

Presidential Election 2008 Edition

The Patriot

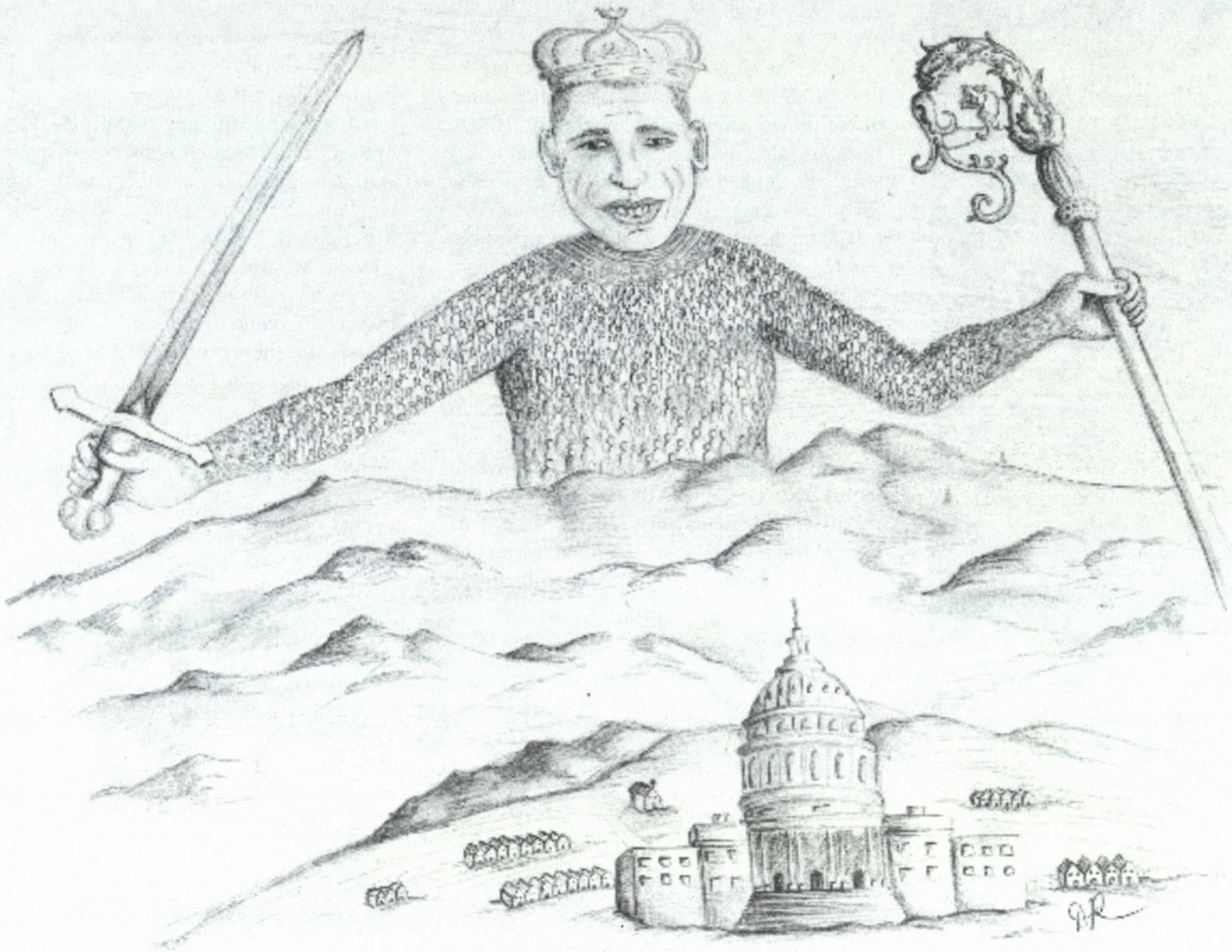
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November 2008

The Lurking Leviathan

Barack Obama And The Rise Of Omnipotent Government



*Paying the Bailout Bill • The Grand Old Party - No longer the Old Boys Club • Why I'm a Liberal
Robert Spencer Comes to Stony Brook • Liberal Bias in the Classroom • Barack Obama and his Radical
Friends • McCain v. Obama • Lights, Camera, Iraq • Patriot Poll: Do Love and Politics Collide?
The Youth Vote: An Historical Perspective • And Much More*

THIS ISSUE

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On Robert Spencer

Last week The Patriot welcomed Robert Spencer to Stony Brook. For those who don't know, Robert Spencer is a scholar, author of eight books on Islam – two of which have been New York Times Bestsellers – and director of Jihad Watch, a program “dedicated to bringing public attention to the role that jihad theology and ideology plays in the modern world, and to correcting popular misconceptions about the role of jihad and religion in modern-day conflicts.” For a much more thorough description of Robert Spencer and his work, I refer you to the article on pages 5 and 6 by Conor Harrigan.

Before and after Mr. Spencer's visit, some have asked why The Patriot invited him to speak with us. He is a 'hate preacher' some say – worse, an Islamophobe, and a Zionist. Why would we wish to give voice to such a person, whose 'extreme' ideas will only promote hostility? they ask.

To these charges, I have the following answers.

First, as anyone who actually came to hear Mr. Spencer speak will know, he is none of the things people have called him. If hate speech – already an essentially meaningless term – be defined as speech that directly calls for an act of aggression on particular individuals, then there is no way that Spencer's statements could be even close to real hate speech. To the charge that he is a Zionist, I will refer you to the recording of his talk on our website, www.thestonybrookpatriot.blogspot.com. Spencer refers to Israel once, I believe. If he is a Zionist, then he is a rather poor one because how could anyone seriously champion a cause without invoking its name enough to let the audience know what he is after? Then we arrive at the charge of Islamophobe. This term too is meaningless if applied to any and all people who make truthful, but unflattering

statements about Islam. This is how that term is used when applied to Spencer and others like him, and this claim should not even be entertained.

I will also address one more charge against Spencer. At campuses across the country, various groups try to stop Spencer from speaking because they say that his words are offensive. In some places they are successful, but thankfully, in most places they are not. This kind of attack against the freedom of speech is very troubling. As Spencer said in his talk, what is the need for the freedom of speech if not to protect those who say things that offend? To the freedom of speech some now append another, imaginary one, the freedom to not be offended. Such folly might fly in some places, but not in the United States. Let's keep it that way.

So then the question arises, what did we hope to achieve by having Spencer come to Stony Brook?

Let me first say that Mr. Spencer's views don't necessarily represent the views of The Patriot. In fact, it may surprise some to know that I was, and still am, doubtful about some of the claims that Spencer makes. Many of our staff can say the same. Others agree strongly with Spencer's views, however. Regardless, Mr. Spencer's while we neither reject nor endorse Mr. Spencer's views, we very much respect his right to voice his opinions, as we respect that same right for everyone else, especially for those with whom we disagree.

With that said, I also want to make it clear that The Patriot has no ax to grind with Islam as a whole, or with any other religion for that matter. I say this emphatically.

But, we – non-Muslims and Muslims alike – must take a stand against are those elements of Radical Islam that seek to bring about the death and destruction of Western society. One

The Patriot

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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*.

Send questions and comments to sbpatriot@gmail.com

The Patriot is a paper of the Enduring Freedom Alliance:
<http://www.ic.sunysb.edu/clubs/efa/>

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the opinions columns are not necessarily the opinions of *The Patriot* or its editorial staff as a whole.

Letters to the Editor

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need not be an expert to recognize that in the past years, there has been increasing aggression and violence from figures who claim to be acting in the name 'jihad' against the West. September 11th comes to mind, although this is far from the only manifestation of this threat. Seeing what we do around us, it is critical that we recognize that Western liberal society (understood in the classical sense) is under siege, and all of us who wish to preserve that society must work to understand and then thwart the dangerous ideology whose goal is to destroy us.

So, what was our aim? Well, in inviting Robert Spencer, we hoped to bring to the fore the imminent threat that I just spoke of. And, we hoped that his knowledge and erudition would contribute to our understanding of the problem we face.

“ what is the need for the freedom of speech if not to protect those who say things that offend?”

We brought Spencer in with the aim that his visit would spur an ongoing discussion between Muslims and non-Muslims about what each stands for and what each hopes to achieve. In fact, I personally had hoped that my Muslim friends, whom I hold in very high regard, would take the opportunity to say publicly what they say to me in private:

that they are really ticked off that fellow Muslims, acting supposedly in the name of Islam in committing acts of violence, are sullyng the good name of the great majority of Muslims who have absolutely no desire to bring harm to anyone. Finally, in the interest of promoting civil, substantive debate within the university setting, we had hoped that those who disagree with Spencer's statements would show up to call him out on whatever fallacies might be found in what he says.

I will finish, by saying that our goal was not at all to 'promote disunity,' as one attendee suggested, or to antagonize the campus community toward Muslims. You know what our aims are because I just outlined them, but I won't be at all surprised if some will try to say otherwise. To them, I say have fun making up stories. For our honest and intelligent readers, I urge you to carry on with the discussion started last Thursday when Robert Spencer came to Stony Brook. And, I also encourage you to join us throughout the rest of the year for the numerous other events we will host that aim similarly at informing our campus community about the problems our great country faces and the solutions available to us.

Sincerely,
Alexander Chamessian
(sometimes known as Alaxander).

Dear Editor,

My name is Kathleen Schultz and I am a USG Senator. I am writing to inform the students of Stony Brook University of a crisis that has been broadcast for months, but no solution presented. As many students know, the impending budget cuts affect all organizations funded by New York State, including the SUNY system.

Basically, we are all getting screwed by the NYS budget cuts. The SUNY system is losing \$148 million this year because of the economic recession, the rising cost of living, etc. How does the budget affect you?

Think about it. If the schools are receiving less money, then more professors are laid off, fewer TAs will get paid. So, fewer classes will be offered, and the student enrollment those that are available will drastically increase (perhaps you already notice it?) "So what," you may say. "I happen to like large classes." Yeah, but do you want to get your BA in four years? Because you might not be able to, what with fewer classes that apply to your major or those that do are closed out.

Research/science-y people! You know your research professors are getting grants and funded by SUNY? Well there is less money available to go to them. The numbers of research positions available to undergrads will decrease. Bye bye, research experience.

Less money is available for technological upgrades. Do you like having high-tech computers and large flat screen TVs and whatever else your school offers? Admire them now, for tomorrow they may not be there. Or upgraded to something better.

There is an answer. There is something you can do as students and NYS taxpayers. I don't even care if you're not a NYS taxpayer.

We have been told that the most effective way as civilians to effect a change is by writing personal letters to the state and dis-

trict legislature. Remember, the local politicians depend on your vote to keep them in office, so they're more likely to pay attention to what you, as responsible, voting taxpayers have to say about their policies. They are supposed to represent YOUR interests, not their own. Politicians receive letters from activist groups all the time, and disregard the mass produced letters. However, if they get something from a student detailing how the budget cut is going to directly affect them, they are more likely to look at it and do something.

This is from President Jeffrey Akita's letter: In order to find out who your representatives are, please go into these websites and follow the instructions.

New York State Assemblymen:

<http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/>

Type in your zip code click on the name of your rep and the contact comes up. New York State Senators:

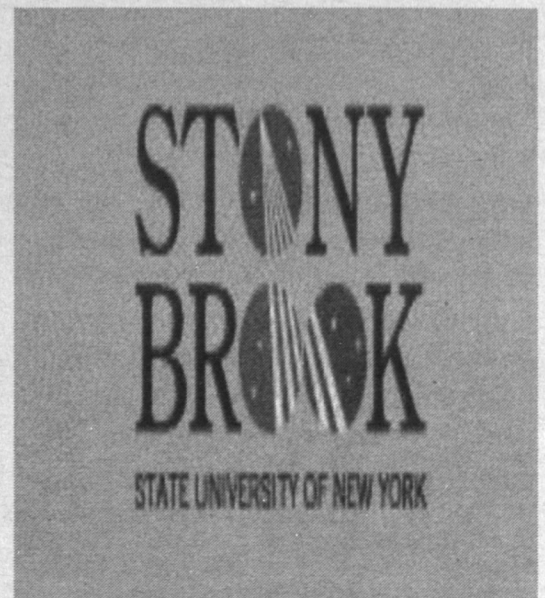
<http://www.senate.state.ny.us/senatehomepage.nsf/senators?OpenForm>

senators?OpenForm

Type in your zip code click on the name of your rep and the contact comes up.

This needs to be done quickly, so I ask all of you to save your tuition, your classes, your SUNY system. This is something you can do. Please do it.

Thank you,
Kathleen Schultz,
USG Senate



Letters to the Editor

Note: This letter is a response to "Immigration and the Rule of Law" from September 2008

Sir,

Let me first say that your final point that it is also the system is flawed is a very true one. However, I would respectfully disagree with the rogue, criminal image of which you give to illegal immigrants. I suspect that you fail to understand the deep inner workings of what is the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and by such you lay most of the blame on illegal immigrants. Let me also say that I try to be as objective as I positively can, that said I will grant a few arguments against illegal immigration such as, they raise crime rates and some of them don't speak the language. The first point, is obviously only somewhat true, not all illegal's are also career criminals, but without a doubt there are always some that ruin the good name. It is undeniable that with the influx of illegal immigrants there is a rise in street gang's because "mareros" or "pandilleros" or in english gang members are part of that influx and bring with them their gang ways. I mention the spanish names because due to the proximity of Latin America with the United States and those would appear to be the most well known with the 18th street gang or the 13th street gangs found both in Los Angeles and New York. Secondly, and strangely enough I actually take issue with the second point. I am a Latin American immigrant who arrived only recently, and I took the time and effort to ensure that my english was at such a level that I could work, study and live here without any problems. Oddly enough this is a double edged sword, immigrants of one culture or nationality often live amongst each other creating this "language bubble" but again, I feel a certain duty to my "host" country to assimilate as well as possible ala JFK "Ask not what your country..."

That being said let us continue to what I believe is the larger problem, the INS (which I believe has now been soaked into the umbrella of government agencies now known as Homeland Security Department) there are several major issues with the INS that spur on illegal immigration, costs, convenience, bureaucracy, uncertainty and mismanagement. The first two can most certainly be put together, cost and convenience. A good majority of immigrants often seek out a better life because their present life just wasn't satisfactory and more often then not these people are in the blue collar working class. However to put it more in perspective the average workers in central America will make anywhere from \$ 60 to \$ 300 a month depending on the country, what their job is exactly and the such.

That said, it needs to be urgently said that simply to apply for a visa can cost as a non-refundable fee \$50 to \$60 (I just read that its been upped to \$141(plus all the things that the consulate office demands such as criminal record (\$5 to X dollars depending on if there are any minor offenses on there), banking records which usually cost about \$10 or \$15 dollars, photocopies of passports, ID cards, buses, taxis, lost pay to missing work etc. The price can get astronomically high taking up at least a months salary. Time is the other issue, usually the consulate office's have 9 to 5 hours sometimes less, but I've never seen more. Those hours mean that the person has to leave work (again often without pay), the children have to leave school etc. Also, the wait alone can be hours until you see someone which often means requiring a day off, furthermore its not a one time thing, a person may come back as few as twice or as many as ten times. All this for a visa that at any part of the process for reasons that do not need to be disclosed can be denied. Mind you I don't mind the fee, after all it's a service and services cost money, it's the fact that its completely non-refundable which is the problem.

I wish that time and costs were the only issues, but a big problem is the bureaucracy. Millions of forms to wade through, some of them translated poorly or simply not user-friendly. Some of the forms are written in lawyer-ese clearly too complex for the average immigrant to understand, hell sometimes I don't even understand it. Also there is a large variety of company names that are dropped, INS, Homeland Security etc, and unending amount of visas; type A, type B, type 12-C etc. It's a maze of papers and people that must be examined and spoken to, sometimes unnecessarily.

I do not claim to be the authority on immigration by any means I simply draw on what I see and read. However, I want it noted that much of this letter draws on personal experience, I have been on both sides of this issue. I have been an immigrant having to jump through those hoops, and I have worked in consulate offices in Ecuador and Honduras as a translator and clerk. I have seen the desperation in their eyes, that one crossing thought that maybe going illegally wasn't so bad if this is the legal method, I have seen the worried look if they're boss was going to be furious and fire them because they wouldn't be able to go back to work that day.

Voltaire said "I may not agree with what you say but I will fight to the death so that you can say it" however I do ask that you speak with experience and knowledge before passing a judgment down and labeling a whole group of people as a "band of rogue outlaws".

-Nicolas E.

Dear Nicolas,

Thank you for taking the time to write your thoughtful letter. Your accounts regarding the issues and circumstances that make immigration to this country so difficult make it clear that you speak from a position of experience and familiarity. With that said, I must point out that you failed to actually address the major contention of my article - that illegal immigration undermines the rule of law. No matter how you spin it, unauthorized immigration to the United States is illegal. That says nothing about whether the laws are good or just. I think both you and I agree that the laws, as they are now, are faulty and need to be dramatically reformed so as to make it less cumbersome to immigrate legally. But that doesn't change the fact that people who enter this country without the proper documentation are committing an illegal act, and through both our and their neglect of the current laws, the idea that laws matter and that no one is above them suffers great damage. And this is most pernicious to all of us, for it is the rule of law that enables the prosperity and happiness we enjoy as Americans.

Nevertheless, your response is instructive. It is a fine demonstration of how one will fail to recognize and address the actual claims of an article if overcome by a feeling of offense. It seems that you were so quick to decide that I argued that "all illegal's are also career criminals," and that I "fail to understand the deep inner workings of what is the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)," that you couldn't even read what I actually wrote. Instead you inferred things that I clearly did not say. You finish by exhorting me to 'speak with experience and knowledge before passing a judgment down and labeling a whole group of people as a "band of rogue outlaws."' If I actually said that a whole group of people were a 'band of rogue outlaws,' you might have a point in asking me to speak more prudently in the future, but I never said this. So, I will finish by again thanking you for the effort and thought you put into your response and for your undeniable concern for the well being of immigrants to this great country. But let me leave you with an exhortation of my own: the next time you read my or anyone else's articles, let not your indignation cloud your sensibility.

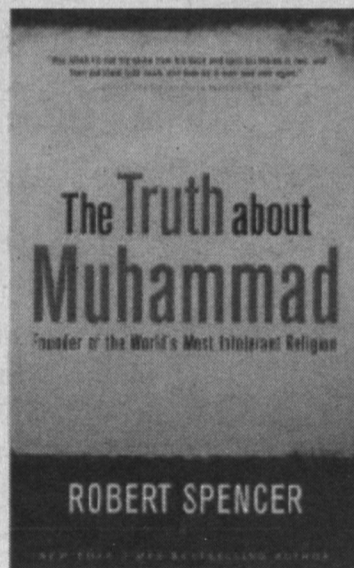
News and Events

Robert Spencer: Evil Zionist Muslim-Eater, or Mild-Mannered Islamic Theologian?

By Conor Harrigan

On September 11th, 2001, the United States had a rude awakening. Within days, “Islam,” “Muslims,” and “Usama” had entered the public lexicon. Americans of every stripe wondered, “How could this have happened?” Many of us seemed absolutely speechless, struggling to conjure up some sort of answer. Despite our inability to internalize and understand the murder we had just seen, the answers had been in front of us for quite a while, with a handful of men and women acting as a clarion call to the dangers of Islamic terrorism. People like Steve Emerson, an investigative journalist, had been sounding the alarm since the 1980s, trying desperately to warn the FBI of the jihadist propaganda filling mosques and convention centers in places across America such as Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. All of this information was systematically suppressed, ignored, or both throughout the 1990s, as all Americans brushed away any encounters with violent Islamic jihadists as a rare occurrence, and as something that would only happen on a small level. Our ignorance was shattered on September 11th, 2001.

Enter Robert Spencer. In our post 9/11-era, Mr. Spencer is America’s leading defense against the pervasive ignorance and utter denial amongst Americans on the subject of Islamic jihad. Labeled as a “Muslim-hater,” an “Islamophobe,” a “xenophobe,” an “agent of the Zionist and Jewish agenda,” and other false descriptions, Robert Spencer in reality is a mild-mannered, cordial man who is a knowledgeable source on Islamic theology.



Who is Robert Spencer?

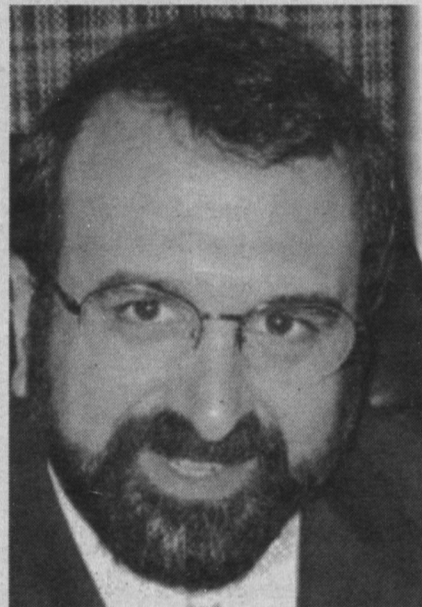
Robert Spencer is a New York Times bestselling author of eight books on Islam and jihad. He is also the director of “Jihad-Watch.com,” a program of the David Horowitz Freedom Center. In addition, Mr. Spencer is a contributor to the conservative publications, Human Events and FrontPage Magazine (a project of David Horowitz). His most famous books are “The Truth About Muhammad,” “Religion of Peace: Why Christianity Is and Islam Isn’t,” and “The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Crusades.” Spencer has a book forthcoming this month, titled “Stealth Jihad: How Radical Islam is Subverting America without Guns or Bombs.” Mr. Spencer has also done consulting work with the U.S. military, the FBI, and Homeland Security on Islamic jihad.

What is Robert Spencer’s message?

Many critics of Spencer tend to spend more time misrepresenting his statements and arguments than they do actually trying to contradict what he says in a factual, logical matter. According to Spencer himself, he relies on the actual words, phrases, and verse contained in Islamic scripture, tradition, and of actual Islamic jihadists. Spencer does not use opinion to formulate his

argument but instead uses actual Qur’anic verses, passages from the Hadith, and the findings of Islam’s major houses of Islamic jurisprudence. The core of Mr. Spencer’s message is that Islam is not a religion of peace, but a religion that promotes intolerance and violence towards

Jews, Christians, and non-Muslims. In addition, Mr. Spencer believes, along with other Muslims he has worked with, that Islam should be reformed, not destroyed. His critics and detractors have been unable to point out any inaccuracies of his scholarship.



Mr. Spencer also believes that the West is doing a large disservice to itself by trying to besmirch Christianity. According to Spencer, the American Left’s own “jihad” against Christianity is distracting us from the real threat of Islamic jihad. In addition,

Spencer believes many of us on the right are just as delusional about Islam and Christianity. Indeed he is correct, as many conservative authors, such as Ralph Peters and Dinesh D’Souza, claim

Christianity to be just as violent as Islamic history and tradition. Peters has gone so far as to say the book of Joshua far outshines any violence in the Qur’an. Are these accusations true?

Spencer argues no. Robert Spencer argues that any violence in the Bible is descriptive, that is, it describes a story of violence, as seen in the narration of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. In contrast, according to him, violence in the Qur’an is descriptive:

“But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practise regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful” (al-Taawba, Sura 9 Aya 5).

These sorts of commands to followers are not seen in the Old or New Testaments. Furthermore, the New Testament is of more importance to Christianity when compared to the Old Testament. The New Testament is the basis of Christianity, and it revolves around the fundamental message that one should love his or her neighbor, treating others as he or she would like to be treated. This is not so in

Islam. As Spencer writes in his book “Religion of Peace,” “Live-and-let-live tolerance appears in a chapter of the Qur’an that was revealed to Muhammad early in his prophetic career.” Bear in mind that the Qur’an is not a chronological document. It is ordered from shortest to longest Surat (chapters). Certain Surat

continued on page 6.

were revealed to Muhammad during his time in Mecca, where he lived in relative peace with others. Ayat (verses) during this time professed that there was “no compulsion in religion” (2:256). These verses are often used by those contradicting Mr. Spencer’s claims of violence and intolerance.

After the Hijrah to Medina, according to Spencer in his book “Religion of Peace,” Muhammad established the “first Islamic political and military entity.” Shortly after the establishment of Islam as a political and military entity, Muhammad began receiving “Qur’anic revelations allowing Muslims to fight under certain circumstances.” According to Robert Spencer, we as readers of the Qur’an can see a gradual shift and genesis from defensive warfare, to all-out offensive warfare against kuffar (unbelievers).

In Chapter 8, al-Anfal, the Spoils of War, verses 12 to 16 contain a declaration that Muslims must fight in defense of Muslim lands:

“Remember thy Lord inspired the angels (with the message): ‘I am with you: give firmness to the Believers: I will instill terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers: smite ye above their necks and smite all their finger-tips off them.’ This is because they contended against Allah and His Messenger: If any contend against Allah and His Messenger, Allah is strict in punishment. Thus (will it be said): ‘Taste ye then of the punishment: for those who resist Allah, is the penalty of the Fire.’ O ye who Believe! When ye meet the Unbelievers in hostile array, never turn your backs to them. If any do turn his back to them on such a day – unless it be in a stratagem of war, or to retreat to a troop – he draws on himself the wrath of Allah, and his abode is Hell, an evil refuge indeed!”

We then see a shift, according to Spencer, from self-defense to fighting until “Allah’s religion prevails”:

“Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors. And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith. But if they cease, Allah is Oft-giving, Most Merciful. And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah; but if the case, let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression (2:190-193).”

In contrast, the New Testament concludes that Jesus’ followers should “turn the other cheek.” This is in complete contrast to the vision of defensive warfare until the establishment of Allah’s religion in the Qur’an. In Chapter 2 verse 194 of the Qur’an, Allah instructs Muslims that, “If then any one transgresses the prohibition against you, transgress ye like-wise against him.” The two attitudes towards revenge and retribution could not be any more different.

Finally, Spencer notes the pivot from self-defense for establishing Allah’s will to an attitude of all-out warfare against non-believers:

“Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever ye find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due, then leave their way free. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful” (9:5).

“Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya [the tax on non-Muslims] with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued”

(9:29).

Here, according to Mr. Spencer, we see the complete transformation and genesis from defensive warfare against the unbelievers, to the defensive warfare against unbelievers and transgressors until the religion of Allah is established, all the way to open-ended warfare against unbelievers until they become Muslims or pay the jizya tax.

How do we explain such a transformation in “foreign policy”? According to Spencer, Muhammad Ibn Ishaq Ibn Yasar, Muhammad’s earliest biographer, Muhammad originally “had not been given permission to fight or allowed to shed blood... He had simply been ordered to call men to God and to endure insult and forgive the ignorant.” According to Ibn Ishaq, Allah revealed piece-by-piece new sources of policy that eventually reached the mandate of open-ended warfare against kuffar (non-believers).

Spencer also notes that all four principal Sunni-Muslim schools agree on the importance of jihad. It is quite clear that there is a call

“ We as Westerners, and more specifically Americans, must stop berating our own Judeo-Christian culture to placate and pacify the climate of political correctness that has bubbled about our great country. “

for jihad inside the Qur’an. It is also equally clear that this is completely different from the axiom of “turning the other cheek” in the New Testament. The two attitudes could not be any more different. These things are all part of Robert Spencer’s message.

According to Spencer, if we are to defeat Islamic jihad around the world, we must acknowledge what we are dealing with. To continually deny any scriptural problems with Islam is to embrace ignorance. We as Westerners, and more specifically Americans, must stop berating our own Judeo-Christian culture to placate and pacify the climate of political correctness that has bubbled about our great country. To lambaste our own Christian foundations only distracts us from the real threat of Islamic jihad.

Robert Spencer closes his book, “Religion of Peace,” with the following words:

“Whether one believes in Christianity or not, it is necessary now for all lovers of authentic freedom to acknowledge their debt to the Judeo-Christian West, to the Judeo-Christian assumptions that built Europe and the United States, and to acknowledge that this great civilization is imperiled and worth defending. On that first step, everything else depends.”

Self-hatred, especially self-hatred based on fallacy and ignorance, will not only hurt us, it might end up destroying us. Despite my agnosticism towards Christianity, I cannot help but wholeheartedly agree with Robert Spencer.

Robert Spencer Comes to Stony Brook

By Aisha Aktar

Director of jihadwatch.org and author of eight books, Robert Spencer, gave a lecture: "Stealth Jihad: What it Means and Why it Matters." His talk reflected a history of the Muslim Brotherhood, and how their activities have extended to bring destruction to the Western world.

Why invite Spencer to speak? "It should have every American of every stripe trying to understand the causes and motivations for the aggression and animosity directed towards us and our allies," said Alexander Chamessian, President of the Enduring Freedom Alliance and Editor-in-chief of The Patriot.

"Robert Spencer offers one compelling analysis of the problem, although he does not offer the only one," said Chamessian.

"It is painfully clear that terrorism poses a grave threat to the west and in particular to the United States with 9-11, the Madrid bombing, and countless other acts that were carried out under the banner for the destruction of the West," said Chamessian.

Spencer has made numerous appearances at campuses all around the nation, stirring much controversy of Islam and its tolerance for the west.

"Its an ongoing puzzle of how any of this is controversial because everything I will tell you tonight, I will give you a source for," said Robert Spencer.

"Mr. Spencer's words may not have been as controversial as it might have seemed, but he sewed the seeds of hatred and paranoia against Muslims across Stony Brook's campus," said sophomore Ibrahim Khwaja.

Some might find what Mr. Spencer says hard to swallow. This is no reason to discount or disregard what he has to say," said Chamessian, "Attempts to silence him under guise of "hate speech" are almost as frightening as the terrorist threat itself to us Americans who so greatly cherish our right to the freedom of speech."

Spencer began his lecture by saying, "Probably everyone that is here tonight is because you are interested in justice and protecting the rights of individuals and particularly individuals who are threatened." He continued to give a history of how the Western rights have been and continue to be attacked.

In 1928, in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood was founded by "Hassan al-Banna because he believed an important element of Islam was not being put into practice by Muslims around the world and he was determined to fix that," said Spencer. This non-existent practice is political Islam, where states needed to follow the sharia, or Islamic law, for political purposes.

Spencer says that the brotherhood formed as a result of the changes in the Turkish government.

Founder of modern secular Turkey, [Mustafa Kemal] Atatürk, wanted to create, in Turkey, after World War I, a state according to western European, western secular government," said Spencer, "In which religion would play a role in society, but the government would not be organized according to religion but would be separate from the government, which was not seen anywhere in the Islamic world."

"He removed secular Islam in Turkey by above all removing the caliphate," said Spencer, "so those like Hassan [al-Banna] and others founded the Muslim brotherhood to bring back political Islam, and called upon all Muslims to encompass Islam as a way of life."

Spencer talked about on the current plans of the brotherhood. He quotes Muhammad Akram, a sheikh of Islamic Sufism, and a writer/interpreter of sharia.

"The Muslim brotherhood must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand plot in eliminating and destroying the western civilization," said Spencer, by quoting Akram.

Spencer said that there were documents uncovered at the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, a charity organization. A trial followed.

"Documents mapping out a general strategy for how the Muslim brotherhood was going to proceed in the United States," said Spencer, "What's interesting about these trials are the larger initiatives that are going on within these organizations and individuals who are active."

Spencer listed organizations that were linked with the Muslim Brotherhood and their cause, one of which being the Muslim Student Associations at campuses across the country. The MSA was founded by the brotherhood in 1963.

I find that regardless of whether you're the director of Jihad Watch and an author of over 300 articles and 8 books on Jihad and Islamic Terrorism, or just a typical student or faculty member attending an event hosted in the Student Union building, the best kind of awareness you can offer to anyone interested in discovering what Muslims are really doing on college campuses is by actually taking the time to attend an event run by Muslims on a college campus- especially at a campus that you're going to lecture at," said Omar Shareef, Vice President of the Muslim Student Association.

"Its interesting that the first outreach event the MSA had was a fast-a-thon, an event uniting Muslims with non-Muslims to experience hunger and help the poor, while this event promotes disunity and paranoia of innocent people," said junior Haseena Sahib.

Islam has laws that cover every aspect of life. "This is the vision of Islamic law, sharia," said Spencer, "Unfortunately contradicts some human rights that have hitherto prevailed. Includes



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Liberal Bias in the Classroom

By Derek Mordente

Going through my undergraduate career predominantly taking classes to fulfill the requirements for a mathematics degree, I didn't really run into politics too much. The second derivative of a linear homogenous differential equation doesn't exactly care about who's running for president or whether conservatism or liberalism is better. However, I did manage to take at least one or two classes a semester over the past three years where politics did come up. I noticed there was always one constant characteristic in every one of these types of classes I took, whether they be English classes, history classes, honors seminars, and so on: I was always the extreme minority as a conservative, and by extreme minority I mean it was either only me or me and no more than two other people out of everyone in the room, professors included. In other words, I have noticed a major liberal bias in the classroom here at Stony Brook, and this is in a predominantly science-oriented school; I can only imagine the groupthink nightmare that must be going on at schools focusing more on liberal arts and humanities.

I once took a class as a freshman where the premise of the class was a discussion/debate of op-ed articles between a mixed group of fellow students and a group of senior citizens. The professor/instructor of the class, or the so called "moderator," barely moderated anything, moving the discussion along or cutting me off every time I challenged hers or someone else's left-wing ideals. The only other conservative voice in the class was one of the senior citizens who couldn't even be there every class. I was once called a fascist and an ***hole for supporting the war in Iraq. The "moderator" let the rest of the group run wild with the idea, but conveniently decided it was time to "move along" as I started to counter everyone.

I recall a different discussion in the same class where I was also in the extreme minority. After parrying the various and quite emotionally tinged arguments made against my position, the "moderator" directed her own sally against me starting with the words: "Let me play 'Devil's Advocate' for a moment..." With virtually the entire class ranged in solid lockstep opinion, she had apparently decided that my single, lone voice in opposition was intolerable and that instead of playing Devil's Advocate challenging the opinions of the majority, she felt compelled to play Devil's Advocate against me. Apparently thinking critically about liberal shibboleths is the one thing you can't do in a Stony Brook "Critical Thinking" class.

Also as a freshman, I sat in on one of my friend's upper-division Sociology classes one day. I forget exactly what they were discussing, but I remember one kid piping up and the professor chuckling, "Oh that's right, you're my token conservative in the class this semester," and the rest of the class giggled along at the put-down of one identified as the intolerable "other," discrediting anything such an "outsider" had said, was saying, or would say in the future. Nice, huh?

In one of my honors seminars, the topic of global warming once came up. I found myself the only one in the class not blaming "impure humans" for tainting Mother Gaia with our carbon footprint. As usual, one of the professors took the side of the rest of the class. The other professor in the class (there were three) was one of the prominent geo-scientists on campus. He sat in silence in the back of the room as the yelling match raged on. I've always wondered to this day why he never offered his

opinion on the matter; did he agree or was he just too frightened to express a politically incorrect opinion?

I then decided to write one of the papers in that class about man-made global warming. The assignment was to show how perceptions of things shift and how the model of the ways in

“Apparently thinking critically about liberal shibboleths is the one thing you can't do in a Stony Brook 'Critical Thinking' class.”

which a given topic is looked at can change as well. In my paper, I discussed in depth how in the 1970s there was a "global cooling" panic. The professor told me this was "totally unrelated" to my paper and my argument, which was that we cannot just accept man-made global warming as absolute fact. I cited the global cooling as an example of how "accepted science" can be wrong. I don't know, you tell me if you think it's unrelated. He also circled other things I wrote which reflected my opinion on the matter (which I'm sure I don't have to ex-

PLICITLY go into detail about) saying they were flat out wrong. Let's just say I had more empirical evidence on my side than his or the rest of my class' side. If you'd like a follow-up on that, please feel free to send me an e-mail. In the end, my contrary opinion resulted in my not getting a very good grade on the paper. However, I think it had more to do with the fact that my position ran counter to the prevailing orthodoxy rather than with being poorly written, being overly off-topic, or poorly constructed.

The bottom line is this: the majority of kids our age are engaging in the most shallow example of *bien pensant* groupthink imaginable, finding comfort in talking and thinking in lockstep with one another. The only things they are critical of are identical to what their teachers oppose. Every time someone offers a different opinion or a counter point or a refutation to their "groupthink," they freak and lash out in anger. Discussion degenerates into inquisition, which can only be satisfied by a confession of guilt and error by the person who dared to think critically. What's more scary scarier, however, is that the professors are usually the ones herding them around, ensuring their minds remain closed and encouraging the reiteration of the same way of thinking. It should be noted that I'm not saying this as a universal truth, but I am saying it's more the norm than the exception. I'm scared to think what the future holds.

Why I'm A Liberal

By Deborah Machalow

Why am I a liberal? I could easily blame my parents for passing their political ideologies onto me. I could say that my religion formulated my ideas about punishment and salvation. I could make the case that by growing up in the Northeast, I was overly exposed to liberal thought and tendencies. I could charge that my childhood crush on President Clinton predisposed me towards the Democratic base. I could do any of these things, but I would rather explain to you why I'm a liberal based on what I consider to be a typical liberal ideology, not on the factors that made me accept these fundamental beliefs.

Former New York Senator Patrick Moynihan said, "The liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself." Basically, the definition of a liberal changed with Franklin Delano Roosevelt's tenure in the White House. From 1933 to the present, a liberal ideology has been synonymous with a large, active federal government, which systematically takes care of its citizens through the use of a welfare state.

As a liberal, I stand by the rallying cry that "healthcare should not be a privilege; it is a fundamental right." This is not only an economic issue, but a moral issue as well. How can we classify America as the greatest nation on Earth when we allow almost sixteen percent of our population to subsist on inadequate or nonexistent healthcare coverage? There are 18,000 unnecessary deaths each year due to a lack of insurance. Healthcare costs take up fourteen percent of our GNP; that is the most of any industrialized nation and we're not even receiving the best coverage. It is immoral and un-American to allow 47 million Americans to lack healthcare. Universal healthcare seems to be the only legitimate answer to this dilemma. Extending Medicare and Medicaid, providing incentives to businesses which offer health insurance, and creating a program that incorporates those otherwise not accounted for would help solve the problem of the populous uninsured. In addition, increasing emphasis on preventative medicine, increasing competition between pharmaceutical/insurance companies, reevaluating our current use of technology, and other like-minded actions would solve the problem of the exorbitant cost of healthcare.

As a liberal, I believe the greening of the American economy is vital to our survival. Energy independence is imperative; this is an economic, environmental, and national security crisis. We need to create a green industry to improve efficiency, reduce the amount of money we ship overseas, and save our planet. We only have one Earth; even if former Vice President Al Gore is overly dramatic, isn't it better safe than sorry? We need to preserve the environment, not only for the wildlife, but for us and our posterity. Dependence on foreign oil is weakening our nation. By importing over 13 billion barrels of oil a day, we not only create a major trade-deficit, but we are pumping money into countries that knowingly harbor terrorists. We weaken our own economy and threaten our collective security. We send money overseas, and it is hard to believe that none of this money finds its way into the hands of terrorists. The change to a greener economy will create millions of green-collar jobs.

As a liberal, I don't believe that the day-to-day actions of individuals should be regulated by the government in Washington. If two people are in love, they should be able to get married, regardless of their genders. At the very least, people involved in a committed relationship should receive the same rights as married couples in the case of hospitalization, death, or adoption. Love

"...liberal ideology has been synonymous with a large, active federal government, which systematically takes care of its citizens through the use of a welfare state."

is love. Moving to the issue of abortion, I'll start by stating that liberals are pro-choice; no one is pro-abortion. That said, the ideal number of abortions is zero, but it is not the federal government's place to tell women what they can and cannot do with their bodies. How can we allow the government to make decisions for individual Americans? That is a major infringement on freedom. Turning to free speech, liberals support the most minimal restrictions possible. Throughout our history, the freedom of speech has been seen as a preferential right; anytime it has been restricted, the nation as a whole has regretted it. It is not up to the government to determine what is appropriate and what is not. As long as what you're saying doesn't put others at risk, then it should be fine. Censorship has no place in a free, democratic society. As a liberal, I also feel it is unnecessary for us to give up the rights provided to us by the Bill of Rights and the Constitution in the name of security. These fundamental rights and liberties must be protected at all costs; otherwise the very principles that this country was founded on will be abandoned and replaced by an omnipresent fear of terrorism, reducing the American government to a totalitarian regime. As a liberal, I don't believe the government should take rights away from its citizens.

As a liberal, or as a caring American, I believe it's time to pull our troops out of this Vietnam-esque conflict, the war in Iraq. We were misled in our reasons for entering into this (undeclared) war, and now that we're there, we're stuck. Too many brave young Americans have lost their lives in a conflict that we had no business getting involved in. It is not in our best interest to continue our occupation, as our military is stretched too thin, and the search for Osama bin Laden hasn't been given adequate attention. We should use our military forces more efficiently.

As a liberal, I support tax cuts for the middle class, and making the rich pay their fair share. The middle class is being squeezed from the top and the bottom – the cost of living has increased, as have their taxes. Trickle-down economics gives money back to those who don't need it, while continuing to squeeze money out of the shrinking middle class. Instead, liberals support a form of Keynesian economics. Keynesianism states that there must be a balance between spending and saving--there must be a correct level of demand, created by government spending--and thus supports an activist government. Considering the economic downturn we're in right now, we need to change our economic strategy drastically before it is too late and we're embroiled in another 1920s-esque depress

The above reasons are why I'm a liberal. The earliest political memory I have is of the 1996 election: my parents let me pull the lever for Bill Clinton, and then stay up until the election results were final. From then on, I knew I was a Democrat. It wasn't until the 2000 presidential election that I really found a legitimate reason to consider myself a liberal – I agreed with Al Gore's proposed policies. As I've learned more about the issues, and followed this election intently, my liberal ideology has been supported, and boosted.

The Foreign Front

Free Trade With Cuba

By Zachary Kurtz

It is odd to think that in an era where the globalization and outsourcing are the norm, the United States, the supposedly capitalist giant, would be participating in the longest trade embargo in modern history. Yet since 1962, US companies and citizens have not been able buy from companies with Cuban interests, a nation only 90 miles off the coast of south Florida.

In 1999 President Clinton authorized the sale of US made goods to Cuba, but further tightened trade restrictions on would-be Cuban imports. Ironically, even though we are a country with a huge trade deficit favoring imports, we are not allowed to import goods from Cuba. The United States, meanwhile, is the 7th largest provider of Cuban imports. This indicates positive trading potential between the two countries.

Historically, Cuba and America have had strong trading ties, throughout the 19th century and especially after Cuban independence and the Spanish-American War. American "imperialist" interests frequently interfered in Cuban politics, which resulted in American companies owning a majority of the sugar and tobacco cash crop production. However, with tourism and trade on the rise, Cuba and its middle class prospered under these conditions, experiencing a surge in GDP. However, corruption and the mafia also found a foothold in the new arrangement, as anyone who has seen *The Godfather II* knows. This contributed to the Cuban revolution, which saw the overthrow of Batista and the rise of Fidel Castro. Under Castro's socialist government, many holdings owned by US companies and citizens were expropriated.

So why, 50 years after these events, and Castro's government apparently starting to unravel, are the embargos still on the books? And why did Clinton reinforce them?

The answer, its sad to say, is politics as usual. As long as Cuban refugees remain a large voting bloc in Florida and as long as Florida remains a swing state, the trade embargo won't be lifted by a politician running for Floridian local, state or even national office.

In 1992, congress passed the "Cuban Democracy Act" and the "Cuban Liberty and Democracy Solidarity Act" in 1996, which codified the trade embargo with the stated goal of bringing democracy to Cuba. This was justified under the guise that Cuba was trafficking in goods stolen from US companies.

However, the result of this doesn't benefit commerce or democracy. Simple logic dictates that the Cuban government isn't going to adopt democratic policies under threat. If nothing else, observing its ineffectiveness for the last 50 years should make it obvious that it's not going to start working any time soon.

Furthermore, it has enabled Castro's government to avoid responsibility by pointing to the embargos as the source of Cuba's economic problems. This only serves as a rallying point around Castro's own government and against our own. We will never be able to spread democracy this way.

This, in turn, has allowed the government to retain protectionism in an economy that would benefit from market liberaliza-

tion. Instead, Cuba has not diversified its exports or investments in foreign currency, ensuring debts to Japan and European countries will not be repaid. This further weakens confidence in the Cuban economy which further hurts trade. The cycle of blaming the embargo continues and democracy is no closer to being adopted.

We can, however, demonstrate to Cubans the power that a capitalism-based economy has when a government ensures the freedom of its citizens. Cuba was once a popular tourist spot and it can be again. If we allow American tourists to vacation there, it will help generate new industry and employment opportunities for Cubans. This, in addition to the trade that will result, could inspire the government to allow for real reform. This type of free trade encourages democratic principles more than legislation that restricts free trade ever could. *Continued on page ()*

Restricting trade impedes humanitarian efforts by ensuring that Cuban citizens don't have access to enough medical supplies or clean drinking water, and doesn't provide much else. Meanwhile, the lack of competition, which US businesses could provide, helps keep prices high in a nation with a large population living below in poverty.

Its time for everyone to forgive old grievances and let the free market naturally do the job that government can't possibly accomplish.

Lights, Camera, Iraq

By Drew Art

"A nation, like a person, has a mind--a mind that must be kept informed and alert, that must know itself, that understands the hopes and needs of its neighbors--all the other nations that live within the narrowing circle of the world." -Franklin D. Roosevelt

The pace of America's withdrawal from Iraq has been startling. Not of its troops, but of its media, its attention and its concern. Eight months ago, according to the PEW Research Center for People & the Press, 54% of Americans could correctly cite the number of U.S. casualties in Iraq, dropping to 28% today. That number is 4,200, yet nobody seems to be counting. A study by the Project

for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage further reveals that events in Iraq, once accounting for 25% of all network news and broadcast print last September, occupied only 3% over that same period in 2008. So what happened?

Both The Los Angeles and New York Times blame new events at home for taking precedence over the situation in Iraq. Since May, election coverage and current economic downturn have dominated the news as Iraq has swiftly faded into the back of our minds. "There is a cold and sad calculation that readers aren't that interested in the war," Bill Keller, executive editor of the New York Times laments, "whether because they are preoccupied with paying \$4 for a gallon of gas and avoiding foreclosure, or because they have Iraq fatigue." However, a recent PEW study suggests that public disinterest is the effect rather than the cause

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of decreased media coverage; the results point to a significant decrease in news coverage of Iraq before public interest began to wane. According to the study, 75% of the public incidentally come across news concerning Iraq, compared with just 20% who say they actively seek it. In addition to these findings, Associated Press consultant Andrew Tyndall, reports

“We must remember to honor both the sacrifices and the successes which our troops continue to make”.

that in the months following General Petraeus’s testimony before Congress in September of 2007, network coverage of Iraq plummeted from an average of thirty minutes to four minutes a week while public interest decreased only slightly.

Offering an alternate explanation, the Washington Post has pointed to major financial strains as the leading cause in the Iraq coverage gap. As readership and advertising revenue have declined, The Post argues, news organizations have been forced to make numerous budget cuts. Regretfully, many of these cuts have targeted operations overseas, where the expenses of maintaining and protecting journalists have become radically high as the number of front page articles have steadily declined. In 2003 alone the Washington Post, New York Times and LA Times printed 858 front page articles, compared to a meager 379 in 2007. The number western Journalists in the region have fallen from 219 in September 2007 to approximately 39 currently.

These budget cuts, however, fail to explain why Iraq, once a media goldmine, has become an economic burden upon its previous chroniclers. Alissa J. Rubin, the New York Times acting bureau chief in Bagdad, admits that the situation in Iraq has become almost static, lacking clear narrative lines and becoming far more complex than ever before. Building on her statements, General G. Perkins, top U.S. military spokesman in Iraq explains, “There are a lot of things going on, a lot of very complicated things going on. And to cover that, you really have to understand the details and the sophistication of it. When you have a big explosion where 20 people die, it doesn’t take much understanding of the intricacies of what’s going on in the country to run out there with a camera and report that 20 people have been killed.” Naturally as Iraq stabilizes and troops are slowly withdrawn, news must evolve to cover deeper relationships and changes within Iraq. “News coverage that once centered largely on the U.S. military experience is shifting,” Ernesto Londoño and Amit R. Paley of the Washington Post Foreign Service write, “Like the country itself, to a story of Iraqis taking the halting, often mundane steps towards building their own government.” The question now is whether or not the American media can shift to capture the nuances of a changing Iraq.

Still, regardless of the media’s challenges, it’s disappointing to find such a jaded attitude towards American involvement abroad. As the Iraqi people begin a new chapter in their history, we forget that this is a tale still being written by over 145,000 American hands and being driven by our ideals. We must remember to honor both the sacrifices and the successes which our troops continue to make.

freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, equality of all rights of people before the law.”

“Freedom of conscience, declared by the UN declaration of human rights in Article 18, a person should be able to change his religion or to have no religion at all,” said Spencer, “Muslim brotherhood wants to put an end to that.”

He only mentions how a specific few Muslims threaten it even though there are many things in today’s world that do the same,” said freshman Hamna Zafar, “Yet if anything, The Patriot Act threatens our rights more than anything, our right to privacy has been greatly limited since it has been passed by the American government; and yet Spencer claims that Islam or Muslims are trying to limit our rights?”

“Do I say that every Muslim is following the same agenda, no, that would be rather stupid.” said Spencer, “Many Muslims don’t have the interest to conquest Europe or the west but the appeal is made to them under the purity of Islam.”

“Mr. Spencer’s thesis really resonated with me, as I feel that extremism in all ways of life (be them religious or not) can be dangerous,” said senior Kevin Ankney, “Unfortunately, it is difficult to not seem hypocritical when condemning extremism while condoning moderation, especially in matters of faith, since everyone is “entitled” to believe what he/she wants. It is a constant balancing act we must play.”

Spencer believes that fundamental rights can be taken away from people, and they will not even know that it is happening. “I think it is an initiative that is being proceeded with stealth, and not by some covert activity,” said Spencer. This brings to Spencer’s point on ‘stealth’ jihad.

“Things are going on in the ways you would not notice,” said Spencer. Spencer gave the example of the cab system that was implemented at the Minneapolis- St. Paul International Airport. At the airport, cabs were color coded for those that would carry passengers with alcohol, and those that would not.

“The idea that the brotherhood is trying to put forward is that the Islamic law and American law are in collision with one another and it’s the American law that has to give way,” said Spencer. This is one of the examples Spencer gave to show stealth jihad is making progress.

Another example of the Swift & Co. meat packing industry in Nebraska and Colorado. During the month of Ramadan, Muslim workers requested to open their fast, at the appropriate time. Therefore, break times were switched and the other workers had to work longer hours to compensate for the alternative break time.

“To offer one group rights the other doesn’t have is to go completely against American rights that were earned by the civil rights movement and I’m going to oppose that,” said Spencer.

“I was impressed by the conviction with which he asserts that the Stealth Jihad movement is making progress within Western civilization,” said Ankney, “However, I would’ve liked to hear a few more tangible examples to illuminate this assertion. At the very least, Mr. Spencer’s fear of this movement has intrigued me to the point where I want to investigate it in more detail.”

In the specific case of taxi drivers trying to follow a detail of their religion that they had previously, and most still, ignore, never, I think, in a million years would this escalate into a larger scale adoption of Sharia law in this country,” said senior Zachary Kurtz, “The economics of the thing simply wouldn’t allow it.”

On The Economy

Paying the Bailout Bill By Jonathan Pu

Some weeks ago, the \$700 billion bailout bill was passed into law and yet we are seeing no end to the current financial crisis. As a matter of fact, we are simply seeing more expansion of federal power in the private financial sectors, including the recent socialization of the banking industry. Why has this bailout bill not worked?

To be fair, the financial crisis might have been controlled to a degree with the passing of the bailout bill. The stocks, despite plunging for a while, have steadied and even rose on some days. But in general, there are some major faults in the bailout bill that seem to go against the logic of how to serve the interests of the American people. To begin, the bailout bill grants 700 billion dollars to the Department of the Treasury to use as it deems fit and without any congressional oversight. Secondly, the 700 billion dollars are taxpayer dollars. Thirdly, the bailout bill was passed only after being put to a second vote after a major set of revisions.

The first of the three issues I cite comes as a major danger to the American political system. As we all should know, whomever has the gold makes the rules and now the federal government has a big bag of gold and no need to report on how it is being spent. Money is power and the method our Constitution lays

out states that the government ensures that no one branch of government has full access to all funds. As a matter of fact, Congress is always supposed to have clear documentation on how the federal government spends its money. Perhaps you may trust the government to be safe with your taxpayer dollars, but I am not so sure that money is being spent in the best interests of the citizens in this bailout package.

This brings me to my second point: taxpayer dollars should not be used to remedy the mistakes of the federal government and the mortgage companies. Now, more than ever, taxpayers need their money in their own hands. The fault of the problem that has arisen lies with the mortgage companies that made too many risk loans and the politicians who either supported the practice or did nothing to stop it. Throwing money at the banks and financial institutions won't help solve their problem. However, with the supply-demand problem in the housing market, it would make far more sense to give money back to the taxpayers so as to return the demand for housing to equilibrium with the supply. This solution would be a win-win situation rather than the win-lose bill that we're currently suffering under.

My third and final point on the bailout package is that it does not even resemble a

bailout package anymore. It seems that the politicians on Capitol Hill still haven't learned their lesson with being irresponsible. The failing of the economy is partially the fault of some politicians, as already discussed. Now, when they have been given the chance to redeem themselves by putting forth a good plan to alleviate this country of its troubles, these politicians can do nothing but think of pork. Granted, the money put forth in earmarks is hardly significant compared to the size and scope of the \$700 billion bulk of the bailout plan, but this emphasis on pork shows how little the politicians really care about the problems we face here on Main Street.

The economic bailout bill doesn't help the citizens. There are many other ways to inject money into the economy, whether it be through tax breaks or through financing a bailout bill with private dollars. It is true that this bailout plan might succeed and the federal government might be able to make good out of its investment, but remember that it's your tax dollars being invested--the very same tax dollars you, and many millions of other Americans, might feel would be best kept in their wallets. After all, we've already got our own bills to pay, never mind having to pay the government's.

Blame Game

By Britany Klenofsky

Every day it seems like another major bank is failing. One morning it's Bear Sterns, and then a few weeks later Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae are taken over by the federal government. Like a domino effect, Lehman Brothers files for Chapter 11. And not too shortly after, our country's economy is fighting for air. AIG is taken over by the government and Merrill Lynch is scooped up by Bank of America.

Why is this happening? Who is to blame?

Nancy Pelosi is quick to jump to the defense of the Democratic Party. The ball gets tossed back and forth as Democrats blame a government run by a Republican executive office. At the same time, Republicans fight back blaming a Democratic House and Senate. Obviously it does not change things if we find someone to blame, but maybe it is important to look at things closer with a critical election right around the corner.

Let's take a look back and explore some things.

Right now, many banks are failing and in desperate need of help: What is causing this? Well, each day many people are leaving their houses. In the past few years, people have been greedy--there is no denying this. Mortgage lenders just looking for business were giving out enticing one-year adjustable rate mortgages with 1% teaser rates. People were now given the keys to \$400,000 houses that they believed they could now afford. Entering their houses with practi-

cally no money down, people saw no changes in their bank accounts the next day. A real estate boom was now created as prices were driven up by this new market of buyers teased by the idea of owning a house that they could never have afforded before.

What happens, though, when these adjustable mortgage rates go to 3%, and then 7%? Watch the news. We are living through what happens. Just as people were quickly given houses they could not afford, these people are now just walking away from their houses. Having received interest-only mortgages and not paying any principle on the house, they own nothing. All these people have is bad credit.

Human nature is about greed That is why we have Congress. Congress is supposed to be responsible for the mortgage lenders who give out unfit mortgages to subprime customers. Without any checks, lenders are obviously going to give out mortgages that give them business, just as much as the happy new homeowners are going to grab at the opportunity to achieve the American dream. Why was no one responsible enough to see what was happening?

But there were responsible people out there. The only problem is their words went unheard as everyone was living the life. In a recent article in Investor's Business Daily, Nancy Pelosi is quoted as saying, "The American people are not protected from the risk-taking and the greed of these financial institutions." However, this

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could not be farther from the truth. While everyone is trying to blame President Bush for this mess, he actually tried to prevent it. Let us trace back some more and we can see a Sept 11, 2003 New York Times headline that foresaw this economy. It said, "The Bush administration today recommended the most significant regulatory overhaul in the housing finance industry since the savings and loan crisis a decade ago." This article states that there was a call for a new government agency to monitor Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The plan was an "acknowledgment by the administration that oversight of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac... is broken." It was concluded that these two companies "manipulated its accounting to mislead investors."

It certainly seems to me like today's problems should have been avoided. Why weren't they? Denial. Democrats in office denied that there was a problem because they believed that every American deserved the American dream of owning a home. Is the American dream really to own a house you cannot afford? Is it an American dream

to see your house taken away and to become a part of the new phenomena known as "jingle mail," which is when you are so desperate to get out that you mail your keys back to the bank? Apparently, President Bush was exaggerating the problem according to the then-Democrat on the Financial Services Committee, Rep. Barney Frank. According to him, the two companies "are not facing any kind of financial crisis."

People today criticize President Bush and fellow Republicans for their economic shortcomings, but Senator McCain also foresaw the future and did not just cry out when the going got tough. According to Investor's Business Daily, he was quoted in 2005 as saying, "If Congress does not act, American taxpayers will continue to be exposed to the enormous risk that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac pose to the housing market, the overall financial system, and the economy as a whole."

These problems were not born in a day. These problems were created over years of economic policies being created

by senators with legal, not economic, backgrounds. It began when Presidents Carter and Clinton felt that everyone should be given houses. The Community Reinvestment Act mandated that banks lend to subprime investors. Despite warnings from Republicans, Clinton added to this mess by handing over \$10,000 to the many families with new homes. In their minds, not only should un-credit-worthy people be given homes that they cannot afford, but these same people should be given taxpayer dollars to supposedly furnish these homes.

We have officially reaped what we sowed and what we sowed was a mess. Now we must cut our losses and deal with the fact that practically every street is filled with "for sale" signs. Just as we raised the prices of houses by creating a new market of buyers, the great hole we have created now drives down every house.

Next time we should all remember one important money fact: only spend what you can afford. It is not a right to own a house or a fancy car; it is a privilege that one works and saves for.

Bailouts Aren't Bright for our Economic Future

Credit Expansion and the Business Cycle

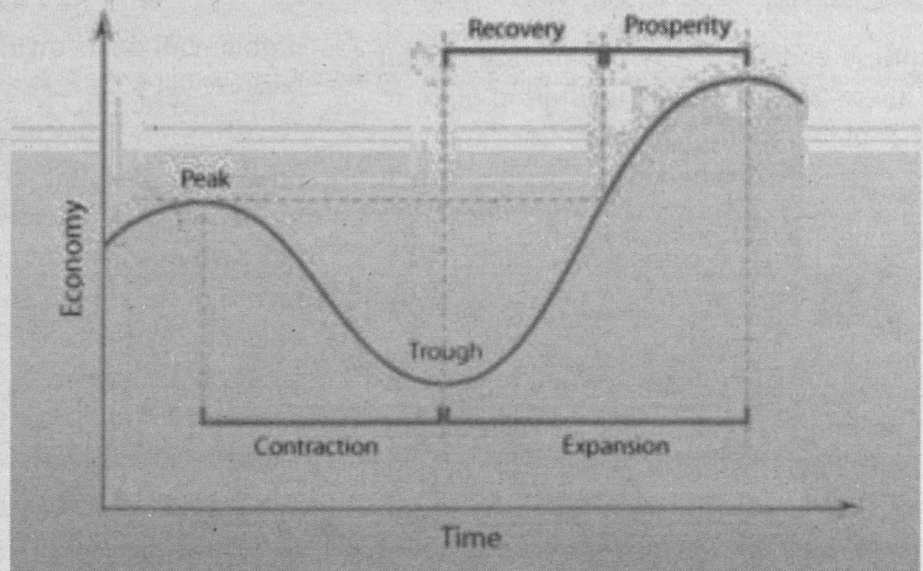
By Zachary Kurtz

With the government rushing like mad to push through "bailout bills" and "economic stimulus packages" its important to consider how these, and all public ventures in general, get paid for. After all, when congress tries to pass a bill, the cost of implementing it must be accounted for. It is a basic principle of the economics of government that whatever project comes out must have had something of equal or greater value coming in to finance it.

There are three primary ways in which government can raise the capital to finance projects; by collecting taxes, printing money or by borrowing money, usually from foreign nations. By and large, the government can claim no unique sources of production and so must take, make or raise new capital from external sources. It is essentially impossible for the government to create anything valuable from scratch and so it is impossible for the government to spend money that does cause a devaluation somewhere else.

So, when the government raises taxes, it makes it citizens poorer. When the government borrows money, it makes our futures poorer, because that money will have to be paid back. When the government prints new bills, new value isn't added to the money supply, so it devalues all the entire currency in a phenomenon known as monetary inflation.

Likewise, government activity cannot create new jobs, because it can only divert credit from other places. If, for example, the Highway department wants to build a new road, they must take capital from some-



The Business Cycle

where else, which will prevent a job from being created elsewhere. Its a process of zero net gain. The best we could hope for is that the government could potentially reallocate resources to a more efficient project and therefore use funds more pro-

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ductively. However, increasing efficiency is not something the government is particularly good at.

In the case of these bailout bills, which congressmen (Barney Frank, et. al) think will save the economy, the Federal Reserve is printing money or using borrowed money to infuse credit into the economy. However, this "credit infusion" is hurting the value of the dollar and is ultimately a

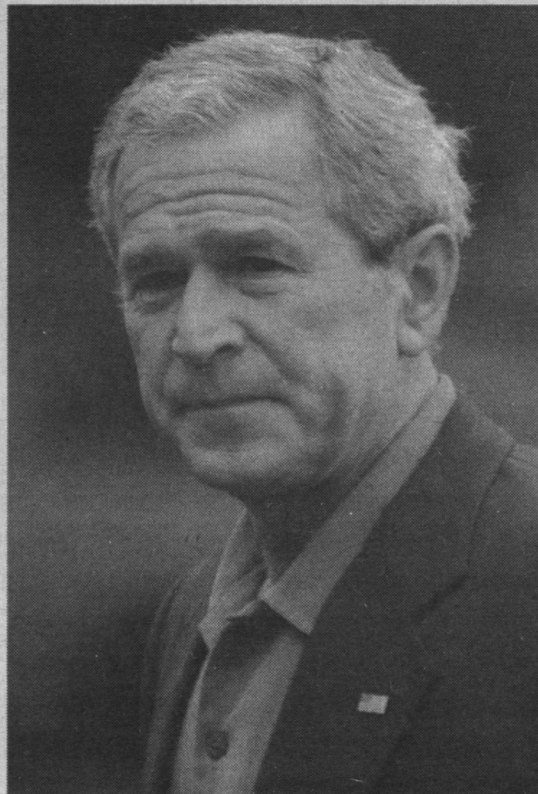
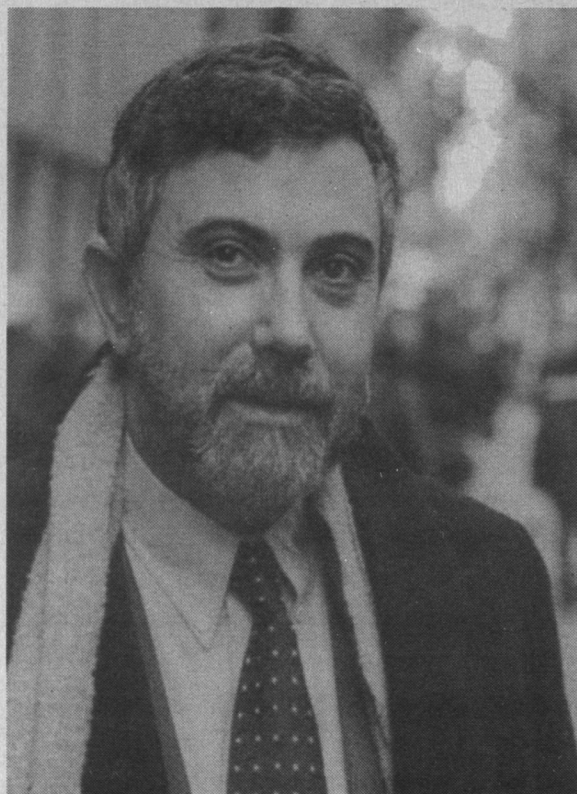
and keep the capital flowing, in addition to supplying capital to banks directly. However, the restructuring of capital in this way is unsustainable. The credit consumption to spur production is only a temporary phenomenon to reduce volatility. The missing piece is that the Feds don't realize how keeping interest rates low cause malinvestment, merely introducing more regulation to control investor behavior (which is a

resources to fund bailouts, but this will come at a cost later on if you don't reduce current consumption. You can't expect new investments to increase production without cutting consumption elsewhere. You can either do this in the safer and traditional way, by reducing initial consumption to reallocate resources (which allows investors to limit investments to what is more likely to work) or you can destabilize the entire economy and steal from our future financial health to prop up failing companies (which may cause busts anyway). Since politicians aren't accustomed to thinking about making sacrificing now, they are more than willing to wait until their out of office to pay this price.

The really bad part, is that in an unpredictable market, we don't know where the eventual, but inevitable, bust is going to happen. The formation of the Housing Bubble can be traced back to the Dot-Com bust, but where will the credit and housing bust go? Perhaps unsustainable energy stocks, which the government is so lovingly subsidizing, but perhaps something entirely different, like a second dot-com bubble (is facebook really worth \$8 mill?).

The really scary part is that our government and economic leaders are clueless. Or, even if they have some idea, they care more about their cushy jobs than the long-term health of the economy. Everyone who is endorsing these bailouts, from George Bush to Paul Krugman (recent winner of the Nobel Prize in economics, no less) don't understand the principle that you can't create something out of nothing. You can restructure capital to finance projects, but this will have to come at a cost of something else. Whether its weakening the dollar and promoting bad investments, taking money directly out of the hands of citizens - thus reducing purchasing power and the capital available investments, or doing both of the these by selling our debt to China.

The only thing we can do to avoid another, and worse, bubble, is to tighten our belts and let entrepreneurs find sustainable projects to invest in, at interest rates which the banks are comfortable lending at. It is probably far too late in the game to adopt this policy now and too few leaders are willing to listen to the Austrian School of Economics. However, perhaps the populace will be better prepared in 5 years for the next bubble to burst, so we can tell our politicians that we're tired of the worsening boom-bust cycles they're creating.



Strange Bedfellows

Economist Paul Krugman (left), recipient of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Economics and President George W. Bush (right) both "don't understand the principle that you can't create something out of nothing."

fruitless endeavor. By channeling capital to these almost failed institutions, we're propping up inefficient businesses and giving them an advantage over the banks that aren't failing, further weakening the ability of strong banks to compete favorably.

We've seen the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) rise in recent weeks. The daily LIBOR is the rate at which banks are willing to lend money to each other - despite being based in London the system is used by many international banks. High rates means that banks are wary about where they send their money. They don't want to lend to a bank that might not exist three months from now, so they expect a higher interest rate to recoup potential losses.

For the Fed, this isn't good enough, because the US Federal Funds rate keep getting slashed, despite the necessary low confidence. Bernanke and the world's central banks idea is that by keeping interest rates low, banks can borrow money easily

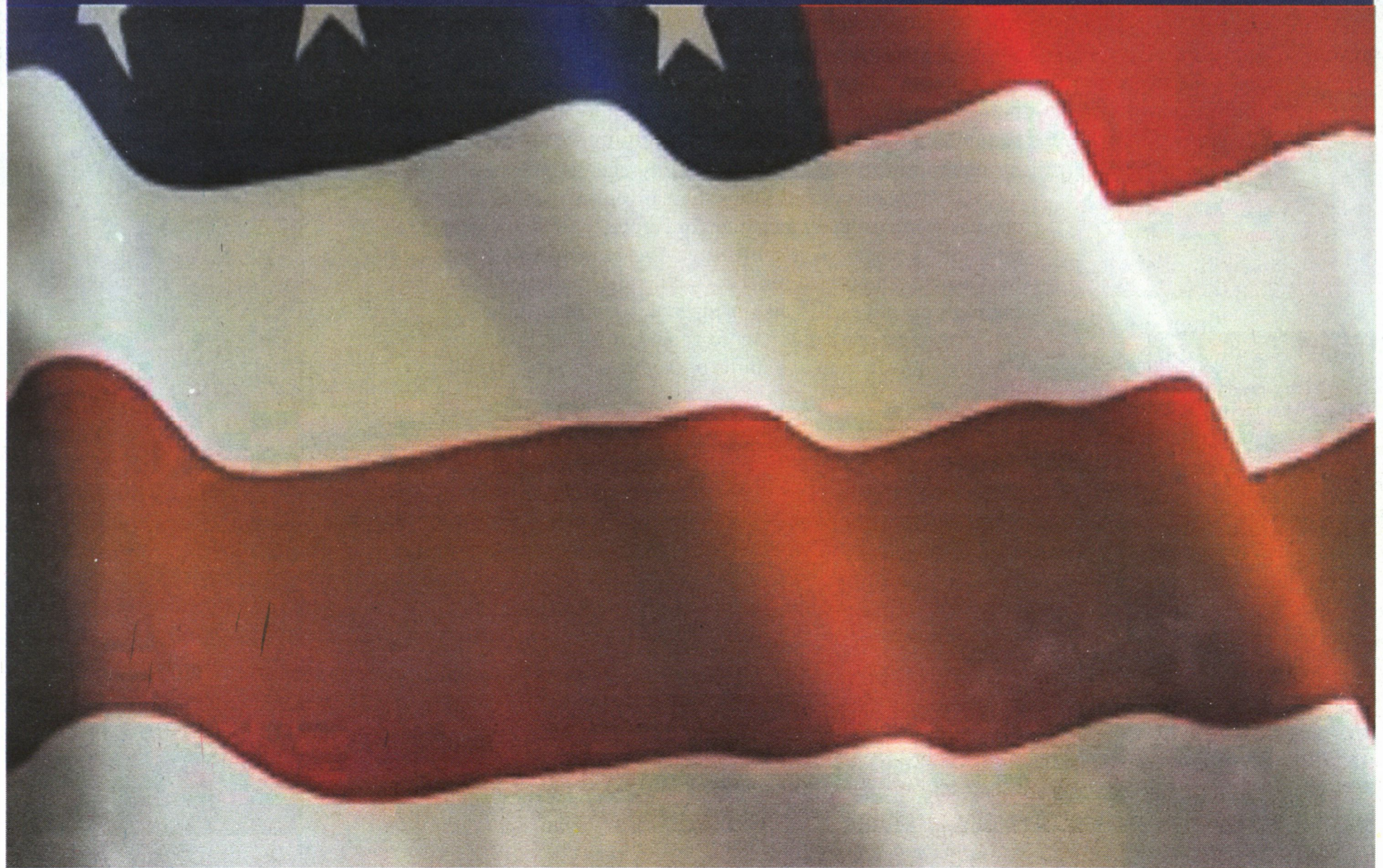
problem all on its own) will not stop boom-bust cycles.

Right now, we're financing these bailouts with "capital consumption." This means we are basically eating the value of our currency in order to enhance the performance of these banks. Similarly, during the housing boom, home buyers assumed that rising housing prices could finance their purchases and so they consumed capital, that they didn't have, and lost those homes when prices and demand fell.

In general, a sustainable economic boom must be financed by reducing consumption, in order to allocate existing resources for new production. However, this isn't happening now; we're trying to spur economic productivity by increasing consumption. For a time, investment banks may be saved by capital infusions, credit expansions and diversions, and homeowners can buy with bad credit scores and no money down, but this is a risky business that has repercussions. You can reallocate



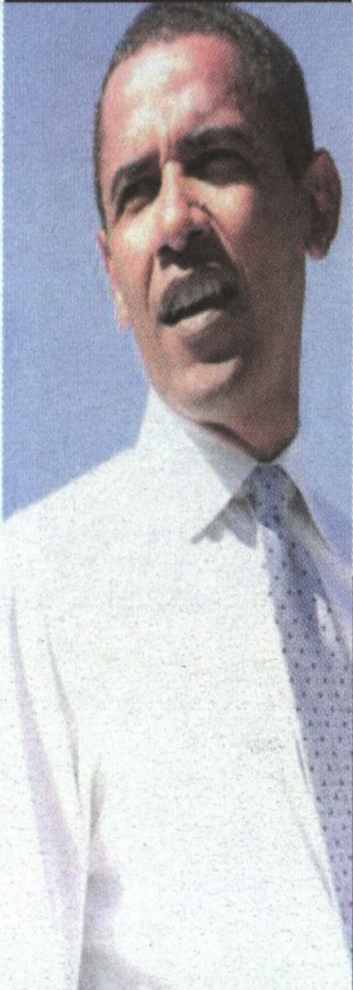
Presidential Election 2008



Getting to Know John McCain and Barack Obama

By Bridget Matikainen

BARACK
OBAMA



Choosing the next president of the United States can be a complicated process. The voters in charge of that decision can easily fall victim to the endless finger-pointing, tongue-lashings, and daggers flying back and forth between candidates, and wind up more confused than ever regarding where the candidates stand on certain issues – what they truly believe. Senator Obama and Senator McCain vary significantly on some issues (abortion, for example), and not so far from one another when it comes to others (economic crisis policy). Here is the long and short, very cut and dry, reiteration of their stances...

Previously mentioned was the matter of a woman's right to choose... whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term, that is. Both candidates present strong fronts on this matter, with Obama supporting *Roe v. Wade* in full, and McCain believing that this particular Supreme Court decision should be overturned. Should that be the case, legalized abortion would not necessarily cease to exist; it would instead be a matter for individual states to decide.

Another issue affecting many people is racial profiling. Barack Hussein Obama unsurprisingly denounces racial profiling as an effective means of homeland security and vows to end all forms of it upon his potential election. McCain sensitively and indirectly touches on the subject, making no mention of dissolving racial profiling methodology currently used at the borders whatsoever, and instead speaking on "strengthening security." He also cites the case of Raed Mansour al-Banna, who was denied entry to the U.S. and went on to become a suicide bomber, killing hundreds of innocent Iraqis.

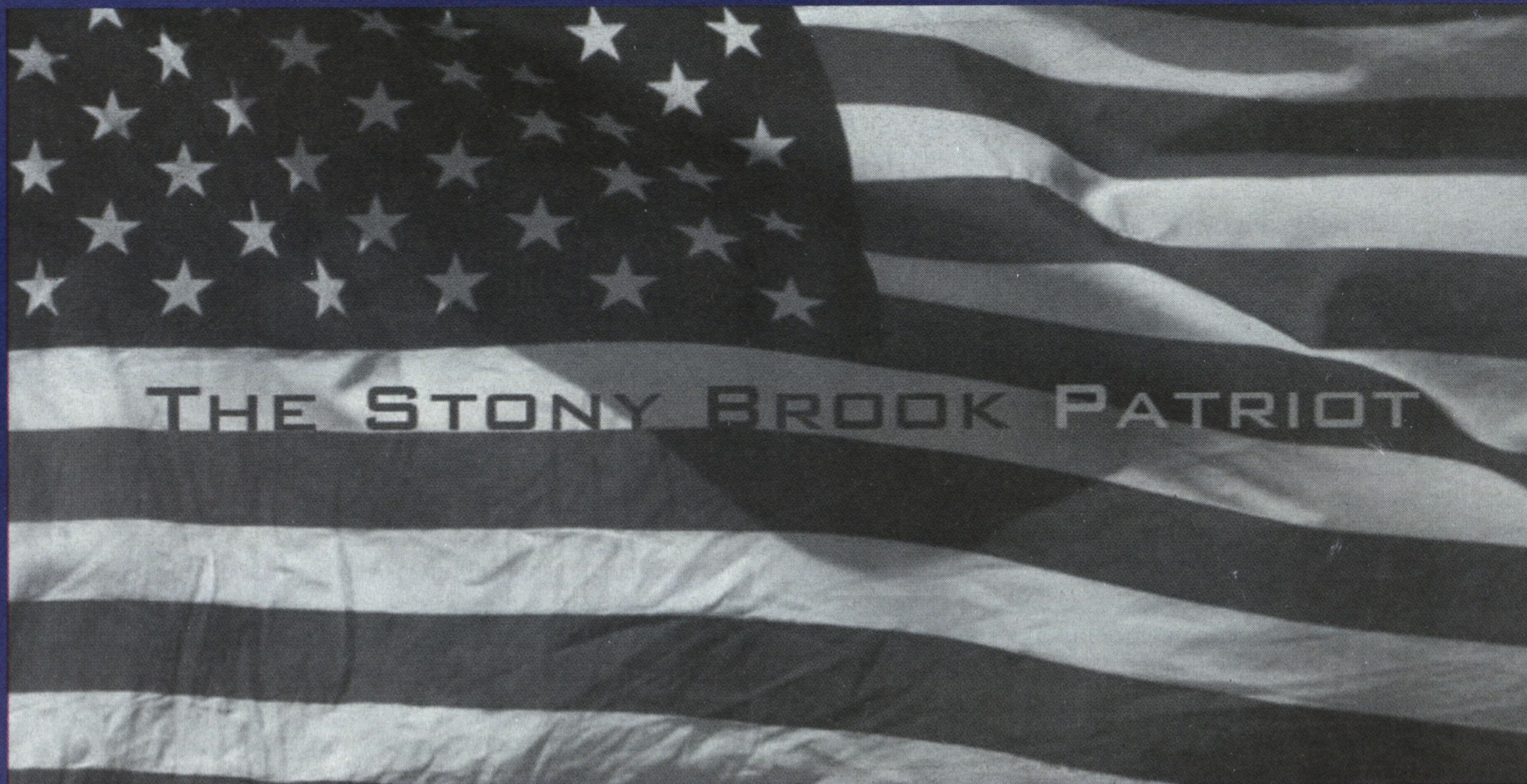
Both candidates share similar views on energy conservation; that is, they're both proponents of ending the American addiction to foreign oil. McCain promises to put the country on track towards becoming sufficiently energy-independent by 2025, through systems using alternative, "greener" energy sources, while creating incentive for corporate America to do the same. Obama has a similar plan, yet it includes aspects of personal, short-term relief to for families suffering from the high oil prices. He also pledges to have plug-in hybrid cars driven by one million more people by 2015... which is roughly equivalent to two thirds of the population of Suffolk County.

Perhaps the issue of greatest interest and importance to the American people is that of the economy, specifically how each candidate will strive to improve it, should they be elected. Senator McCain, in response to concerned homeowners facing the risk of losing their house and all equity in it, has proposed a plan to relieve escalating mortgage payments with fixed-rate loans reflecting accurate home values, with eligibility dependent upon credit-ratings prior to the recent inflation of interest rates. Senator McCain has promised to balance the budget by 2013, relying on economic growth coupled with drastic federal spending controls. He believes a future worth shaping for the American people relies on prosperous small businesses, the reform of entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare, and – of course – tax cuts. Senator Obama – alias Robin Hood – also sees an imperative need to

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JOHN
MCCAIN





**“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is
that good men do nothing”
-Edmund Burke**

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The Manufactured Candidate

By Aaron Burr

Watching the press coverage of the election, I can't help but remember a particularly memorable movie, "The Candidate." In this movie, we see a few unusual things. First, there's Robert Redford in it, actually looking young and energetic. Secondly, it is quite an honest look at a political campaign's effects on its candidate. Robert Redford's character (Bill McKay) is asked by his future campaign adviser (Marvin Lucas) to run for a Senate seat against Crocker Jarmon, a popular Republican. So Mr. McKay sort of says what he wants, since his chances of winning are slim. After realizing how badly he will lose, he starts watering down his liberal message to appeal to voters. Instead of sticking to his beliefs, he makes his message as vapid and meaningless as possible. This wins him more and more popularity. It also depresses him, and at the end of his debate, he blurts out that they didn't talk about any real issues. Since his father (a former political big shot) had stayed out of the campaign the entire time, he comes out to support his son, effectively hiding his son's true meaning. At the very end, Mr. McKay wins. As he sits there, on the bed, he asks his campaign adviser what should be done now. He never receives an answer.

To a large degree, we've been seeing that same thing play out on our TV screens almost every night. You see this attractive, youthful candidate, Mr. Obama, slowly getting drained away by what is happening around him. What we saw in the Democratic Convention is only the beginning of people's disillusionment with him. His speech--well, it had the same hallmarks all of his recent speeches have had: a whole lot of promises, very little substance. Rather than focus on the speech, I sort of noticed what happened as he met his wife and kids on stage: they all looked tired. Even Joe Biden looked relatively energetic compared to them. As he watched the fireworks go off behind him, it looked as if he seemed somewhat resigned. Perhaps his changes in positions on Iraq (removing the bit on his website about being against the surge), which had won him so much praise early on, seem almost sobering to his idealistic spirit. Maybe the fact that reality has dashed many of his previous positions makes him worried about being called a "flip-flopper." Reviews of his speech, which came in over the next few days, weren't exactly encouraging either. And this isn't from some sort of rabid anti-Democratic Fox News commentator either; rather they were in the op-ed section of the New York Times, a bastion of liberal rants if there ever was one. One person, a speech teacher from upstate New York, said that the speech sort of lacked the cadence, delivery, and inflection necessary for a good speech. Others opined that Obama had lost some of his luster and charm, that perhaps he was overrated.

Marvin Lucas might have been more impressed with the Republican Convention. Sure, the Democratic Convention had its moments (I think Mark Werner spoke quite well, and Kucinich kept my attention, since I've always enjoyed his odd charm), but overall very boring compared to the Republican Convention. The Republican Convention definitely outdid the Democratic Convention. First of all, there were less boring speeches. There also were reminders to me of how thankful I am that Mitt Romney and Rudy Giuliani never got tremendously popular. Mitt Romney gave an almost unreasonably conservative speech, calling the current Supreme Court "too liberal," as if George Bush wasn't conservative enough for him. His hope probably lies in some sort of rebellion in case McCain loses, and then the Republican Party will go more conservative. Rudy had no such pretensions. Simply put, he is an a**hole

that could come only out of New York. Each statement he gave about Obama seemed almost like a cruel punch line. At least he's aware that there exists no chance for him to win. Finally, when his stomachache-creating speech was over, a vocal part of the auditorium booed him. Watching Rudy speak could not have been more painful for me; he exemplifies the very reason I want to leave New York. Thankfully what came next made it almost worth it to sit uncomfortably as Rudy led some sort of call-and-response sort of thing.

Sarah Palin came up, and helped clear her name from a lot of charges being thrown at her. First, that she was completely inexperienced. During the duration of her speech, she had insults, but polite ones, against Obama. Actually, as it continued, her barbs about "a mayor being sort of like a community organizer, except a mayor has actual responsibilities" were delivered quite nicely, and without the meanness that affected Giuliani's speech. Everyone, whether down in the hall or the commentators, said she delivered an impressive speech. What remained funny is despite blasting the liberal media in her speech, the liberal media seemed somewhat impressed. Even those not usually inclined to give her the benefit of the doubt said she exceeded expectations. And, for a brief moment, the questions subsided as people clearly saw that she was picked for the energy she brings.

However, by picking her, there are other questions brought up. One is: why the stupid names for her kids (Track, Trig, Willow, Piper, and Bristol)? Those are awful. Another is that after scratching the surface you begin to see signs that she isn't as dedicated to eliminating wasteful government spending, and only part of it can be explained away by her living in Alaska, not all. Add to this a pregnant teenage daughter with a gum-chewing boyfriend, with her lackluster involvement in a party that promotes secession from the United States and you get a rather strange ticket. Now, I think McCain knows what to do, but I'll remain skeptical of her until I hear more. I still think, though, that a lot of the criticism of her is quite unfair, and partly due to the fact that this is a much better (more dynamic) pick than Obama's Biden. So, as of right now, I'm lukewarm towards her, but I hope she can convince me, since I really would like to believe in someone who pulled herself up from her bootstraps onto the national stage. Something about it seems so American.

Obama's criticism of her rings quite hollow as well; he's merely regurgitating the lines that have been said about his lack of experience, and lately his pleas have been sounding more desperate. As if by sheer repetition he will force into our skulls everything he wants us to believe. Things like: McCain equals Bush, Republicans have destroyed the country, and only the Democrats can lead us on the correct path. Well, he doesn't deviate from the party line, and this is a problem for him. It makes him seem stiff off the cusp, as if he's been performed for a very specific task, not for actually getting down in the dirt with people.

McCain lacks this problem, for a number of reasons. Whereas Mr. Obama has a tight lid on anything being said to reporters, McCain gabs with them for hours on end, even if it means gaffes. And due to this openness, he isn't as concerned about any misstatement, since he speaks off the cusp most of the time anyway. Obama, when speaking off the cusp, seems politely awkward, like an indie rock star trying and failing to connect with the audience. Rather than sort of appear proper for cameras, McCain doesn't mind taking the earthy approach, eating utter junk food and apparently enjoying it.

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Yes, Bush took this approach as well, yet there always seemed to be a nervous tension that existed between him and the media. Like he needed to show his goofy side (almost embarrassingly too much) in order to show he was one of us.

Obama's attempts at doing this have been a bit contrived; perhaps that explains his choice of Joe Biden, probably the closest

"I find it funny how people are now attacking Sarah Palin for her inexperience, yet their candidate is only 3 years older and hasn't accomplished nearly as much as she has."

thing you can get in the Senate to an "Average Joe." For most of Obama's life, he's been doing all right, but nothing exceptional. Out of his experiences, there's nothing you could exactly look up or down to. He's generally voted in tow with his party an astonishingly large amount of the time (97 percent!), so his claims of being bipartisan should fall on deaf ears. Lately, they sort of have. Looking at some of the poll numbers in the battleground states, we see that the after-convention bump hasn't been anywhere near as big as they hoped. This 47-year-old really hasn't done anything all that extraordinary, or brave, when kept in context with his party's philosophy. Everything they stand for, he stands for. Sure, go criticize George W. Bush; that's certainly a brave thing for the Democratic nominee for president to do. I mean, the Democrats certainly stood up for themselves when they voted for the most awful piece of legislation ever passed, the Patriot Act. Hell, even the (now) Libertarian candidate Bob Barr stood for that, so how many people can really claim to be "mavericks"?

Oddly, it seems that McCain's maverick status has helped him, even as much of the Republican's support has otherwise tanked. He still remains a rather popular choice among independents, and his nomination of Sarah Palin is particularly nice: it has begun to settle worries that he wasn't Republican enough. So a pretty fair balance for his ticket, of his half-hearted endorsement of certain lifestyle-choice Republican values, and her much more pronounced support for pro-life, pro-gun, and so on. Joe Biden and Barack Obama do compliment each other well; however, they are almost too similar. Sure, Biden does have much more experience. He is particularly well-known for cringe-worthy gaffes (about Obama, Indian-Americans). Add into the equation his foolish-in-hindsight idea about breaking Iraq into three parts, and the addition of Joe Biden doesn't add enough of a mix into the equation.

I find it funny how people are now attacking Sarah Palin for her inexperience, yet their candidate is only 3 years older and hasn't accomplished nearly as much as she has. They claim she's from some "Podunk" town in Alaska, and her experience is for naught. Obama's not from Podunk, and what has he accomplished? He's brought some cheer, some optimism to the political process. Optimism isn't a campaign promise. McCain's been doing his own thing for decades, even when it meant going through some very tough battles, often with his own party. He fought them on immigration reform and lost. Yet he still ended up being their candidate. It takes a certain amount of fighting to do that. And he came and turned his entire campaign around and won. Even the media give him a certain grudging respect.

So, if we could picture a scenario where Obama would win, what would the outcome be? He does have some good advisers, but how many would stay after the campaign? Perhaps afterwards, after all the hype, he'll be like our friend Bill McKay. He'll look up to his advisers and ask, "What now?" and never get a response.

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reform various aspects of government so as to influence the economy. He, true to his mantra of change, calls for immediate wind-fall taxes on oil-company profits in order to provide financial relief to middle-class families. Interestingly, Obama holds a similar stance on small businesses as McCain; he sees their success as synonymous with an optimistic future for the entire country and is in favor of cutting taxes for small businesses across the board.

As similar as some stances both candidates have on some issues are, McCain and Obama differ as drastically as night and day when it comes to the war in Iraq. A popular buzzword floating around as of late is the "surge," referring to the increase in troops stationed in Iraq as of 2006. Thus far, this surge has been successful in reducing sectarian violence by 90 percent. John McCain is a proponent of continuing success, and votes to finish the job in Iraq; that is, helping to establish stable democracies. Barack Obama, on the other hand, feels quite differently. Though he admits that the removal of the troops would need to be done carefully and slowly, Obama vows to pull them out, period.

Healthcare. Ah, the eternally debated issue. Everyone needs it, but can everyone get it? John McCain has a plan to reform the way health care is offered, detaching it from primarily employer-based options. He offers a tax-refund for those opting to finance their own health care, and also hopes to lower the cost of healthcare, making it more affordable. Obama takes a universal stance, insisting that every American should be guaranteed the right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and healthcare.

As you can see, the candidates differ greatly on some issues, and mildly on others. Should you still be unclear on where either candidate stands on any issue, extensive descriptions of both Senator McCain and Senator Obama's stances on all issues can be accessed on their official websites. No matter your own opinion, one thing is for sure: this election will be one of the more interesting ones, with the result – either way – being an intelligent, capable president.

"No matter your own opinion, one thing is for sure: this election will be one of the more interesting ones, with the result – either way – being an intelligent, capable president."

A Reality Check For Obama Voters

Yes Virginia, There *is* a Relationship Between Bill Ayers

By Derek Mordente

To those of you voting for Barack Obama in the upcoming election, I challenge you to offer an alternate explanation to what I am writing about. I challenge you to account for it. I challenge you to discredit or falsify it. Most importantly, I challenge you to ask yourself, had you not known, why you didn't.

Let me start by talking about a group called the Weather Underground. Now, if you already know what I'm going to say, don't just grimace and fold the newspaper up and put it down. Indulge me for a minute. The Weather Underground was a violent, militant domestic terrorist organization of the late 1960s and 1970s. They bombed police precincts, banks, and government facilities. They were not anti-war "activists." They were not misguided "protesters." They were terrorists. They were real. They hate America. They planted real bombs. They killed real people. They were out and proud to be communists. Members were deemed a legitimate threat by J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI. A lot of them went to jail. Some of them got off. None of them regret anything. On 9/11/2001, the group's leader said, "I don't regret setting bombs. I feel we didn't do enough."

This brings us to Bill Ayers, the leader I just quoted and mentioned above. Let's run through some of his attributes. He is a communist. He founded and led an organization whose purpose was to hurt America and leave innocent casualties in its wake. He and his organization made attempts at mass murder; police once found in 1970 four 12" dynamite filled pipe-bombs and several fused eight-stick bundles of dynamite that had been destined for a non-commissioned officers' dance at Fort Dix, New Jersey, targeting American soldiers and their civilian dates. In 2004, he was quoted as saying, "the question of did we do something that was horrendous, awful? ... I don't think so. I think what we did was to respond to a situation that was unconscionable." I wonder if the families of San Francisco Officer Brian V. McDonnell, Officer Robert Fogarty, New York Police Officer Waverly Brown and Sergeant Ed O'Grady, and brinks guard Peter Paige think Ayers actions were "horrendous, awful?" I don't expect you to know who any of those people are. Just know that they were killed because of Bill Ayers, his organization and his traitorous, murderous terrorism.

He and his comrades also declared war on his country through his organization. Now, I don't know about you, but I define all of this as treason.

Finally, consider this last little tidbit of information about Bill Ayers. A woman Ayers was once involved with said in a recent interview that Ayers once locked her in his attic apartment and forced her to have sex with his African-American roommate and his brother. Her account is as follows:

"What I do recall is that when I was getting ready to leave Ayers told me I couldn't go until I slept with his roommate and his brother. At this point Bill and I had slept together just once. I was sexually inexperienced, having had only one serious boyfriend with

whom I had recently broken up.

At first I thought Ayers was joking. I got up; and went to the door. He moved quickly to block me at the doorway. He locked the door and put the chain on it. I went to the couch and sat down and told him that I had no intention of having sex with his roommate and his brother or him.

He said that I had no choice but to do as he said if I wanted to get out of there. He claimed that I wouldn't sleep with his married roommate because he was black – that I was a bigot. I had gone to school with black kids and had them as friends all my life. I couldn't believe he was saying that to me.

I felt trapped. I had to get out of the situation I was in and because he was so effective a guilt-tripper, I also felt I had to prove to him that I wasn't a bigot. I got up from the couch and walked over to the black roommate's bed and put myself on it and he f---d me."

The woman remarked that during the encounter she "went totally out of my body," a description commonly used by victims of rape. So, Ayers sounds like a real stand-up guy, huh?

This brings us back to my introductory paragraph. My question to all

of you voting for Barack Obama is as follows: How do you explain Obama's deep involvement with Bill Ayers? They did not randomly cross paths a few times, as the Obama camp likes to say. They are seemingly close friends. Let's take a look at the facts. They met in 1995 for the first time where they worked together in the Alliance for Better Chicago Schools. In 1995, at the start of Obama's political career as a state senator, Ayers threw a campaign party for Obama in his own house and gave him two hundred dollars out of his pocket for his campaign. Ayers was also instrumental in forming the Chicago Annenberg Challenge, and arranged for Obama to be chairman of the Board of Directors over more qualified board members. Obama returned the favor by channeling over a million dollars in grants to Ayers' Small School Workshop program. Obama and Ayers served together for years on the Board of Directors of the Woods Fund. Obama was also a member of the Board of Directors of the Joyce Foundation, which may have influenced several grants made to Ayers.

According to Obama, he "didn't know the history" of Bill Ayers and the Weather Underground and, as another dodge, even said that he was just a child when Ayers and his organization were engaging in their terrorism. My question to Obama is if he knew Ayers for that long on that level, how did he never find this out? Or even stumble across it by chance? Ayers and his organization are no secret. I'll even be nice and consider the option that Obama "didn't know the history." Then what does a murdering terrorist traitor like Bill Ayers see in your candidate? What does he see in him that he'd throw a campaign party for him in his own home? What does he see in him that he would trust him to disburse tens of millions of dollars in grant money to "educational" causes Ayers approves of?

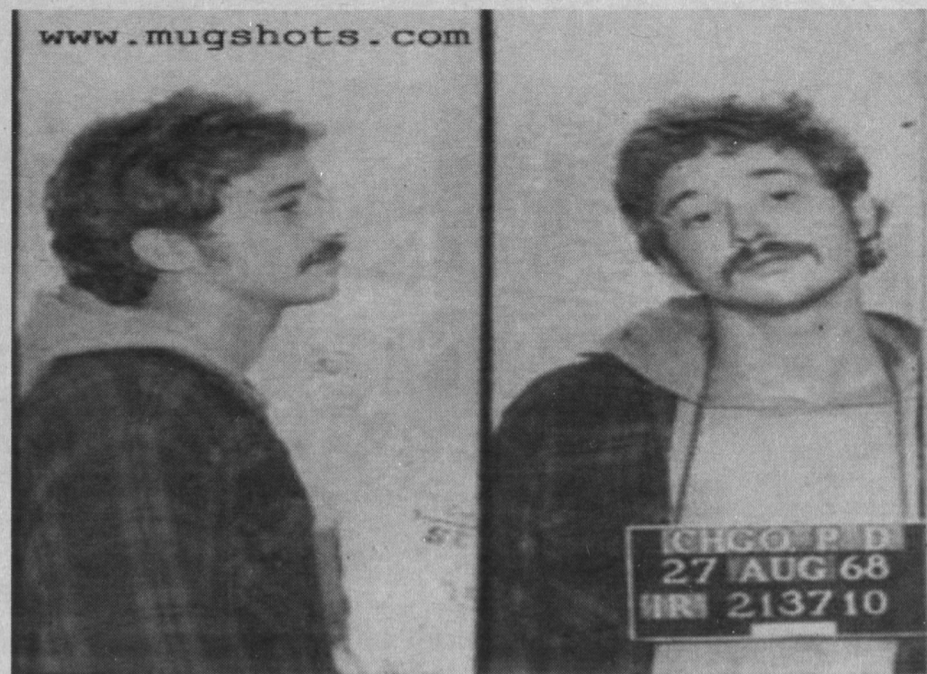
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Let us now alter a few of the circumstances mentioned above and see how they compare. Suppose there was a person, "Bill Smith," who was an out-and-proud racist. During the 1960s he was part of a violent, white supremacist organization that bombed black churches and pro-Civil Rights groups as part of its "race war" against equal rights for minorities. He was arrested with his wife who, along with other comrades, was convicted for various terrorist acts. Some were sent to prison for life. Smith himself was let off on a technicality and later got a job as professor of education at a college known for its opposition to integration. He managed to finagle a large grant from a foundation by claiming his purpose was to infuse students with a sense of (white) racial pride and downplayed academic achievement in favor of racial activism dedicated to provoking resistance to policies designed to promote racial harmony and integration. Suppose further that he focused on a young "community organizer" who he felt could advance his cause. Suppose he threw a party for him in his house that launched his political career, raised money for him, served with him on various Boards of Directors, allowed him to write a glowing review of his racist book and, most importantly, put him in charge of dispersing the funds he received from the foundation.

Would you vote for a person with the kind of relationship de-

scribed above with such a reprehensible person for president of the United States? If you're voting for Barack Obama, know that you are...



Bill Ayers in his "Glory Days"
Courtesy of MugShot.com

Getting News in a New Age

Drudge Report vs. the Huffington Post

By Brittany Klenofsky

Where do you get your news? As teenagers, our parents probably learned what was happening in the world from the NBC Nightly News or occasionally reading the paper. The biggest alternatives they had were changing the channel (and there were just a few of them) or reading some fringe newspaper from The Village. Today, this is hardly the case.

The Internet has transformed politics in more ways than we can count. College students who may have felt distant from the happenings in Washington and countries they had hardly heard of around the world before now watch debates on YouTube, Facebook-friend their candidate, and get automatic updates when their favorite news site adds a story. With the Internet, politics is more accessible to our generation than ever before.

Two of the most influential news websites are the Drudge Report and the Huffington Post. The only thing these two sites have in common is that they have power. The format and direction of each of the sites is completely different. The Drudge Report is conservative. Right now, the top of the website shows an unflattering picture of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, looking a few decades older than she really is and perhaps on the verge of tears. On the other hand, The Huffington Post is liberal. The top of their website currently displays a picture of President Bush looking confused and sad. You don't even have to read any articles to see what these two sites are all about.

The Drudge Report is primarily a large collection of links that would be of interest to - or slanted towards - conservatives. As a conservative myself, it would seem that this would be my favorite website, but it's not. Because the Internet at Stony Brook is horrible - I'm tapping someone's illegal wireless network - about every two minutes, the Drudge Report decides to automatically refresh. By the time the site loads for me, it

starts to refresh again. I don't know if any new articles are being added because I don't have time to scroll through the page before it starts changing again. For conservatives with a decent net access, The Drudge Report is amazing, but, for me, it's not worth the hassle.

Apparently a lot of people don't have this same problem, because The Drudge Report averages about 3 million visitors per month. The visitors average about 66 minutes on the site, about 20 of which are spent automatically refreshing if they go to Stony Brook). However, Things aren't looking so good for the Drudge Report lately. Traffic is falling, oddly, even with the excitement going on right now. Maybe they should do away with the auto-refresh.

The Huffington Post is primarily a site of liberal blogs in addition to some links, all of which, obviously, are of liberal interests. There are weird headlines like "McCain At Meeting: Sat Quietly" (how dare he!) and "Pants Designer Offers 'The Obamas' and 'The McCains.'" One of the few stories I read was one where a pastor highly connected with Governor Palin (his sole connection is that he is a fan of hers; they never even met each other) made an anti-Semitic statement, saying in a way that Jews are trying to take over the "economics of our nation." I have never heard of an anti-Semitic pastor connected with someone who wants to run our country. This is new for me. Because this pastor is a fan of Governor Palin, they are probably BFF and she is probably also scared of "Israelites working it."

The Huffington Post is not in any way a better site and does not appeal to me at all, but it doesn't auto-refresh, so I have no problem reading all of the weird headlines. In contrast to The Drudge Report, The Huffington Post has gained popularity in the last few years. This is possibly from the funny headlines and lack of auto-refresh.

Healthcare Reform Debate

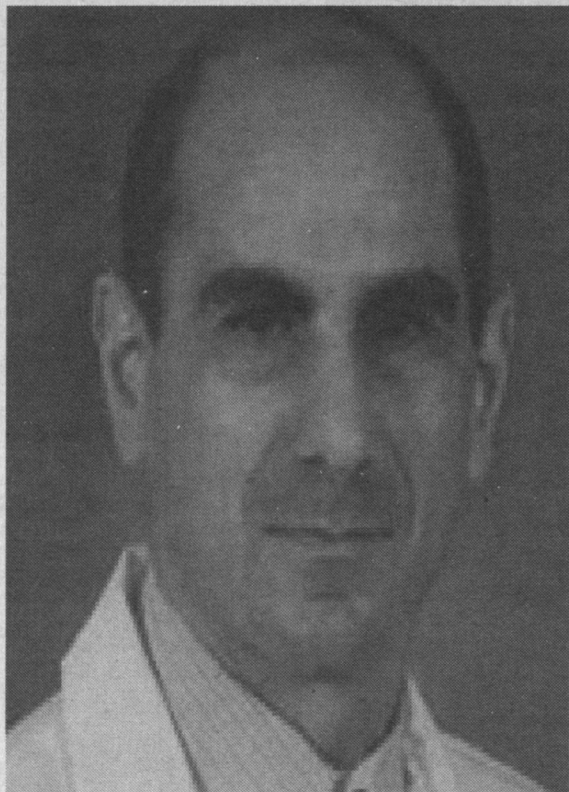
Is Government the Answer or the Problem?

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2008

7:00-10:00 PM

STUDENT ACTIVITIES CENTER AUDITORIUM
STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

DR. DAVID BROWN
STONY BROOK MEDICAL CENTER



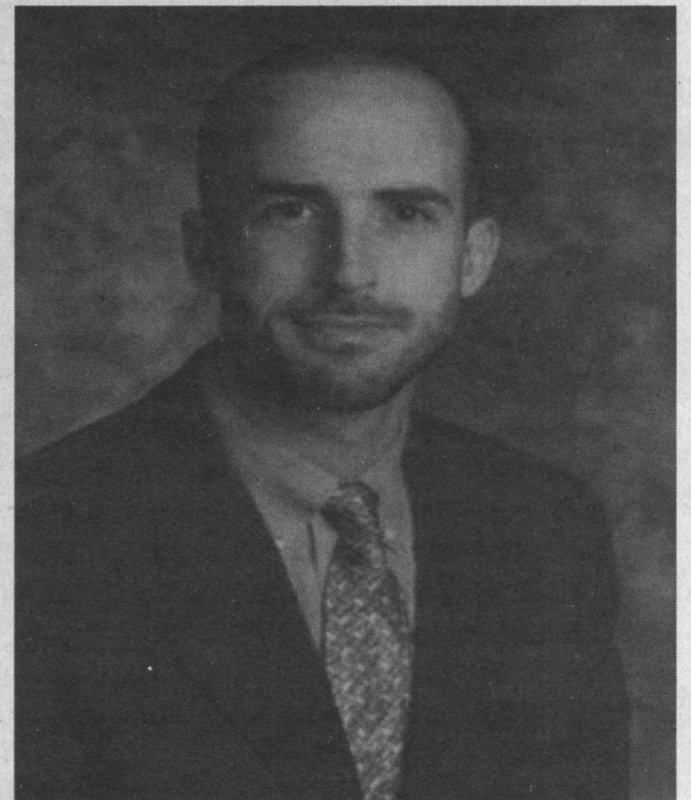
David L. Brown, MD, FACC, FAHA, FSCAI, is a professor of medicine at Stony Brook University Medical School and the Chief of the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine. Dr. Brown, whose clinical expertise comprises interventional cardiology, and cardiac intensive care, is board certified in interventional cardiology. His current research interests wide-ranging, and include outcomes research in cardiovascular disease, the diagnosis and treatment of the vulnerable plaque, and volume-outcome relationship. Dr. Brown holds a B.A. (cum laude), from the University of Texas, Austin, 1977, and an M.D. from the Baylor College of Medicine, 1982



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MICHAEL CANNON
CATO INSTITUTE



*Michael F. Cannon is the Cato Institute's director of health policy studies. Previously, he served as a domestic policy analyst for the U.S. Senate Republican Policy Committee under Chairman Larry E. Craig, where he advised the Senate leadership on health, education, labor, welfare, and the Second Amendment. Cannon has appeared on ABC, CBS, CNN, CNBC, C-SPAN, Fox News Channel, and NPR. His articles have been featured in USA Today, the Los Angeles Times, the New York Post, the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun-Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, Forum for Health Economics & Policy, and the Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law, and Ethics. Cannon is coauthor of *Healthy Competition: What's Holding Back Health Care and How to Free It*. He holds a bachelor's degree in American government (B.A.) from the University of Virginia, and master's degrees in economics (M.A.) and law & economics (J.M.) from George Mason University.*

Why The Stony Brook Youth Needs to Vote: A Historical Perspective and Assessment

By Britany Klenofsky

From 1775 to 1783, American patriots fought for political freedom from the British Empire. Men, both young and old, fought against a ruler that provided them with absolutely no rights. He made them trade a certain way and he taxed them a certain way--all of this without a single representative vote. Finally, after years of aggravation and mistreatment, the colonists made a decision for themselves and they began to rally and eventually they won.

What is my point? My point is to remind you of our past. The point is to remind you of where we come from and remind you of the things that each and everyone of us takes for granted.

Even after fighting a war for independence, the resulting government still provided limited rights. Young people who had just fought in the war were still not granted the right to vote. Black males who had fought in the same war as their white counterparts were not given the fruits of their labor either. Additionally, if blacks had been slaves during the war, they were slaves after the war as well.

It took years for people to be granted universal suffrage, regardless of race, gender, or class. Not until 1870 did states grant the right to vote to all people regardless of race (15th amendment), regardless of gender in 1920 (19th amendment), and regardless of paying any form of poll tax in 1964 (24th amendment). Furthermore, it was not until 1971 that people like us, who are 18 and over, were granted the right to vote through the 26th amendment.

Voting rights began to change in 1870, but why did the amendment to restrict states from setting the voting age from anything higher than 18 take so long to be passed? Well, because no one really fought for it. Not until our soldiers were once again being drafted to war in Vietnam did people start fighting for young people, like us, who had no say in the government that they were being sent out to defend.

People came out to protest and rally against segregation throughout the Civil Rights Movement. Again, masses of young Americans came out to protest the Vietnam War, but how many people actually came out to vote? How many people are actually registered to vote? Our founding fathers worked so hard to create our government. Many soldiers lost their lives in order to defend our right to vote, and yet so many people choose not to vote. Sadly, young people between the ages of 18 and 29 are practically missing in the polls. As a result, we have an entire generation of people who are placing themselves into voluntary taxation without representation. I do not know which is worse: the fact that young people do not go out to vote, or the fact that each and every day young people criticize the government that they care too little about to simply go out and cast a ballot every 2 to 4 years.

In my opinion, you have no right to judge if you do not care

enough to make time to vote. Be involved if you are going to criticize. Enact change if you want to see it. Chances are, if you are reading this article, you are a college student. If that is the case, you have a bevy of resources that enables you to meet with local politicians. With each small step, you reach a more prominent politician, and with a giant leap you get your voice heard by becoming involved. If you do not like the candidates running, speak out and support other candidates for elections--it really is not that hard.

I say all of this because the 2008 election is a big one. As you are at least 18 years old, you have recently been granted the right to legally make decisions for yourself without your parents. Now you must vote to keep those rights. Make sure you go out to vote for the president who will protect your safety; in my opinion there is no point in having rights if this country is not safe from terrorists.

Now you are coming to the age when you might not be able to apply for your parents' health insurance, so vote for the candidate who you think will help you get and keep the best insurance for now and in the future. You are in school now in order to pursue a career--possibly law, business, or medicine. Unlimited careers and unlimited possibilities for great success and fortune are made possible through education.

Go out to vote for a candidate who will allow you to keep that success. Your parents no longer have a say in how you spend your money; why do you want the government to spend it? We all know we have to pay taxes, but why pay practically half of your earnings in taxes? Is

it a punishment for working hard and succeeding? Why have 39 percent of your income taxed for the federal government and then 7.5 to 8% in state taxes if you make more than \$250,000? Oh, and if you want to live in the city, add on another 3.5%. That is about a total of 50 to 50.5% in taxes if you live in New York, which, chances are, if you go to Stony Brook, you do. In reference to "Joe the plumber," I hope no one plans on being Bob, his assistant, if his business is successful. That is, because an additional self-employment tax of 15.3% on successful businesses means he only keeps 38 cents on every dollar that he earns. This translates to him not being able to afford a staff. Oh, and let us not forget if you fall into the AMT, you will lose all deductions except for charitable donations and your mortgage. Let it be known that some places are considering making property taxes related to income, too, so even if you want to save money and buy a more fiscally conservative home, you will still be charged more than people who spend beyond their limits. And if you don't believe that people spend out of their limits for homes, take a look at the fall-out on Wall Street caused by subprime mortgages.

So please, for the sake of independence and the American dream, GO OUT AND VOTE!



It's John McCain's Republican Party Now

By Jason Schaeffer

John McCain has served in Congress as a Republican for over twenty-six years. Before that, he proudly served our country during the Vietnam War as a Naval captain. In 2000, McCain tried to obtain the Republican party's nomination for president. Despite early successes in a few key states, he suffered a major defeat in South Carolina at the hands of George W. Bush., who would later go on to clinch the nomination and the general election. From early on, McCain was dogged by fears that he was not conservative enough and was unable to successfully appeal to the party base. This was a theme that was repeated by many pundits throughout the 2008 primary race as well.

However, in 2008 McCain fared significantly better in his quest. After being written off as dead and out of money, McCain scored a narrow victory in the all-important New Hampshire primary against Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney. The claim that McCain was not a conservative did linger from Romney and Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee as well, but in contrast to the bloodbath Democratic primary that Clinton and Obama fought, John McCain went on to quickly clinch the nomination in mid-March with little strife. The big question is: what major changes took place in those eight years to make McCain more palatable? The answer is Iraq and 9/11. Republicans realized that they needed a candidate who understands military and foreign policy issues, and McCain seemed to be that man since the surge he championed in Iraq was an integral part in our apparent victory there. McCain's Senate service on the foreign relations committee and his military history also served to further boost his credentials.

Although there is no doubt in my mind about who is the better candidate in this election, the numerous reasons for conservatives initially doubted McCain are just. During his tenure in Congress, McCain has a record of taking some unsavory, liberal-leaning positions. For example, McCain teamed up with Senator Russ Feingold to sponsor legislation that imposed strict limits on campaign financing. McCain also has conspired with ultra-liberal Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy to sponsor an immigration bill in 2006 that essentially included the idea of amnesty for illegal aliens. In addition, McCain has generally been supportive of environmental regulations and even favors a carbon tax to combat alleged global warming, which has also been a sticking point with Republicans. Republicans also would like to be more confident that McCain will not nominate liberal judges to the Supreme Court, as the first President Bush did.

The question that now remains is if McCain can seal the deal with conservatives this November. and I believe that answer to be yes. McCain has always been conservative on social issues. His appeal to the evangelical Christian base is apparently very strong and his choice of Alaska Governor Sarah Palin has done nothing but strengthen this appeal. McCain has also been known to be one of the staunchest fighters on earmarks and pork-barrel spending. He also vows to make the Bush tax cuts permanent. Perhaps his centerpiece on the spending issue is to create a temporary freeze on non-defense discretionary spending when he is elected. The latest Rasmussen polls seem to indicate that

McCain has approximately 80 percent of the Republican vote, which indicates overwhelming confidence from party members.

I also feel that his maverick nature will make him more appealing to independents and conservative Democrats who've been left behind by Barack Obama.

Republicans have also been somewhat ambivalent towards our election prospects this year. Unfortunately, their fears may be somewhat justified. McCain is currently trailing by a small amount in the polls, but a closer look at the electoral map shows Obama could be widening this lead. Bush's unpopularity will not make a victory in the coming weeks easy. In fact, McCain will need to win at least one state leaning in Barack Obama's favor if he is to win in the fall, and the challenge will be finding which blue state to try to turn red. Victory is by no means impossible in November. Americans are learning more and more about who Barack Obama associates with and are finding out about his fringe-left positions. McCain also stormed back in the third debate and blew the taxes issue wide open; finally revealing which of the two candidates is a staunch conservative and which one is a tax-and-spend liberal. So the bottom line is that Republicans such as ourselves should not despair; we have nothing but reminders to support McCain and reasons to work even harder to keep America safe and in the right hands.

McCain's maverick nature will make him more appealing to independents and conservative Democrats who've been left behind by Barack Obama.

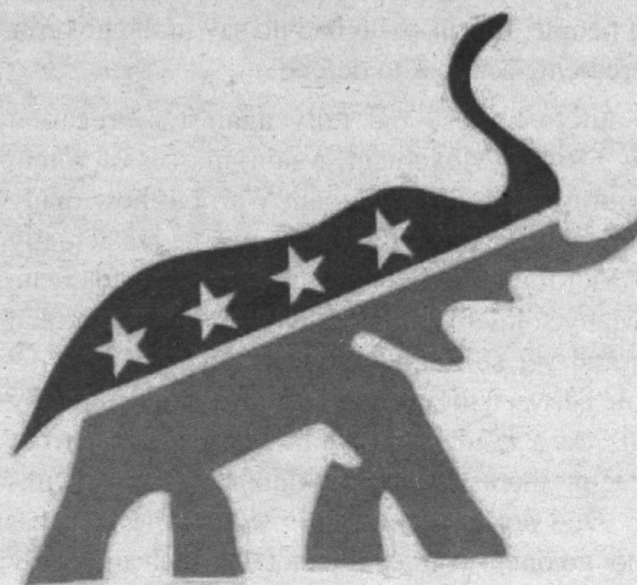


Image Courtesy of GOP.com

That's *President Fascist*, To You!

By Sarah Marshall

About a year ago, I moved from the "Yes, ma'am" capital of the world, Mississippi, here to Long Island. I wasn't exactly expecting to see chivalry, but some things did surprise me. A lot of teachers here want us to call them by their first names. Seriously? I should call my teacher with two PhDs who has been doing research projects in my field since before I was born "Steve"? Nope. Can't do it. Sorry. It's hard enough for me to not call them "Yessir" but to call them by their first names will never happen.

The informality I found upon leaving home is not limited to professor-student relationships. People outside of my little hometown sure have an odd way of talking about politicians. I had a classmate at home who was about as liberal as you can get. When insulting our president, though, he wrote all over his website, "President Bush is a fascist!" This is obviously an offensive - not to mention untrue - statement, but this guy would never think of leaving out his formal title. I have gone from hearing insults directed at "President Bush" to insults directed at "George." The first time it happened I was reading an article about Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and heard her referred to as "Condi." I realize this is an affectionate term, as some of President Bush's biggest supporters call him "Dubya," but it's weird.

I read all sorts of news articles these days and hear about people named "Obama," "McCain," and "Sarah." My name is Sarah. The vice presidential hopeful is named Governor Palin. A kid on a high school basketball team can be called by his last name. The people who are hoping to run our country in a few months are not Obama

and McCain. They are Senator Obama and Senator McCain.

Maybe using formal titles has become obsolete. I'm sure, though, general respect hasn't. It's hard to believe that with the flyers that are shoved in my hands every time I walk through the city.

I am a big supporter of Senator McCain. I disagree with about 90 percent of Senator Obama's plans. I don't know what plans are in the other 10 percent because I can't find anything that I do agree with, but I'm being optimistic and assuming there is something. The polls have been, for the past month, hovering on the even mark. There is a decent chance that Senator Obama will win the election and, come January, be the President of the United States of America. At that point he would become President Obama. If that happens, I will be very sad. There is a good chance that I will even cry. A lot. I will criticize his policies and actions (or lack thereof). I will accuse him of being a younger, more attractive, more charismatic, former president Jimmy Carter. I will be right.

I will not start calling him Barack. I will not draw mean caricatures of him, making fun of whatever physical characteristic of his I don't like as people do now, with Senator McCain's gland and Senator Obama's ears. I will not say he cheated to win the election. I won't say he is racist. None of these things are okay, even if you use formal titles.

In America we have the right to criticize the government in any way we want, but do yourself a favor and be respectful. When people make fun of politicians, anything less tasteful than the SNL's Tina Fey skit crosses the line, they only make themselves and their parties look bad.

John McCain - Here's Why Not

By Deborah Machalow

John Sydney McCain is the Republican nominee for president of the United States. As a liberal Democrat I'm all but required to hate him; however I have nothing but respect for the man who risked his life fighting for our country. Despite my adamant respect for this national hero, I don't believe he's the right choice for President at this important juncture in history. Even though Senator McCain has far more experience than Senator Obama, his ideas regarding what's best for this country are in fact not what is needed to improve the state of the Union.

When George W. Bush took over the Oval Office, he was handed the largest governmental surplus in national history; now, the American public faces a national deficit of nearly ten trillion dollars. It doesn't make sense to continue with the supply-side economics when trickle-down theory has been employed for the past eight years, and the standard of living has decreased, and the national debt has ballooned. By 'simplifying' the tax code and lowering the taxes of the upper-income brackets, a McCain administration would be inflicting more of the tax burden on the middle class's shoulders. Using 'across-the-board' spending freezes doesn't help anyone. Much needed funds wouldn't get to millions of programs that help the American people.

There are forty-seven million Americans lacking adequate healthcare coverage. Senator McCain proposes providing a

\$5,000 tax credit to each family (and \$2,000 to each individual) to help them go out and purchase healthcare. McCain's plan also stipulates that the value of employer-provided healthcare be taxed. This plan wouldn't require insurance companies to provide coverage to individuals with preexisting health conditions. In contrast, Senator Obama's plan would help get everyone who wants health insurance insured. His plan would allow individuals and small businesses to buy into a healthcare plan similar to the one he receives through the federal government and would require insurance companies to provide coverage to individuals with preexisting conditions. The Lewin Group projects that McCain's plan to tackle the healthcare emergency would be far costlier than Obama's, and would ensure far fewer individuals.

Senator McCain is not an adamant supporter of wind and solar energies. His energy plan is centered around nuclear power, without a mention of solar or renewable energies on his webpage. How does it make sense to discount cleaner, safer options? The senator from Arizona has voted against legislation with incentives for solar/renewable energy industries twenty times. Obama favors renewable energy sources, and wants 25 percent of electricity to come from such sources by 2025. Senator Obama also wants to vastly improve energy efficiency by 2030. We need to find safer, renewable forms of energy to help break our dependence on fossil fuels.

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It's time to start bringing our brave young men and women home from Iraq. The American people were misled in the reasons for entering the war in the first place, and we need to, at the very least, have a plan implemented to start withdrawing our troops. How many more soldiers need to be sacrificed before Iraq is classified as Vietnam II? This war brought President Bush's approval ratings to an all-time low; it makes sense to start a withdrawal. We spend millions of dollars a week in Iraq; we need to stop accruing debt and stop this Vietnam-esque war. Focus needs to be shifted back to Afghanistan, as Senator Obama has proposed, and the troops need to be returned home safely.

As a political science junkie, the selection of Sarah Palin as John McCain's running mate was brilliant; however, as a liberal, I start shaking in my boots at the very thought of her anywhere near the Oval Office. While McCain is more flexible policy-wise than most conservatives are comfortable with, Governor Palin is

a strict conservative. (I won't mention her inexperience, as that's one of the most hypocritical arguments a liberal can make, what with Obama's three years of Senate experience.) Palin believes that creationism should be taught alongside evolution; she supports banning all abortions (including in the cases of rape, incest and mother's health); she supports drilling in ANWR. I don't believe McCain would be more likely to die in office than Obama would be, but the thought of Sarah Palin occupying the Oval Office worries me greatly.

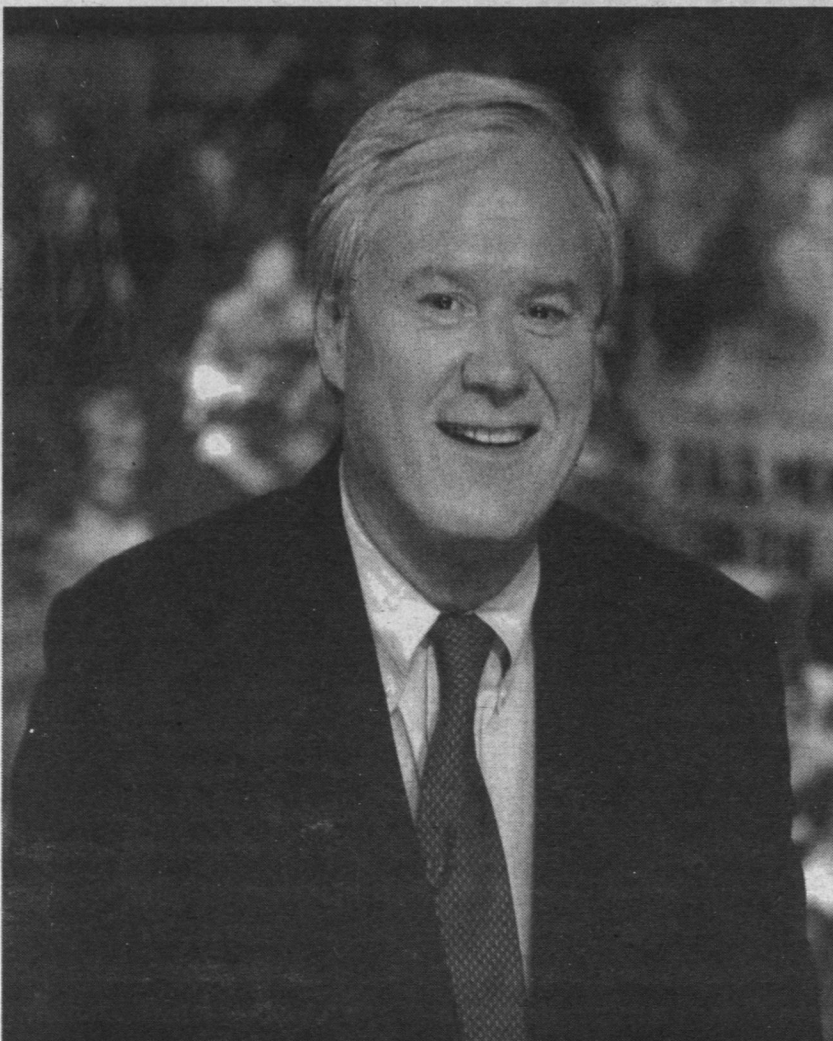
As stated before, I absolutely, 100% respect the service Senator John McCain has given to this country. While I firmly believe that McCain would make any decision with the firm belief that he was helping the country, what he believes is right for this country is not what this country needs to get moving again. I look forward immensely to McCain reaching across the aisle in the Senate to help pass legislation to improve our great country.

MSNBC Cans Olbermann and Mathews

A Win for News Network Neutrality

By Jason Schaeffer

Following the Republican National Convention this month, MSNBC felt that certain changes were necessary in its coverage of this year's presidential election. Specifically, the network decided to purge its newly-promoted news personalities, Keith Olbermann and Chris Mathews from the anchor seats. They will now be replaced by MSNBC host and Washington correspondent, David Gregory. Olbermann and Mathews will remain as analysts at the network and will keep their popular prime-time talk shows, "Countdown" and "Hardball," respectively. This movement marks a major character changes at the network and has implications for conservatives and liberals alike.



It was surprising to me to see MSNBC put the two hosts into the anchor seats in the first place. Both Mathews and Olbermann have strong liberal preferences that they frequently vocalize, so it was impossible for the network to not think about its objectivity when they were first installed as anchors. Before becoming a prominent face of MSNBC, Olbermann was known for his work as a sportscaster. In 2003 he created "Countdown," which quickly became a lightning rod of controversy in the conservative community and surged in population for its gnawing criticisms of the Bush administration and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Mathews is known for his work as Washington D.C. Bureau Chief for the San Francisco Examiner for thirteen years and recently for his show, "Hardball," in which he is known to blatantly disagree with and interrupt his guests, or as he calls it, "playing hardball." He is also known for some of the statements he made against Hillary Clinton when he was "anchoring" during the primary season. Conservatives were quick to criticize the moves of the network. There was just no way that this pair could be objective; it could be likened to putting Bill O'Reilly or Rush Limbaugh in the anchor seat at the DNC.

Indeed the critics of the network's decisions were justified. Although over 2.2 million viewers tuned in to watch MSNBC's coverage of the RNC in a "Sports Center"-style format, Mathews and Olbermann couldn't remain impartial. At the convention, some footage was shown of the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks. It was meant to pay tribute to the victims and to invoke feelings of patriotism. To most people in attendance the tribute had bipartisan appeal and was moving, but certainly did not exploit or offend anyone. Keith Olbermann viewed things slightly differently and decided to take matters into his own hands vocalize his opinions in a most unprofessional manner, by vocalizing his opinions in a most unprofessional manner. Olbermann prefaced his comments with, "I'm sorry it's necessary to say this; it was probably not appropriate to be shown." Olbermann then continued to apologize to viewers who were offended and made accusations about the supposedly exploited memories of the dead. Olbermann was interviewed about his comments and he's quoted as saying that he's "not utterly neutral." Forgiving his liberal bias, Mr. Olbermann either doesn't understand why his comments were inappropriate for someone in his role, or he simply didn't care. "I found it ironic

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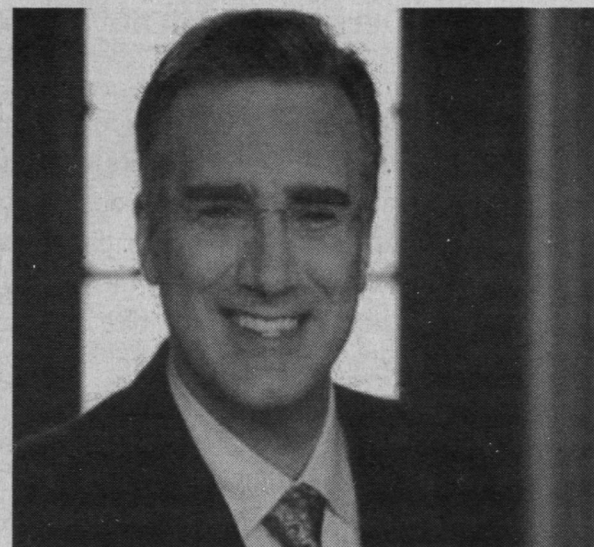
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and instructive that I could have easily said exactly what I did say, exactly when I did say it, if I had been wearing a different hat, and nobody would have taken any issue," he said.

MSNBC moved quickly to rectify the situation in a brazen manner that might have broad ramifications for people of all political outlooks. At a time when the media's approval rating for professionalism is just about 49 percent, some wonder if the changes at MSNBC herald a move toward some neutrality and objectivity. MSNBC's parent company, NBC Universal, was clearly embarrassed at by the biased coverage. Tom Brokaw and Brian Williams, the past and present hosts of NBC Nightly News, have told friends and colleagues that they are finding it harder to defend the cable arm of its news division. At a panel discussion in Denver, Brokaw was quoted as saying they had "gone too far." McCain wrote a formal letter of complaint to the network as well, citing similar complaints, though its president made sure to deny that the network actually has an ideology. In addition to the remarks made during the RNC, the network has made other politically biased moves. Perhaps the most appalling of them all was the breaking news headline, "How many new houses does Sarah Palin add to the Republican ticket?" which aired on the day of her pick.

The changes at MSNBC signify that maybe our media estab-

lishment is beginning to head in the right direction. It is now just simply impossible to display a biased view in a journalistic outlet without being called out on it. News networks and other media outlets may finally be forced to realize this and move back towards a position of neutrality and regain some of the credibility they had in the days following 9/11. It is vital to free speech that this in fact be the case and that we make sure that all sides get to express their views. If the news media becomes more partisan, then democracy itself is threatened.



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MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2008

Robert Spencer, Part Two
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hEWn8Ccsijs>

After Mr. Spencer's talk, we reached the Q & A section of the event. I

The Rights and Wrongs of NeoConservatism

By Derreck Mordente

Ask someone what is a NeoCon and you are likely to get a multitude of answers. Liberals will tend to see them as a cabal of warmongers with an obsession for secrecy pushing a program of hawkish American imperialism; more traditional Conservatives will see them as illegitimate apostate liberal usurpers of the Conservative movement who are overly internationalist and who are either “soft” or wrong on social issues near and dear to the Conservative heart including the threats of economic globalism, illegal immigration and to traditional social values including gun rights and what constitutes the definition of marriage.

The problem is that not only may both sides be partially correct in their interpretations but that the philosophy behind the ideology may have wanted it that way in the pursuit of truth!

How does one define a “NeoCon”?

I think it’s safe to say that Neo-Conservatism’s intellectual roots date back to the 1930s and ‘40s, in the vibrant atmosphere of left-wing political circles centered in New York’s City College. These circles included Irving Kristol (father of Bill), Nathan Glazer, Irving Howe, Daniel Bell and Seymour Martin Lipset. Disgusted by the Stalin’s crimes, they gravitated to Stalin’s main rival, Leon Trotsky, taking his side in the debate that maintained that Stalin had “betrayed” the ideals of the Russian Revolution and blamed him for abandoning the universalist aspirations of socialism by ruthlessly pursuing his Russian nationalist policy of building “socialism in one country.” The NeoCon pursuit of a vision of “global democratic revolution” appears to have its basis in the Trotskyite vision of “permanent revolution.” The NeoCon idea that society can be “perfected” by an evangelist ideology also has similarities with the Trotskyite view.

They were also heavily influenced by an oft misunderstood philosopher, named Leo Strauss, a German émigré who escaped from Nazi Germany.

Strauss is an interesting figure who, unfortunately cannot be fully explained within the limits of this article. Some have described him as being anti-democratic. However, I think a fair assessment of his view is one similar to Winston Churchill’s: Democracy is a bad form of government, but all others are far worse. Strauss believed that man was faced with “permanent problems” about what constitutes justice, the existence of God, and so on. He believed these problems would always be with us since he thought there were no settled answers to such questions. For Strauss, liberal democracy was the best solution to this problem because it is tolerant and open-minded; it allows those with differing views to practice their ways as they see fit without threatening the liberty of those with dissenting views to choose the opposite. For that reason it should be strongly defended. Strauss is more a believer in liberal democracy than he is in Conservatism – “neo” or otherwise; but it is the NeoCons who, having abandoned the historical dead-end of Trotskyite Socialism, have picked up Strauss’ strong affinity for democracy and tied it to their desire to perfect society around the world by democratizing it. Following Strauss, the NeoCons have a very clear vision of “Good” vs. “Evil” and argue for putting moral judgments back at the center of Ameri-

can foreign policy, as Woodrow Wilson had when he described U.S. entry in WWI to make the world “safe for democracy,” as Reagan had with the notion of confronting the Soviet “evil empire,” and Bush II did with his “axis of evil” speech -- a division of the world into friends who supported us and enemies who supported the terrorists (which was written by NeoCon David Frum). Furthermore, the NeoCons follow Strauss in that they see as the pursuit of wisdom and of what constitutes the “Good,” must face the fact that in the “real” world, as Thrasymachus states in Plato’s Republic, justice is helping friends and hurting enemies.

The enemies of NeoCons among Conservatives are known as “PaleoCons.” They represent the traditional conservative values of Robert Taft, Russell Kirk, Barry Goldwater, and Ronald Reagan. They also view the NeoCons as refugees who came into the Conservative movement because of their conversion to anti-Communism during the Cold War. However, as Irving Kristol has stated, “...the historical task and political purpose of neo-conservatism would seem to be... to convert the Republican Party and American conservatism in general, against their respective wills, into a new kind of conservative politics suitable for a growing democracy.” For traditional conservatives this was apostasy of the first order and it manifested itself most strongly in the NeoCon view of foreign policy, namely the complete abandonment of a policy as old as the Republic which called for avoiding “permanent alliances” (as with Israel), “passionate attachments” (as with free trade), and foreign wars (as in Iraq). The latter was the breaking point for the PaleoCons, who oppose the war in Iraq as an unnecessary sallying forth to “slay monsters,” not in the interest of the United States, but driven by the interests of Israel.

If the Bush Doctrine means anything, it encompasses such NeoCon maxims as viewing the War on Terror as a clash between “good and evil” rather than between differing systems based on political, not moral, motives; it is the idea that you are “either with us or against us” and that the survival of democracy in the USA depends on its survival everywhere – thus obligating us to defend it everywhere. Add to this the fact that the NeoCons have totally abandoned a “Nationalist” view of economics for unfettered globalist “free trade,” support all sorts of corporate welfare and government bailouts, support the policy of open borders and amnesty for illegal immigrants favored by Big Business, and have largely abandoned traditional conservative stands on abortion, affirmative action and gay rights, and one can see just how deeply opposed the PaleoCon wing is from the NeoCons.

NeoCons have been just as fierce in their denunciation of their PaleoCon rivals. Leading NeoCon William Kristol has been quoted as saying, “I will take Bush over Kerry, but Kerry over (Patrick) Buchanan... the Weekly Standard (his NeoCon magazine)... has as much or more in common with the liberal hawks than with traditional conservatives.”

The NeoCons charge that the Paleos are defeatist to the point of being unpatriotic due to their opposition to the war in Iraq. To the NeoCons, it is the PaleoCons’ outdated economic policies that are anti-business and tinged with left-wing anti-globalist conspiracy theory. NeoCon Jonah Goldberg points out that “if being a conservative for war and democracy makes

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you a NeoCon, then roughly 90 percent of the Republican Party is 'neoconservative' according to most polls." Noting "democracies don't go to war against other democracies," Goldberg contends that "the spread of free-trading liberal democracy would be in America's interests."

It seems to me that there is much wrong with Neo-Conservatism, especially its abandonment of many traditional conservative values and principles.

However, while the United States should not run around the world trying to make every failed state a Jeffersonian democracy and try to use its military in utopian exercises in such as "nation-building" in places beset by nihilistic anarchy, it cannot blindly cling to an 18th century view of the shrunken, interdependent 21st century world where circumstances demand action, sometimes even pre-emptive action, such as was required in Iraq. Conservatives should agree that 9/11 mandated that the United States act in its national security interest by attacking and destroying the forces of Islamist fascism in their own region. The fact that the almost universally expected "second 9/11" attack has so far, thank God, been prevented speaks volumes to the success of this policy, if not of every tactical error made in its pursuit.

In this, the NeoCons are correct. But in much else, their "conservatism" is suspect.

America is beset by many foreign policy and social problems that are aggravated by the policies of the Left. To successfully oppose this, the conservatism of the future must aggressively stand up against those who threaten our interest, protect traditional social values, as well as preserve a Capitalist economic system that is in the service of the interests of the United States, not in ideologically driven notions that demand such security and economic interests be trumped by a fanatic devotion to free-trade uber alles.

Fortunately, there is an answer to the NeoCon/PaleoCon rift that has a proven track record and also a proven ability to reconcile the opposing sides. Its success as a forward-looking, optimistic conservatism based on a strong military, a muscular and wise, not muscle-bound and brain-dead, foreign policy and a strong grounding in traditional values as well as a belief in the nationalist concept of American Exceptionalism, has been lost in the squabbling between the Neo- and PaleoCons and the Liberal enemies of both.

It lays waiting for someone to pick up its banner.

The name on the banner is "Reaganism."

The Grand Old Party - No longer the Old Boys Club

By Britany Klenofsky

The announcement of Governor Sarah Palin as John McCain's running mate rocked election headquarters from coast to coast. In the blink of an eye, every preconceived notion about the 2008 election was thrown out the window faster than a liberal can shout "Change!"

The shock that ignited the conservative base and sent shivers through that of liberals was not just because Palin is a little talked about Alaskan politician, but because she is a woman. A Republican woman.

speech that finished off the Democratic National Convention.

For the first time, the GOP would have a woman on the ticket, and not just any woman, but a woman who personifies the very ideals of conservatives who make up the majority of the Republican Party.

The announcement of Palin as a vice presidential nominee was done on the anniversary of women's suffrage, marking the long road that women have trod in this country.

But why are people so surprised?

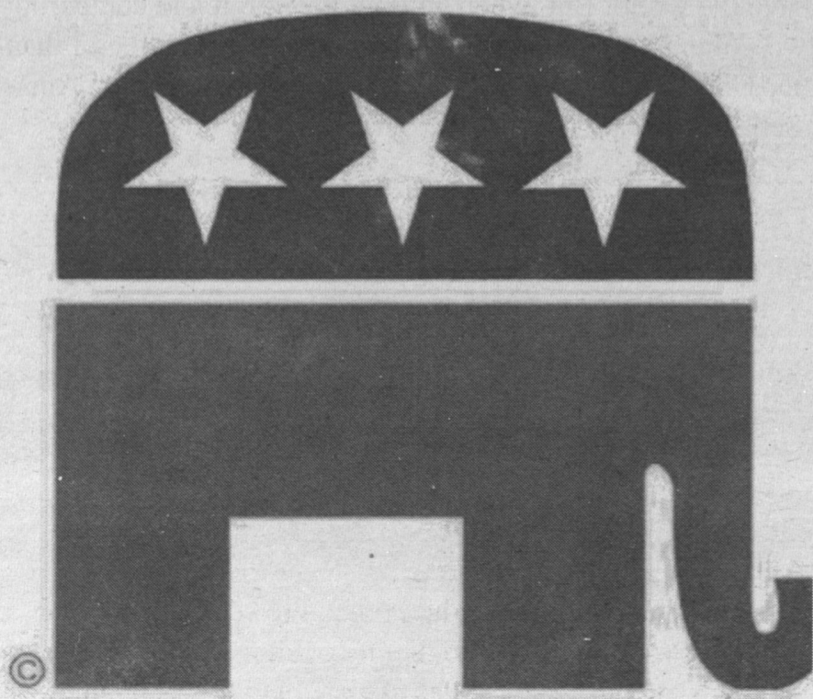
Senator Hillary Clinton was running for the Democratic presidential nomination. Nancy Pelosi sits high on Capitol Hill. Why is the nation so shocked? What has conservatives and liberals alike up in arms?

The commotion is because Governor Palin is a Republican. A Republican that tears the blanket off the conundrum of liberal hypocrisy that has plagued the minds of many.

Aren't Republicans supposed to be cold-hearted, white men? Isn't it the Democratic Party that is the champion of "change" and diversity?

Or is that just what the liberals want you to believe? Are Re-

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It was an amazing announcement which stole coverage from Senator Obama just news blips after his attention-seeking

publicans composed of nothing but racist white men?

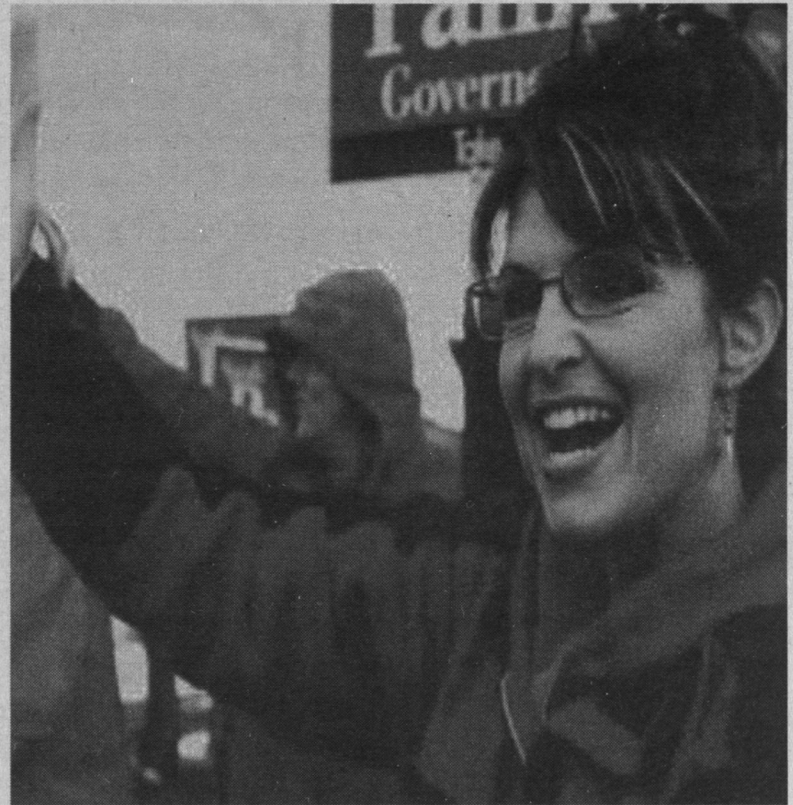
The answer is a resounding no.

It was the newborn Republican Party, led by President Lincoln during its first breaths in the political world, that freed the slaves. The Democratic Party claims to be the most forward-thinking, and yet President Bush's cabinet was more diverse than President Clinton's. Alongside President Bush has been Colin Powell, a black man, and Condoleezza Rice, a black woman. Why was no praise given when Elaine Chao was appointed Secretary of Labor? Chao is an Asian immigrant who arrived in America at the age of eight without knowing any English. But by working hard, she became the first Asian-American cabinet member in U.S. history. Sounds like the American dream to me. Maybe liberals just don't like the American dream anymore. Working hard to succeed and break through previously set barriers. Going from a non-English-speaking immigrant to one of the most important positions in the country.

Or maybe liberals just don't think the American dream should apply to conservatives.

Republicans are the ones who are forward-thinking, the ones who have values and some shred of a conscience. They just don't need to prove it to people in rhetoric. They prove it in action and deeds.

Good luck, Governor Palin, and thanks for paving the way for "change."



Senator McCain the Tree Hugger

By Sarah Marshall

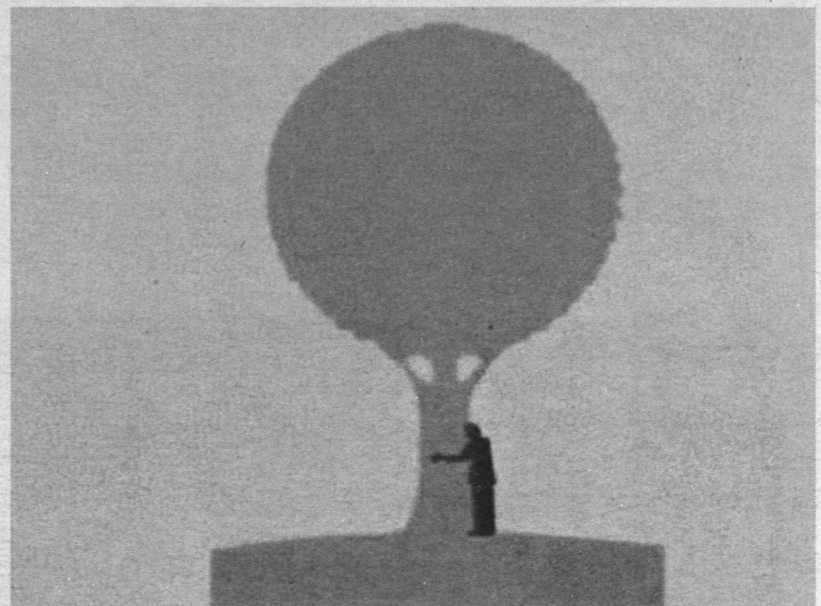
About a week ago, I was talking to a friend from home (Mississippi) about the election, and she was upset when she found out I was voting for Senator McCain. "Why do you hate the Earth? Do you want more hurricanes?" she asked me. This friend happens to be the epitome of a tree hugger and thinks President Bush caused Hurricane Katrina with his collaboration with Big Oil to speed up global warming, but I still thought it would be close-minded of me to not even consider what she said.

My friend from Mississippi was wrong. After looking at his record, I wouldn't be too surprised if my friend and Senator McCain ended up hugging trees together. Basically every time Senator McCain voted on or spoke about the environment, it was hardly words of someone who "hates the Earth." Just this year he pledged his support on tougher regulations on emission requirements. He said that preserving the wilderness was among his proudest achievements, and his votes generally supported that. He worked to put 3.5 billion acres of land into protection. Much of his other environmental work involves stronger mercury regulations. The Republican candidate for president says, that a "A McCain White House will reflect the guiding principles of Theodore Roosevelt."

For those of you who don't remember 11th-grade American History, TR, a Republican, was by far, of all the presidents we have had, the biggest conservationist. He was a major supporter of alternative energies, such as wind and solar. Senator McCain is in opposition to a general plan, like other candidates who excite us with claims that they can help us "save more oil than we currently import from the Middle East and Venezuela combined" and tell us that by the end of their first term they can ensure that 10% of our power comes from renewable energy sources (that's not that exciting, by the way; right now the number is at 6% and climbing) without ever telling us how. He has many unique ideas, such as 'John McCain's Clean Car Chal-

lenge,' in which he plans to offer a huge tax credit to the first to develop a clean car, and then a \$5,000 tax credit to everyone who buys one. Senator McCain is a huge supporter of nuclear energy, which has worked well in other countries, like France. Senator Obama's running mate, Senator Joe Biden, says he won't even look into clean coal. Oh, those open-minded people on the left!

Basically, Senator McCain has a very genuinely green record while Senator Obama has a particularly blank record. Senator McCain has a lot of specific and realistic ideas on how to fix things. Senator Obama generally makes very extreme claims on how he will save the world. But, when getting down to it and comparing the two policies, Senator McCain's is actually more liberal than Senator Obama's! If your vote depends on the fate of the Amazon, Senator McCain is actually your man.



ELECTION PARTY

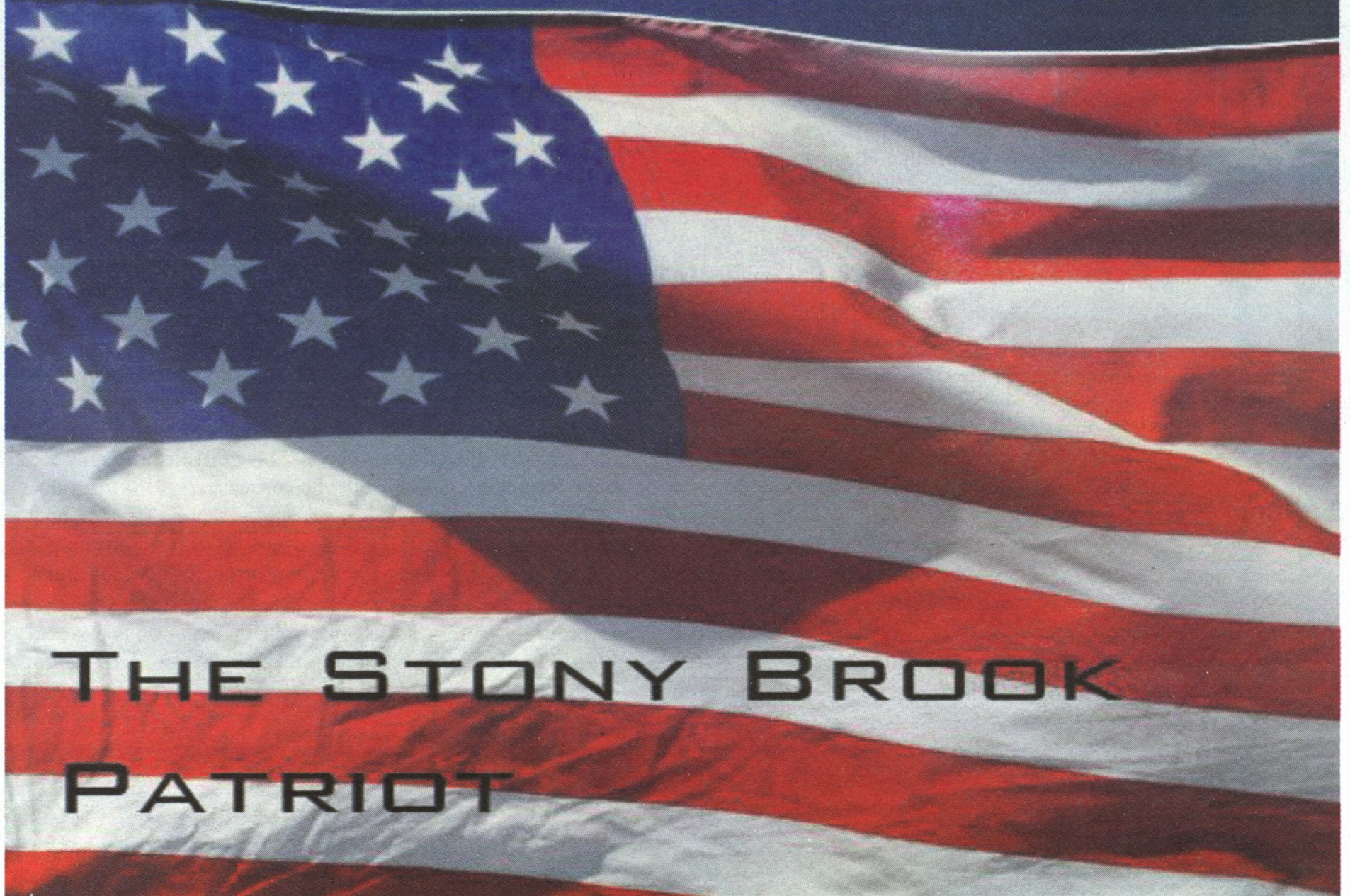
2008!

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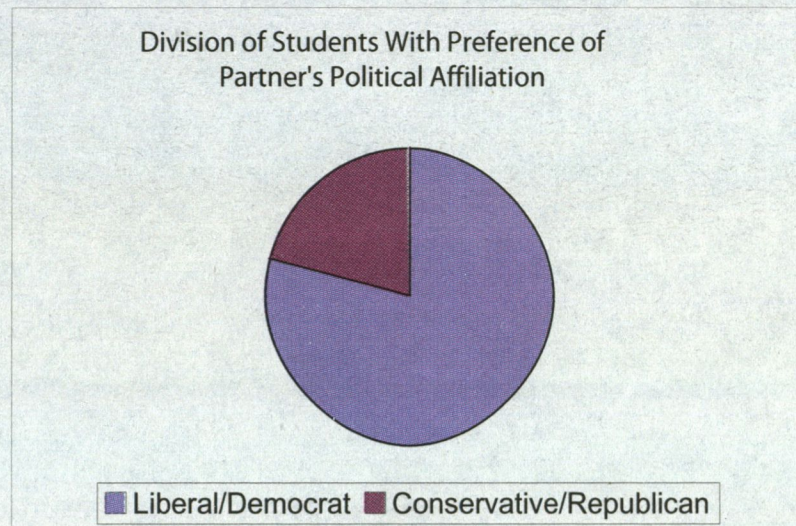
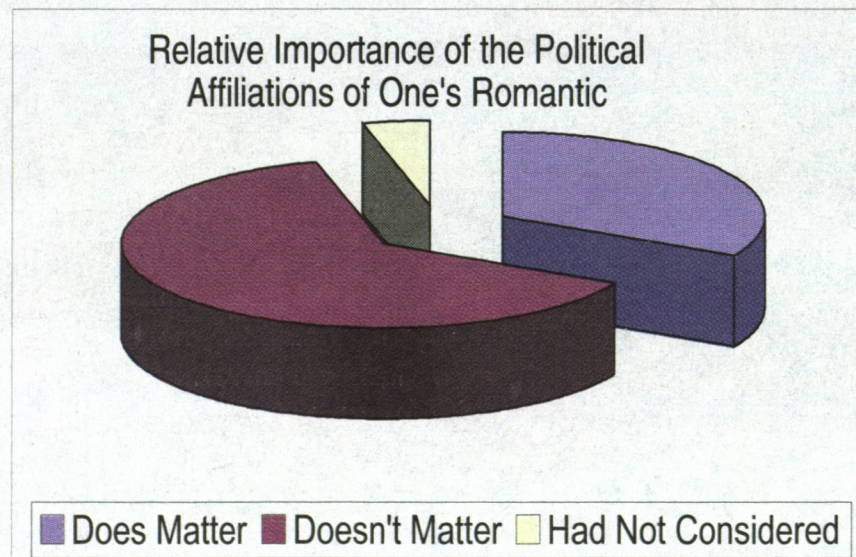
The Patriot Poll

Do The Political Affiliations of Your Partner Matter? *By Bridget Matikainen*

Love is such an anomaly. What is responsible for two people falling for each other? What makes our brains work that way? Exactly what causes that delectable cocktail of neurotransmitters to be released? Perhaps a specific few personality traits, amongst other qualities, can be held accountable for the phenomenon we call romance. Volumes of literature have been written on the subjects of love, romance, and attraction, and one could debate the specifics endlessly. And with the current administration coming to a regrettable close, the matter of political opinions keeps coming to light. Politics seems to be everywhere these days. You can't turn on a television or radio, or open a periodical without being bombarded with news of the upcoming Presidential election. And where does this heated political tumult fall, when shoved awkwardly into the sphere of love's influence? Do the two (political opinion and romance) affect each other? Should they? Or if they do, is it only because the person whose opinion is in question has a strong political stance themselves?

I asked these exact questions to a group of 73 university students in New York State, all between the ages of 17 and 23. The results I got were somewhat surprising. But before too much analysis, here are the numbers, cut and dry...

As you can see, the majority of students polled had no preference when it came to their partner's political views. Of this affable group, 84.8% considered themselves to be moderates,



4.3% classified themselves as conservative, Libertarian or Republican, and 10.9% claimed to be liberal or a Democrat.

There were twenty-four people who attested to the fact that it did, in fact, matter to them if their partner were a liberal or a conservative. Of these twenty-four, every single person considered themselves strongly associated with either a major political party; five people Republican and nineteen Democrat.

These results are not so shocking at first glance; after all, it seems reasonable that those who hold strong beliefs (of any kind, really) would hold to high esteem the beliefs of their loved ones, while those who took a less orthodox stance on political issues would allow their partner the same. It is intriguing, though, to think of the concept of tolerance, a commonly touted theme amongst the ever open-minded liberals. Almost 80% of students who responded with a fervent, "Yes!" when asked whether or not the political views of their significant other would matter, also considered themselves liberal. Is liberal tolerance only tolerant when it is hand-in-hand with consensus?

At a time like this election, a time when history is about to be sculpted a little sharper, opinions are important; having a voice matters. It makes no difference if it is a whisper in the wind, or a roar from the rooftops – saying what you think has never meant more. And whether your opinion influences matters of life, love, or political polls taken by Stony Brook Patriot writers, one pertinent fact remains the same – it is your opinion, dear reader.

The Last Word

Give me Liberty, or Give me Death!

-Patrick Henry

Who Will Stony Brook Vote For?

n=137

McCain: 13.1%

Obama: 78.1%

Undecided: 8.8%

Polling by

Bridget Matikainen