

AL JAZEERA IS AVAILABLE

November 29, 2006
News-Journal Letters to the Editor
by Reinhold Schlieper
Palm Coast,Fl

Pierre Tristam is right on the money again with his comment that the US should attempt to see itself as the rest of the world sees it; however, he is wrong that Al-Jazeera is not available by regular TV subscription. I recommend a visit to <http://www.globecastwv.com/> [GlobeCast World TV] on the Internet to see a full listing of what that service offers.

As I am writing this, English Al-Jazeera is showing a live report of the military sealing off of Beit Hanoun, a town in Gaza, with live footage of Israeli tanks shooting at vehicles attempting to leave town. Al-Jazeera interviews spokespersons from the Palestinian side and spokespersons from the Israeli side. And Al-Jazeera must have a tremendous impact on the male-dominated Middle East by using female reporters in battle gear at Beit Hanoun. And during all that reporting, no one interrupted to try to sell toilet paper or make-up kits or underwear or any other perversion of the consumer society. The tone is sober and matter-of-fact.

November 19, 2006
News-Journal Letters to Editor
by Patricia Tugas
Ormond Beach,

PEACE

Voices unite in songs of hope

The first in a series of Environmental/Peace Concerts was held Friday, Nov. 10 at the Unitarian Universalist Society, 56 N. Halifax, Ormond Beach. The music was introduced by Rev. Bud Murphy, pastor of the Society, reading from Thich N'hat Hanh and Starhawk.

The songs presented were originals by Dan Gribbin and by Sharon Resnikoff, as well as folk standards by Cat Stevens, Joni Mitchell, and Woody Guthrie. In asking the audience to sing along, the program stated, 'Some assembly is definitely required!'

From being a dream in the heart of Walt DeYoung, this concert grew and took root in the voice and strings of Dan Gribbin, where it began to strum and flicker in the thoughts of a harmonious group of folks in the 'UU' Society, and those who stand on street corners protesting the war in Iraq.

They were joined by many members of the community and visitors to the area, those who wanted their voices to be heard singing songs about hope, love and joy!

The wonderful evening ended with the entire audience holding hands in a circle singing these most beautiful words of John Lennon, 'All we are saying is give peace a chance.'

COMMUNITY VOICES

News-Journal October 30, 2006

By **William A Ternent**

Employer's Letter to job seeders on Nov. 7 ballot

Dear candidates, now that I'm about to hire you, there are a few things I want you to understand about your job.

I'm hiring you to represent me, but not only me. Your job is to represent all of the people you serve, not just me because you think I agree with everything you say or your party's platform. Most of all, I'm not hiring you because I think you are infallible or that you have the 'right take' personally on every issue that comes before you.

I'm hiring you to represent my best interests and the best interests of every other citizen. I'm not hiring you to impose on me and everyone else your personal views or those of some special interest group that supported you with cold cash. Similarly, I'm not hiring you to invoke your unique religious beliefs or dogma, or any others for that matter, in making decisions. Rather, stick with moral and ethical precepts which transcend religious differences.

I recognize that is a tall order. It's a real squeeze play, but that's the reality of the office you seek. There are no final truths, only brokered best choices for all people between what are usually two extremes that are repugnant to about half of us.

Your job is to see that all views are heard and considered and a reasonable choice is made that most of us can truly support. When you don't, that's when your reputation as a politician and representative of the people suffers.

Although your advertisements or those of your party seem to suggest otherwise, **true democracy or a representative republic is not a zero sum game: You know, winner take all; my way or the highway. Your job is to find solutions that virtually all of us can accept and live with until we live a little more, learn a little more, and can come up with a better solution.** Everybody loses when you alienate about half of us with your decisions because you think you have a "mandate" to do one thing or another, or fall into the trap of believing you have the final best answer.

So where does being a 'representative' of the people come in? Well, I'm giving you plenty of room to be open to divergent ideas, to investigate them, to weigh their merits, to conduct a continuing dialogue with your constituents about them, to internalize all that input and come to a judgment as to what seems to be in our collective best interests as a society or community, to interact with other representatives and what they are learning in this process called government, and to suggest issues, policies and make decisions.

Lest you think I'm 'wishy washy' or without convictions: I really believe in the capacity for goodness of a government where people are listened to and really heard. I can respect a government where everyone can have a voice on issues that impact them. I can defend a government that defends individuality while recognizing that to be peaceful we must work together in community. I can honor a government that respects and understands the strengths that can arise out of diversity. I can support a government that nurtures those processes which bring us together while preserving our identities as members of the human family. I can afford a government that understands what a balanced budget means and that it needs to pay its obligations, not continually refinance them at my or my children's expense.

Remember, through the democratic process we ALL hire you. Whatever games you may have had to play to become a nominee and eventually get hired don't really count. You are OUR employee, and we expect you to act like it. Oh, and thanks for being willing to apply for the job.

William A. Ternent, a retired college administrator, lives in Port Orange.

August 16, 2006 News-Journal

Charles L. McDearmont

Daytona Beach

Complains about the price of gasoline, often evoke a response by apologists about how high gas is in other industrialized nations. The other morning I heard a caller on CSPAN who had lived in England a number of years say gas there was \$6 or \$7 dollar per gallon. Currently, in Canada gas about \$4 per gallon. In Germany it is \$6.65 per gallon. There is no doubt gas is more expensive in almost every industrialized country than it is here; it always has been.

On recent visits to Canada and Germany, I heard few complaints. Why? I believe it's because they get something from higher gas prices. Everyone (rich or poor) in each of these countries have excellent health care. In other words, their 'Medicare' covers ever citizen, not just the elderly. No one in Canada, England or Germany goes without medical care because they can't afford to pay the doctor or hospital bills. Also, people pay much less for medications, some of which are produced in the United States.

It was my observation, based on my wife's relatives, that the people in Germany receive outstanding health care. They also have some of the best roads and bridges in the world. What do we get for the higher price of gas? I'll leave it to the reader to figure out who does benefit. Maybe the higher gas prices will eventually force the auto industry to produce more fuel-efficient cars - similar to the ones in Europe. Note I said maybe.

COMMUNITY VOICES: 1 person in a world of peace or war

News-Journal June 2, 2006

Dan Kennedy

Ormond Beach

Most people clearly desire a personal sense of identification with one or more groupings of people (e.g. family, nation). This seems to provide a sense of grounding and feeling of stability in our lives. Some of these identification groupings are relatively more specific or limited, while others are relatively more general. Thus to consider extremes, at the specific end we may have a person who identifies with her/his unique, idiosyncratic individuality as a person, while at the general end we might have identification with the human species or with all existing life. Between the extremes we have such categories as male or female, family, ethnic group, religious group, socio-economic status class, and geopolitical groupings (e.g. state, nation, western civilization). Most of us identify to some degree with several different categories, but also tend to emphasize or value some of them more than others. I believe that psychological identification can have important implications for human conflict.

History has shown that a strong sense of identity with certain identification categories tends to be especially associated with human conflict, ranging in violence from clan disputes to all out global warfare. These categories include ethnic groups, conservative religious groups possessing rigid dogma, socio-economic status class, and geopolitical groups.

On the other hand, a strong sense of identity with the total human species, with life in general, and with total cosmic existence, as exemplified by liberal religious groups and secular humanists, appears to be more nearly associated with peaceful, nonviolent approaches to human disputes.

It is also worth noting that the psychological concept of concrete vs abstract thinking is pertinent to the distinctions being made here. For example, a sense of family or ethnicity is more a part of everyday life for most people than is a concept such as 'citizen of the world.' Current globalization trends, however, are greatly increasing the importance of the latter concept.

The various forms of psychological identification should certainly be respected, and indeed help serve to make life interesting. However, if we value peace over war, it would seem to be advisable for education to promote a broad sense of identification with life and existence in general.

May 21, 2006 News-Journal

Kurtland Davies

Ormond Beach

MANKIND VERSUS THE ECOSYSTEM

Re 'First Baptist approved to build,' May 9 article:

I was disturbed but not surprised by the approval of the First Baptists to build on a sensitive ecological site. What did surprise me was the statement of Mike Thompson of the Volusia-Flagler Sierra Club: 'I thought Christians were supposed to take care of the planet.'

It is largely because of Judeo-Christianity that humans are causing the sixth major extinction of species in the history of the planet. The religious story that man and only man was created in the image of God creates a moral hierarchy that places the human community at the top, then animals and plants enjoyed by humans, followed by less desirable species such as reptiles and insects, with the oldest microorganisms at the very bottom. This anthropocentrism is sheer nonsense. Humans are totally dependent on millions of microorganisms operating symbiotically in our bodies and all over the planet. Ecology destroys this myth of the moral superiority of our species. The real driver of the universe is the interdependence of all species. Yet as long as the Christian community believes in this hierarchy of man, we will continue to disregard anything not human, such as the Tomoka River ecosystem.

Adding to the ecological disaster is the belief of many Christians that life is a temporary passage, and Earth a temporary place. For founders of Christianity and some fundamentalists today, the end of the world is imminent and any attachment to the natural world is foolish.

A third Christian story leading to environmental destruction is that man is flawed, a born sinner. Man's instinctual nature, emotions and wild nature are evil, and the only redemption is to tame and control this wildness by praying to an invisible male god in the sky. I asked one of the members of the First Baptist Church why they were insisting on building on a very sensitive environmental site, and he said, 'Because we can. It is God's will.'

Anyone who cares about our planet needs to understand these destructive unconscious stories that drive our culture and help to root out and transform them before they destroy the very foundation of life on this planet.

April 30, 2006 News-Journal
Marsha Lewis
Daytona Beach

Disillusioned over Visioning

When I first learned about the Citizens Visioning Committee I wanted to become a member. I managed to get appointed and attended several planning sessions. .I did not attend the public sessions or the subsequent workshops. However, I would like to share impressions of the process as I observed it.

The introductory meeting was well orchestrated. A Power Point presentation showed all attendees what Daytona Beach could look like if properly developed. Some of the streetscapes were appealing. Slides showed how improvements in paving and landscape, rehabilitation of salvageable buildings, and infill with structures of compatible architecture could transform a dilapidated street into an inviting scene. Unfortunately, while the slides showed walkable neighborhoods with single family homes and low-density multiple -family complexes, the overall plan was heavy on high-density condos.

The planning sessions included lengthy questionnaires. I was dismayed to find only A/B/C/D, choices for answers. There was no option for "none of the above" nor any space for original input. Further disappointing, was no mention of any provision for historic preservation.

At the last session I attended, several tables were set up with large maps of the city as it exists. Tissue overlays were placed on the maps one at a time, and we were instructed to place new police stations, new fire station, new schools, new parks on each one as they were whisked past us. We were also asked to decide where high-, medium-, and low-density housing should be constructed. We were asked in matter of minutes to make decisions that urban planners would take weeks, perhaps months, to decide; and they would have the advantage of staff assistance, en-gineering reports and necessary research.

I left this session disillusioned once again, with serious doubts that I would want to live in a Daytona Beach that evolved from this process. I would like to think that the city fathers are well-intentioned, but I believe strategy and direction need to be readdressed. I urge the city to re-ject the Anton Nelessen propos-al. The few worthy suggestions in it are far outweighed by the unacceptable.

April 1, 2006 News-Journal
by **Marti King**
Ormond Beach

Beware the Legislature

Mark Lane really put it all together in his March 22 article, 'Legislators get back at judges and you!' 'Our' legislators are so determined to get their own way, not the peoples' way, that they seem willing to go to extreme measures to circumvent the voters' wishes. Their gerrymandered districts appear to make them feel insulated from any backlash from voters. From class-size and pregnant pigs to vouchers, they are pushing hard.

And speaking of vouchers, the article 'House: No FCAT for voucher students' also on March 22, makes it clear what their plans are for our public schools: 'The Florida House rejected a Democratic proposal Tuesday that would have required voucher students who attend private schools at taxpayer expense to take the same standardized test as children in public schools.'

That proposal seems fair, doesn't it? How can you have two parallel school systems, both funded by

the state, one having academic standards and the other having none? Is it any surprise that we have a huge teacher shortage in public schools when teachers know they are going to continue to have abnormally large classes and still receive below normal wages for teachers in other locales? Is there any longer any doubt that 'our' Legislature is trying its best to tear down our public school system? We had better make sure that we are well-informed on the issues that the legislature is getting ready to put on the ballot this fall, and then we need to get out and vote!

March 17, 2006 News-Journal
RUSH TO SPREAD THE WORD
Gordon Williamson

Holly Hill, Florida

We should be greatly appreciate to the News-Journal for revealing in the Ideas section Feb.26 that the Bush Administration is serious about selling hundreds of thousands of acres of our national parks to private developers. It seems that paying off supporters, tax cuts and spending for Bush's war have caused shortfalls in the pending budget.

Some of the nationwide parcels involve critical water recharge areas, wetlands, sensitive wildlife habitat and old growth forests, so important in reducing global warming. Built by overcoming great political difficulties over more than 100 years, our parks have become one of our greatest assets, enjoyed by people everywhere. We should be adding acreage as a heritage for our children rather than selling them. Once the property is developed, it will be impossible to reclaim.

The administration is keeping quiet about this. Relatively few citizens know it's happening. The News-Journal editorial is a start, but we must spread the word to everyone and complain to our state officials (almost a thousand acres is in the watershed areas of the Ocala National Forest) and national leaders. A visit to the Forest Service Web site looks more like a real estate office multiple listing service rather than a forest caretaker site. We need to comment to srs_land_sales@fs.fed.us by March 30. Our parks should not be stolen from us; they must be preserved! Time is of the essence!

For more information about Gordon Williamson you can do a google search: Gordon Williamson WTTG TV Washington, D.C.

March 7, 2006 News-Journal
TORTURE BY ANY NAME
by **Daniel Kennedy**

Re: 'Judge sanctions exported torture,' News-Journal, Bob Herbert's column of 2-22-06.

Herbert described the case of Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen, who was taken prisoner by U.S. authorities at Kennedy Airport in 2002 and sent to his native country, Syria. There he was imprisoned in deplorable conditions in a dungeon, beaten, and tortured.

He apparently had no background of any trouble with the law, no evidence was found of any involvement in terrorist activity, and he was finally released after ten months with no charges ever having been filed against him. His attempt to sue for damages in a U.S. Federal court was recently dismissed due a need for secrecy related to national security matters.

A follow-up story by Herbert ('No justice, peace after 'rendition', " News-Journal, 2-27-06) describes Arar's continuing adjustment problems after this horrible experience.

Herbert claims that all of this has been well documented. If his report is accurate, which is highly likely, why was this torture outsourcing outrage not presented on the front page of the News-Journal? This is the type of story that should make headlines!

February 1, 2006 News-Journal
THE LIVING NEED ATTENTION

by **Donna Jordon**

Ormond Beach

In letter dated Jan 24th from Rev. Rebecca Spanos, it was stated that 40 million unborn children have been 'lost' since the Roe v. Wade law came down from our Supreme Court. Her point was to birth these children so they could be adopted by willing parents.

Our world is so overpopulated with children at this point that we can't feed, medicate, soothe or protect from war, genocide, disease, starvation, natural disasters – need I go on?

There are already 1.2 million existing children needing to be adopted, in real time. Let's concentrate our adoption efforts on our living children who need our outreach, in any form.

Do we need 40 million more!?

January 31, 2006 News Journal
THREAT TO LONG-TERM CARE

by **William A. Ternent**

Port Orange

U.S. Reps. Tom Feeney and John Mica will vote on the Budget Reconciliation Bill when Congress reconvenes Wednesday. The bill includes provisions that endanger the health and long-term care of millions of Americans and should be revised or voted down in its present form.

It seeks to achieve billions in 'savings' through asset transfer provisions that penalize the kinds of charitable donations that are encouraged in our society. And, as a result of such donations, an estimated 120,000 persons a year could be denied long-term care in nursing homes under the provisions of Medicaid if this bill is passed.

Average cost per year for nursing home care now exceeds \$60,000 per year, yet only 7 percent of seniors have enough savings to cover it, and even fewer have long-term care insurance.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the asset transfer provisions in the budget bill would deny more than 120,000 people needing nursing home care an average of three months' and in some cases over a year's coverage under Medicaid. The home equity provision would deny another 5,000 persons care (primarily elderly women).

Emergency room costs can be expected to skyrocket when those denied Medicaid under the budget bill are forced to frequent emergency rooms.

. This Budget Reconciliation Bill just doesn't make sense, and conflicts with traditional and contemporary societal values.

I urge readers to dial 1-800-928-8084 (toll free) and ask their congressman to vote 'No' to the present form of the bill.

January 2, 2006 - **N-Journal 'Eye for an Eye' Was Counsel for Restraint, not License to Kill**

by **Reinhold Schlieper**

The 'Death Penalty' discussion was quite interesting in your December 25 edition. Several of the writers appear to make fairly obvious errors in reasoning. One writer observes, 'A majority of the American people support the death penalty.' I wish we could solve ethical problems by votes; several problems might become so much easier to deal with. But let's try to apply this procedure. Ninety percent of Austria voted in favor of being governed by Adolf Hitler. By Mr. Greenberg's reasoning, one might have several possible conclusions:

Hitler was a good person since an outstandingly great majority voted for him. Hitler was a good person for that time and day in Austria because an Austrian majority of that day and age voted for him. An Austrian majority of that day and age is obviously significantly dumber than a US-American majority would have been of that day and age, and so Hitler was a despicable person nonetheless because a majority of Americans significantly outweighs any other majority in this world.

Well. I think that we would not intuit an agreement with (1), that we would find (2) too relativistic since also the majority of US-Americans may see matters differently very soon or since other majorities of this world might see things differently from the US-American majority or since some sub-sets of US-American majorities—all US-American Roman Catholics, for example—may see things quite differently from the majority that one letter-writer has in mind. Finally, I would sincerely hope that ethnocentric self-exaltation has not quite run as amok as to endorse (3). Or let's try a different problem: The Catholic church branded Jews as god killers or Christ killers well into the sixties, I believe. Now since the majority of Catholics are to abide by the hierarchy, one would assume that a majority of Catholics also endorsed the view that Jews were indeed god killers or Christ killers. In fact, any repressive majority will, by pure majority rule, have the numbers on its side and thus all repression would be justified if majority views were to matter. But do such numbers establish any moral truth? I would hope not. Otherwise, we might have to come to the despicable conclusion that the 'shoa' was, in some very perverse sense of 'majority'-justice, quite justified. The letter-writer also charges Stanley Williams to have been fawning under pressure of the death sentence without any genuine conversion of his views. But Williams' reputation as a peace-maker and his nomination to the Nobel Peace Prize certainly speak against such a silly assumption.

Another letter-writer's self-indulgent sadism feels fundamentally wrong and reprehensive in the extreme. Such thinking establishes nothing. The FBI at www.fbi.gov reports for the year 2000 that violent crimes had a clearance of 47.5 percent. The FBI defines 'clearance' as someone's having been apprehended and turned over to the courts. In other words, a murderer has about a 50/50 chance of being captured and sent to the courts. Take away from this number all violent crimes committed from passion and pure adrenaline, and the remaining coldly rational murderers have an even better chance of getting away with murder. Take away from this number the probably false arrests or the defendants cleared by judicial error or the ones who go to their graves protesting their innocence—such as Stanley Williams—perhaps even validly, and the number of murderers not touched by justice increases again. The result is a pitifully small group of people whose severity of punishment might do anything for anyone out there. So, why would severity of treatment of the people in jail have any impact at all on the number of violent crimes committed? In fact, the crime statistics for the European Union, which has firmly established that the death penalty is a violation of basic human-rights, show that that group of nations is doing better than the vengeful US. in keeping violent crimes low.

And the 'eye for an eye' justification! Will it ever die? Originally, this was a rule of restraint: take only one eye for an eye—don't overdo this. But didn't the Christians just celebrate the birthday of one who counseled love of one's enemies. If you could ask him now, would he begin with depends on how you define 'enemy' and then exclude criminals? But let's just consider the rule as it is and generalize it. If this kind of tit-for-tat rule were to be sound, then we would rape rapists, steal from thieves, embezzle from embezzlers, beat up spouse beaters, abuse child abusers, and so on. Somewhere on that line of get-even acts, surely someone is likely to shut down the series. Such a string of acts would be raw revenge; it would not have anything to do with justice at all.

Intuitively, I quite agree with John Paul II's statement that a society has a right to protect itself—if need be, by killing; but that a society never has the right to exercise revenge. If a police officer shoots and kills a homicidal maniac in the process of the maniac's committing homicide, then such killing is justified by general principles of self-defense or societal defense. But if a society kills a person already confined, then such killings can only be justified under some perverse sense of justice, the perversion being the thinly disguised yearning for retribution—a troglodyte mentality, in other words. Certainly, such a step cannot possibly be justified as an enlightened society's protecting itself.

If we were a truly pragmatic lot, we should be looking at correctional systems that manage to rehabilitate, correctional systems that limit recidivism, and a social structure that reduces the immense lag between wealth and poverty, the latter being the culprit that tends to lead to violent behavior at a scale that is offensive to us, particularly—in all probability—because the poor are offensive to us. Dow Chemical and Union Carbide's 'murder' of 20,000 Indians

cost these companies \$470,000,000.00 in fees. Let's see. That would be about \$23,500 a person dead. Take away some of that for all the people injured and still today living with a polluted site, and we'd reduce that figure significantly for a person dead. Perhaps, we could get away with murder at, say, about \$15,000.00 a pop, if we were to be judged by the same standards as the CEO of the chemical plant in India was judged. Or shall we think of the hundreds of thousands dead and dying in Iraq? Whom should we incarcerate and eventually execute in that connection, one wonders?

You can go to [Reinhold Schlieper's web site](#) to read other papers by him.