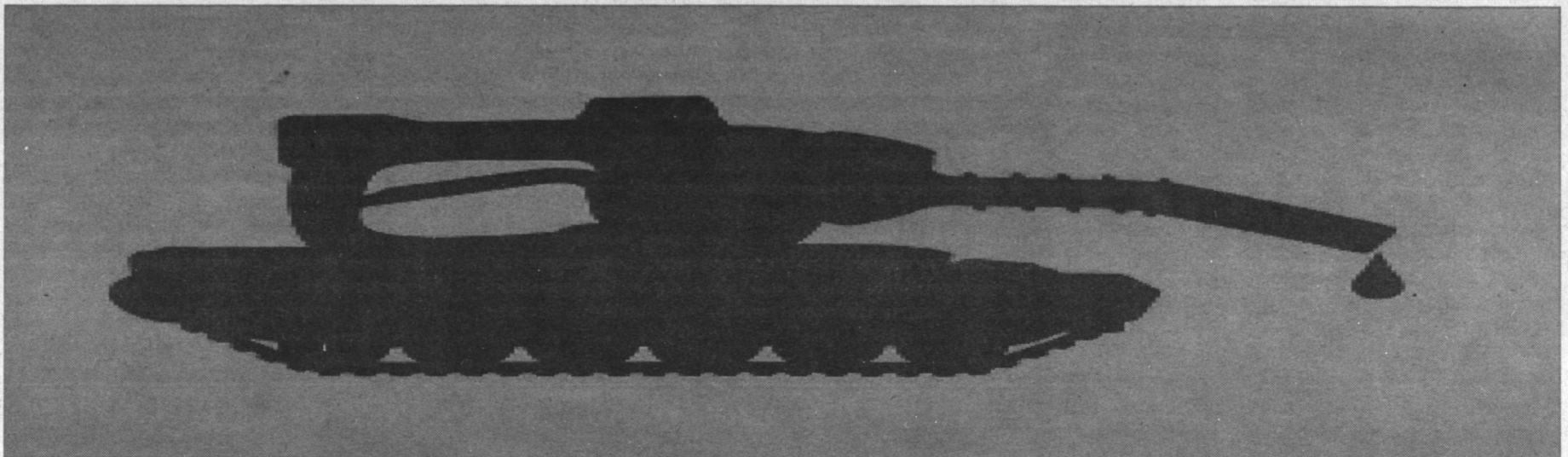
I think it is clear that we did not and are not fighting the war in Iraq over oil, even if the soaring gas prices are our only indication, although they are not. But, for arguments sake, let's just say we did go to war solely for oil. What's so bad about this? First,

mankind has been going to war for resources since its onset. Second, whether we like it or not, oil is the blood running through the veins of America right now. Everything and everyone is dependent on oil in some way, shape, or form. From oil we get gasoline, which fuels our cars, our buses, and our planes. The same people who were crying "No Blood For Oil" would probably tell me right now that we should move away from fossil fuels to more efficient methods. Maybe we should, but we aren't there yet. So for now, we need oil and gasoline. And I'm sure many of those in the "No Blood for Oil" mindset are also opposed to drilling in Alaska for fear of endangering the Caribou and the tree-darter snails. Drilling in Alaska does not necessarily mean swift death to anything and everything that naturally lives there. There are ways to go about this carefully and safely and without endangering any Caribou or disrupting the habitats of any tree-darter snails.

It should also be noted that the prices of everything we consume including food, clothes, appliances, and even toothpicks are dependent on oil as well. I'm going on the assumption here that very little, by that I mean next to nothing, is actually made where it

is sold. Everything in the stores we shop at is shipped or imported from somewhere else in some way, shape, or form. As a firsthand example, I've worked at a grocery store for the past four years and I have seen the price of one gallon of milk skyrocket from roughly \$2.39 to about \$4.89. As a cashier and customer service attendant, I get to hear most of the complaints from the customers. To their dismay, I have to tell them that the price of their milk was going up due to increased oil prices. As the price of oil goes up, the price of gas goes up and thus it costs more for the trucks to drive around and deliver it, which then in turn causes the price of the milk to go up. I have always wondered how many of the people I told this to were one of those clinging to the fact that we were in Iraq for oil.

The criticisms of the war in Iraq are plentiful. On the flip-side, counters to these criticisms are, in my opinion, more plentiful. I'm sure anyone reading this, no matter which side of the political spectrum he or she may fall on, can rattle off most if not all of them. But for now, consider the issue of oil. We'll address the rest for next time.



Domestic Discourse

Windfall Profits Tax: Help for Suffering Families or One Step Closer to Socialism?

By: Christopher Jay Mojica

The Senate Democrats and the Obama Campaign seem to have hit a new low as a possible re-surfacing of the Oil Windfall Profit Tax seems to have erupted back onto the American Political scene. This plan sought to impose a tax on all excess profits that oil companies make that "have nothing to do with their management skill or investment decisions," says the Obama campaign. This tax is included in Obama's intricate economic plan to help struggling American families. One of the major facets of his idea is the use of these new windfall oil taxes to supplement and contribute to his eventual goal of giving one-thousand dollars to all of those struggling families. This is not only an unfair burden on the oil companies, but is also moving one step closer to socialism.

The supporters of this new tax also seem to have forgotten one huge aspect of any industry: risk. Even if the oil profits were not earned by skill, as Senator Obama claimed, there is still risk involved in any company within the oil industry especially. One year they could have many detriments and loss in profit and the next year they could earn it all back and then some. The industry is based upon that aspect of risk. The question is, if the government wishes to tax excess profits then what is the point of them investing time in oil itself? If there is no reward for risks, then what is the purpose of taking them? There would be no corporations nor an oil industry if the government began to eliminate the altitude of their profits. If the extreme of the situation was ever reached all interest in investment would disappear.

The majority of politicians base their platforms off of quick non-efficient solutions all moving towards the current system of public appeasement and a general public acceptance for meritocracy. From McCain's Gas Holidays to Obama's one-thousand dollar gift, almost every politician has a gimmick that takes the focus off of actual problems and moving them towards trivial solutions. America's system is no longer concerned with actually fighting problems in the long run. This tax proposal is just another way for the government to get their hands on more funds to settle the mind of the public in the easiest way possible.



Illegal Immigration and the Rule of Law

By: Alexander Chamessian

We truly are a nation of immigrants. Indeed, people from all around the world have come to the United States in order to build a better life since its very inception. Today, as before, they are drawn by the unmatched prosperity and security we enjoy. More importantly, they come knowing that our society is the society in which they will be most free to pursue their own ends and live in accordance with their own values. Our country is great because we do not turn these people away. Rather, we have welcomed those industrious, disciplined, and ambitious individuals who bring with them skills, knowledge, and labor from which we all benefit, and we will continue to welcome those who want to become a part of our great nation. But if these people wish to avail themselves of our bounty and to participate in our way of life, they must first play by our rules.

What illegal immigrants don't realize, and what we seem to forget, is that our very comfortable and privileged way of life hinges not only on good people but also on good principles of governance. Of these, the rule of law - the idea that no one is above the law - is arguably the most important, and certainly most important to this discussion.

Immigrants who enter this country without proper

documentation and without authorization, no matter how desperate their situation or how worthy their aims, are breaking the law. One may argue that we have bad laws, but the fact remains that these individuals are committing an illegal act at this moment. By turning a blind eye to illegals, we demonstrate that we lack the courage to enforce our own laws, and most damagingly, that we may disregard our laws whenever it is convenient.

This sets a disastrous precedent. If we may make exceptions to immigration laws because we like the outcome they bring, then we can legitimately do the same in other contexts as well. The cherished laws that grant us such rights as the freedom of speech and the right to bear arms are meaningless if we can circumvent them whenever we would like. We may change the laws if we think they are not good or just, but we must still abide by them while they are in place; otherwise, we can have no confidence that when we act in accordance with the law, we will not be punished after the fact.

Granting amnesty to the illegals, as some politicians have proposed, undermines the rule of law and demonstrates that breaking our rules has no consequence. What kind of message will this send to others who want to come to the United States? It tells them that we are not serious about our laws, and that if they disobey them, we'll

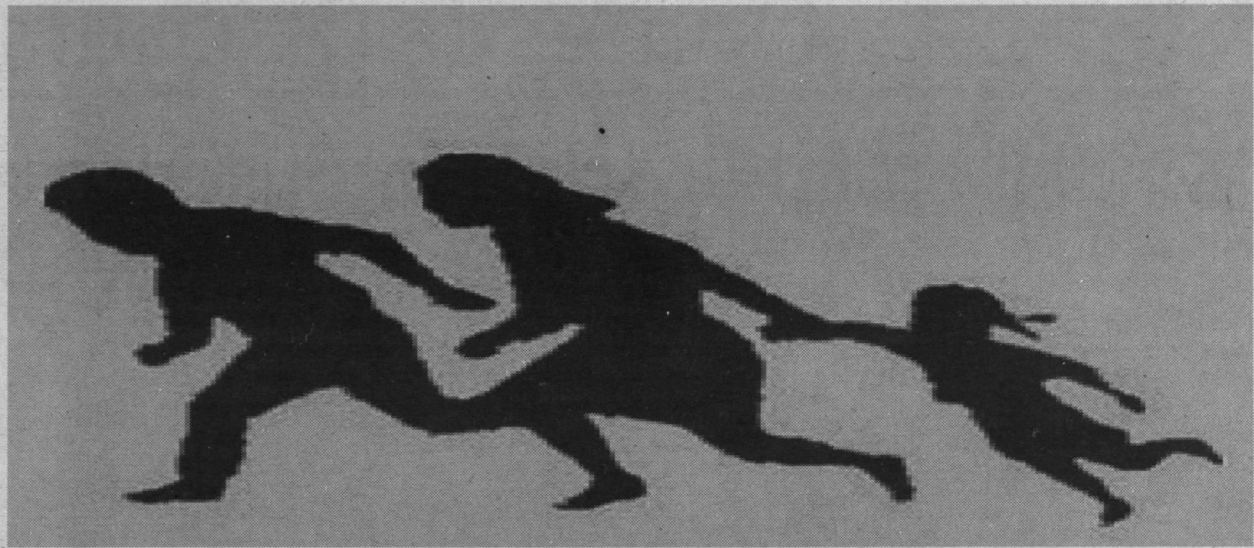
feel sorry and let them slide. Such a move will only embolden others to disobey our laws, and it will most likely attract the kind of people we don't want - those who want to suckle off our success, but have no admiration or respect for the ideas and institutions that have allowed us to achieve that success. Furthermore, granting amnesty to illegals spits in the face of all the millions of people who have been waiting patiently - respecting our laws - to become residents or citizens of the United States.

But, apart from the ills we suffer from our negligence, the immigrants themselves are the ones who stand to suffer most from their own actions. As I said before, our prosperity and happiness follow from the fact that we are a nation of laws and not of men. By breaking our immigration laws, and then demanding that we forgive them, illegal immigrants are subverting and destroying the foundations of the way of life they dream of making their own. A mass pardon would do much to establish the idea that some people are above the law. Illegal immigration, coupled with our unwillingness to stand up to those who flout our laws, will slowly but surely erode our commitment to the rule of law, and then nobody will be able to enjoy our wonderful American life any longer.

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In my mind, whatever solution is offered to deal with illegal immigration must put the upholding of the rule of law as its first priority. Such a solution would necessarily have to punish those who have come illegally in order to show them and all others that actions have consequences, and that obeying the law is as much a part of the American life as the riches and opportunities that lure immigrants to our country in the first place. Punishment at this point should not, and cannot reasonably be deportation, but it must be of sufficient magnitude to reinforce the idea that we take our laws seriously. At the same time, making it easier to immigrate legally to the United States should also be a major part of a comprehensive solution. In this way, we demonstrate how changes are made in a society that is ruled by law: we do not break the rules, but rather we work to make them more just.



Information Super Highway To Turn Into Jersey Turnpike

By: David Fishman

The modern Internet has been humming along since the late 70's, getting faster, larger, and more robust with each passing year. It has become the place to go for everything, and the best part was that on the Internet, everyone was equal. No matter what you were attempting to do, whether e-mailing your grandma or downloading the latest blockbuster off the pirate bay, your information was processed by servers in the order it was received. There were no cuts or special lanes where someone would get their information processed before you because they could pay more. And this is how things were, till the beginning of this decade when corporations and some politicians began to think this should change. A logical person may say, "Why change how the Internet runs, it runs just fine for me." Well sadly some of the politicians in charge of Internet legislation are far from logical let alone know how the Internet works. These politicians are on the United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and sadly, the chair of this committee up until August was Senator Ted Stevens. Ted Stevens viewed the Internet as a series of tubes you see. I can't

do him justice so, "Senator Stevens, you are the head of the committee that makes policies regarding the Internet, what exactly is the Internet?" "I just the other day got, an Internet was sent by my staff at 10 o'clock in the morning on Friday and I just got it yesterday. Why? Because it got tangled up with all these things going on the Internet commercially....They want to deliver vast amounts of information over the Internet. And again, the Internet is not something you just dump something on. It's not a truck. It's a series of tubes. And if you don't understand those tubes can be filled and if they are filled, when you put your message in, it gets in line and its going to be delayed by anyone that puts into that tube enormous amounts of material, enormous amounts of material." And there is the problem, these old people in Washington have no clue what the Internet is or how it actually works. The telecoms such as Comcast are betting on this, using lobbyists to spread ideas such as one day the Internet is going to be one giant traffic jam unless they are allowed to take action. While a logical action would be to increase the infrastructure to support future higher loads, this

is not what the telecoms have in mind. Their solution is to throttle traffic (artificially slow down) of certain types unless you and the company you get your data from pay for the privilege to go at the speed everyone else is. Basically the Internet will become New Jersey. Your Internet traffic, like real traffic, can get from one part of the state to another, but if you want to make any semblance of good time, you are going to have to drive on and pay to use a toll road. If we lose net neutrality this could be a real threat toward the freedom of speech we enjoy on the Internet. Hypothetically, large corporations such as News Corp and Vivendi universal could pay ISP to go ahead of everyone's traffic. Since these companies put out constant streams of data, your data that you are trying to retrieve from, say the consumerist, could take a much longer time to load or eventually time out, thus requiring you to re-connect to the server or making it appear that the website had crashed. Of course this is the worst case scenario, a day when only major corporations will be accessible, but it is a possibility. Then what happens to the independent voice? It gets buried in the noise. The first steps towards

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this control of the Internet have already been taken by companies, such as Comcast, who has tried in secret to slow down and/or block traffic related to file sharing clients such as LimeWire or BitTorrent. For now, the government and the law is on our side. On August 20th, the Federal Communications Commission ordered that Comcast has 30 days to disclose the details of its 'unreasonable network management practices.' FCC Chair Kevin Martin stated that in the FCC's decision, the Commission's Order rejects the ISP giant's insistence that its handling of peer-to-peer applications was necessary. 'We conclude that the company's discriminatory and arbitrary practice unduly squelches the dynamic benefits of an open and accessible Internet,' the agency declares." For once the FCC is on our side, but for how long this will last is anyone's guess.



Closer to Home

A Conservative Freshman's Survival Guide to Stony Brook

By: Conor Harrigan

Welcome to Stony Brook University. You are about to embark on a long journey through collegiate education. Many of you are extremely intelligent and promising. Some of you are not. If you work hard, manage your time correctly, and make the correct decisions on the lines between work and play, chances are you will be a successful student, and become a positive contribution to our country. Some of you won't, simply because you'll smoke too much marijuana. However, aside from time management and partying, there is another large and important obstacle that you must deal with. This is the extreme, pervasive liberalism that permeates through every pore of this beautiful campus. Welcome to a fortified bastion of leftist thought, new students.

As a senior, I have seen the ideology that runs deep in the very fibers of this institution. I have had to endure the constant commentary of leftist professors, who day in and day out condemn conservatives, Republicans, and anyone who believes differently than they, and the other Marxist faculty, do. I have listened to Professor Harvey in his Sexuality and Literature class bash the Bush administration, demean the war effort, and ridicule conservatives for an entire lecture. I have endured the drivel of Gary, a graduate T.A. for Sociology and Technology led by Professor Jane Ely, demean President Bush for "not believing global warming," that missiles are phallic shaped to fulfill the machismo of men in government and the military, and that fighting Islamic terrorists is the equivalent of "fighting fire with fire." I have read the assignments about the evils of the religious right, the conservative movement, and the greatness of the "progressive" movement. The stories from my co-eds about the ridicule they and other conservative students have endured from their professors when they have dared to speak out against their professors' garbage remain in my mind.

You want to talk torture? Have fun listening to a bunch of self-aggrandizing, self-important "journalists" in Journalism 101 blatantly lie through their teeth to students, telling them that they are "watchdogs of the government," "independent," "objective," and that their job is to bring the "truth" to the American people, while their former newspapers and networks operate fully submerged in Barack Obamamania. What a bunch of unadulterated crap. You know those "I'd rather be" bumper stickers? When it comes to JRN 101, I'd rather be waterboarding.

At the same time, thankfully, there are wonderful professors such as Professor Norpoth and Professor Myers, two brilliant men in the political science department. To this day, I am unsure of their political views. This is an indication of the quality of their instruction. They keep their own political views out of the classroom. The only things being discussed are class material and the opinions of individual students. This, my friends, is proper teaching. What was mentioned in the previous paragraph is indoctrination. Unfortunately, professors like Mr. Norpoth and Mr. Myers are few and far between at Stony Brook. Unfortunately, too many professors at this university do not understand the distinction between indoctrination and teaching. Or perhaps, they simply do not care for the distinctions

at all.

How do you survive being constantly surrounded by morons? Hard to say, but here are a few strategies and things to remember during your time at this otherwise awesome place:

1. Location, location, location: Sometimes, when the liberals gird about you, it is hard to keep your wits about you. You might feel as if you are so alone, as if there is nowhere you could go to meet anyone of ideological kin. Let not your heart be troubled, though. Try to remember you are in one of the most liberal states in the country, in



a state university system, and simply put, you are in college! Where do you think the Marxists swarmed to during the Cold War? Academia and Hollywood! Understand your circumstances in a geographical context.

2. Surround yourselves with the "right" folks: Join the College Republicans. Hell, join the Patriot! Use Facebook! Find conservatives! Surround yourselves with people who are like-minded. This is not to say you must remain in completely homogeneous groups. There is nothing wrong with having liberal friends (to most people, not me), but you also need an outlet for your daily frustration. Maintain a balance. Meet people of all political stripes, but maintain your home base.

3. Speak up in class: Be the adult you are. If you have a liberal professor or student spawning B.S. from their forked tongues, call them out! Let them know how wrong their ideas are, and explain why. The only reason these people blabber constantly is because they are never challenged. They are in a comfortable place. We are not. You must speak up and challenge the mental depravity in your lectures.

4. E&E: Escape and Evasion. This is a military term for those trapped behind enemy lines. Picture yourselves in that sort of scenario. There are certain people to be avoided. Please, for the sake of everything anti-bacterial and cleanly, avoid the Social Justice

Alliance and their associates. Many of them have extremely dirty, greasy hair, and unwashed clothes, so it is unknown what kinds of creepy crawlers live on those scalps and breed in those fabrics. If not for simple sanitary reasons, avoid them for their rabid leftist activism and aggression. They are an incredibly angry bunch. I know from experience. There is no use arguing with them. You will only end up angry and frustrated because of their communist impulses and the depth of their ignorance. Do not engage their vitriol. Doing so will cause you stress, and stress will cause wrinkles and, in time, cardiac arrest.

5. Don't get angry: I'll be frank; I hate the far left. They nauseate me. Their aggression and violence at their protests makes my blood boil and causes my BPM to rise quite a bit. Don't be like me. Do not get angry. Instead, have an airtight argument, so you can make your opponents look like fools. Let them get angry. Stay cool. Come out on top.

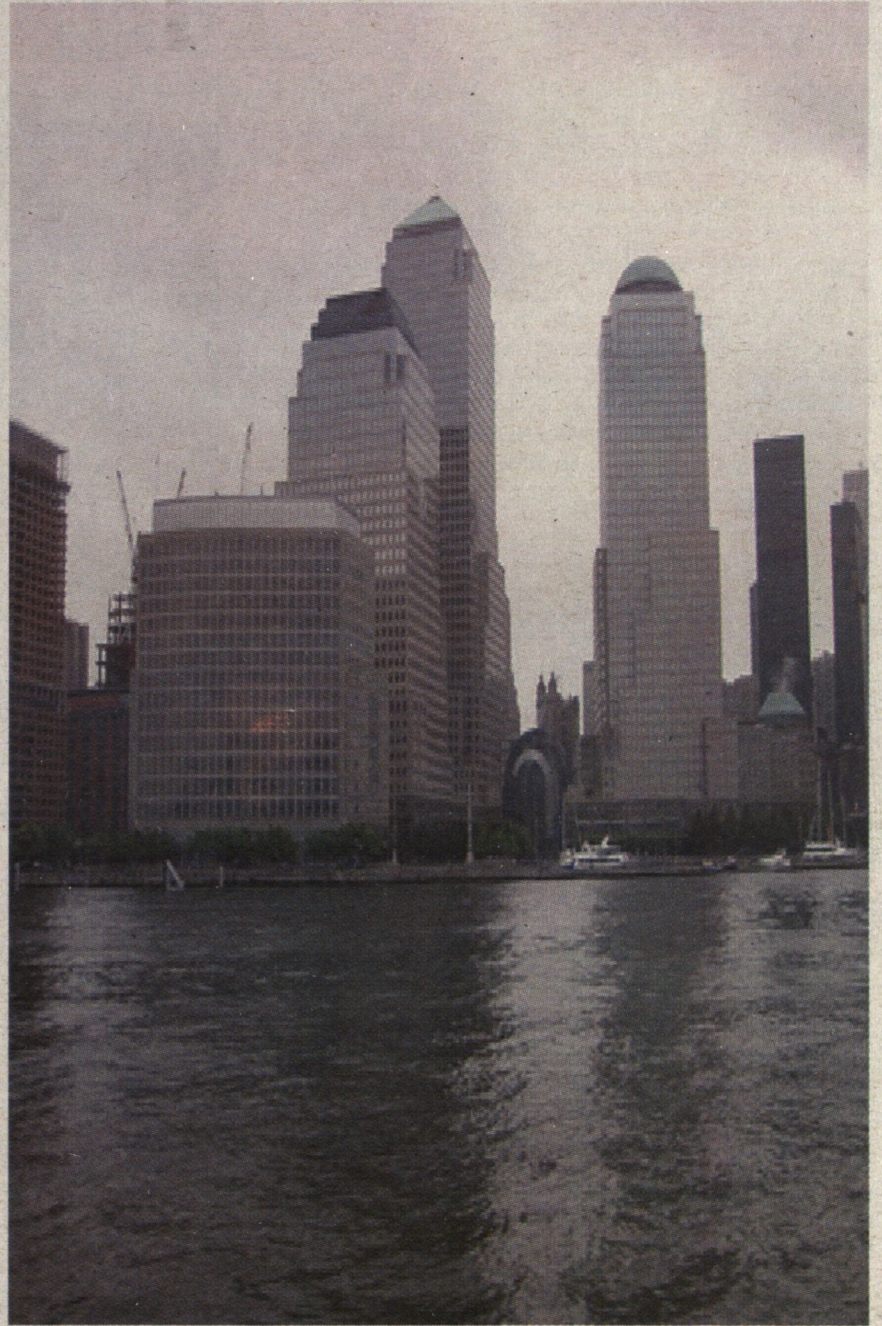
6. Have fun with it: Treason is a serious thing, and the left is guilty of it. Although it is hard not to explode with rage when watching leftists denigrate our military members in Iraq, and sticking up for savage murderers at Guantanamo Bay, try not to take them seriously. Although they consistently declare their "solidarity" with various Islamic militias, you have to simply pity them. Have fun with it. Laugh at their stupidity. Remember that they are morons and you are not.

These aren't rules, more of "guidelines" (Pirates Of The Caribbean, people). Follow them as faithfully as you can, and you will be successful. The lefties are going to try to persuade you. They will throw around words like tolerance, dialogue, community, discussion, awareness, and all of the other double-speak code for Marxist thought. In the next four years, you will see aggression, depravity, and the insanity that is liberalism. Fold this away in your purse or wallet, and pull it out if you ever need a boost.

Good luck, and Godspeed. We are fighting for the very life of our nation. While the leftists pretend to produce "ideas," "hope," and "change," we must produce true solutions. Stand strong and never back down. With the war against Islamic terrorism raging, problems with the Russians rising, and the onslaught of social entitlement chaos to come, it is time for us to solidify, coalesce, and defeat the enemies of freedom of speech, freedom of choice, and freedom itself.

Even though many of us at the Patriot will be graduating this year, we will be with you in spirit. You will walk the same halls, sit in the same seats, feel the same cold, see the same sunsets, and laugh in the same cafeterias. This is our connection. Although we do not know you, we do. We know your fears for your country, your frustration, and your fight. Don't ever give in.

You are not alone.



We Will Never Forget!