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CHENEY'S REIGN OF TERROR

The Rules of Quail Hunting With Dick Cheney

by Charles Carreon

Hunting accidents happen, yes - but not among the best sportsmen. So, it was surprising when Dick Cheney came within a hairsbreadth of killing a perfectly good member of his lawyer posse, Harry Whittington, mistaking him for a flurry of quail. In Whittington, the people of Texas stood

to lose their industry-loving Funeral Service Commissioner. But imagine if the target of Cheney's misdirected blast had been Scooter Libby, or the President himself. In the first case, he'd be accused of trying to silence a witness, in the second, of paving his way to the Oval Office with a little accident. I can

imagine the brouhaha in Congress as he tried to swear himself in with Justice Roberts at his side, while Ted Kennedy is hauled from the chambers in a foaming fit, and Cindy Sheehan sets herself ablaze on Pennsylvania Avenue.

See "CHENEY" Page 44

Editor's notes...

Everything happens for a reason, my mom said, and I have found that to be true. She usually offered this bit of wisdom as a consolation prize for all the stuff we missed out on, being a whole family of procrastinators. Borrowing a phrase from Springsteen, I called my mom's props against depression "cloud liners." As we missed planes, trains and automobiles, we good-naturedly made the best of a thousand misadventures, telling ourselves that falling out of the schedule and tumbling helter-skelter through life was really exciting. My mom's favorite cloud liner, too often used, was, "If we had caught that plane, it might have crashed." This was her way of mining traditional Mexican fatalism to extract the psychic gold of optimism. She was a genius at renovating reality, something that living with and loving my father must have required of her.

Not surprisingly, I too have inducted those near to me on expeditions to distant lands and strange beliefs. "Rude Awakening" is a story about some of those expeditions, as well as a review of what I've called Ram Dass's testament, the moving and disturbing movie, "Fierce Grace." This movie, and my review of it, consider the dangers of relying too heavily on cloud liners to repel the terror of insurmountables like old age and death. All techniques have their limits.

Iggy Pop put another spin on the idea that everything happens for a reason:

I'm looking at you
And you're too much to chew
For a reason
And the problems you got
Are the problems you got
For a reason
And what you are not
Is what you are not
For a reason.

Loser, Skull Ring © 2003, Iggy Pop

I have come to believe that Iggy's approach is the one more likely to lead to catching the planes, rather than reconciling yourself to missing them,

and having the expected experience, rather than what you can put together like a gypsy, out of the back of a car and a handbag.

Still, when shit happens, I dust off my mom's philosophy, so I was reaching for the cloud liners when Jacob took off for Houston, leaving me with no layout skills at my easy disposal and the short month of February staring down the gunbarrel straight at me. But my son Josh and Meghan McGuire allowed me to save on cloud liners. They're real gold. Right now Meghan and I are sitting here at our respective computer screens in the late evening, cranking out the work so that you can read, enjoy, trip out, and totally have a blast with this publication. For a reason. Josh's cover art gives us new pride in our ability to kick ass in the graphics department. With these talents in our corner, I think you can see that the paper has shaped up into a real contender. Again, for a reason.

Pushing beyond the confines of the printed page, our new website is fun, fast and hauling in the hits. We will publish all future issues to the site as soon as they are ready, so Ashland's web-users can read the latest issue as soon as it's written, days before it rolls down the road to the numerous distribution locations that are now serviced by our new Distribution Chief, Jamie Altman.

The Hour of Dave has rocketed to stardom, racing to the top of many popular podcast lists, and the queue of local musicians lining up to entertain on the show is growing. The Hour of Dave has become a must-listen online event for those who want to tap into the psychic hotline hidden beneath the quiet streets of Ashland.

Down in the Underground Market, like an electric seed, the Ashland Free Press & Writer's Lounge has started sprouting all kinds of gnarly growth. I had feared it would attract layabouts and space cadets, and it certainly has, but somehow, perhaps due to the wholesome and loving guidance of Steve and Diane Sumrell, who operate the Los Gordos spaceport, diner, and spiritual mission next door, people are using the space productively. Andy Warstar got his website up at <www.

andywarstar.com>, Holly Sheehy cranked out a review of two local gigs and helped get other writers' articles online. The other writers in this issue wandered in with their material under their arms, and walked out with publication credit.

They say it takes a village to make a child. I don't like the saying. It sounds like a slogan that didn't quite translate into our society -- I grew up in a Mexican restaurant and on the inferno-like streets, backlots and canal banks of Phoenix, Arizona, which was not a village. I suppose I was not a child, therefore, or am I being obtuse? Perhaps, but one thing I know -- it takes a village to make villagers -- people who know and really like their neighbors, who watch the same hills, the same rain drifting up the valley, the same moon lighting the sky, the same trees and the clouds each night. The Underground Market feels like a village to me. I love being there, and I am never bored. For a reason. ♦

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SOCRATES NOW!

Think is not a four-letter word

by M.J. Frangadakis

My wife and I recently had dinner with some close friends. They are an Ashland couple who have been following a spiritual path for decades. They display attributes that I would associate with spiritual maturity: neither are afraid of their emotions, both are honest in their relationships, they are compassionate towards themselves and others, and they continue in their spiritual discipline as though they were still beginners on the way.

As we were sipping organic Merlot wine and feasting on some yummy salmon tacos, I noticed a small placard propped against a bowl on the far end of the table. It read: "Stop thinking and trust your intuition." (Or words to that effect). And this got me thinking in spite of that pointed advice.

I know many people on the spiritual path. I would describe these friends and associates as practitioners who cultivate some form of introspection, regardless of whether or not they are part of a traditional religious organization. Given our conversations over the years, I would infer that many of their practices are intended to either diminish or eliminate their thought processes. Stop your discursive thoughts and then get on with the real business of meditation and/or prayer. And what would that task be? Intuition. It's as though intuition has been sanctified, while thinking is little more than the devil's handiwork.

I'm not sure why the spiritual path has taken this kind of turn for so many people, and become an either/or situation. I certainly don't see it that way. In fact, I don't believe that

thinking inhibits the intuitive quality of our spiritual nature at all. I would even suggest that thinking is an act of intuition.

I view our conceptual apparatus as an after-the-fact, add-on feature. In other words, thinking is part of the natural, evolutionary development of our species. Given our puny and almost defenseless bodies, it seems obvious that what keeps us one step ahead of the prowling packs of other predators is our brains. Package the software of language inside that enlarged cerebral cortex and the world has one ingenious animal on its hands.

The clear consequence of this radical development is that thinking has proved to be an extraordinary survival mechanism... up until now, at

“
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nature from those
of human beings.
”

least. In his writings Darwin wondered whether the intellectual faculties of animals were of a different nature from those of human beings, or varied only in quality or degree of development. Given the evidence he collected over the years, he eventually opted for the latter explanation.

I also agree with the Buddhist view of the human mind. That is, that normal, reasoning, waking-state consciousness is but another of the sense fields. Ordinarily we identify five sense-fields. Some physiologists add our sense of balance to this list. Others add our proprioceptive sense, that awareness of our bodies' relationship to itself and the environment. All of these sense mechanisms are modes of knowledge, the various means by which we gain information about ourselves and our place in the world.

Consciousness is yet another instrument by which we probe reality for her truths—a sixth sense field. By implication we could regard our thoughts as the synthesis of all the sense fields, wherein every bit of sense-data is coalesced into one (dare I say, intuitive?) moment. In my mind this unusual view of consciousness and the concepts she produces fits easily into an evolutionary model.

Finally, I would offer that many philosophers, the most notable being George Santayana, refer to both perception and thinking as intuitive processes. There are at least two ways we can approach this notion. One has to do with understanding the immediacy of sensation; the other is related to the immediacy of ideation and its relationship to concepts.

Most of us rely upon commonsense and believe that there is an independent world that exists apart from our private experiences. If you or I were to die this instant, we know that the world around us would not disappear. Some people may take exception to this view and insist that all experiences, including the experience of the world, are strictly subjective. When they die, I suppose, the universe is swept away with them.

Putting these objections aside, let's agree that when the stimulus of the outside world reaches us, whether it be through photons striking the retina, or the rarefaction and compression of air waves thumping against our eardrums, our immediate experience of that world contains no concepts. No thought need apply for sensations to occur. In this strict sense sensation is immediate, and though there is a nearly undetectable lag before perception occurs, at the first moment of its arising our subjective experience is also absent of concepts. We need no thoughts to see the red rose. Instead, we intuit the rose via the immediacy of sensation and perception.

So, if we return to the notion of consciousness as just another sense field, we could then argue that the spontaneous arising of an idea is also immediate. I am not saying that concepts are like this. Concepts are the names and classifications through which we

See "SOCRATES" Page 17

DEPLETED URANIUM: DIRTY BOMBS, DIRTY MISSILES, DIRTY BULLETS:

*A death sentence
here and abroad*

by Leuren Moret

At an April press conference, a group of New York Army National Guard vets raised their hands when asked if they have health problems. The soldiers, all from the 442nd Military Police Company, are complaining of headaches and fatigue after what they think is exposure to depleted uranium during their recent tour in Iraq.

"Military men are just dumb stupid animals to be used as pawns in foreign policy." - Henry Kissinger, quoted in "Kiss the Boys Goodbye: How the United States Betrayed Its Own POW's in Vietnam"

Vietnam was a chemical war for oil, permanently contaminating large regions and countries downriver with Agent Orange, and environmentally the most devastating war in world history. But since 1991, the U.S. has staged four nuclear wars using depleted uranium weaponry, which, like Agent Orange, meets the U.S. government definition of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Vast regions in the Middle East and Central Asia have been permanently contaminated with radiation.

And what about our soldiers? Terry Jemison of the Department of Veterans Affairs reported this week to the American Free Press that "Gulf-era veterans" now on medical disability since 1991 number 518,739, with only 7,035 reported wounded in Iraq in that same 14-year period.

This week the American Free Press dropped a "dirty bomb" on the Pentagon by reporting that eight out of 20 men who served in one unit in the 2003 U.S. military offensive in Iraq now have malignancies. That means that 40 percent of the soldiers in that unit have developed malignancies in just 16 months.

Since these soldiers were exposed to vaccines and depleted uranium (DU) only, this is strong evidence for researchers and scientists working on this issue, that DU is the definitive cause of Gulf War Syndrome. Vaccines are not known to cause cancer. One of the first published researchers on Gulf War Syndrome, who also served in 1991 in Iraq, Dr. Andras Korényi-Both, is in agreement with Barbara Goodno from the Department of Defense's Deployment Health Support Directorate, that in this war soldiers were not exposed to chemicals, pesticides, bioagents or other suspect causes this time to confuse the issue.

This powerful new evidence is blowing holes in the cover-up perpetrated by the Pentagon and three presidential administrations ever since DU was first used in 1991 in the Persian Gulf War. Fourteen years after the introduction of DU on the battlefield in 1991, the long-term effects have revealed that DU is a death sentence and very nasty stuff.

Scientists studying the biological effects of uranium in the 1960s reported that it targets the DNA. Marion Fulk, a nuclear physical chemist retired from the Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab and formerly involved with the Manhattan Project, interprets the new and rapid malignancies in soldiers from the 2003 war as "spectacular ... and a matter of concern."

This evidence shows that of the three effects which DU has on biological systems - radiation, chemical and particulate - the particulate effect from nano-size particles is the most dominant one immediately after exposure and targets the Master Code in the DNA. This is bad news, but it explains why DU causes a myriad of diseases which are difficult to define.

In simple words, DU "trashes the body." When asked if the main purpose for using it was for destroying things and killing people, Fulk was more specific: "I would say that it is the perfect weapon for killing lots of people."

Soldiers developing malignancies so quickly since 2003 can be expected to develop multiple cancers from independent causes. This phenomenon has been reported by doctors in hospitals treating civilians following NATO bombing with DU in Yugoslavia in 1998-1999 and the U.S. military invasion of Iraq using DU for the first time in 1991. Medical experts report that this phenomenon of multiple malignancies from unrelated causes has been unknown until now and is a new syndrome associated with internal DU exposure.

Just 467 U.S. personnel were wounded in the three-week Persian Gulf War in 1990-1991. Out of 580,400 soldiers who served in Gulf War I, 11,000 are dead, and by 2000 there were 325,000 on permanent medical disability. This astounding number of disabled vets means that a decade later, 56 percent of those soldiers who served now have medical problems.

The number of disabled vets reported up to 2000 has been increasing by 43,000 every year. Brad Flohr of the Department of Veterans Affairs told American Free Press that he believes there are more disabled vets now than even after World War II.

**THEY BROUGHT IT
HOME**

Not only were soldiers exposed to DU on and off the battlefields, but they brought it home. DU in the semen of soldiers internally contaminated their wives, partners and girlfriends. Tragically, some women in their 20s and 30s who were sexual partners of exposed soldiers developed endometriosis and were forced to

have hysterectomies because of health problems.

In a group of 251 soldiers from a study group in Mississippi who had all had normal babies before the Gulf War, 67 percent of their post-war babies were born with severe birth defects. They were born with missing legs, arms, organs or eyes or had immune system and blood diseases. In some veterans' families now, the only normal or healthy members of the family are the children born before the war.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has stated that they do not keep records of birth defects occurring in families of veterans.

HOW DID THEY HIDE IT?

Before a new weapons system can be used, it must be fully tested. The blueprint for depleted uranium weapons is a 1943 declassified document from the Manhattan Project.

Harvard President and physicist James B. Conant, who developed poison gas in World War I, was brought into the Manhattan Project by the father of presidential candidate John Kerry. Kerry's father served at a high level in the Manhattan Project and was a CIA agent.

Conant was chair of the S-1 Poison Gas Committee, which recommended developing poison gas weapons from the radioactive trash of the atomic bomb project in World War II. At that time, it was known that radioactive materials dispersed in bombs from the air, from land vehicles or on the battlefield produced very fine radioactive dust which would penetrate all protective clothing, any gas mask or filter or the skin. By contaminating the lungs and blood, it could kill or cause illness very quickly.

They also recommended it as a permanent terrain contaminant, which could be used to destroy populations by contaminating water supplies and agricultural land with the radioactive

dust.

The first DU weapons system was developed for the Navy in 1968, and DU weapons were given to and used by Israel in 1973 under U.S. supervision in the Yom Kippur war against the Arabs.

The Phalanx weapons system, using DU, was tested on the USS Bigelow out of Hunters Point Naval Shipyard in 1977, and DU weapons have been sold by the U.S. to 29 countries.

Military research report summaries detail the testing of DU from 1974-1999 at military testing grounds, bombing and gunnery ranges and at civilian labs under contract. Today 42 states are contaminated with DU from manufacture, testing and deployment.

Women living around these facilities have reported increases in endometriosis, birth defects in babies, leukemia in children and cancers and other diseases in adults. Thousands of tons of DU weapons tested for decades by the Navy on four bombing and gunnery ranges around Fallon, Nevada, is no doubt the cause of the fastest growing leukemia cluster in the U.S. over the past decade. The military denies that DU is the cause.

The medical profession has been active in the cover-up - just as they were in hiding the effects from the American public - of low level radiation from atmospheric testing and nuclear power plants. A medical doctor in Northern California reported being trained by the Pentagon with other doctors, months before the 2003 war started, to diagnose and treat soldiers returning from the 2003 war for mental problems only.

Medical professionals in hospitals and facilities treating returning soldiers were threatened with \$10,000 fines if they talked about the soldiers or their medical problems. They were also threatened with jail.

Reporters have also been prevented access to more than 14,000 medically evacuated soldiers flown nightly since the 2003 war in C-150s from Germany who are brought to Walter Reed Hospital near Washington, D.C.

Dr. Robert Gould, former president

of the Bay Area chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), has contacted three medical doctors since February 2004, after I had been invited to speak about DU. Dr. Katharine Thomasson, president of the Oregon chapter of the PSR, informed me that Dr. Gould had contacted her and tried to convince her to cancel her invitation for me to speak about DU at Portland State University on April 12. Although I was able to do a presentation, Dr. Thomasson told me I could only talk about DU in Oregon "and nothing overseas ... nothing political."

Dr. Gould also contacted and discouraged Dr. Ross Wilcox in Toronto, Canada, from inviting me to speak to Physicians for Global Survival (PGS), the Canadian equivalent of PSR, several months later. When that didn't work, he contacted Dr. Allan Connolly, the Canadian national president of PGS, who was able to cancel my invitation and nearly succeeded in preventing Dr. Wilcox, his own member, from showing photos and presenting details on civilians suffering from DU exposure and cancer provided to him by doctors in southern Iraq.

Dr. Janette Sherman, a former and long-standing member of PSR, reported that she finally quit some time after being invited to lunch by a new PSR executive administrator. After the woman had pumped Dr. Sherman for information all through lunch about her position on key issues, the woman informed Dr. Sherman that her last job had been with the CIA.

How was the truth about DU hidden from military personnel serving in successive DU wars? Before his tragic death, Sen. Paul Wellstone informed Joyce Riley, R.N., B.S.N., executive director of the American Gulf War Veterans Association, that 95 percent of Gulf War veterans had been recycled out of the military by 1995. Any of those continuing in military service were isolated from each other, preventing critical information being transferred to new troops. The "next DU war" had already been planned, and those planning it wanted "no skunk at the garden party."

THE US HAS A DIRTY (DU) LITTLE (CIA) SECRET.

A new book just published at the American Free Press by Michael Collins Piper, "The High Priests of War: The Secret History of How America's Neo-Conservative Trotskyites Came to Power and Orchestrated the War Against Iraq as the First Step in Their Drive for Global Empire," details the early plans for a war against the Arab world by Henry Kissinger and the neo-cons in the late 1960s and early 1970s. That just happens to coincide with getting the DU "show on the road" and the oil crisis in the Middle East, which caused concern not only to President Nixon. The British had been plotting and scheming for control of the oil in Iraq for decades since first using poison gas on the Iraqis and Kurds in 1912.

The book details the creation of the neo-cons by their "godfather" and Trotsky lover Irving Kristol, who pushed for a "war against terrorism" long before 9/11 and was lavishly funded for years by the CIA. His son, William Kristol, is one of the most influential men in the United States.

Both are public relations men for the Israeli lobby's neo-conservative network, with strong ties to Rupert Murdoch. Kissinger also has ties to this network and the Carlyle Group, who, one could say, have facilitated these omniscient wars beginning from the time former President Bush took office. It would be easy to say that we are recycling World Wars I and II, with the same faces.

When I asked Vietnam Special Ops Green Beret Capt. John McCarthy, who could have devised this omniscient plan to use DU to destroy the genetic code and genetic future of large populations of Arabs and Moslems in the Middle East and Central Asia - just coincidentally the areas where most of the world's oil deposits are located - he replied: "It has all the handprints of Henry Kissinger."

In Zbigniew Brzezinski's book "The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives,"

the map of the Eurasian chessboard includes four regions strategic to U.S. foreign policy. The "South" region corresponds precisely to the regions now contaminated permanently with radiation from U.S. bombs, missiles and bullets made with thousands of tons of DU.

A Japanese professor, Dr. K. Yagasaki, has calculated that 800 tons of DU is the atomicity equivalent of 83,000 Nagasaki bombs. The U.S. has used more DU since 1991 than the atomicity equivalent of 400,000 Nagasaki bombs. Four nuclear wars indeed, and 10 times the amount of radiation released into the atmosphere from atmospheric testing!

No wonder our soldiers, their families and the people of the Middle East, Yugoslavia and Central Asia are sick. But as Henry Kissinger said after Vietnam when our soldiers came home ill from Agent Orange, "Military men are just dumb stupid animals to be used for foreign policy."

Unfortunately, more and more of those soldiers are men and women with brown skin. And unfortunately, the DU radioactive dust will be carried around the world and deposited in our environments just as the "smog of war" from the 1991 Gulf War was found in deposits in South America, the Himalayas and Hawaii.

In June 2003, the World Health Organization announced in a press release that global cancer rates will increase 50 percent by 2020. What else do they know that they aren't telling us? I know that depleted uranium is a death sentence ... for all of us. We will all die in silent ways. ♦

Leuren Moret is a geoscientist who has worked around the world on radiation issues, educating citizens, the media, members of parliaments and Congress and other officials. She became a whistleblower in 1991 at the Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab after experiencing major science fraud on the Yucca Mountain Project. An environmental commissioner in the City of Berkeley, she can be reached at leurenmoret@yahoo.com

BLISS INFESTED AND RESURRECTED: *From India to Ireland Without Leaving Ashland*

by Holly Sheehy

On the evening of Friday, March 3rd, I was at The Unitarian Center to hear Shabda Kahn and his friends play Indian ragas. The warmly lit, spacious non-church provided appropriate ambiance, and as the crowd of predominantly older people milled about, bubbling with idle chatter, I noted that the hefty ticket price seemed to have winnowed out most of my fellow-students. The instruments waited for their musicians on a raised platform draped with lavish fabrics for seating and adornment. Two tambouras lay in back, draped seductively with cloths, one pink, one yellow. The tabla and baya drums were positioned at the front left of the stage, a pair of lovers seated in expectant silence, awaiting the start of their passionate exchange.

When the time came for the show to begin, five Caucasian men in colorful foreign clothing ascended the stage. After the hostess finished her introduction and the tambouras were tuned, front man Shabda Khan told the audience that Hindu music is a form of devotion, a path in itself, a way of awakening the heart. Ragas are literally melodic scales, and more broadly, the melodies that are played in those scales. Shabda Khan explained that, traditionally certain ragas were for different times of day, seasons, and moods. This mirrors the ancient Greek tradition that divided the scales into various "modes" that were similarly accorded special purposes, such as celebration, drinking, mourning and joy. According to the old Vedic

rules, musicians were forbidden to play particular ragas except under the appropriate circumstances, but in this day and age, the rules have been moderated, and it is no longer feared that playing a night-time raga at noon might jump-start an eclipse ahead of schedule.

Taking no chances, however, the eastern westerners first played an early evening raga. The tamboura players, wearing the serious faces of dutiful messengers, droned electrically smooth, as Shabda and a bearded man exchanged vocal leads. Shabda's face modeled sincerity, as though he sought to express something deeply meaningful, and while the other singer emanated comfortable tranquility, I laughed inside when his hands started moving as if he were milking an invisible cow – a sacred cow no doubt, I chuckled to myself. The two communicated with their hands and faces, weaving the air, drawing tonal pictures with a palette of gestures -- sharp, strident, fluid,

and circular -- a language of tone and tempo. The tabla player generally remained aloof, but the looks he exchanged with Shabda allowed the audience an occasional glimpse of

“I imagined it spreading like the sky over untouched wilderness and felt such an amazement for life, such joy.”

the subtle understandings musicians share through their language of glances and smiles. The pair wove harmonies and banded melodies fluidly against a background of tabla rhythm that occasionally burst forth in spatterings like the sound of wild

raindrops. As voices slid through eastern scales, they disturbed and refreshed my western sense of melody. The ebbing and swelling dynamics continually piqued my interest, tugging at some nearly-forgotten primal instinct. Tension built during languid stretches, and I wanted to shout, “Play more vigorously!” Nevertheless I held back, numbed by unaccustomed contentment. As their playing continued, the names of foreign gods flashed by on the horizon and faded behind me as my mind traveled on an ethereal voice spreading like the sky over the virgin wild. Amazed, I reveled in my good fortune – I’m alive in this magnificent cosmos.

On a Sunday afternoon, I took a friend to the weekly Celtic jam at the Black Sheep. The restaurant was bustling with life and human interactions — families laughed as they sat gathered around their tables, friends were burbling as they drank

See “MUSIC” Page 14

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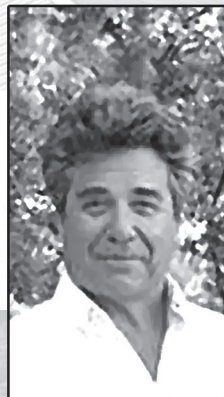
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NEW INTERNET CAFÉ OPENS IN UNDERGROUND MARKETPLACE.

By Josh Carreon

A.F.P. has opened the doors to The Writer's Lounge, an internet café and multimedia workshop in The Underground Marketplace. Conveniently located in downtown Ashland, the A.F.P. Writer's Lounge joins several other established businesses in an area teeming with energy. Known to locals as the home of the Anubis body piercing salon and tattoo shop, as well as Los Gordos Mexican Grill, colorful personalities abound in this spirited atmosphere. The Divine Cup Espresso Bar lives up to its name, offering exquisite beverages just steps from the Writer's Lounge.



Serving healthy Mexican fare and local microbrews on tap, Los Gordos Mexican Grill also sponsors a lively open mic every Wednesday night where the performances are always worth the cover price, and it's free.

Always a center of activity, the Writer's Lounge encourages you to stop by any time and see what's new. Pick up an issue of the Ashland Free Press, check your email, or post pictures of yourself making kissy faces at your cat on Myspace.com. It's the place to come to for the latest in local and global news, conspiracy theories, extraterrestrial encounters, etc.

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ASHLAND PETS AT THE END OF THEIR ROPES

By Barbara Rosen

When Karen Leitner looks out her bedroom window in Ashland, sometimes her heart sinks a little. "My neighbor's dog is always tethered to a doghouse. I've lived here a year and I've only seen him off the rope once," she says. She looks out at the dog about twice a week.

Apparently, the dog isn't even taken off the tether at night. "At night he jumps onto the top of his doghouse and barks and barks and barks," says Leitner, who's trained canines for about 24 years and operates The Delightful Dog Training Service. She's heard neighbors say, half-jokingly, that they'd like to shoot the dog.

Leitner continues, "The dog is saying to the world, 'I want to be free of this tether.' Many dogs bark incessantly when they're continually tethered. They're filled with anxiety. They often turn into biters because they go into fear mode and lose their trust in people." In at least several surveys, chained dogs were more of a biting problem than unchained dogs.

Leitner can see the toll that tethering has taken on her canine neighbor. "He dashes back and forth frantically," she says. "His face looks very tense.

"My heart goes out to him. How would you like to wake up in the morning to find that your family tied you up and you couldn't be with them anymore? That would make you feel very bad."

The U.S. government has declared it "inhumane" to tether dogs continually. It has banned the tethering of canines at circuses, research facilities, and airlines, for example.

Tie up a dog for long periods, and you can put him in deep trouble, according to John Mays, executive director of the National Animal Control Association. "Often dogs get uncomfortably wrapped up in their chains," he says. "Some start strangling, or even end up with broken limbs." Humane workers have witnessed dogs who forgot they were chained, then jumped a fence and hanged themselves. Mays remembers one dog who was chained to a two-story balcony, fell off, and died.

People tend to tie the more aggressive breeds like Rottweilers and Pit Bulls to very heavy logging chains, according to Randall Lockwood, PhD, a psychologist at the Humane Society of the United States. "This must eventually damage the dogs' necks and spines," he says. "The chains also cause chafing."

Also, when dogs are tied up, they're easier targets for abusers and thieves. "It's common for kids to tease chained dogs by hosing them down, or throwing things like rocks, sticks or baseballs at them," Mays says. These helpless dogs often get injured. "Sometimes even adults abuse chained dogs, especially if they have a personal vendetta against a neighbor. They may even poison a dog to death if the dog's barking

bothers them too much."

Mays and Lockwood believe it's easier to steal a dog who's chained. "I'm sure that's done commonly in areas where thieves can sell the dogs to research laboratories," Mays says.

Sticks and stones, broken bones...then comes the rain. If dogs are constantly tied in the same spot, they wear away the

“How would you like to wake up in the morning to find that your family tied you up and you couldn't be with them anymore?”

grass. "You get a downpour of rain, and that dirt turns into mud real quick," Mays says. "A wet, muddy dog is going to be very uncomfortable."

He knows of chained dogs who froze to death because they didn't have enough shelter. And when the summer sun blazes down, many canines have to choose whether to swelter in the sunlight or crouch in an overheated doghouse. "Many of these dogs die of heat exhaustion," Mays says. Some people only

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provide their dogs a 55-gallon barrel for shelter--if the dogs want shade, they have to sit on scalding metal.

Elderly, sick and weak dogs can have an especially tough time. So can young dogs: Sometimes as they grow, the chains become embedded in their necks, damaging the muscle and causing infections. "If dogs are tied up for a long time, they usually spill their water or scatter their food," Lockwood says. The food may spoil, and the dogs may have nothing to drink. Also, dogs may get so frustrated that they chew on anything in sight--even poisonous plants.

Animal control to the rescue?

But if you've ever complained to Jackson County Animal Control that a dog is chained up much of the time, you know how hopeless the situation is. The county allows animals to live permanently on a short tether--only long enough for them to stand up, sit down, turn around, and sit away from their poop.

Randy Giron, a Jackson County Animal Control officer, guesstimates that about 35 percent of Ashland dogs are tied up for at least part of the day. Many of these dogs may live on chains most or all of the time. "Chaining dogs around-the-clock is a lot more common than people think," Mays says. Many, if not the vast majority, of Ashland's chained canines live behind fences, hidden from the public eye.

But there's a solution. Ashland could follow the lead of the 80 or so communities that have passed ordinances to stop tethering that's inhumane. (These ordinances don't deal with tethering dogs in front of shops and the like. They only cover tethering at the animals' homes.)

Like popcorn kernels going off in a pan, one city after another is jumping on the humane bandwagon--from Los Angeles to Washington DC, from Denver to Little Rock. This trend to treat animals more kindly will probably embrace Ashland sooner or later.

Karen Leitner wants it to be sooner. She's one of the 35 or so people who have phoned or written Ashland legislators

over the past two months, asking for an ordinance regulating the tethering of dogs or other animals at home. "All beings, including dogs, need to feel free, and loved," she says. "People don't need to keep dogs tethered. They just need to teach them how to live harmoniously inside the house as family members."

Here are some other Ashlanders who have written to Councilor Cate Hartzel or to the council and mayor, asking for an ordinance: the Jackson Fuel Committee, Annie Hoy (who works at the Ashland Food Co-op), Pamela Joy of Uncle Food's Diner, Reverend Michael Powell of the First United Methodist Church, Reverend Ruth Kirby of the Science of Mind Church, and Reverend Norma Burton of the Unity Church.

Four animal welfare organizations have also written the council asking for an ordinance: the Oregon Humane Society, the Southern Oregon Animal Rights Society, the Humane Society of the United States, and Dogs Deserve Better. Sally Mackler, board president of Spay and Neuter Your Pet (SNYP) wrote for an ordinance, too.

How is the Ashland City Council responding? "I'd like to see an ordinance happen," says Councilor Jack Hardesty. "Dogsshouldn'tbetetheredindefinitely." He'd like Ashland to restrict tethering at home to no more than two hours out of 24, and only on a chain that can't get tangled up. (This reporter tried to get Councilors Russ Silbiger's and Alex Amarotico's responses as well. They did not return the calls.)

How likely is it that council will vote on an ordinance regulating tethering animals at home? Councilor David Chapman says he doesn't know. "If I had a dog," he says, "I wouldn't chain him up. I'd want him to be able to run. To my view, it's not humane to tie up a dog permanently on a short chain."

Ashland: A leader in kindness to animals?

Ashland has a reputation for being progressive and far-seeing. Will it be one of the first cities to join the trend of treating chained animals more humanely?

"I empathize with dogs who spend

their entire lives on short chains," says Mayor John Morrison. "But I'm not sure that constitutes cruelty. I'd have to find that out from a dog expert--for example, a veterinarian or someone who works at a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals."

Mayor Morrison isn't the only legislator to hold back from declaring that it's cruelty to continually chain an animal. "The law is slow in recognizing that chaining dogs constitutes emotional cruelty to the dog," said Linda Cawley, a lawyer who has specialized in dog cases and who wrote *The Legal Beagle*. "Laws usually lag way behind public opinion."

Ashland already has an ordinance about tethering dogs on public property. Couldn't it add something about tying dogs up at their homes?

Councilor Kate Jackson doesn't feel the city has the time or staff to create and enforce a new tethering ordinance now. "We have to respect the voters' position that they don't want to fund government beyond a certain tax base," she says. She adds that not enough people have complained to the police about barking from chained dogs to warrant an ordinance.

"All animals need to be treated humanely," Jackson continues. "But the city already has more than enough key community issues to deal with at this time. For example, how do we deal with beggars and insulting behavior on the plaza?"

Leitner feels that the city should make it a priority to relieve the suffering of chained dogs. She says, "My neighbor's dog, and all Ashland dogs, give people unconditional love. These dogs deserve to be loved and respected in return--not imprisoned at the end of a rope for most of their lives." ♦

Barbara Rosen is leading the campaign for a tethering ordinance in Ashland. For more information: ambujar@hotmail.com

**"Training is everything,
cauliflower is nothing
but cabbage with a college
education.."**

Mark Twain, *Puddn'head Wilson*

FREE MOVIE NIGHT AT THE UNDERGROUND

By Carlos Ramone

On February 14th, the Ashland Free Press and film impresario Stephen Mayerson kicked off the first of a three-show series of Free Movie Nights at the Underground Shops with a show that was quite nearly standing-room only. Stephen's medley of film shorts and inspired excerpts from classic films had a Valentine's Day theme that had the audience alternately laughing uproariously, dabbing their eyes with their hankies, and feeling all soft and mushy. Kicking off the show with Grace Jones' 80's style MTV video of Roxy Music's tune "Love Is The Drug," Mayerson proceeded through a medley of video clips including: classic cartoons like "How To Kiss" and "Little Rural Riding Hood;" Busby Berkeley's incredible production of the thirties tune, "I Only Have Eyes From You," featuring dozens of women dressed and made up identically; a clip of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire reconciling their differences musically in "Swing Time;" the video of the late Freddie Mercury celebrating pansexuality in drag and a moustache, singing "I Want To Break Free;" a traditional blues number by Alberta Hunter, singing "The Love I Have For You" in an intimate ensemble setting at The Cookery in NYC; Nicole Kidman's can-can extravaganza in "Moulin Rouge;" and, closing out with the parade of historic screen kisses from the closing scene of "Cinema Paradiso." I for one felt I had received an astral open-heart massage that reawakened childhood memories and warmed my view of a world that has not been loved so tenderly by its filmmakers in the last couple of decades.

The Tuesday, March 14th show,

See "MOVIES" Page 14



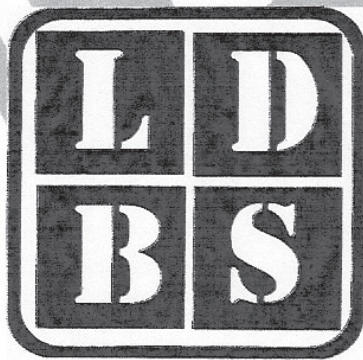
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KSKQ WE WANT THE AIRWAVES!

by Leslie DeLorean

"Welcome to your radio station" a phrase coined by Terry Hill, Production Chair and co-founder of KSKQ 94.9 LPFM (low-power FM). That is now the greeting you hear when you arrive at the studio of Ashland's in-process community radio station. Four years in the making, KSKQ is grinding towards its goal of being live on the air in June 2006. The momentum is building daily. In 2005, volunteers contributed over 10,000 hours raising funds, organizing, developing a programming strategy, and making a name for itself in the community. You may have seen volunteers "tabling" at the Ashland Co-op or at other locations around town, getting the message out about the station. KSKQ is supported by annual memberships, starting at \$35 for individuals.

KSKQ's philosophy is to offer locally produced relevant programming to the south end of the Rogue Valley with the distinct advantage of not having our programming under the influence of government, corporate, or advertiser forces. KSKQ is staffed entirely by volunteers at this point. We have been working with new volunteers to create programs by offering a workshop "How to produce a radio show" which covers how to record, edit audio files on a computer, writing and organizing a show, an overview of FCC programming regulations, and formatting it to be streamed over the internet and broadcast live, when we're on the air in the near future. The next course to be offered is "How to be a DJ" and the training dates are to be determined.

Operating out of suite #6 in the Ashland Arts building, 258 A. street, upstairs from the Rogue Valley

Metaphysical Library (RVML). Plenty of people have found us during Ashland's First Friday Art Walk, KSKQ is unofficially nominated as "the best First Friday open house" each month. Every month has a different theme for First Friday, March is (surprise) St Patrick's Day. Wear green and join us!

Currently, you can web-in and hear KSKQ streaming on <www.kskq.org> for local and regionally produced music, and we are proud to offer Democracy Now! hosted by Amy Goodman, and Free Speech Radio News.

Our goals for 2006 are: 1) raise \$30,000, 2) locate a site for our broadcast tower and install it, 3) create 40+ hours of local programming each week, 4) get the support of 1,000 annual members, and most importantly, 5) be broadcasting live on the airwaves!

“Four years in the making, KSKQ is grinding towards its goal of being live on the air in June 2006. ”

There are many volunteer opportunities to get involved at KSKQ. Here are just a few of our organizational needs: webmaster, publicity, fundraising, grant writing, data entry, administrative assistance, audio production, and many more tasks. If you want to get involved, contact Sean Gordon or Leslie DeLorean at KSKQ 482-3999. Office hours are Monday – Friday 10am – 2pm and Saturday 12pm – 2pm. Be sure and call first.

KSKQ is proud to present David Rovics and Atilla the Stockbroker, musical-political-satirical singer-songwriters on Sunday, March 5th, 7pm at the Unitarian Center, located at 87 Fourth Street, Ashland. For more information, see <www.kskq.org> ♦

Movies ...

Continued from Page 11

entitled "Odd Advertisements and Twisted Propaganda," will start at 6:30 pm, and continue until 9:00 pm with a short intermission so the audience can refuel at The Divine Cup coffee-spot and Los Gordos, serving food, beer and wine until closing time. Stephen informs us in advance that the program will include "The Man Who Planted Trees," "Hemp for Victory," "Peace on Earth," and "Electronic Behavior Control System," four of his favorite samples of cinematic mind-control and persuasion techniques. Be there, along with the rest of the town. Resistance is futile! ♦

Music...

Continued from Page 7

their beer, servers wove among the tables taking and dropping off orders. Searching for a table, we accepted a woman's offer to join her. The three of us quickly established a cozy rapport that lifted my spirits. The Sheep, with its casual, unassuming atmosphere, provides a perfect home for this weekly gathering. At the far end of the restaurant, musicians chatted, settling leisurely into the chairs ringing a small table that become crowded with pint glasses in various stages of fullness and emptiness as the afternoon wore on. The musicians played just about everything you can blow, strike, strum or pick -- a harp, a pennywhistle, a banjo, a mandolin, and multiple guitars, fiddles, and bodhrans found their way into the mix. Eventually, an accordion barged into the experiment, stretching the envelope further than most would consider advisable. But this is Ashland, where the envelope has already been stretched beyond recognition.

The music started sans preliminaries, and continued free of introductions. When the playing started, each musician repaired to

his or her private world, displaying nearly expressionless faces, but they returned to our dimension between performances, smiling, laughing and talking like regular folks before they turned back into rapt minstrels. They might have been "jamming," but not without skill or knowledge of the terrain as they ripped through one lively, danceable tune after another, switching instruments and accommodating new musicians in a swelling unison. I and the rest of the listeners were drawn into the spirit of sharing and celebration. My friend and I shared our lives with the woman at the table, who in turn shared hers with us. Several musicians talked with me about their instruments and music, as I hang on their every word in the midst of the happy din.

Being Irish, the experience provoked reflections on my heritage. Music is fundamental to my life, and as I thought about it, I realized it was also integral to my ancestors, although in a different way. It moved me to learn that the bodhran, a drum made of cedar and sheepskin, evolved from the old tradition of warriors beating on their shields as they went into battle. I felt a proud connection to my heritage, and I felt stronger, knowing that I am one of the Irish people, right down to my genes. Another person explained how the Illian pipes, an instrument like the bagpipe, uses of a bellows to sustain long, continuous tones. I even started learning how to dance a jig!

It would be hard to imagine Shabda Khan and his friend the serene drummer joining into the Celtic jam, but perhaps it would do them good. Both styles of music communicate appreciation for life, but in different ways. The ragas drew my attention to the universe where we can float in a vast sea of vibrations, while the music of my own ancestors drew forth the love I feel for our world and the people I see each day. The exaltation of glimpsing the infinite realms of subtle sound have meaning only when I share it with my human family. Besides, you couldn't get a beer at the Unitarian Center. ❖

LOVESTRONG

by michael wear

*Ulysses was not a Handsome Man,
Though Eloquently he Waxed ...
And with gifted words held fast
The Heavenly Hearts of two,
Daughters of Zeus they were ...
Calypso, Queen of Witches,
Circe, Goddess of Magick ...
And Penelope, Dearest Wife,
For her his Heart did burn,
As she for his did Flame ...
Nor Spell, Nor Storm, Nor Peril,
Could part a Love as Great as theirs.
I For even the knees of gods do Quake,
At Power so Strong they Shake!
And Steel to Rust ...
Its Strength does Give,
As Stone to Sand Becomes,
By Teardrops shed from Longing-eyes,
Of Lovers Parted by the Fates.*

THE SKINNY ON OBESITY: THE MEDICAL VIEW

by Cynthia Lee

In my younger years I was one of those thin people who could easily lose weight with exercise. I tried to be sympathetic with those individuals who didn't seem to have the same ability. Most of my experience concerning weight loss came through the filter of trying the different recommended strategies and pharmaceutical products available. Then one of the employees of my medical office lost about 100 pounds in a physician supervised weight loss program at a well established multi-specialty clinic. However, he gained it back over the next two years. Subsequently I ran into one of the physicians from the same clinic, Dr. G., a gastroenterologist. Conservatively I estimated Dr. G. weighed at least 300 pounds. By this time, over a decade ago, I was skeptical that physicians really understood why people become fat if a physician specialized in human digestion couldn't avoid morbid obesity. Then, more recently, when I shot up from a size eight to a size

enough, when a group of obese people were examined, 20% were infected with the chicken adenovirus. These individuals also were the most obese of the group. A total of nine different viruses have been shown to cause obesity including a human adenovirus known to cause "pink eye", a common condition usually considered self-limiting and benign. I suppose counseling for stress management may help an individual more successfully fight off a virus, but who is going to volunteer to be infected in a double blind study to test this hypothesis? Not me.

Viruses are not the only factors unrelated to caloric intake or diet content to be implicated concerning obesity in humans. Sleep medicine physicians have long known that obstructive sleep apnea can be related to sudden major weight gain. Although physicians were originally taught that the obesity was the cause of the sleep apnea condition, faith in that concept was shaken by the late 1990's when large scale surveys documented that half of the individuals with clinically significant obstructive sleep apnea were not clinically obese. Now, there is evidence that a different factor may be the real culprit. A researcher in Chicago demonstrated that depriving healthy, athletic males aged in their twenties of adequate sleep immediately caused insulin resistance, the most important metabolic issue in

Viruses are not the only factors unrelated to caloric intake or diet content to be implicated concerning obesity in humans.

eighteen in eight months, it was time to start burning the midnight oil to get to the bottom of this mystery (although in retrospect, since burning the midnight oil appears to be one of the causes of unwanted weight gain, this was an inefficient strategy). What follows is the information I have gleaned from the evolving scientific literature related to the subject of weight gain over the last five years. I urge the reader to consider the information and begin challenging their beliefs that they have primary control over their body weight.

It is time to consider that all people may not be fat for the same reasons. And, in fact, the reason any one individual is fat may be entirely outside of their control. For example, several years ago Nicki Dhurandar at the University of Wisconsin proved that chickens can be infected with a virus that causes abdominal obesity. This is the dreaded insulin resistant type of obesity that places an individual into the higher risk categories for coronary disease. The virus was studied in a double blind study where half of the chickens were infected while the other half were not. All of the chickens were allowed the same food and the same access to mental health care, exercise, etc. It was found that the infected chickens gained less lean muscular weight and more fat weight than the uninfected chickens. And sure

pre-diabetic and diabetic conditions. When matched groups of obese patients with sleep apnea were compared to obese patients without sleep apnea, the ones with sleep apnea had more insulin resistance, the condition associated with fat weight, i.e. abdominal obesity. Insulin resistance, according to a widely accepted theory, is when the body is unable to efficiently convert consumed food into energy. Compare this concept to a factory taking orders for a finished product. The finished product stands for your energy needed to walk, breathe, think, etc. The customer orders product (energy). Raw materials go in to the factory but there is a slow down in producing finished product. The head office doesn't realize there is a delay in producing product. The customer doesn't get their shipment and reorders product. The raw materials stack up outside the factory. The stacked materials are representative of fat storage in the body. Unless the metabolic problem of insulin resistance is remedied, you may lose weight through dieting, but it may be lean muscular weight and not the stored fat. Basically, how well and how long you sleep can affect your metabolism, which affects your ability to stay at a healthy weight.

Because America's physicians are being fed a steady diet of pharmaceutical industry sales propaganda recommending the latest and greatest new synthetic for

this or that disease, most are unaware of the new progress in defining mitochondrial deficiency/inefficiency as an etiology of chronic disease. Previously, mitochondrial diseases were only significant as very rare genetic diseases that an individual practitioner was unlikely to have to consider but once in a blue moon. That means the research pointing to mitochondrial insufficiency as the usual precursor to Type 2 diabetes, as covered in Science Issue (No. 5708, January 21, 2005), may need to be brought to the attention of your physician. This concept needs to be considered as a major etiology of obesity sooner rather than later to protect the individual. In fact, researchers discovered that the metabolic processes usually associated with obesity were present before the research rats became fat, so it became clear these events were part of the cause and not the effect. After reviewing this published research I note that the authors did not discuss the probability that human mitochondria were being subjected to damaging influences but rather, possibly reflecting their association with major corporations, usually discussed the possibility of developing a drug to treat the mitochondrial insufficiency. That emphasis is also consistent with our government's bias towards promoting the research that benefits pharmaceutical industry drug development rather than disease prevention strategies. To this end I also bring to your attention some interesting research reviewed in Science News (Vol. 106, July 17, 2004, page 35) examining the possibility those synthetic contaminants can influence the ability to lose weight. In this research, which documented numerous hormone levels as well as levels of common environmental contaminants, the individuals attempting weight loss experienced increasing difficulty in doing so. This difficulty correlated most closely with the rise in levels of these common environmental contaminants. Could it be that contamination consisting of thousands of synthetic compounds negligently unloaded into the world's environment over the decades of the industrial revolution is driving the obesity epidemic? Perhaps those "lazy fat people" who "won't work" are just those individuals who have the most significant levels of environmental contaminants? Obesity is also commonly seen in our most indigent populations who are, probably not so coincidentally, exposed to the highest rates of pollution. Obviously, scientists cannot burden a person with synthetic contaminants in order to measure whether they develop insulin resistance.

The issue of damaged mitochondria has been popularized after the research of Professor Bruce Ames of the University of California at Berkeley was covered in Reader's Digest a couple of years ago. His work, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, demonstrated youthful vigor and improved memory in old rats after ingestion of alpha lipoic acid and acetyl L-Carnitine. While Dr. Ames was able to document in humans the state of health of their mitochondria, the process was too expensive for every day


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Socrates ...

Continued from Page 3

organize our ideas, and they take time to develop. To think conceptually is the essence of mediated consciousness, a step by step process that takes us from point A to B, and so on. However, any idea that gives birth to a concept remains both immediate and, in that sense, intuitive. Another way of saying this is that concepts provide the forms for the expression for our ideas, and ideas provide the meaning of those forms. For example, we could measure and describe in detail the geometry of a triangle, but the relationship or meaning of that form is given to us through an idea: The Pythagorean theorem. And this theorem is intuited by the mind. The philosopher Emmanuel Kant went so far as to say that the ideas of time and space are the most fundamental of our intuitions.

There are many forms of meditation and prayer that require quiet, measured, concentrated thoughtfulness. There are definitely other forms of internal absorption that temporarily abandon any ideas at all. In the practices I do both types of meditative techniques are used. The meditation sessions begin absent of any concepts. Then a myriad of ideas, forms and concepts are generated, only to return in the end to complete silence and emptiness. All of this is designed to mimic the natural dynamics of our minds. And the only way I am able to appreciate the intent, method, and goal of these meditative methods is to think about it. ❖



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NOT LOOKING GOOD -- AFN TAKES MISMANAGEMENT TO A NEW LEVEL

by Charles Carreon

1. *The Stealth Agenda*

The item wasn't on the agenda, and although City Attorney Mike Franell was present, he couldn't give any advice on the issue. After all, it concerned the impending hiring of his brother as head of AFN. Pseudo-legal advice was provided by outgoing City Administrator Gino Grimaldi to the affect that the nepotistic character of the appointment could not be considered by the council. Brushing aside the objections of Councilor Jack Hardesty, the remaining clique of councilors voted to give a second plum job in the City of Ashland to the Franell Family. Richard Franell will relocate here at your expense from Florida. I hope his family like skiing and cappuccino.

2. *A Fait Accomplit*

Since it wasn't on the agenda, no one had signed up to speak on the issue, so no one could speak against it. It was, as they say, a fait accompli, a done deal. The maneuver left no doubt that what is most important to at least three members of the City Council is exercising power, and confirming the perception that their rule is law. They will have their way, however wayward that be. Some people might think that the point isn't whether the City Attorney's brother is the City Attorney's brother, but rather, whether he is "the most qualified for the job." If the City Council's top lawyer had been in action, providing the advice to the City that he is paid to provide, they would have known that Richard Franell's qualifications were irrelevant to the issue of his fitness for the job.

One of my favorite fairy tales will illustrate why this is the case. In

"Donkey Skin," the lovely princess (played by Catherine Deneuve) dons a donkey skin to conceal her beauty and flees her father's castle because, deranged by the death of his lovely wife, and seeking to fulfill her deathbed request that he marry only a woman as beautiful as herself, he has chosen his daughter to wed. Fortunately, the princess's fairy godmother provides ethical guidance in a song that reminds us all that "fathers do not marry their daughters." Some of the most important moral lessons are locked away in children's stories, and "Donkey Skin" reminds us that, before we even consider an applicant's fitness for a salaried position on the public payroll, we must consider whether they have any characteristics, such as blood relations, that would disqualify them from assuming the position. While the omnipotent will always disregard such limitations — witness the marriage of Caesar Borgia to his sister Lucretia with the approval of their father the Pope -- certain boundaries must be respected. In a world governed by sense, a princess cannot ascend to her mother's throne via her father's bed. Similarly, however qualified Richard Franell might be, he cannot properly ascend to the status of a top municipal official using his brother's high office as a stepping-stone.

3. *Yee-Ha!*

Let us presume the rogue councilors are merely ignorant of the dangers of incestuous relations in City government. We would hazard a guess that they are acquainted with the concept of avoiding the "appearance of impropriety." But like a truck full of kids in dad's four-wheeler facing a super-mudhole, the rogue Councilors simply threw it into high and hit the gas, and you know how that works out. The Council's decision (from which only Jack Hardesty dissented) will

dishearten all who hoped, despite past evidences, that Ashland enjoys honest government. That notion is dead. As if the danger of cronyism had not been the subject of the last six months of national news, the Rogue Five — Cate Hartzell, Russ Silbiger, Kate Jackson, Dave Chapman and Alex Amarotico — hijacked our civic vehicle and drove it directly into a filthy swamp of unknown depth.

4. *A Setup For Failure*

Why would the Rogue Five do this? Surely Mr. Franell's brother could not have risen so far above the ranks of the other 59 applicants that he has to be the one to lead AFN. Surely, somewhere among the clever, intelligent techies already peopling the Pacific Northwest, or even in our own little town, we could have found someone to do this job. Aha, now you've hit upon it. What is this job? No one knows. Two hours after they decided to hire Richard Franell, the Council batted around four proposals on what to do with AFN, and Kate Jackson even came up with a hybrid concept that combined the worst elements of the non-profit spin-off (no City control over management) with the worst aspect of the "Open Carrier" proposal (no ESPN).

Like the job of managing FEMA, that the President thought could be managed by a connoisseur of horse-flesh, no one really knows what the new AFN head will do. Perhaps, like "Brownie," all he has to do is "a heck of a job," sitting around with his opposable digit shoved firmly into one orifice or another while the chips fall where they may. Such a person would be ideal for this position, since no one knows just what he will do to "manage" AFN, since even the business model for this orphan agency is up in the air. Many capable people would avoid

such a job, since it is a setup for failure. It is thus doubly suspicious that the candidate we are told is the “best” would in fact accept the job. It would be far more believable to hear that the best candidate, after learning the vague particulars of the position, would reject it. There is every possibility that, like “Brownie,” who was chosen to dismantle FEMA, not manage it, our new AFN manager has been hired by Finance Director Lee Tuneberg and Gino Grimaldi to deliver the coup de grace by demonstrating, once and for all, that AFN is a failure.

5. Who Says We Can't Make A Decision?

As Mayor Morrison asked rudimentary questions, he made it clear he had not studied the proposals that have been on the website for weeks. Dave Chapman, Russ Silbiger, and Cate Hartzell, who put their plan together in non-open meetings despite being a subcommittee of a public body that should hold open meetings, tried to explain things to the Mayor, but some of us thought it was a little late for that. Civic observer Tom Gaffey left in disgust, deeming the exercise a “study session” should’ve been completed long before the meeting. “They’re not going to decide anything,” he said, echoing the comments of former Mayor Cathy Shaw, who said the day before the City Council meeting that she didn’t plan to attend because it was inconceivable that the Council would decide anything. Of course, she didn’t know the appointment of Richard Franell of Florida as AFN head was on the stealth agenda.

6. The Problem of Managing “A Wonderful Man”

Political-correctness maven Leah Ireland, fancying herself charming, first insulted Joel Kramer by laughingly objecting to sharing a seat next to him because she doesn’t like JPR’s content

offerings (not PC enough). Then she turned prophetess, telling us that if JPR were selected to manage AFN, there would be hell to pay. People would mount petitions, hit the streets, and massively reject the plan by popular referendum. By such skillful communications, Leah showed her ability to forge agreements, because after her mini-tirade against JPR, Joel Kramer didn’t want to sit next to her, either.

Then Leah got into another mode, gushing about “this wonderful man” who would be the new AFN head. She just thought this nepotism thing was ridiculous, and he should be given a chance. The other citizens were left wondering what she knew about Richard Franell that the rest of us didn’t. There has been little information about his qualifications released by the City, certainly not enough to know that he is “wonderful”. Even if he were wonderful, though, he would still be a terrible choice based on his blood relation to the City Attorney, which generates what lawyers call a “potential conflict of interest” that should be avoided whenever possible. Once you ignore a potential conflict, you move forward to the next stage of corruption, called “an actual conflict of interest.”

An actual conflict of interest arises when a lawyer would be required, due to his dual loyalties, to take opposite positions for two different clients. How would an actual conflict of interest for Richard Franell arise in this situation, and what would it mean for the City? Essentially, his brother has taken a job as a turnaround specialist, regardless what “option” is adopted by the council. The performance of this individual, who will take the reins of AFN, a department that loses about \$10,000 a week, should be under a microscope, and he should be subject to some strict financial progress requirements tied to his compensation. The City Council will likely fight tooth and nail to prevent disclosing the terms of his contract, but we may assume it provides many protections for the employee and no provision for performance-based compensation. If his work is not satisfactory, his

contractual performance should be reviewed, and at that point, the City Attorney would be consulted by City leaders charged with reviewing his performance. At that point, the City Attorney would be unable to perform his job.

If things go well with the new Franell, the conflict would just simmer in a potential form. Some obvious

“ Let us presume the rogue councilors are merely ignorant of the dangers of incestuous relations in City government. ”

negative effects will be felt. Nepotism is almost always bad for work morale and productivity, as fellow employees move from feeling jealous to thinking how to get their own relatives hired. Other problems will arise. People will say that, in Ashland, it’s who you know, not what you know, that gets you hired, and that will be hard to refute. If the new Franell does well, it will be discounted as luck. If he receives raises, it will be thought of as favoritism. If his faults are overlooked, people will say he “has pull.”

Of course, things might not go well, because they rarely do at AFN. The new Franell’s faults might be of any type. We don’t know if his contract provides for a probationary period. We don’t know what conduct or misconduct would constitute grounds for discipline or firing. We might doubt whether anyone in the City would have the guts to criticize the City Attorney’s brother, which is an inherent problem here, but assuming someone did, we might need to impose some discipline on the new Franell. At that point, we clearly would not be able to rely on the legal advice of our City Attorney, who would be ethically unable to provide such advice, because of the

RUDE AWAKENING- A REVIEW OF “FIERCE GRACE”

by Charles Carreon

Better living through yogic chemistry

It was summer 1970 in Boston. I arrived at Logan airport, and had a layover in Boston for the night, so I stuck out my thumb outside the airport and quickly had a ride with a guy in a cool Porsche. I was fourteen years old, and I was sailing on the after-images of a day flying in a 727 on a hit of orange sunshine. The guy in the Porsche was really nice, had his professional trip and casual style. He said he'd take me to his place to crash and drive me back to the airport in the morning, but he needed to pick up a book downtown by this guy who had just given a talk in town. When we got back to his place, he said he had to crash because he'd been burning himself out. He gave me two hits of purple microdot, saying they weren't really that strong, and left me to sit out the night. I dropped the two hits of purple microdot, which were tiny little pills, domed on each side, with a flat ridge around the edge, a dull purple color. They weren't that strong, but they weren't that weak, either. As the night wore on, sitting in the nice man's living room, I had the company of the book he had just bought, that was also purple, and had a chair on the front of it, locked in a circle at the center of intersecting lines. Around the edge of the circle it said "BE HERE NOW."

It was a long and beautiful night, a strange trip away from myself. I didn't follow all of the logic and reasoning, not really, but the flow of images of saintly men and women, of dancing gods and goddesses, illustrating the world as a vast golden loop of infinity, drew me in like a net of seduction. By morning, when my very gracious host rose to ferry me back to the airport as promised, I had one more favor to ask of him – could I please buy this book from him? I still have the book, and it bears on the inside front cover a wacky fourteen-year-old-on-acid attempt to claim ownership of the book on behalf of a non-self. It's hilarious, and warming to remember when I wrote those words, sailing aloft on wings of steel, peering out at the earth below, glorying in my mind and in the fact that I had found friends. For years I had been navigating the byways of psychedelic space with no vocabulary or context to guide my explorations. My prep school pals and I had no tools for confronting the inner landscape that yawned open before our youthful eyes. Seeing is believing, and we had seen a world we had never suspected existed within us. Now this guy, Ram Dass,

Tim Leary's pal that also got kicked out of Harvard, was teaching this Indian guru path and making it look cool.

Three years later I was seventeen, living in Tempe, Arizona, going to school, wearing sandals, flowered shirts and cutoffs, and I had a friend named Jane who was a waitress at Earthen Joy, the extremely wonderful natural food restaurant next door to Gentle Strength Coop and across the street from Changing Hands Books and the Buffalo Exchange. One day I met Jane on the ASU campus and she told me she was going to see this cool guy speak, so I went with Jane. It was Ram Dass, the guy who wrote the purple book, that frankly I hadn't thought about in quite some time. It must've been hosted by the Yogi Bhaan crew, because they had the front-circle position, and seemed to know what they were doing. I was a young kid far more interested in girls than God, and yet, there was something about his voice that I really liked. After an hour or so, Ram Dass said it was time for some of us to go, and that's when Jane and I parted company, she staying, me going.

Of death and compassion

I went off into the Arizona night, bicycling on the broad concrete arteries of the ASU campus, off into my life. I met a beautiful, slender blonde girl during the spring semester, and in one of those silly rebound things, I swapped my lukewarm relationship with a Catholic girl who acted Jewish for a wild head-over-heels obsession with the blonde. That summer we took a hitchhiking trip from Denver to Dallas to Florida, back up into Tennessee and Kentucky, north to Michigan and then back to Phoenix. We could cover some territory in those days. My girl had a yard of flashing gold streaming from her head, legs like a gazelle and a toothy smile. We made good time, but in the American South, that just means you hit trouble faster.

One night in Kentucky, we found ourselves on the wrong side of Green River, having a verbal dispute in a car with a man who was drunk, very big and strong. My girl said she had bad vibes from the guy when the car lurched to a stop next to us as we walked down the road. Our suspicions grew when he drove the car onto a one-car ferry that, he advised us, stopped running at nine, and took us to the other shore. As we drove on, the place he said he was taking us was just always a little farther, a little farther into the darkening Kentucky hills until the sunset turned to dusk turned to dark and at last in the pitch black night he declared that we were at the place, out in the middle of nowhere, and just needed to walk down to a lake. Nope, nope, nope. That wasn't something my girl was going to do. And besides, she said, we had to trade places, because he'd been squeezing her leg during the whole ride. He was mad when we decided not to walk down to the "lake," madder still when I insisted on sitting between him and my girl, and really mad after he pulled off the main road and I said "Whoa, whoa, whoa, where are we going?" He said he was

taking a shortcut. I told him he was scaring us. He told me he got scared sometimes, too, which is why he kept a 357 under the seat.

Quick thinking was required, but what I remembered was that guy in Tempe, in the robe with the beads and the beard. I remembered the page in the Be Here Now book where Ram Dass is looking at his own image in the mirror. It suddenly occurred to me that the man behind the wheel, basically announcing that he was going to kill us, was a very unhappy man. It occurred to me that Ram Dass might say we should feel compassion toward this person. I remembered the page of Be Here Now where Ram Dass wrote that as his torturers were nailing him to the cross, Christ was probably feeling sorry for them. The driver got back on the main road, to my relief. Suddenly it occurred to me that I was not drinking or smoking, but the man was. I realized I must appear to be a strange person, a skinny guy with long, curly hair who doesn't smoke or drink. I had quit smoking years before, and didn't like beer much at all, but I asked the man if I could have a beer and a cigarette. He said yes, of course. I lit up and popped the beer can and drank and smoked, genuinely thankful to our host, who suddenly began expressing the earnest hope that we would not miss the last ferry and get stuck in the dark on the wrong side of Green River. He was driving about as fast as you should on the two-lane road, and when we saw that the last ferry was still there, we were all joyful. As we reached the other shore, the man apologized for the events of the night, explaining that sometimes he went kind of crazy. He would like to make it up to us, he said, but we were out of the car, hauling our huge backpacks as fast as we could, and literally tearing through the woods away from the terror car at top speed to get away.

Go east, young seekers

My girlfriend and I didn't actually change our hitchhiking habits, just our choice of rides, but the fact was, life in other people's cars was hazardous. We married young and traveled around the country. We got our own cars, but they were miserable experiences, always breaking down, costing too much, sending you back to the grinding system of cash generation with its boring, downer bosses, tedious material trips, and of course, restaurant jobs. Reading gets you out of your space, though, and I read anything I could find on yoga. Autobiography of A Yogi was everywhere, being pushed through the food coops and head shops where you found eastern spiritual literature in those days, and I was seized by the miracles of consciousness laid out in the book. Paramahansa Yogananda's story was romantically beautiful. All of the problems of life were intended to be resolved through inner peace. Nothing seemed more likely to me. I had been on this subjective approach to reality for a long time.

So had Richard Alpert, the Harvard professor who would become Ram Dass. Until adulthood he enjoyed being a rich man's son, intelligent and handsome, a doctor, a professor with money and friends. He was a tenured professor at

Harvard before age forty, and the world, as he put it himself, "was his oyster." Indeed it was. Psychedelic experiences, however, upped the ante. No longer good enough to be rich, good looking, admired and respected. Now he needed to discover the who-less who of himself, that he had become so acquainted with while flossing his brain cells with Doctor Hoffman's mold extract. For that, only a trip to India, toting along a little medicine kit stuffed with White Lightning, 305 micrograms per little white pill, would suffice. And yes, at the top of a high mountain. Yes, at an old temple! Yes, a funny old man! Who can take all the White Lightning in the bottle, enough to make your face melt off and run down into your bellybutton, and just tease you about it. Yes, it's God – the acid-free acid-head! LSD was the fulcrum of Richard Alpert's psyche, the philosopher's stone of consciousness, and like a redneck who will respect anyone who can hold his liquor, Alpert had to bow down to someone for whom acid was nothing. Not much of a well-reasoned philosophy there, but it has a certain *je ne se quois*.

Having gotten out of Boston and into the invigorating air of the Indian highlands, Richard Alpert found a new source of authority to make up for his loss of his teaching position in academe, the mysterious little-known holy man, Neem Karoli Baba. Neems are a type of Indian pine tree, so you can deduce that this Baba lived way out in nowhere, where nobody ever went to see him. The perfect guru for a man starting over. And indeed, according to Ram Dass, the only recorder of the events he described, they hit it off famously. Neem Karoli Baba once even told an old disciple who wanted to touch his feet to go touch Ram Dass's instead. When the guy gave Ram Dass the devotional foot-touch, Neem Karoli Baba smiled at him. You can take the meaning any way you want. Ram Dass certainly did. The newly-named Ram Dass went to work on his image with a lack of subtlety that would have caused comment if anyone had understood what he was doing. We were so relieved to get someone who could talk about Indian philosophy without an accent, who could wear a robe but not be a priest, who had a beard like Freud, and joked about being Jewish and getting bloated after eating ice cream, that we just didn't criticize. When he said we had to read the Bhagavad Gita, and we became the Arjunas of our personal Mahabharata epics, we knew we had Ram Dass to thank for entry into the mysterious East. No silly turbans like stage clairvoyants. No table-tapping and parlor stunts like spiritualists. Just good old fashioned internal holographic displays like you saw on

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acid, that had to be real. Meditation isn't that hard, man. You'll be tripping out in no time – Ram Dass is already on a much higher plane than the rest of us. His guru told him to feed people. His guru could read his thoughts. His guru was already so high that acid did nothing to him. Really! Talk about mind over matter. That was proof that the West had nothing on the East. They would just meditate those mushroom clouds into lotus blossoms.

So I and my girlfriend, like lots of other people, followed Ram Dass's example and traveled all the way to India. We hitchhiked from Eugene to Phoenix to New York, caught the Icelandic cheap fare to Luxembourg, Belgium, hitchhiked to Munich, caught the train to Istanbul, and took buses through Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir, before we arrived at the Sacred Ganges river. There we sought out the grandson of Yogananda's guru. We found him without much trouble. His address was as listed in the Spiritual Community Guide, but he wasn't, as the Guide claimed, "giving strong Kriya Yoga teachings." He wouldn't teach us at all, he said, because a Guru took on a big job, a lifetime job, with each disciple, and he couldn't do it if we lived in America. He had only one English-speaking student, and he spoke Hindi and had read the Upanishads in the original language before they ever met. He was sorry, and unmoved. We would have to get the yoga lessons through the mail that Yogananda's group offered. That was for us.

So the Hindus had no use for us, and generally didn't allow non-Hindus into their temples. While Ram Dass had led us all to believe that spiritual bonhomie was the general rule in India, we found this to be untrue. The Indians had little use for foreigners entirely, unless they could sell us something, haggling with earnest sincerity. As poor as we were, we took classes in tabla and bonsuri from three men who were all from the same Brahmin family, and through this contact gained some familiarity with the attitude of ceremony and gentle arrogance typical of the Indian upper class. We wondered without understanding as we saw people thronging the streets of Benares, carbuncled with temples great and small, overgrown with banyans, populated by orange-robed sannyasis, moving along the shores of the great Ganges river, lined with burning ghats and temples, edge to edge for miles and miles.

We studied some Buddhist meditation with an English monk named Luong-Pi, who taught mindfulness meditation. I couldn't abide the stuffy stillness of the Buddhist approach, the tedious attention to little sensations. I enjoyed the colorful

style of the Hindus, the gods and goddesses, the stories, the tales of how one deity created illusions that other deities would purify and redeem. India was a great vacation from the Western mindset, as Ram Dass had promised. We came back more alienated from our homeland than before. The remedy for this feeling was total immersion in spirituality.

Neo-Tibetians take to the woods

In 1978, my wife and I became the disciples of a bonafide Tibetan Rinpoche, and we built a house in the woods with help from several friends who knew nothing about carpentry, and lived there for three years on next to nothing, exploring the life of the spirit and the emptiness of the natural world. I dedicated myself to the life of the spirit, trusting that the material world would take care of itself, and in 1982 that had all lined up. I was living with my wife and two kids in a yurt



out in an Oregon meadow. We were homesteading as Buddhist pilgrims in a field of alfalfa gone to seed and teasle making a comeback. We lived on student aid, food stamps, and what I could make cutting wood at about \$2.80 an hour, not figuring the cost of saw-sharpening and other necessary expenses.

Poverty – not having the money to buy anything you wanted, and only some of what you needed – was our difficult friend. It kept us simple, but it kept us

weak. We had very little power or independence. Like poor people all over the world, we kept as still as circumstances permitted, to keep our expenses as low as possible. We knew how long the honey, the peanut butter, and the whole wheat flour were likely to last, and when we'd get food stamps next. I just read last night in "The Intelligent Investor" by investing guru Benjamin Graham that from 1972, when I got out of high school, until 1983, when I left Oregon to get a law degree in LA, the cost of living doubled -- the largest ten-year rise in US history. So times really were tough, and we bore them pretty stoically, raising a couple of little kids in a little house in a meadow, just like the Waltons, the TV family in "Little House on The Prairie," a popular show of which I never saw a full episode. Ironically, it made us feel cutting-edge to be out of touch, because we were living the reality other Americans were watching, since like the Waltons, we had no electricity and no reception, and thus also like the Waltons, we weren't distracted from the beauty of the natural world by television. We maybe went to the movies twice a year, and ate out only under the direst circumstances

of necessity. Our main source of entertainment consisted in feasting on scenery and silence, studying the shade of the sky, listening to the birds and crickets, and hating the deer for eating our garden. These were all healthy pursuits that cost nothing, except the loss of the garden to the deer, hence the anger. Everyday living left us with nothing extra to put towards pleasure travel.

So when we heard that our guru was giving a talk along with Ram Dass up in Eugene, it was a conundrum. The drive was four hours, and we didn't want to risk the trip if it would cause us to suffer a car breakdown. We could not abide the thought that our car might break down. It was our lifeline to town. Everything depended on it. It was local hippie lore that the drive to Eugene, over all the insane passes north of Grants Pass, Rice Hill, etcetera, had put an end to more than one good workaday vehicle. We didn't know what to do, because we really wanted to go. I had never thrown the I Ching before, but the matter seemed to demand some third-party input. I tried to figure out the method of casting the lines, and in fact got it backward, but derived a hexagram that said, in the John Blofeld version: "The superior man does nothing that is trivial." The changing line added the commentary that "There is great power in the cart axle." The heavens had spoken. The matter was settled. We roasted a chicken, made potato salad, packed the car and made the trip to Eugene. Of course everyone went up to see Ram Dass, and no one paid a lick of attention to my guru, who was an unromantic Tibetan man with bucked teeth and a wicked sense of humor that, however, you had to take the time to appreciate. I remember Ram Dass's words to me as our eyes met briefly when I went up to see him. He gave me a friendly guy-to-guy word of encouragement – "We've been doing this for a long time, haven't we?" It felt great, like a shot of encouragement right in my heart. We'd been doing it a long time, together, me and Ram Dass and all the other folks on the liberation train. All of us.

Secret teachings

A month or so later, I was talking with my buck-toothed guru on a hill where there's now a big temple. At that time, all we had were underfunded projects, so we built things out of logs and poles, and on that day we'd been working on a deck where some teachings were going to take place that summer. My guru said to me that Ram Dass, or "that guy," as he called him, had taught him a lot. He said yes, that he had spent three days reading over his texts, preparing with his translator to deliver the teaching he gave in Eugene, but that Ram Dass had just sat there on a chair with his legs folded under him, smiling like he was having the greatest time, and talking about just anything. The Buddhist Dharma, he said to me, was not very sexy. It was, he said, like a big, ugly old truck with a noisy engine and a cab that fills up with dust and exhaust. Still, all the great masters of the past, Guru Rinpoche, Milarepa, Naropa, all of them, traveled in that same, ugly old truck, so we must use it. Ram Dass, he said, offered a much more flexible, stylish alternative. He recognized that, and was amazed at how

Ram Dass had derived spiritual lessons from everything. His teachings, my guru said, were like the CIA – they might be hiding anywhere, behind any rock or tree. As he said this, he jumped around, looking behind this tree and that rock until I grasped his wacky analogy and laughed. I was in total agreement with his confessional about the geeky appearance of our Dharma vehicle, but also, I heard the ring of noble adherence to tradition in his voice, and was attracted by it. The Dharma truck, yes, I would ride in the Dharma truck.

Around that same time, I encountered Bhagavan Dass, the surfer-dude-cum-yogi who introduced Ram Dass to Neem Karoli Baba, in the kitchen of our Ashland Buddhist center on 2nd Street, in a location that has been turned into a garden restaurant because of its sunny exposure in an above-the-boulevard location. It was a sunny day when I met Bhagavan Dass, and while I was thrilled, he seemed to be a totally regular guy, not a spiritual leader in any sense. You could say he was unassuming, perhaps. What seemed strange was that in *Be Here Now*, Ram Dass had described Bhagavan Dass as a stellar spiritual exemplar, a man who was literally always in the flow and in the know. Perhaps, I figured, he needed the hash he was smoking in India to keep his Shiva-baba mojo going, and just slid down the psychic totem pole without it. I assumed Ram Dass had told Bhagavan Dass to check out Oregon, because his joint appearance in Eugene with Gyatrul Rinpoche had a huge turnout of over three-thousand people. Of course, he might have been headed for Antelope, Oregon, the town that the Osho/Rajneesh cult took over and turned into the last known preserve where antique Rolls Royce automobiles could roam freely in the open fields. Certainly such an environment would have been more congruent with Bhagavan Dass's interests, that struck me as regrettably concrete. I would have liked to ask him the whereabouts of Neem Karoli Baba, or his reminiscences of sojourns in the upper Ganges regions where sadhus have lived and grooved the life ecstatic for millennia. But he was focused on prospects for immediate financial improvement, and just asked about money-making opportunities in the astrological field, his wife's specialty, to which I replied that in Ashland we were historically overstaffed in that department. He and Mrs. Bhagavan Dass left town the same day they arrived, as I recall.

I wasn't critical of Bhagavan Dass being focused on his own welfare rather than ministering to the flock like his friend Ram Dass -- after all, everyone has to pay for their brown rice and tofu, and indeed my own attention was increasingly focused on material matters. Certainly the idea of me meditating had turned into a huge joke with Gyatrul Rinpoche -- once when I asked him what the secret mandala offering was, he responded that it was the Chod practice of exorcism, but that the real secret was how I'd been supposedly doing my preliminary hundred-thousand mantras and mandala offerings for years now, and still hadn't completed anything. About that time he also started calling me "Grandma Lawyer," apparently because I was as

MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			6:30, Bill Leonhart, Avalon 7-8PM Nonviolent Communication, Peace House, 482-7567	6:30PM, Jim Quinby, Avalon 8PM, Entertaining Strangers by David Edgar, SOU Center Stage Theatre, 552-8348	Birthday, Roger Benson 9PM Flat Mtn Girls, Johnny B's 8PM Richard/Piano, Avalon 7PM, Billy Mills, Stevenson Union 7-8:30PM Folk Dance, Ashland Cmnty Cntr, 482-8249 8-9:45PM Cello Concert SOU Music Recital Hall	8:30AM-5:30PM Permaculture Cert. Course, Dharmalaya, 359-4177 7PM-12:01AM, Tango Milonga, The Grove, 1195 E Main
8:30AM-5:30PM Permaculture Cert. Course, Dharmalaya, 359-4177 8 PM, Moly O'Brien, Mojo Rising, mojonrisingstudio.com	6:30, Dave Scoggin, Avalon	6:30-7:30 PM Nicoline Anonymous, 717 Siskiyou Boulevard, 488-1987	6:30, Bill Leonhart, Avalon 7-8PM The Road Less Traveled, Nth Mtn Pk 7-8PM, Open Mic, Siskiyou Brew Pub, 552-8641	6:30 Jim Quinby, Avalon 8PM, Andre Nickatina, Indigo Nightclub 535 5th St., Eureka, CA	7-8:30PM Folk Dance, Ashland Cmnty Cntr 482-8249 10:30-11:45AM Puppets, Nth Mtn Pk, 488-6906 7:30PM, Open Mic, Los Gordos, 3rd and Main Underground Marketplace 8PM, Andre Nickatina, Vibes, 821 N. Riverside, Medford, 925-833-7820 8PM Richard/Piano, Avalon	11AM, Argentine Tango Workshop, The Grove, 1195 E. Main, 773-2006 southernoregonstage.com 8PM Spoken and Oldtime Manifest, The Revolution, 188 Garfield 7PM, Tango Milonga, The Grove, 1195 E Main 10-12PM, Find Your Inner Poet with Lawson Inada, 570 Clover Lane
	6:30, Dave Scoggin, Avalon 7-8PM, Wisdom Healing with Min Tong Gu, Ashland Food Co-Op, chlocenter.com	6:30-7:30 PM Nicoline Anonymous, 717 Siskiyou Boulevard, 488-1987 6:30-8:00PM, Odd Advertisements and Twisted Propaganda, Underground Marketplace, 33 3rd St., ashlandfreepress.com 7PM, The Energy Big Picture, Christopher Dymond, Pioneer Hall, 73 Windburn Way	6:30, Bill Leonhart, Avalon 10-11:30AM New Volunteer Open House, Nth Mtn Pk, 488-6906 7-8PM, Open Mic, Siskiyou Brew Pub, 552-8641	6:30 Jim Quinby, Avalon	7PM, Frankie Hernandez opening for the Toys, Ashland Armory \$17 7:30PM, Open Mic, Los Gordos, 3rd and Main Underground Marketplace, 3rd and Main 7PM, Tango Milonga 1195 E Main 10PM, Frankie Hernandez, Siskiyou Brew Pub Ray Manzanek with Roy Rogers, Rogue Theater,	8:30AM-5:30PM Permaculture Cert. Course, Dharmalaya, 359-4177 3 & 8PM, Oregon State Choral Coalition, SOU Recital Hall, 552-8101 7-10:30PM Contra Dance, Walker Elementary, 552-1039
	6:30, Dave Scoggin, Avalon	6:30-7:30 PM Nicoline Anonymous, 717 Siskiyou Boulevard, 488-1987 8PM, Crossing Delancey Preview, Oregon Stage Works	8AM-5PM Regression Therapy, 324-3855 6:30, Bill Leonhart, Avalon 7-8PM, Open Mic, Siskiyou Brew Pub, 552-8641 7PM, Eric Heman and Levi Kreis, A Street Marketplace 8PM, Crossing Delancey Preview, Oregon Stage Works	8AM-5PM Regression Therapy, 324-3855 6:30 Jim Quinby, Avalon 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works	8AM-5PM Regression Therapy, 324-3855 7PM, Tango Milonga, The Grove, 1195 E Main 7:30PM, Open Mic, Los Gordos, 3rd and Main 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works 8PM, Music of Scotland, Unitarian Center, stclairrevents.com 8:00 Richard/Piano, Avalon	8AM-5PM Regression Therapy, 324-3855 9-10AM Project Feeder Watch, Nth Mtn Pk, 488-6606 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works
8AM-5PM Regression Therapy, 324-3855 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works	8AM-5PM Regression Therapy, 324-3855 6:30, Dave Scoggin, Avalon	6:30-7:30 PM Nicoline Anonymous, 717 Siskiyou Boulevard, 488-1987	6:30, Bill Leonhart, Avalon	6:30, Jim Quinby, Avalon 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works	7:30PM, Open Mic, Los Gordos, Underground Marketplace, 3rd and Main 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works Walter Trout and The Free Radicals, Rogue Theater, 143 SE 4th, Grants Pass, OR, \$20, 18+, 471-1316	8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works

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Talent

512 -

APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
 2PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works 2	3	 7PM, Poetry Reading with Shawn Beasley, Ashland Public Library 4	5	 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works  8PM, David Roth, Unitarian Center, 4 th St., ashlandevents.com , 535-3562  Ashland Independent Film Festival, ashlandfilm.org 6	 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works  Ashland Independent Film Festival, ashlandfilm.org  Chicago Blues Revolution, Rogue Theater, roguetheater.com 7	 5-6:30PM, Code Pink, Ashland Plaza, 482-0561, codepinkert.org  8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works  Ashland Independent Film Festival, ashlandfilm.org  8PM, Frankie Hernandez, Trophy Room, Prospect 8
 2PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works  Ashland Independent Film Festival, ashlandfilm.org 9	 Ashland Independent Film Festival, ashlandfilm.org 10	 7PM, Roots Reggae Showcase, Marlee Community Center, Humbolt, 707-823-8233, roots.com 11	 7PM, Grease presented by Childrens Theater, Ashland Armory  8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works  Jackie Green, Rogue Theater, roguetheater.com  8PM, Frankie Hernandez, T.J's, Medford 12	 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works 13	 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works  New Riders of the Purple Sage, Rogue Theater, roguetheater.com 14	 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works  New Riders of the Purple Sage, Rogue Theater, roguetheater.com 15
 2PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works 16	 7PM, Grease presented by Childrens Theater, Ashland Armory  7PM, Tito La Rosa, 1 st United Methodist Church, 175 N Main St., Ayniprospects.com 17	 7PM, Grease presented by Childrens Theater, Ashland Armory 18	 7PM, Grease presented by Childrens Theater, Ashland Armory 19	 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works 20	 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works  8PM, Frankie Hernandez, J.D's, Grants Pass 21	 8PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works  8PM, Frankie Hernandez, J.D's, Grants Pass 22
 2PM, Crossing Delancey, Oregon Stage Works 23	24	 8PM, Tools and the Maytalls, Ashland Armory, 530-583-2801, renegadeshows.com 25	26	 8PM, Frankie Hernandez, T.J's, Medford 27	28	 7PM, Turned Up Missing, The Revolution, Garfield and Iowa 29
 7PM, Frankie Hernandez opening for the Green Alibates, Ashland Armory \$17  8PM, Frankie Hernandez, T.J's, Medford 30	31			Event Locations AFP Cyberlounge, 33 3rd Street, Ashland A Street Market, Intersection of Oak Street and A Street, Ashland The Avalon Bar & Grill, 105 Valley View Rd., Talent Johnny B's, 35 South Bartlett St., Medford Mobius, 281 Fourth Street, Ashland Oregon Stage Works, at A Street Market, Ashland The Underground Market, 33 Third Street, Ashland The Wild Goose, 2365 Ashland Street, Ashland		

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Grace...

Continued from Page 23

loquacious as an old Tibetan woman. By alluding to my future career choice, my guru was gently showing me the door to the yurt. It was time to venture out of the vajra circle and attend to concrete reality.

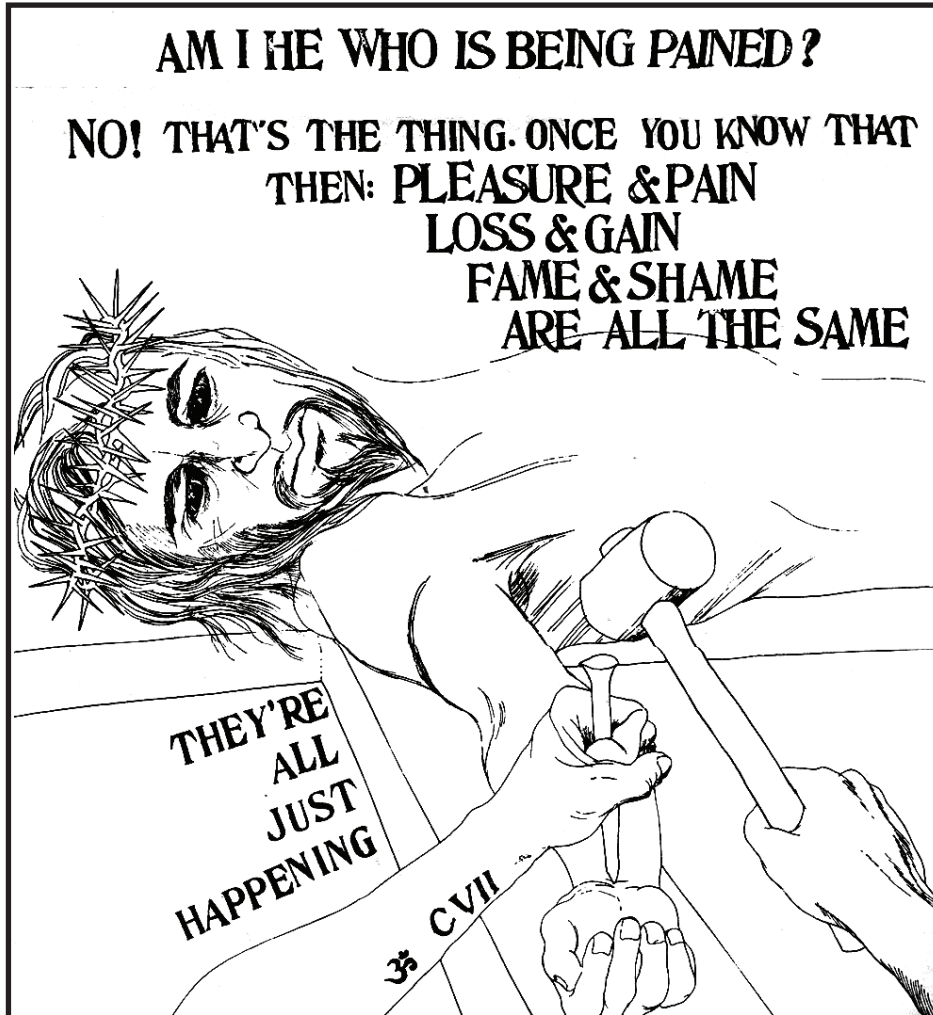
I began to recognize that poverty was an obstacle to fulfilling my life desires. Further, it became a source of humiliation after two students bought the land we were living on in a homemade yurt, and gave it to Gyatrul Rinpoche. Now we lived on the Buddha's land, and officious Dharma jerks would come by and critique the layout of our yurt, the location of the outhouse, and the fact that our refrigerator was under the porch. I wanted to buy land, and be close to my guru, but I was so broke that owning land was a ridiculous pipe dream, and my guru obviously took affluent people more seriously and regretted that so many of the Dharma simpletons drawn to esoteric Buddhism literally lacked even pots in which to piss. We were so obviously penniless that no real estate agent would have even wasted time talking to us. Reagan had become president, and was "staying the course" through the worst of the post-cold war recession, and it seemed harder times lay ahead. My mom had died unexpectedly, my father was sunk in grief, and the world without mom was mighty unfriendly -- she had always helped us financially in little ways, and her death left us literally poorer than

ever. In the summer of 1982, after my mom died, Gyatrul Rinpoche started work on the monumental 32-foot high statue of Vajrasattva Buddha, and told me to work only on that project, to dedicate all the merit to my mother as the representative of all sentient beings, and not to worry no matter how poor I got. I got so poor I couldn't buy shoes. I wrote a poem about it, but it didn't make me feel much better. I really had no shoes. My wife and I had

Professional Buddhists

With Gyatrul Rinpoche's strong encouragement, I went to law school at UCLA. We moved to LA with three kids and Tara at the wheel of a white and blue 61 Econoline church window-van, and me pulling a U-Haul with no blinkers behind a slant six Dodge half-ton pickup piled high with domestic belongings and crowned with Tara's rocking chair. We looked painfully like the Beverly Hillbillies, and were literally jeered by a drunk guy in a satin jacket crossing the street and eating a slice of pizza -- we startled him so badly with our parade that he almost lost his cheese. Somewhere in the back of the pickup was a Vespa scooter I got from Mitchell Frangadakis in exchange for a kickass little gas-powered portable water pump that had been our running water source in the yurt that we had lived in for three years and was now lying disassembled inside an old barn in Colestine Valley. I sold the Vespa to a black mod kid who would have pushed his

grandma off a cliff to get it, and a few months later he showed me the brutal gash on his shin where he'd piled it into an open car door while lane-splitting. I sold the truck a year later to an appreciative surfer dude from Tujunga for \$425. But the van I would not let go of. I drove out of Topanga one day with my hand reaching into the engine compartment, grabbing the carburetor throttle with my bare hands, a drive of about ten miles through stop and go traffic on PCH. It was a goner, though, after some jerk yelled at Tara



created a third child, a lovely little girl, and I started to feel motivated toward material independence like never before in my life. Three months of continuous hard physical labor for ten to twelve hours a day, working on the foundation of the statue, had a healing effect on my grief-stricken mind, no doubt. When the academic year began, I returned to college, finished my last year of undergraduate work, took the LSAT, and got ready to join the rat race I had avoided for a decade.

in Century City as she toodled down Avenue of the Stars, "Get that junker off the road!" We swapped it for a Mercedes 240D my dad spotted as a bargain in Phoenix, that served until I burned it up three years later and traded up to a Cherokee in preparation for our return to Oregon. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

My wife got straight clothes, put on a little makeup, got a job with no experience from a guy with no class by agreeing to work two weeks for free. She worked as a top-flight legal secretary for the next twenty years. I got a haircut, a California bar license, large debts, and the means to earn money to buy land. I worked in a skyscraper in a big city, about twelve hours a day, and in the evenings we hosted Dharma events at our house, which was one of the main Tibetan Buddhist centers in a large metropolis. Life was simple, and we kept it that way. With the guru at the top, everything else fell into line. Sometimes when he came to the big city, he stayed at our house.

My guru was almost always very pleasant with me, and had a generally good feeling about my spiritual potential. He had spotted me hundreds of thousands of mantras so I could take teachings I wasn't qualified to receive, but he figured I'd need a lot of retreat time to grind off the worldly professional patina I was acquiring in my big city job, and paying for the standard three-year retreat was another conundrum. The years went by, and I remained stuck in the big city, and when I came back to visit him, he would always ask if I was making progress toward moving back. I often told him I needed to get out of debt to move back near him, and once, after I'd been gone nearly ten years, he asked, "Are you getting out of debt?" We were, but so slowly, at times it was imperceptible. Eventually, debt or no debt, we had to get out of the metropolis. The Rodney King uprising blighted the energy of the city severely, and so in 1993, ten years after we exchanged hippiedom for yuppitude, we reversed course and headed back to the woods to reclaim our spiritual roots.

Back to the compound

We built another yurt on a parcel of twenty acres overlooking the impressive three-story temple my guru had built with Chinese dollars and American sweat. My life seemed stable, and although the isolated country setting was inconvenient for my kids' social lives, everyone had to sacrifice so we could be close to the Dharma. As luck would have it, the whole thing was not a happy homecoming. There was a terrible anticlimax about the whole situation. We had moved to the big city, lived there for ten years, bought land and moved back to the country to be near our guru, and built a house from the driveway of which we could see the golden roof of his house every morning. What was wrong? Well, by the time we got there, the guru was effectively gone. He had experienced a marital upset – his wife running off with a young Tibetan monk to whom my guru had shown great generosity. But there you have it – no good deed will go unpunished.

I and all of the other students had thought my guru and his wife were the Divine Couple, and as their relationship unraveled, various students were drawn into intrigues, enlisted as allies by the wife and guru respectively, and in several cases, watched as their faith was sacrificed to the newly-pragmatic order of the day. Strange new faces showed up around the temple – a Hollywood martial arts actor newly-recognized as a reincarnated tulku and his entourage. It was enough to give the most hardened stomach vertigo. The guru spent time huddled with top disciples, planning countermoves, and students stayed away in droves. A sorrow that would not disperse pervaded the place.

My guru seemed to lose all pleasure in being at his temple, a place that had been built so tantric practitioners could perform Dzogchen, Mahamudra, Trek Chod and Togyal meditations, and realize the rainbow body. The place was lonely as hell. The mountain

beauty surrounding the temple became desolate and sad. The hearts of the students were dazed, confused, and silently aching. Nothing made sense. The looming temple, the monumental statues, the rows of gleaming water bowls, the multicolored brocades, the bundles of incense, the flickering butter lamps, all their colors faded when deprived of the presence of the guru whose inspiration had brought it all together, then abandoned his creation.

My guru ultimately moved away to a windy hilltop near the sea, a few hundred miles from the temple. The house was provided for his use by a wealthy young woman who had appeared about a year before at the temple. They moved into a big house on a hilltop near the Pacific, and the coterie of devotees who must be close to the guru, and have no children or other ties to bind them, moved down there and assembled a new court.

So after ten years in the big city and moving back to the country to connect with my spiritual circle, after a couple of years back in the compound, the whole arrangement unraveled like an old sweater when somebody pulls the wrong thread. An empty temple is a lonely place that engenders a lot of strange game-playing among the students. Once in Benares we walked through a temple where a single lonely sadhu was dolefully playing a drum and singing. The local fellow who was showing us the way to our destination told us it was a temple where the guru had died. It had struck me that succession planning might be difficult for a guru, but I didn't do anything to deal with it. When the time came, and my guru effectively abdicated his throne to deal with a case of personal depression, it left me, and more importantly, the devoted members of my family, bereft of direction. (to p.28)

**"If any man would sue you
and take your coat, let him
have your cloak as well.."
Matthew 5:38-41**

Wipeout

For my wife, losing faith was about as painful as losing her skin. For over twenty years she had invested every waking thought in the project of self-perfection according to the Tibetan Buddhist philosophy. She had performed a hundred thousand prostrations, many more than a million mantras, transcribed and edited teachings by our guru, built thrones, sewed every ecclesiastical fabric creation requested of her, and managed hundreds of meals and ceremonies, large and small. When she realized that nothing good had happened to her mind as a result of all her efforts, and that she was just as

“ Ram Dass clearly states in *Fierce Grace* that after a lifetime of faith, his near-death experience devastated his beliefs, leaving him far less certain of his beliefs than he appeared during his long and apparently self-deluded career as a spiritual teacher. ”

far from clear on the meaning of Buddhism as she had been years before, she was enraged. As the thought-structure she had created began to come apart, it was about as dramatic as the Challenger explosion, and for several years she was condemned to repeat it daily. Self-deprogramming from a delusive worldview can be painful.

My faith in Buddhism had always been tenuous, but losing it altogether was no fun. By tenuous, I mean that I always felt like a phony practitioner. My mind is incorrigibly active, and meditating had always made me more uptight, to be honest. I certainly didn't get the hang of trancing out in meditation, like Ram Dass, who found it an adequate substitute for drugs. I generally considered myself more lucky than good, but luck is all about associating with the lucky. The lucky ones in my pantheon were the Siddhas and Mad Saints who overleaped the restraints of this world to declare the triumph of the human spirit. I had gotten quite used to relying upon their company to enliven the dreary confines of the workaday world. I was also very used to the company of wrathful and peaceful deities whose presence I had cultivated. My Buddhist lifestyle had made me able to balance various different personalities on the theory that my inherent nature was empty, but in actual fact, I had gone somewhat crazy. I woke up to my condition one day after reading a book by a Miriam Williams who had spent fifteen years of her life in the Children of God Christian sex cult, a cult that I myself had been in just before it went altogether freaky. I realized I'd been in one cult, then gotten into another one, and spent twenty years in it. My self-delusion that I hadn't been in a cult crumbled as I reviewed the last years of

my life, how I had ended up living in a remote backwoods location near an empty temple where an old Tibetan lama had broken up with his wife, and nothing very interesting was happening at all.

When we lose faith, we lose several sources of psychological comfort. We lose the social agreement and ritual activities we shared with other believers. We will no longer share homilies with the Sangha. We will not regularly read Dharma books with a reverent air. We will not push ourselves on toward the goal of enlightenment for the sake of all beings with that terribly earnest style. We will not wear special clothes, sport prayer paraphernalia or religious fashion accents. The evenings become strangely lonely when you have no fellow-believers to shore up your self-image.

I have recounted how my experiences first led me to embrace, then reject, spiritual doctrines of the sort endorsed by Ram Dass, because few people experience religious disillusionment after a long period of belief, and apostates are often not very outspoken about their despair. The faithful certainly don't want to hear about it. Therefore, it is significant that Ram Dass clearly states in *Fierce Grace* that after a lifetime of faith, his near-death experience devastated his beliefs, leaving him far less certain of his beliefs than he appeared during his long and apparently self-deluded career as a spiritual teacher.

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, Ram Dass was iconified as the epitome of a New Age guru with unquestioned credentials. His achievements were logged in the hall of fame and required no further confirmation. As he passed into middle age, he kept cranking out lectures that were turned into books, and kept certifying the experiences and writings of other spiritual lights. Like a restless explorer always looking for new places to discover, he at last settled into "aging" as his next big frontier. Of course, he subjected his encroaching decrepitude to the same internal scrutiny he had perfected with his meditator's eye. One day he was visualizing what it would be like to have failing eyesight and other weakened faculties, when it stopped being an experiment, a speculation. Most human potential fans say that if you visualize something really clearly, it becomes reality, and Ram Dass should've probably taken that promise more seriously.

Ram Dass had just answered the phone when he began exhibiting severe symptoms caused by a cerebral hemorrhage from a ruptured blood vessel in his brain. A cerebral hemorrhage leads to unconsciousness, coma, brain damage and death as blood pressure increases inside the braincase. Ram Dass had begun to slur his words, and his friend on the other end of the line, concerned, called the paramedics. "When I answered the phone, my right side wasn't working, my words were slurred, and the friend on the phone was worried," Ram Dass said about the stroke. "My friends called 911. I was on the floor when these big young firemen came. They stared at me and suddenly, I knew what it was to be old. On the gurney I remember

the pipes and the long faces of the doctors and nurses. Later, I found out they thought I was dying." An attending physician said, "Ram Dass had a massive left hemorrhagic stroke and I believe he had chronic hypertension. Since I am not his personal physician, I cannot tell you how closely his blood pressure was followed nor if it was controlled, so that may have played a part in his stroke." The lay name for hypertension is high blood pressure. When the blood pressure went up too high inside Ram Dass's blood vessels, one of them ruptured in his brain, and then the pressure started going up inside his braincase, and then he started dying.

Ironically, most doctors today will tell you "yoga" is good for reducing your blood pressure. The doctors of course are thinking of hatha yoga asanas and pranayama, the rhythmic stretching, relaxing and breathing exercises that some yoga practitioners perform. Apparently Ram Dass was dedicated to a subtler "heart yoga," which he sometimes taught people to practice by imagining that they had nostrils in the middle of their chest. It must have worked for him, but he apparently missed the fact that he wasn't taking care of his body. Like many spiritual athletes filled to the brim with the adulation of disciples, his specialness had inflated to such a dimension that it blocked an honest view of himself. In the midst of the last thirty years of hoopla, it had slipped his mind that, when it comes to death, one size fits all.

Some of us don't look forward to dying, but Ram Dass had been anticipating the moment when death would remove the fleshly barrier between himself and "Rama" the big blue God-king from ancient India whose name he had by now repeated millions of times. Constant recitation of Rama's name was said to be like "placing a lamp at the door of the mouth, so there will be light within and without." Pronounced with the last "a" silent, as in "Rahm," Ghandi shouted out the holy name the moment his assassins cut him down. Ram Dass was fond of this story, of course.

But to his own great disappointment, during the moments when his brain was failing and he was plummeting toward death, Ram Dass didn't remember Rama, God, guru, enlightenment, or anything spiritual at all. Of course, you can hardly blame him, since nothing happened to remind him of his planned after-death scenario. He didn't travel through a long tunnel, he wasn't drawn to a beautiful light, no guides showed up to meet him, and he didn't return

to this world because he still had work to do among the living. He just stared at the pipes on the ceiling, noticing that they were there. He didn't think about God, not one little bit. There's no mystery here, unless you want to invent one. Ram Dass's malfunctioning brain couldn't access the programs he'd stored to know when he was dying, and how to act. He'd locked his spiritual keys in his material vehicle, and wasn't going anywhere.

Ironies abound in Ram Dass's situation. Ram Dass apparently thought the power of the spirit could trump physical limitations, but his physical collapse has underlined the folly of ignoring one's physical health if one wishes to enjoy continued mental clarity. He didn't even know he had high blood pressure, or must've figured he'd just muddle through on good vibes. High blood pressure kills, and you don't argue with the numbers – you get your blood pressure down or you die.

Ram Dass believed, however, that spirit and body were fundamentally distinct, and that he had set things up in such a way that his consciousness would trend upward into clarity and peace, gradually freed from earthly constraints into "liberation." That is the fairy tale. Now, paralyzed and cognitively impaired, unable to drive his new car, to roll his own wheelchair, to speak clearly or express his intentions unambiguously, he is a living demonstration of how the mind depends on the body to experience suppleness and beauty.

The entire wisdom of Ram Dass's teaching is of course called into question by his own sense of complete befuddlement when faced with precisely the event for which he'd been preparing for the last thirty years. Ram Dass's philosophy flowed from his first psychedelic experience, when he believed he suffered "ego death," and discovered that even though "nobody was home," his existence-less self was still "minding the store." After getting over the shocking effects of ego-death, Richard Alpert decided it was a good thing to go through, and that it should, logically, turn you into a holy man, which is why he became Ram Dass by means of the available route – going to India with a stash of psychedelics and looking for God among the hash-smokers of Benares. But whatever Richard Alpert's ego-death was, it must have been really different from Ram Dass's near-death experience, because he clearly did not conceive of it as a good thing, and it didn't turn him into a holy man. It turned



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-- Billy Graham

him into a very sad man.

Ram Dass placed his faith in the power of the spirit to soften the reality of life. By dint of good fortune and a kindly disposition, he did in fact make his life pleasant, and he articulated a cozy philosophy that has no doubt comforted legions of believers. The history of his popularity and the adulation he received are in the record books. But when death came it didn't stop to look at the clippings and the videos and the audiotapes. It came straight for him, and he was unable to take proactive, conscious steps to manage the death experience. In the Mission Impossible moment when the smart yogi hot-wires reality and flies off with the dakini in a magic vehicle, he froze. Nothing looked right, and he forgot what to do. Whoa! Had he been studying the wrong map? Was he like an old convict who had always said he would escape, but dozed through the big jailbreak, and woke up inside the same old slammer? Or was the whole escape story just bullshit? Was there no "outside?" Perhaps what we see is all there is. Certainly Ram Dass couldn't testify to anything different based on direct experience. He fell from a height of certainty into a chasm of doubt about our mortal destiny. Based on his own spiritual criteria, Ram Dass announced at the beginning of the film: "I failed the test. I have a lot of work to do." Ram Dass never recants this dark declaration, and all by itself, this statement undermines a lifetime of confident pronouncements, as both his theory and practice appear to have left him a goodly distance short of the finish line.

Revisiting the legacy

Fierce Grace doesn't retell a fraction of Ram Dass's career as a guru, and indeed, doesn't pretend to be an entire biography. Nevertheless, to leave out the scope of his life activity presents a one-sided view of the man. His involvement in pyramid schemes like The Circle of Gold in the late seventies, which siphoned money into the hands

of a few spiritual and political elitists based on a ridiculous metaphysical proposition that a pyramid scheme was just a brilliant method of investing money that would make the whole world rich if we'd just let it do its work. I remember two local healers brought two of the official Circle of Gold chain letters up from the Bay Area, that you had to buy for \$150, and conveyed the right to sell them to two people for the equal price. A big selling point was that Ram Dass and other spiritual luminaries appeared as senders of the original letter. The healers were unable to sell the letters to the unventuresome Ashland hippies, who wanted to buy large bags of granola and dried fruit, not silly letters that anyone could write. A few months later the whole scheme went bust. Quite a saintly venture, that.

Left out entirely is the saucy story of Ram Dass's humiliation at the hands of Chogyam Trungpa during the early years at Naropa Institute, when Trungpa, a throwback feudal lordling with eleven incarnations in the Tibetan Ancien Regime, showed him how a tulku wields spiritual power. Ram Dass felt unable to compete when Trungpa talked about lineage. He hadn't even asked Neem Karoli Baba what his lineage was. In a painful humiliation that ran the spiritual circuit worldwide like a satellite transmission, Ram Dass's friend, the Hindu troubadour, had his ass-length sadhu braid cut off by Trungpa as he lay unconscious after a night of drinking at Naropa. Trungpa explained that the braid was for sannyasis, not drunkards. After that major tonsorial event, Bhagavan Dass acquired a permanent shit-eating grin that he still displays in the movie, and although the braids are back and look okay, his eyebrows are ridiculous.

Fierce Grace also completely misses the Joya Santanya scandal. Ram Dass indiscriminately legitimized a lot of mediums and holy people. One of his channel-surfing buddies, Hilda Charlton, introduced him to Joya, a thirty-something Brooklyn Jewish housewife who fell into trances from doing "the yogi breath" in the bathtub

for six hours as an appetite-reduction thing. Guess she was really hungry, and Samadhi was her only refuge. After falling into trances, she developed this problem of seeing "an old man with a blanket." Hilda asked Ram Dass to see Joya, and just like catching a fever, dear old Ram Dass went head over heels for Joya. He decided the old man in the blanket was Neem Karoli Baba, so he got his guru back, because Joya was a channel. Better yet, she was a channel with huge capacity, a virtual spiritual television who could channel anyone from Crazy Horse to Mohandas Ghandi. Joya was a scandalous divine mother given to salty language and straight talk. A little bit of Dr. Laura, a little Leona Helmsley, and a lot of Helena Blavatsky. She grabbed Ram Dass and took him like an elevator straight to the top. She taught Ram Dass what it meant to have superstar status, and locked him into a lie – they were having sex, but publicly claimed to be celibate. There was of course a discovery, more discoveries, a coverup, a scandal, an explosion, an implosion, and egg all over Ram Dass's face, as he admitted in his book *Grist For the Mill*.

Ram Dass's complete failure to perform as a guru on an equal level with Trungpa, or as a partner with Joya, is omitted from the movie, and the filmmakers don't ask Ram Dass about those years. I would have thought they merited as much attention as the silly "Millbrook experiment," a free-floating assemblage of self-conceived geniuses dosing on acid in a groovy mansion owned by those signal exploiters of humanity, the Hitchcock-Mellons. Wow, utopia. Not. Leary and Alpert had just been kicked out of Harvard because they had given in to the desire to proselytize and liberate the chemical sacrament, as they conceived it. They had been giving LSD outside the parameters of their job authority, and were proving for everyone that LSD caused people to lose their sense of social reality. Indeed, the fact that both Leary and Alpert seemed totally fine with their disgrace was virtual proof that the drug they championed had

caused them to lose the very rationality that had been the whole reason for being Harvard professors at all.

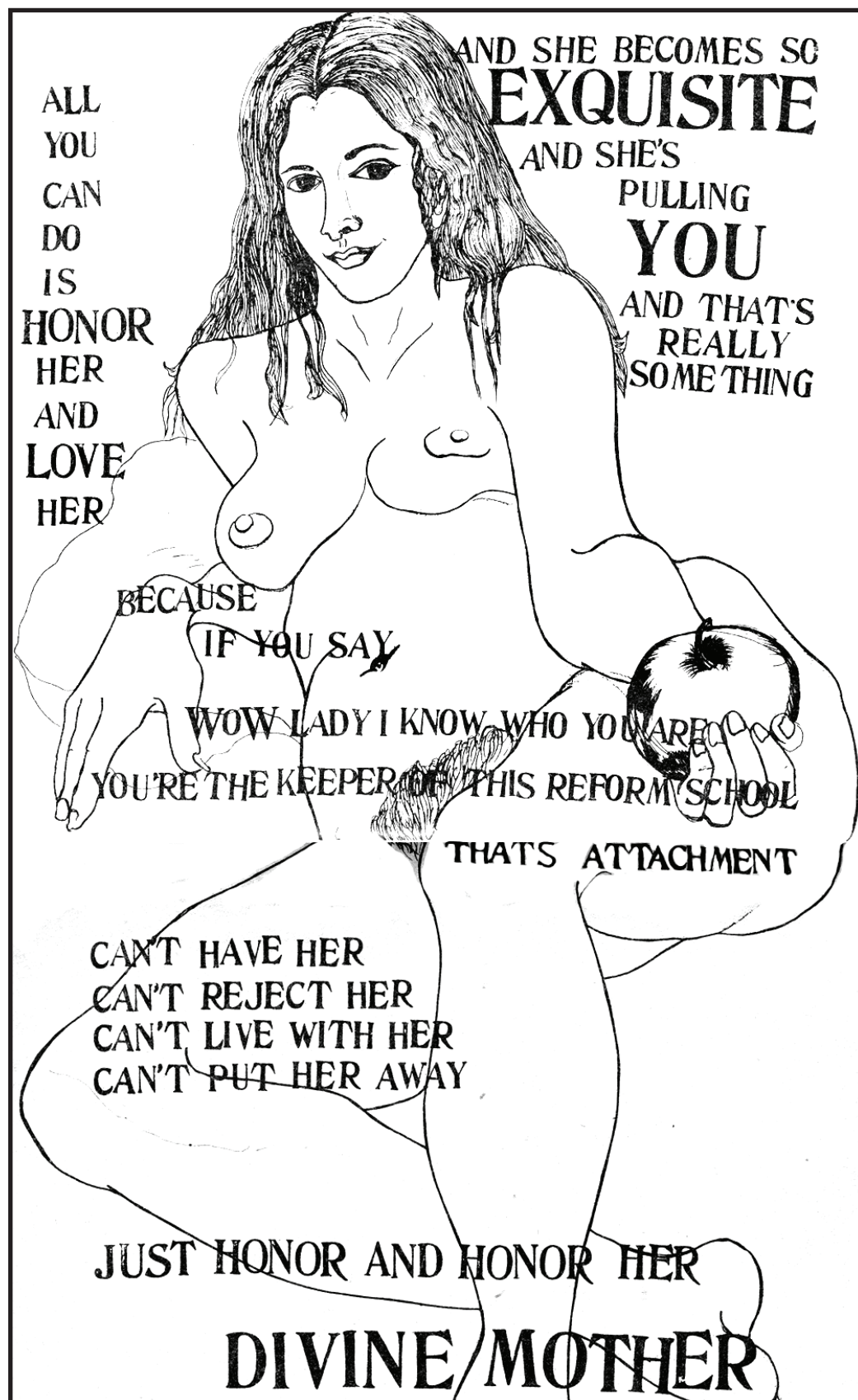
We can thank this incredibly stupid faux pas by the Leary-Alpert pair for giving the DEA a huge win in its effort to ban an expanding spectrum of mind drugs of every type, including

traditional native medicines. But even after living through a lifetime and a near-death experience, Ram Dass doesn't realize that by getting run out of Harvard in disgrace while sporting a silly acid smile, he squandered the opportunity to experiment legitimately with psychedelics in one of the world's

finest educational institutions. Instead of defaming psychedelics with his own childish behavior, proving unable to apply scientific protocols to a serious endeavor, he could have kept his head. He could have been more like the discoverer of LSD, Dr. Albert Hoffman, for example, who died recently, mourned by all, and fit as a fiddle until he stepped off the stage.

Ram Dass also seems a bit of a selfish child grown large. He seems willfully oblivious to the shock his abrupt decision to kamikaze his career must have given his father. Shock or no, Ram Dass's father aged far better than his youngest son Richard. As has Ram Dass's older brother William, a silver-haired, tanned gentleman. He reminisces briefly about how Richard once wrecked a brand new boat within seconds of taking control. The future guru manhandled the shifter, causing the boat to slam back and forth between the dock and another obstacle. That was all the boating they did that day. With a resigned note in his voice, William wraps up the story with an explanatory declaration -- "That was Richard" -- tilting his head, raising his brows, and twisting his mouth wryly in a tolerant expression.

Yes, that was Richard, the same Richard who returned from India as Ram Dass to host flocks of barefoot young people on the golf course adjacent to his father's country estate. That was Richard, earnestly but self-impressedly telling the crowd through closed eyes, "Now, we will meditate ... for about ..." here pausing for a self-adoring smile, the better to select a mystic number, "seven minutes ..." No doubt seven minutes became the right amount of time to meditate for dozens of people that day. Richard, now Ram Dass, never realized how silly he must have looked to his relatives, and how sorry his brother must feel for him now. No wife, no kids, no one to care for him. Sure, he had a hell of a good ride, the incense smoke and the adulation, but it wasn't very virile or very challenging, and now it's tired, cold and lonely with a crew of hangers-on standing in for a family.



We can do this

The moviemakers are not very receptive to criticism of Ram Dass's past or present personality or "teachings." Ignoring the obvious fact that a great part of Ram Dass's spiritual value to students and devotees has been crushed under God's careless hammer, this film highlights the silver lining in the clouds that have engulfed Ram Dass in their darkness. The feel-good machine has to be turned on high to accomplish this transformation, but after all, what is the New Age all about but doing amazing things with film? As the movie maneuvers to a feel-good conclusion, the background music becomes more encouraging. Ram Dass, it turns out, has come out of his funk. He's battling back against the paralysis, getting on his feet, blending his own arcane grief with the pedestrian sufferings of others. He is writing a book with a man who finishes his sentences, although at the beginning of the movie he said he prefers that people not finish his sentences. The "writing" process comes across, literally, as a charade. Ram Dass is trying to make his mind produce speech from thoughts that aren't even fully there. The writer is sitting there putting words in his mouth, writing stuff down, just guessing what to say, and he has no gift for this – he knows he's failing, but he keeps trying. After the writer manages to come up with a complete cheeseball of a closing line, Ram Dass, smiling beatifically the while, ekes out the comment, "You're so ... New York schmaltzy". The writer backs up, exposed. Okay, we'll just cut that last part, he volunteers. Ram Dass says no, let's finish it. So it is finished, but when books are written this way, by civil negotiation between a wordsmith and an aphasic older gentleman formerly-famous for his metaphysical eloquence, something has gone seriously awry. Spiritual leadership has been redefined at this point. In Ram Dass, the New Age has found its Reagan, an old warrior venerated even in dotage. Reagan had Nancy. Ram Dass has the publishing industry.

Thanks to the publishing industry, Ram Dass has got his groove back, and in so getting it back, he echoes what Wavy Gravy says to the camera with total non-seriousness – he is going ahead of us baby boomers into the tunnel of aging, bringing back the information we need to make it through. We're not going to be let down by this movie, I realize. It's a recovery story. As the theme sweeps onward to its conclusion, Ram Dass is interviewed in front of a hall that is never quite shown to be full of people. Baby boomers, particularly women, come to say hello, to express deep warmth, to give hugs, and Ram Dass is back on his game. He's talking better, and he has a new rap down. A somber moment falls when his caregiver rolls him out of the empty hall, shown in its unfillable expanse for the first time. It is a lonely moment.

What's a little lame about Ram Dass's recovery is how he doesn't own the bummer he was on after he first recovered from the stroke. He blames it on other people – everybody around him thinking "poor Ram Dass," causing him to

believe their negativity. Okay, I don't want to beat up on an old man trying to get through a very hard day such as Ram Dass faces daily. But at the beginning of the film Ram Dass said he'd been jolted by his failure to manifest spiritual awareness during imminent death, and was deeply grieved by mental and physical deficits resulting from brain damage. That's enough for anybody to be entitled to be a little bleak of spirit, but it's typical of Ram Dass's willingness to rise to the role of role model that he preserves his image even under hellish circumstances. At this point, his time for naked honesty is past. He needs to survive and keep on, so he is now buying into the revisionist history constructed by his handlers.

Like a Hallmark greeting card that rises to any occasion, Fierce Grace tries to make everything all right. Doggedly, the producers plow on, attempting to show how Ram Dass is carrying on. He explains to the camera that he had lost faith, and reclaimed it when he realized how bleak life is without it, so again he's a believer. We can all breathe a sigh of relief. Ram Dass is saved from a permanent bummer, and we won't have to digest his grief! But what Ram Dass believes in is a pretty vague quantity. His faith seems like a cup that's been broken and glued back together – marginally functional and unable to bear ordinary use. It's not entirely clear that it is an unalloyed pleasure for this old man to sing bhajans anymore. As he claps to the rhythm of a roomful of blue-state Americans singing Hindu holy songs, he gets a pained, confused look on his face. Behind closed eyes, Ram Dass seems to be digging for meaning, until he gives up the process, his emotions carry him away, and he starts to cry wretchedly. Throughout the uplifting singalong, Ram Dass's face reveals difficult emotions, and he looks very little like the other devotees, affecting serene transports as their reward for devoted crooning. Among his many expressions, one recurs most often – ambiguous bewilderment – the look of a man who is trying to laugh along, but is not sure if he has exactly got the joke.

This is a big loss for everybody, because before his stroke, Ram Dass knew, and taught his beliefs with confidence. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told his close disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth. If the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" Jesus was telling his disciples that they had to be filled with faith, to communicate faith to others, just as salt must be salty to be of any use. Ram Dass was the salt – he communicated the flavor of the Buddhist-hippie-Hindu-reincarnationist philosophy to all of us. By his own admission, however, he has slid considerably down the scale of relative saltiness. He isn't very salty at all any more, in fact, he probably needs salt, but as the former saltiest man in America, where would he get a supply?

Despite the obvious fact that it's time to scale down the myth to fit the reality, the makers of Fierce Grace have quite another story to tell. Ram Dass, they push us to believe, deserves continued veneration as a saint. However, they simultaneously disregard his true message, perhaps because Ram Dass isn't consistent in communicating it, and

really no one wants to hear it. Ram Dass's true message was politically unacceptable for those in the religion business, so the filmmakers sweep it under the rug.

Instead of airing the truth that Ram Dass is disoriented by his brain damage, and is recovering from depression, the movie is intent on burnishing his credentials and piling up fuel to fire the funeral pyre of his legacy. For example, at the start of the movie, a couple from Ashland describes how Ram Dass's letter to them after the sudden death of their daughter helped them heal from their bereavement. This scene seemed ill-conceived, like several others in the film. Granted that he wrote good consolatory correspondence with students, Ram Dass can no longer perform at that level of intellectual and emotional subtlety. Besides, what is the point of this bit of character-testimony? Obviously no one was willing to say he'd healed the blind or made the lame to walk, but why get into the competition at all? Perhaps because, with a bit of nostalgia, we can honeycoat this reality and pretend that, notwithstanding Ram Dass's disheartening cry of pain and fear at the moment of his rude awakening, it is all okay. We'll just crank up some emotional footage with guitar music to cover it up. Don't worry folks, we can do this. Just close your eyes to reality, and the movie's spin will take you to a good space where it's "all good."

A diagnosis and report of cure

Reviewing the evidence, I would submit that Ram Dass suffered from a form of narcissism I have dubbed TIDS ("Tantra-Induced Delusional Syndrome"), a proposed entry for the Diagnostic Symptoms Manual for Mental Disorders. TIDS comes in three flavors – Student-Side, Guru-Side, and Transitional. Student-side TIDS causes the slavish, self-hating behavior typical of many cult adherents. Guru-side TIDS leads to a "god-realm" attitude in which internal and external events reinforce delusions of wisdom, greatness, goodness, and significance in the subject, who floats ever-higher on a spiral of self-reinforcing self-adulation. Transitional TIDS is an advanced stage of Student-side TIDS, in which the subject develops the delusion that they are turning into a guru, something that so rarely happens as to be discounted entirely from the realm of possibility. Transitional TIDS-sufferers are often highly energized and competitive, and thus are found in high levels of spiritual organizations, currying favor and partaking of the true Guru's reflected glory, fancying themselves greater than they are ever likely to become.

While hardly anyone gets Guru-side TIDS without the aid of outside persons who "recognize" the spiritual genius within them, virtually no one recovers from it. The self-delusive lock is self-reinforcing. Having experienced the impossible pleasure of complete guru-hood, their minds just won't go back. Even if Andrew Cohen ends up living in a dumpster, he will still think he's a guru. But I think Ram Dass is off the high. At the start of the movie, Ram Dass

was terribly put out because he failed to think of God at all, and became absorbed in the appearance of pipes on the ceiling above him. Perhaps if he'd been practicing "bare-awareness" meditation, this sterile perception wouldn't have disturbed him so deeply, but Ram Dass was apparently expecting some confirmation of his beliefs when the death process began, and there was none. His Guru-side TIDS condition collapsed when it was punctured by the sharp point of reality.

The proof comes from a sad scene toward the end of the movie, shot with a young girl who has come to Ram Dass distraught over the murder of her activist boyfriend by a Central American death squad. Ram Dass tries to comfort her by saying that God doesn't follow our desires, but he clumsily invokes as an example his own disappointment at being unable to do a radio show he'd been planning before he lost his mental capabilities. Most people would say that was an insensitive response to death – to compare not doing a radio show with never seeing your sweetheart again – and the girl's face shows it. She seems to be wondering, "What the hell? This is helpful?" By the time Ram Dass blurted that malapropism, though, the interview had turned into a debacle. He had harvested a rejection when he tried to give the girl a flower. Smiling beatifically like a sweet old grandpa didn't work either. This girl wanted answers to deep questions, and Ram Dass struggles to converse about everything. He said to her that "losing a lover is a path," but that didn't help. She told Ram Dass about a dream in which she communicated with her dead boyfriend, but with his limited vocabulary, Ram Dass could barely get out a crippled exclamation that evoked a rudimentary mental state: "Yummy! Oh, yum, yum!" It's a tortured scene. Ram Dass can't express himself clearly; the girl's not getting any empathy; she's having to cover for his frailties; the whole exchange is humiliating. Ram Dass breaks down. The young lady leaves after they exchange a cute hug and she gives him a kiss. Who the hell thought this was a good idea? Well, at any rate, his career as a guru is clearly at an end.

As a Guru-side TIDS sufferer, Ram Dass's prognosis for recovery was terrible, but he beat the odds when the outer and inner framework supporting the delusion fell apart. From the outside, he lost the charming eloquence that made him a spiritual personality in modern media. He lost the chance to do a radio show. The few cooling embers of his career can't get his kettle boiling. And on the inside, Ram Dass lost the illusion that he enjoyed for all the years when he thought that his spirit, independent of his body, would travel on into eternity to continue the joys of consciousness. He knows death is coming with a gun loaded with darkness that he can't see into, and he doesn't believe the pretty pictures he painted on the darkness for a lifetime. He is free from TIDS, and subject again to the normal constraints of humanity. But don't try to tell the moviemakers. They've got TIDS themselves. ❖

Obese...

Continued from Page 17

clinical use. That problem may now be solved. Very recently two Oregon entrepreneurs, UO biology professor Rod Capaldi and UO monoclonal lab director Mike Marusich, started a bioscience company, Mitosciences, Inc. to develop a tool that can measure the health of an individual's mitochondria.

food items a day. These deficiencies may also be related to how virulent a virus is. For example, until 1979, selenium deficiency was not believed to be harmful. Then a usually benign virus was implicated in an epidemic of viral cardiomyopathy (heart failure) in China. Researchers discovered that the soils in that province were selenium deficient, which caused foods grown in the soil to be deficient, and that the deficiency had allowed the virus to become virulent.

Over the last several decades since

known to be a neurotoxic compound, rodent studies were employed. It was found that rodents fed uncooked rat chow did not have measurable acrylamide but those fed rat chow processed at more than 250 degrees F. did. This story was covered in the United States in Science News. This is a very important issue best explored further by readers by accessing the website for the Center for Science in the Public Interest. This nonprofit organization documented that the federal government blocked the State

The individuals not exposed were found to also have acrylamide in their blood despite no known exposure.

Since medications like antipsychotic drugs can damage the mitochondria, this tool can help assess whether an individual's health problem involves compromised cellular energy so as to serve as a contraindication for specific medications. In certain hard to assess populations, like veterans diagnosed with Gulf War Syndrome, a test that can evaluate their metabolic health can establish both the necessity of not labeling them "psychiatric" but also spur appropriate treatment protocols.

Lots of natural substances are involved in the fat weight/lean weight equation. Some individuals have deficiencies of trace minerals associated with insulin resistance. Chromium is probably the best known. Vitamin deficiencies should also be suspect. In fact, Professor Roger J. Williams (bioinst.cm.utexas.edu/williams/), late of the Clayton Foundation Biochemical Institute of the University of Texas, the discoverer of the B vitamin pantothenic acid, once noted that he was unable to induce his laboratory rats to overeat unless he deprived them of an essential ingredient. The possibility of being deprived of an essential compound is the reason the government of Japan advises their citizens to eat 30 different kinds of

JFK's initial efforts to get Americans exercising, our government has attempted to demonstrate leadership on the issue of obesity. Their attempts have been unsuccessful. For example, Americans were pushed to eat less fat. They were encouraged to eat more grains. The government promoted the concept of a food pyramid recommending lots of grain carbs. Nonprofits with heavy subsidies from the food industry jumped on the bandwagon and breakfast foods composed mostly of sugar were misrepresented as "heart healthy". The emphasis on carbohydrates, besides the issue of over processed "empty" calories, has an even darker side to it. Several years ago, the Swiss government had to investigate how to follow humans exposed to acrylamide secondary to a massive construction accident. In this accident, acrylamide leaked into a, downstream from which fish and cows, who drank from the river, died. In monitoring the workers exposed to acrylamide, a comparison was made of blood levels of workers who had not been exposed. The individuals not exposed were found to also have acrylamide in their blood despite no known exposure. Since acrylamide was little studied although

of California's efforts to achieve control of this compound to protect consumers. Suffice it to say, encouraging humans to eat more fried or baked carbohydrates may have caused more damage than eating large amounts of high fat unprocessed products, like almonds, avocados or even boiled meats.

While most of the information the public is exposed to involves decreasing caloric intake to treat or prevent obesity, there is considerable evidence that other factors are involved. Many of these factors are outside of an individual's direct control. Especially in childhood, one cannot prevent being exposed to viruses, pollution, or acrylamide-containing foods, yet the accumulated exposures of a lifetime may be at work in damaging the cellular metabolic machinery. Many dietary studies, looking at issues from the aspects of weight control to the incidence of cancer, fail to fully consider the whole experience. The studies will look at carbohydrates versus protein intake but fail to look at circadian rhythm/sleep issues. Since our government has so far failed to exercise leadership, we the public have to develop strategies to spread this information. I suggest asking Oprah and other celebrities fighting fat to publicize the issue. ♦

Let's Go Back To The Days of Dialup

by Cyrus Magee

I grew up without the Internet
And I ain't never found a use for it yet
Yep, a horse and buggy is good enough
For a person who needs to move their stuff

Yeah, let's go back to the days of dialup
We'll get all the citizens riled up
Remembering about the good old days,
Good enough for me is the way it should stay.

When I get a look at that Internet porn
It makes me wanna blow my horn
It's mighty hard to look the other way
When every pretty face just wants to play

So let's go back to the days of dialup
The folks around here are all riled up
It wasn't this way in the good old days
So let's turn back the clock and quit the rat race

Yeah they're all wrapped up in this fiber net
Never seen no good from it yet
Too many bills already to pay
What's a poor local fellow to say?

But let's go back to the days of dialup
Me and my friends are all riled up
You don't need nothing we don't understand
And we all agree it was a terrible plan

They say there ain't no solution, we can't fix nothin'
Can't fire nobody or get an answer to a question
They must think we're stupid or just don't care
How much we pay for light and air

So let's go back to the days of dialup
All say "aye" and stand up
Don't have to understand when you know what
you're doin'
And I'm pretty darned sure it's not myself I'm
screwin'

We're headed back to the days of dialup
Better get used to sayin' "giddy-up,"
'Cause the past was fast, but the future will be
slower.
You can honk your horn, but we won't pull over.

THE MAGIC OF MOTORIZED METAL

By Jason R. Couch

You have got to love car shows. I mean, where else can you find such a beautiful display of good old American know how, history, craftsmanship, artistic expression, family fun and community minded charity? Once a year Rogue Valley Street Rods presents the Southern Oregon Rod and Custom show at the Jackson County Fair grounds to benefit local kids treated by the Oregon Health Sciences University and the Child Development and Rehabilitation Center at RVMC. In the last 29 years they have raised nearly \$300,000 and most of it from ticket sales to this fun family event.

The show fills the main arena and spills out into the parking lot and adjoining buildings showcasing

everything from Nationally recognized custom car builders to the Rogue Valley's own Mark Daley and his "Thunderstruck" motorcycles and many local gear heads and backyard builders. Parts, performance and builder's supply companies like Precision Brakes of Ashland and Industrial Source welders supply of Medford were also well represented with many raffling off donated items and ALL FOR CHARITY. Also many necessary items to put on and fill out the show were donated by local merchants including Sherm's, Lithia Dodge and Shari's restaurants. These people do us all proud folks and the word on the street was that Mark Daley was offered good money to show in Portland that weekend but he stayed here at home to chip in for this great cause; you have

got to respect that and it is hard not to say "WOW! at the depth of the artistic ability, ingenuity and sticktoitiveness the craft demands. Wow!

I will say it again here. For 29 years now the Rogue Valley Street Rods have been putting on this show and over the years have raised nearly \$300,000 for charity and in the process club President Troy Boyd and Treasurer Larry Stalions pointed out that a fantastic family event has also grown and become a real showcase that everyone from Uncle Bill to little Violet can enjoy and certainly it was by special guest and recipient of much care and attention Jamie Edwards. You need to make sure you go and see this show for yourself when it comes back around next year.

I have been going to car shows since



I was a kid and I think on some level we all love to see the super polished and tuned vintage and custom cars and motorcycles at car shows and parades but it is deeper than that. Recently Ford Motor Company announced that they were “going green” meaning that they are realigning the whole concept of how they are going to build cars for the future and locally bio-diesel and electric and hybrid cars are showing up more and more frequently. Do we as a nation have what it takes to buckle down and do the work and create transportation that will get us through the next hundred years while maintaining a connection to the wonder in design from our past and to tinker and adapt to a new paradigm? Hell yes, and a trip to any car show will prove it. Americans have the “from the ground up” know how, the determination and we are getting the motivation. Our out of the box style of thinking, creating and expression are in good working order and will get us where we need go and the go juice we need is not coming out of the ground half way around the world. It is between our ears. Hand me my welding helmet will you, please? We have work to do.

Oh and a quick disclosure; those raffle tickets can really pay off. I won a really nice Lincoln® MIG welder that was donated by Industrial Supply on a \$1.00 try, woo hoo! ❖



OUTSPOKEN APPAREL FOR THE DISCREETLY DISRUPTIVE ASHLANDER

By Jerry Quince

Ever since the Fall from Grace, humans have been wearing clothing, stealing the skins off furry creatures, weaving wool and hemp strands into textiles, imprinting fabrics with bright imagery, and cutting and stitching flexible materials into soft sculptures that reinterpret the human form. Clothes, some have said, make the man, and I said as much to my friend Cyl Stengel as I saw her walking past Geppettos yesterday in a stylish thrift-store herringbone calf-length overcoat that

to place in pure awareness, and so little time to actually sound off about what chaps your very own, personal hide. Some people, inspired by Lady Godiva, who doffed her royal gowns to remind her husband that the peasants were also nearly bare due to their poverty, resort to displays of bare elegance, and as the breast-baring protesters a few months ago showed us, the City of Ashland may consider exposed breasts a form of free speech. However, for many of us, wishing to maintain employment, and deter gossip among the narrow-minded, naked expression of this sort is unpalatable. If you fall into this last category, the Ashland Free Press has developed a line of "Outspoken Apparel." Our first offering, modeled here by Holly Sheehy, is the "I Want To Spy On You," t-shirt, plucked from the cover of the New Years 2006 issue of the AFP. While we can't promise you'll look as provocative as Holly, you can wear it with impunity, knowing that after all, you are only repeating what the President himself promised. Worried about ending up on the FBI's list? Don't be. This is safer than getting email from MoveOn.org. Although penis enlargement ads and Democratic spam in your email leave electronic fingerprints, a t-shirt is an evanescent statement that you can wear today and stuff in your drawer (or fireplace) at a moment's notice. So, as your attorney, I advise you to come down the AFP Writer's Lounge in the Underground Markets, buy one of these bad boys for \$15, slip it over your torso, and start enjoying the stream of delighted looks from shameless Ashland liberals who will congratulate you on your good taste and intellectual acuity. Then, you can share love, and tell them where you got it. Enough of these shirts get out there, and soon, the undeniable, naked truth will be out -- and Lady Godiva couldn't say it better. ♦



Marketplace...

Continued from Page 8

the cost of computer access at the writer's lounge is \$8.00 per hour. In a self serve environment, all computers run the latest software. Color inkjet printer, scanner, cd burners, and many other tools make the writer's lounge a well equipped multimedia center suitable for a variety of uses. If you need help using a computer, an assistant is available after 4:00 pm. For seniors and students the Writer's Lounge offers a 25% discount. ♦

accented her boyish haircut most fetchingly. Cyl, like my old friend Matthew Small, could walk through a Salvation Army and come out dressed like Cary Grant our Audrey Hepburn, but for the rest of us, sartorial panache is elusive.

Reasons for our dowdiness we have in abundance. After all, we are activists. Style? Fashion? Who has time for it? So many demonstrations to attend, so many new relationships to develop, so many tyrants to topple, so many living beings



conflict of interest between his loyalty to his brother and his duty to us. He would have to call one of his friends at a law firm in Portland and pay them a retainer of about \$10,000, so a firm with a name like Stoel, Rives can bill us \$350/hr for the services of a municipal employment lawyer. City lawyers make friends referring work out like this, and all things work together for good. There is less work for the City Attorney, a good connection with a big lawfirm, and perhaps a nice settlement for the outgoing Franell.

Oh, I can hear the optimists among us scoffing. Things like that never happen in Ashland! Right, and there are no ducks in Lithia Park. The City has wasted plenty of money on employment issues that result from poor hiring choices. Last time the City paid off a departing employee, Lisa Brooks of Ashland Police Department, she settled her harassment suit for \$250,000. The legal fees certainly exceeded that amount, so the Brooks disaster probably cost half a mill. The City was once sued after it fired

brush fires. Last year, the City Council paid \$35,000 to consultants who papered over the still-simmering antagonism toward Chief Mike Bianca, who insists on seeing the town as a peaceful place, and does not mistake himself for Clint Eastwood, to the great chagrin of the would-be gunslingers hired by the previous Chief, that Bianca can't fire until he catches them committing some criminal act. Indeed, under the surface, the rift at the heart of the APD is still bubbling like an undersea heat-vent that will in time generate its own volcano. But let's focus on the problem at hand.

The Rogue Five don't want to see the employment disaster they have engineered by ignoring the laws of nature and the ethical law that governs lawyers. They are pleased to send the message that their will is law, common sense and legalities be damned. Of course, since the City Attorney finds it convenient to remain silent about the looming dangers of hiring his brother, the Rogue Councilors can claim ignorance. Deniability is built into this plan. Some might think, that placed in the City Attorney's position, they would not even want their brother to get the job. For example, my brother has been one of the top City Attorneys

Attorney might be placing a premium on getting his brother out of harm's way, and into the safe bosom of Ashland. To bring these two siblings together, currently separated by the entire length and breadth of the continental United States, all we have to do is pay the new Franell's relocation expenses, his salary and benefits, the costs of extra legal advice to negotiate his contract and monitor his performance, and whatever costs arise from having him take a job that no one can tell you what it is. And for that, as Leah Ireland put it so well, we get a wonderful man.

5. Kissing Off the White Knight

Having demonstrated their imperviousness to sense, the Council found it easy to commit further blunders. They gave Joel Kramer of JPR all the excuse he needed to leave the discussion table for good. Of the "four" options on the table, many citizens liked the idea of passing management of the business to JPR, that has built a heck of a listener base and is one of the largest ISPs selling AFN Internet access. But it was clear to Kramer, probably even before the meeting, that three of the Councilors -- Hartzell, Chapman, and Silbiger -- were certain to vote against a JPR spin-off, and eager to proceed with the new "Open Carrier" model that the three prefer. And in predictable fashion, as these things always play out, the Council voted to focus on developing the Open Carrier option.

The Open Carrier model sounds very sensible, and quite frankly, I would support it, if it were possible. Before I explain why it's not possible, however, I'll tell you how the Council hopes it will work. An Open Carrier system would maintain City ownership of all of AFN. All households would receive mid-speed Internet access and a "base level of TV" (all broadcast and local channels, and CSPAN). The City would jettison costly TV cable channels that many AFN users shun. The City

“ The Rogue Five don't want to see the employment disaster they have engineered by ignoring the laws of nature and the ethical law that governs lawyers. ”

the Fire Chief, who was grossly obese, on grounds the City had failed to accommodate his disability — weighing so much he couldn't climb a ladder. Of course, if the Fire Chief had been the City Attorney's brother, he'd probably still be sitting in the new station house, putting out bureaucratic

in the City of Phoenix, Arizona for twenty years, but even when I've been between jobs and hard against it, he has never suggested that I apply for an opening there. After all, it would only taint his reputation and cause people to suspect my qualifications.

Then again, with hurricanes devastating the Gulf Coast, our City

would add a new charge to the utility bill of between \$7 and \$15 per month for this service, thus going directly into competition with local ISPs like Jeffnet, Info structure, Ashland Home Net, and Open Door.

Practically speaking, of course, the financial part of the plan has already received a popular rejection. The City Council backed into a buzz-saw last year after Lee Tuneberg convinced them to add a monthly AFN charge to our utility bill. They withdrew the plan when it exploded in their face. Granted, the Open Carrier plan will give people something for their money — Net access and basic TV — but the plan to charge everyone for service on the utility bill will not be made more palatable to those who objected they didn't want to pay for AFN if they didn't use it.

But let's say, that like me, you think the Open Carrier proposal sounds good. Why do I say it can't be done? The answer is simple. You will note that what is getting trimmed under the Open Carrier proposal is City spending "on TV." What does that mean? That means not sending checks to the media magnates like Warner Brothers for that TV programming Ashlanders don't seem that interested in, and that is equally available at lower price from Charter.

The high-priced question is, of course — can we stop sending checks to Hollywood? According to Joel Kramer of JPR, the answer is a resounding "No." Why? Kramer explained his answer in this fashion: "I would never have signed the contracts that the City signed to get television content. Most are binding until 2014. One, for religious programming, is effective until 2009." Asked directly whether he thought these long-term TV contracts posed an insuperable obstacle to the adoption of the Open Carrier plan, he unequivocally answered, "Yes."

So the City has signed contracts that obligate it to provide television channels like HBO, Disney, and Warner Brothers through AFN for the next eight years, and to pay the TV studios set rates per subscriber. Kramer said

he was very disappointed to discover, once he got his hands on some of the contracts, that they had many onerous provisions, but was most taken aback by two things — the extremely long terms and the fact that the contracts had been signed by the City without prior review by legal counsel. At this point, AFN's Rick Holmboe chimed into to inform us that the assistance of a

tough sell to the citizens, but it seemed a logical approach to administering a valuable City resource. Though the nepotistic choice of the new Franel to do a vague job disturbed me, I felt I could still support the Open Carrier option. Now, that view had taken a serious hit, since I am disinclined to attempt the impossible. Being well-acquainted with the rapacity of entertainment

“ If I see Dick Cheney or any other thug coming, I'll take cover and phone Chief Bianca to talk him down. ”

lawyer couldn't have resulted in better terms — the studio contracts are "take it or leave it." You can see why the City Attorney isn't worried about being unable to consult on AFN's operations — they think his assistance would be of no value. Besides, our City Attorney is more than busy enough cutting deals with developers to manage the steady inflation in our residential real estate market, that is making many Medford realtors wealthy. Let AFN continue on its merry way, leaking money like a sieve! That's entertainment!

I asked Kramer where the City's action left JPR, and he answered: "We're done. If the city had said they wanted to go forward with us, we would have worked on it with them. We do not want to be seen as pushing anything. If they had said 'yes,' I would have written up a report. Now I don't have to write a report." Then he was gone.

6. They Must Have Been Kidding

Joel's statements rocked my world. I had walked into the Council meeting thinking that Open Carrier might be a

lawyers, having practiced cheek by jowl with them in Century City, LA's premier lawyer anthill, the likelihood of weaseling out of the agreements those guys build like steel traps to extract maximum revenue seemed slim. Hollywood is not to be toyed with. Through her handlers at Mattell, for example, Barbie is the nation's most litigious woman with plastic tits.

While I was standing in the lobby area thinking about the dark side of Hollywood, out came the power troika that was rocking the cradle of their latest newborn horror -- Hartzell, Chapman and Silbiger. Silbiger and Hartzell were frankly giddy. And why not? They had swept all before them. They had hired the wonderful man, they had given JPR the kissoff, and they had embarked on a course that, according to Joel Kramer, would lead straight to a brick wall. I was about to ask them if they had a plan for how to get out of these contracts, but I didn't have to. As I listened to Cate Hartzell talking with Russ Silbiger, intermittently giggling with delight over their victory, my concern ripened into horror. The two were talking about how they could get out of the TV contracts by pricing the service so high that no one would buy it! Ha-ha! It was so funny, I joined in

the joke. I said maybe we could just put one TV in the plaza, and we could all drop by and watch it, and just pay one subscriber fee. Humoring me, no doubt, and perhaps not quite getting the point of my sarcasm, even Cate laughed at the notion. I am afraid, however, that it will not be funny when the citizens realize that the Open Carrier option finances are built on the mistaken notion that the expensive TV contracts can be made to go away. Of course, the City Attorney has probably not been consulted on the binding

nature of these media contracts, because he is keeping his nose out of all AFN business to avoid a conflict of interest.

7. Proceed Directly to the Status Quo

Having determined that the long-term TV contracts exist, although Joel did say he didn't even see half of them because they are "confidential," I was

considerably let down. The Open Carrier proposal has no legs. We will have to either keep servicing those media contracts, and cutting TV out of the equation is not only theoretically going to cost you subscription revenue in the short run -- it will cost you in litigation in the long run.

As Yogi Berra said, "The problem with not knowing where you're going is, you may never get there." He might have been talking about AFN. No one has any idea where it's going, and it's not likely to get there. Strangely, for an institution that is founded on law, the City has run AFN as if lawyers were a hindrance. They signed long-term contracts for television content -- a product we can't sell at a profit -- and kept the agreements secret from ordinary citizens and even from prospective corporate suitors like JPR. The City has hired a new AFN director without the advice of outside or inside legal counsel to perform a job that cannot even be described. This path leads directly to more of the same treatment the citizens have received all along. Figurehead management, unconstrained spending, and a tax bill for the citizenry that expands to fit the demands of an ever-increasing, self-protective empire of bureaucrats.

When it comes to AFN, the City refuses to look at the cause of the problem, and persists in coming up with imaginative ways to hide a debt that has already been incurred, and must be paid. City spending cannot grow and grow. The town is no larger, by population, than when I moved here in 1978. But the budget, particularly under Finance Director Lee Tuneberg, has swelled in volume. Now weighing in at 423 pages of paper to describe the disbursement of \$93 Million, the Ashland budget is verbally extensive and factually spare, omitting essential figures like the amount of Tuneberg's salary, or that of the other top officials whose nests are so amply feathered. The annual report for General Motors, with total revenue of \$35 Billion, is about half that length, and it lists the compensation of all top officers.

According to the census, there are

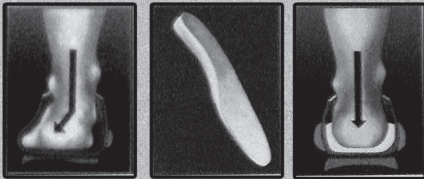


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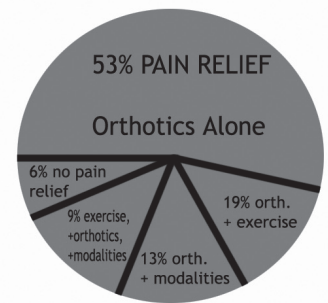
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In one study, 95% of patients wearing orthotics reported pain relief from orthotics either alone or in combination with exercise and modalities.

-R. Donatelli, C. Hurlbert, D. Conaway, R. St. Pierre, "Biomechanical Foot Orthotics: A Retrospective Study," Journal of Orthopedic and Sports Therapy, 10(6):205 (1998).

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2,009 government workers in Ashland – one out of five people. We spend \$4 Million per year on police. With a population of under 20,000 people, that's \$200 per year for each one of us to receive police protection, or harassment, depending on your age. Personally, I'd rather have a fourth as many cops, pay fifty bucks, and just exercise a greater degree of circumspection. If I see Dick Cheney or any other thug coming, I'll take cover and phone Chief Bianca to talk him down. Ashland City government is a greedy little creature, and Lee Tuneberg is always looking for another place to slip in a hidden tax. Thanks to this philosophy of "we're special and it costs more to be special," we are the only town in Oregon where you pay sales tax on meals. In every other town in the state, your restaurant bill is 5% cheaper. Soon, if Tuneberg and the Council have their way, we will enjoy another distinction, and be the only city to tax people to give them Internet and local TV. After all, it's the cost of being special. ♦

ALL ALONG THE SPINE OF THE SISKIYOU

by Charles Carreon

It's a soft-focus night, moonless and mute.

Truck-light on the freeway
filters through gentle rain drifting
from the mountains,
cloaking the valley.

In the upper reaches of the valley,
a southward-running ridge,
a finger of forest reaching
into the drylands of California.

Winds stream by,
Stirring the tall trees,
Bearing a harvest of clouds.
To the north -- coolness and moisture.
In the south -- valleys filled with dry grass.
There is tension between the two.

They lie next to each other,
all along the spine of the Siskiyou,
everything touching, licking each other
with tongues of clouds.

In the morning,
The fruit of their love
is fresh-fallen snow.

“DUDE, IRAQ SUCKS,” *Letters from soldiers to Michael Moore*

“OPERATION BAN CENSORSHIP?”

FROM: Michael W.

SENT: Tuesday, July 13, 2004

12:28 PM

SUBJECT: Dude, Iraq sucks

My name is Michael Wand. I am a 30-year-old National Guard infantryman serving in southeast Baghdad. I have been in Iraq since March of '04 and will continue to serve here until March of '05.

I was just home to Seattle for a fifteen-day R&R, and while I was home I just had to see Fahrenheit 9/11. My wife and I saw it together, and I have to tell you we were so disgusted we almost had to leave the theater.

Not because we didn't like the movie or disagreed with the film, but because of the hard truths of our administration's dealings in Iraq and the way the soldiers -- soldiers like me -- are being used to enforce W's personal agenda, and are killing and being killed for it. I am embarrassed to be a part of it!

While in Iraq I have had some heated debates over our involvement in the war. Some of my more right-wing “blind-follower” soldier buddies (and trust me, there are a lot of them) have said to me on more than one occasion, “You signed up, you have to deal with it,” or “He [W.] is our commander, and you should just go along with the program.”

My response is BULLSHIT! Yes, I signed a contract with the government to serve in our military, and proudly, but I never thought that our military would be used in such a self-serving, crooked, and disgraceful way. Nowhere does my contract say that I should put my life on the line for a handful of select socialite ELITES. My contract says that I must protect and defend the

Constitution of the United States!

So in that respect, it would make much more sense to be activated in support of “Operation Ban Censorship” or “Operation End Discrimination.” However, something tells me there is no money in doing the right thing for the greater good, so I can expect that those “operations” are not high on the list of potential “targets.”

In the few short months my unit has been in Iraq, we have already lost one man and have had many injured (including me) in combat operations. And for what? At the very least, the government could have made sure that each of our vehicles had the proper armament to protect us soldiers.

In the early morning hours of May 10th, one month to the day from my 30th birthday, I and twelve other men were attacked in a well-executed roadside ambush in southeast Baghdad. We were attacked with small-arms fire, a rocket-propelled grenade, and two well-placed roadside bombs. These roadside bombs nearly destroyed one of our Hummers and riddled my friends with shrapnel, almost killing them.

They would not have had a scratch if they had the “Up Armour” kits on them. So where was W. on that one? Turns out we finally got some of the kits, and the funny thing is we have had zero engagements with the “enemy” since that night. Go figure, maybe too little too late?

It's just so ridiculous, which leads me to my next point. A Blackwater contractor makes \$15,000 a month for doing the same job as my pals and me. I make about \$4,000 a month over here. What's up with that?

Beyond that, the government is calling up more and more troops from the Reserves. For what? Man, there is a huge fucking scam going on here! There are civilian contractors crawling all over this country. Blackwater, Kellogg Brown and Root, Halliburton, on and on. These contractors are doing everything you can think of from security to catering lunch!

Christ, I'm sure my father would have loved some great, catered lunch

at the all night chow hall during his time in Vietnam. We are spending money out the ass for this shit, and very few of the projects are going to the Iraqi people. Someone's back is getting scratched here, and it ain't the Iraqis'!

Whatever happened to the Marshall Plan? Surely some general could blow the dust off that file and get something good going for this country and its people! Right? The fact that we don't shows me that the administration has no interest in really making a difference here or they would have already gotten the Marshall Plan out and put it to work. It's a great plan that worked during World War n when our government demonstrated its desire to get Germany and Japan back on track after causing way more destruction and disruption than even dreamed of in Iraq. The administration is so obviously capable of being successful here. Christ, there is a template already made for them.

Along with this, you have no idea how much time we sit on our asses vs. being involved in any real “fighting.” Yet W is making the case for a buildup to gain control of the country. What for? We control everything already, and some units here do nothing but sit on their asses! YES, there is fighting in Iraq; YES there is combat. But some folks ain't seeing it, so why call more damn troops? Why disrupt more lives when there are more than enough resources already here to take care of all of this nonsense? EASY FIX: Send the units sitting on their butts to the places that need more troops! Surely the generals know some folks are not doing a damn thing over here! They are in charge, right?

Or is it that W wants to portray some big conflict that is spinning out of control to warrant more troops, to warrant more contractors, ultimately warranting leaving him in place in the Upcoming election? These guys are making bank off this bullshit war, and us soldiers are paying in more ways than one! When the war is over, what is next for me? I have no clue. My life is left to chance at this point. I just hope I come home alive.

"I HATE MY COMMANDER IN CHIEF"

FROM: Anonymous

SENT: Thursday, July 29, 2004

4:51 AM

SUBJECT: No time to grieve, deploy!

Hello Michael,

I'm a 20-year-old female airman currently deployed in Baghdad. I have just recently seen your movie, and I must say it moved me. I have never been interested in politics. I believe this country was founded by thieves and run by crooks, but that's neither here nor there. I've never voted, but after seeing your movie I was immediately on the Net trying to find registration papers so that when the time comes, I'll be ready.

Your movie should be rated a horror film because I was (am) horrified. I find myself stuck now because if you had made this film a year and two months earlier (my time in the service), I would NOT be in the military!

Now, I have three years to serve under a man who has never served himself before, whose whole election was a lie, and who, unfortunately; doesn't give a shit whether I live or die. It's scary to think (to know) that the president is involved in so much scandal, and nothing seems to be getting done about it.

The reason for my letter (and the meaning behind my subject line) is that about two weeks before my deployment my brother passed away (nonmilitary). Being a young airman I wasn't sure what the procedure was to take emergency leave. I was given a week. A week to grieve with my family that I hadn't seen in almost a year, and a week to say good-bye to my brother forever. As soon as I came back, with a few days of out processing, I was on my way to Baghdad. Now I'm here, and I have added stress with trying to stay focused on the mission. It hurts to know that the mission, a war that isn't even a war but a "I gotta cover up all my shit scheme" for the president, is more important than me and my family at a time of remorse.

I didn't include my name, and this

is why: I hate my commander in chief. I hate the very ground he walks on, and I pray (and I know I shouldn't) that he burns in hell for what he is doing to our country and the lives of soldiers and airmen and the lives of the innocent Iraqis. Now, for three years I can look forward to serving my country with a heavy heart. I will no longer be proud to salute the flag, and I couldn't care less when the "Star-Spangled Banner" plays. I will always have respect for those who have laid down their lives for us. But right now I hate everything the flag stands for because America put this asshole in office and now

half of America still thinks he is the same man they thought he was. As an Mexican American, I ask, "Why the hell couldn't y'all just leave us be? Now we're in this bullshit with you."

I thank you for this documentary. I thank you for opening my eyes and the eyes of a lot of soldiers. I thank you for uncovering the truth that everybody knew all along but were too chicken shit to speak on. You are the man and though I may never meet you and you may never print this letter, know that you have definitely changed the life of at least one Airman. ❖

DISENTRANCE

by michael wear

*No-matter what the Bait,
The Hidden Hook...*

Cuts just as deep!

To be Willing to Bleed,

Daring to Love Life,

Willing to Bare Death ...

And All to find Love,

Lost between the Lines.

From gilded tongues Fly

Powers of Persuasion.

Web-spun and guaranteed to Bind Tender-hearts...

to some View,

Along some Sticky-lines...

Merely an affected smile,

And playing a part ...

Without rancor in our Spirit.

An Adversary cunning to Deceive,

Reaches deeper into the Heart

Than a blade of steel,

Cold to the Core ...

To Disentrance ... Strange Blessing,

Yet welcome home, Anyway!

Cheney...

Continued from Page 1

Finally, imagine if the fortunes of the hunting buddies had been reversed, and Whittington had blasted Cheney with a snootful of birdshot. No doubt Whittington's corpse, riddled with the .40 caliber and 9 millimeter rounds favored by the Secret Service, would ultimately have received a state funeral, once his status as a security risk had been dealt with through standard operating procedures. After all, Cheney's bodyguards would be faulted for allowing Whittington to take a second shot.

That so many humorous and Strangelovian scenarios can be spun from a few stray pieces of birdshot speaks volumes about the man who is their focus. As the dust settles, a few new pieces of the Cheney puzzle have fallen into place as well, and the picture that emerges is more than disquieting. Cheney can no longer be perceived as merely a robust specimen of American manhood, because engaging in incompetent gunplay is not the sort of behavior you expect from a robust executive. Withdrawing like a beast into his lair, Cheney lurked in radio silence until the taunts of late-night comedians drew him forth to make a statement on home ground – Rupert Murdoch's Fox network. When he spoke, Cheney told us that it was the worst day in his life. What about Harry Whittington's life? He lay in a hospital with a sphere of metal lodged in his heart, causing him to suffer little heart attacks now and then. Enjoying the benefits of a double standard has clearly become a way of life for Dick Cheney, and he has been sorely put upon by those who charge that he uses his office to flaunt the law, and dares anyone to interfere. With an ever-loyal President at his back, Cheney has succeeded in having his cake, and eating everybody else's, too.

The Friendly Fire Was A Little Fierce

While initial reports from the hospital were delayed, it is now clear that after he was felled by Cheney's shotgun blast, Whittington was within an ace of his life. Although Kathryn Armstrong, who hosted the hunting party on her Texas ranch, told the news that Whittington's injuries were minor and he wouldn't have been hospitalized but for the convenient presence of the Vice President's entourage, this was a blatant lie. By Cheney's own account given four days later, Whittington fell to the ground immediately upon being shot. Armstrong said she thought Whittington had a heart attack. Perhaps if he'd been hit by a truck she'd have considered that an attack of the flu, but no matter, all are agreed he went down like a sack of potatoes. At that moment, no one knew whether the man would live or die. He was helicoptered first to a local hospital, and once he

was stabilized, to a larger hospital where he was attended by top level specialists in intensive care. Two days into his stay, it was reported that a piece of birdshot had migrated into his heart, causing a minor heart attack. Reportedly, if all goes well, Whittington will have this souvenir of the event for the rest of his life. When he checked out of the hospital on Friday, he looked such that no one would want to trade places with him. There was yellow bruising all over the right side of his face, purple bruises on his neck and hidden below his high collar. He had a half-dozen puncture wounds on his right cheek and in the eye socket. With what we know about the perforation to his chest cavity that has impinged on the operation of his heart, he looked pretty far from being a happy camper.

Could A Real Prosecutor Please Stand Up?

Whittington might not be happy, but he's still a team player, and he didn't suffer brain damage, so he still knows what side of his bread is buttered. So he knew better than to make a fuss by demanding an investigation, say, just for the sake of the insurance claim. There was no police investigation of this near-fatal shooting of the Texas Funeral Service Commissioner, and the law never talked to the shooter. The Secret Service kept Cheney safely behind bars the night of the shooting, turning away a deputy who came to see him, and it is clear that Whittington has done nothing to encourage an investigation. Without the benefit of any evidence, the local District Attorney, who might as well have been born without clearly discernible genitalia, cleared Cheney of all criminal culpability.

Some things, we say in the law, are "res ipsa loquitur" – the thing speaks for itself – but that could hardly be said of this situation, where everything hangs from the shooter's mental state at the time of the shooting. Apparently, to the local DA, it is impossible for the Vice President to possess the requisite criminal mental state to commit a gun crime, for it is clear he committed the physical act of shooting another person. In legal terms, Cheney unquestionably committed the "actus reus," the wrongful act of shooting Whittington, and the only remaining issue would be whether he possessed the "mens rea," a wrongful state of mind, when he shot him. Such cases are not only charged, but also prosecuted to conviction, quite frequently, because people handling guns, which are deadly weapons, have a duty to handle them with great care and never when under the influence of alcohol. Accordingly, many people have been convicted of homicide after shooting friends with what they believed were unloaded guns, and in all such cases, the shooter's use of alcohol before the shooting would count as evidence of guilt. As you can see, this is not much different from mistaking your friend for a flurry of quail. When a shooting does not result in death, careless shooters may be convicted of reckless wounding or assault. Finally, it is notable that after a shooting, it is considered

mandatory to cooperate with a police investigation, and very few accidental shooters attempt to secret themselves away and avoid questioning, fearful of drawing suspicion by avoiding contact with police.

Just A Minute, I Think I Have A Judge Here In My Pocket

If Harry Whittington had been run over by a carhop in the parking lot of The Million Dollar Saloon in Dallas, he would've certainly demanded a police report. You can sue the valet parking company and the saloon. But there really isn't much point in suing Dick Cheney. Ask the Office of Management and Budget. They still haven't gotten any information in response to the subpoenas they served on Cheney five years ago to discover what he, Ken Lay, and numerous other energy magnates talked about when they crafted the nation's energy policy. No matter that Cheney's energy policy has given car owners the highest gas prices, and oil companies their highest profits in history – the Bush appointees on the D.C. Circuit Court agree with Cheney that it would impede his freedom to discuss important matters with his corporate cronies if he had to disclose those matters to the OMB. Cheney has made a lot of smart investments in people, and as a result, is about as free to tread on other people's toes as a man can be without actually having, like James Bond, a license to kill.

Cheney's Little Row With The Intelligence Community

Cheney would give our real James Bonds licenses to torture "terror suspects," if he could, so convinced is he that our anti-terrorist forces would use such license discreetly. Then again, it's possible that the CIA has construed its mission differently from Cheney, who believes in staffing every government agency with yes-men from top to bottom. When it appeared, for example, that Ambassador Joe Wilson, a State Department employee, had dared to write an article for the New York Times disclosing that the President lied to the nation in his State of Union address during the run-up to the liberation of Iraq, Cheney's office put out the smear that Wilson had no real knowledge, and had merely gone to Niger for fun on a trip engineered by his wife, Valerie Plame, the "well-known" CIA agent.

The Plame Leak occurred in July and August 2003, shortly after US Ambassador Joe Wilson published an article in the New York Times criticizing the President for saying in his State of the Union address that Saddam Hussein bought yellowcake uranium from Niger, when Wilson's own investigation had determined that the story was bogus. Wilson's story got lots of attention, because this particular lie had gotten very stale from overuse, and it was simply embarrassing that Bush was caught using it months after Condoleezza Rice got the word that the Niger story was

kaput. As we now know, this embarrassing kickoff for our thoroughly modern Crusade to liberate Iraq, like so much other garbage that was fed to the nation via broadcast media, was part of Cheney's plan to keep using lies even when they had worn out. While some of his advisers might have advised him to simply make up new lies, Cheney is the master of The Big Lie, and his handling of the Plame affair showed why. Getting a lie off the ground isn't as easy as it seems, and once you've got it going, you don't want to destroy your credibility by admitting it was a lie. No, you've got to stand by your lies, or soon nobody will believe them.

Wilson's story threatened to become a bigger story than Iraq itself. Cheney worked for Nixon, and he knows how dangerous it can be when everyone's running around saying, "The President is a liar." Then, just as Wilson's story, drawing strength from his personal credibility as a career diplomat, picked up steam, putting Bush and company in a very bad light, suddenly "everyone in the press" knew all at once that Valerie Plame, Joe Wilson's attractive blonde wife, was a CIA agent, and some people were saying that Wilson's trip to Niger was just a diplomatic safari. Scooter Libby, indicted now by Special Prosecutor Mike Fitzgerald for obstructing his investigation into the sources of the leak, has now disclosed in legal filings, that his "superiors" put him up to it. Since Scooter Libby was the top slime-slinger in Cheney's office, that should put Cheney himself directly in the crosshairs of Special Prosecutor Mike Fitzgerald.

The President Flees Washington To Escape The Stink

The explosive potential of what Scooter Libby knows, and might reveal, was evident back when the news broke at the start of last November. Trying to escape the stink wafting from Cheney's office, Bush went as far as Argentina, from whence the news networks aired repetitive footage of violent demonstrations at an international trade conference. Even Fox gave extensive air time to the anti-imperialist declamations of Hugo Chavez, President of Venezuela, and Chavez is no Fox network favorite. He's the type of leader who says no to Bush's economic plans for the region, and last week responded to Condoleezza Rice's saber rattling in the Caribbean by telling an elated audience of Venezuelans -- "Hey babe, don't even try it!" Ordinarily, he would not be given twenty-one inches of TV screen to make objectionable points, but with the name "Scooter Libby" on every reporter's lips, the networks decided that keeping The Big Lie in place required a different strategy at this treacherous moment, when someone might trace the vile odor emanating from the West Wing first to Cheney's very own person, and perhaps, to other people, even higher up the food chain.

There could be only one reason why the networks would bury us in footage of Argentines rioting against Bush and adoring Chavez. Because, hidden like a bulging boil under the surface of the President's thin skin, lay the

toxic deposit of Libby's indictment, an unhealthy condition that the Commander in Chief was eager to avoid discussing. The obliging media outlets therefore showed only a few seconds of Bush's agonizing press conference in Rio de la Plata, where the traveling press pool peppered him exclusively with questions about Rove and Libby. The spectacle of masked men hurling gasoline bombs in the streets interested the press corps far less than what Karl Rove knew, and when he knew it. Questioned about how he planned to correct a situation where a majority of registered voters question his personal honesty, Bush characteristically declined to be pushed around by public opinion. Finally, realizing that the reporters would not drop the Rovegate questioning-style, he launched into a stock outline of his antiterrorism, disaster recovery and prosperity agenda and ran out the clock, waving off the last Rove-related question to create the shot that all the news agencies ran that night. The truncated exchange eliminated all the tasty shots of the President dodging fire like an agile elephant.

A High-Flying Conspiracy

What all the reporters wanted to know, but none directly asked, was this – “Why is Karl Rove still be working in the White House when he was aboard Air Force 2 on July 13, 2003, with Dick Cheney and Scooter Libby, when the three very likely agreed to blow the cover on a CIA agent?” The answer is probably a simple aeronautical and legal fact – when he's in Air Force 2, flying 30,000 feet above the United States, Dick Cheney is literally above the law. I believe Attorney General Alberto Gonzales wrote a memo about that for Dick. But for this legal exemption, we would call the meeting of these three top politicians a “criminal conspiracy” to commit high treason, for which all the participants could likely be imprisoned for life, maybe even tortured to learn the identities of their co-conspirators. The word “conspiracy” is just Italian for

“breathing the same air,” which would certainly be the case in the elegant cabin of AirForce 2, where the air is constantly recirculated. Lately, there's started to be some talk about whether Cheney had the power to unilaterally “declassify” the information about Plame's undercover status, so perhaps there's some question about the reliability of the AG's “above the law” analysis, but let's take the easy approach and not bother our pretty little heads about it. Leave it to the liberal nutcases to hurl horrible epithets like “traitor,” “conspirator,” and “dirtbag.”

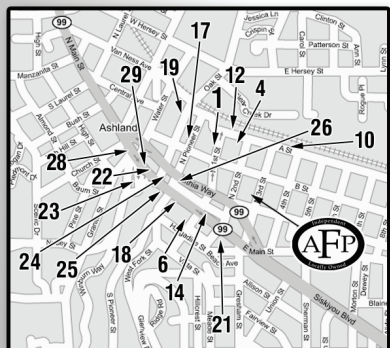
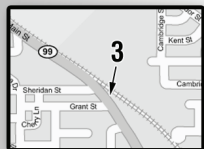
We could quibble about the facts of this airborne conspiracy, but it would take a mind utterly innocent of the Hobbesian realities of Washington to conceive of any scenario in which the AirForce 2 conspirators intended anything other than to destroy Wilson and his wife for having the temerity to contradict the President's lies. Feeling betrayed by Wilson, the conspirators sought to repay Wilson in his own coin – by betraying his wife. After all, why were the conspirators talking about Wilson's wife? Perhaps Scooter, who like Cheney's wife and other elite deviants, enjoys writing pornography, had suggested sending him a kinky anniversary present. No, they were talking about Valerie because they were looking for a way to break Wilson's knees. What was the cover story for this act of treason? One that only Cheney, with his love of brazen outrageousness, could have orchestrated. They would just claim that “everybody knew” Valerie Plame was a CIA agent. To create that “suddenly everyone knew” effect, the conspirators leaked the news to Richard Novak, Chris Matthews, Judith Miller, and perhaps several other reporters near-simultaneously. Doubtless these reporters knew they were treading on thin ice, inviting criminal sanctions for breaching national security, but they devoured Valerie Plame like a female sacrifice, apparently certain that the Vice President would protect them from liability. Which undoubtedly Cheney intended to do.

The Worm Turns

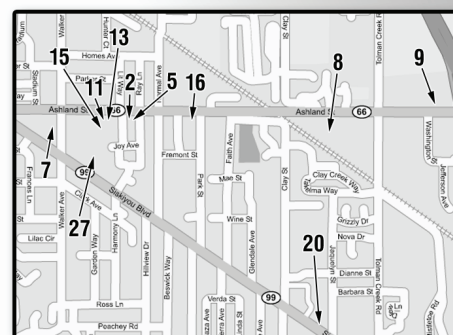
Cheney should have known better than to initiate a vendetta with the CIA, because the agency was mad already about all the dung they had to swallow over the last five or six years. First they were excoriated after 9/11 for being caught flat-footed by the attackers. Then the agency was swallowed by Homeland Security, had its rules rewritten to authorize torture, and was tasked with the job of inventing and marketing a nonexistent Iraqi weapons threat to fuel the push to war. The agency was further humiliated when George Tenet, the CIA head, took the fall for the “bad intelligence” that caused the President to repeat the lie that Iraq had obtained uranium from Niger in his State of the Union address. Tenet got the Medal of Honor for taking an exquisite dive, just like Paul Bremer received the same high honor for completely abandoning his job as the transitional czar of the American occupation of Iraq. But individual CIA agents got no medals, and the outing of Valerie Plame was the last straw, and a little bit more. As the old saying goes, you can push a worm, that is to say a dragon -- only so far – and then it will turn.

The AirForce 2 conspirators misjudged CIA culture. Spying is built on deception. Deception is based on secrecy. Secrecy is ensured by loyalty, and intra-Company loyalty is supposed to be an absolute article of faith. Undercover CIA agents who die in action are supposed to remain anonymous even after death, honored only in a secret book kept at CIA headquarters. (See “The Book of Honor” by Ted Gup.) Yup, the Cheney team, comprised only of sold-out courtiers equipped with greasy palms, greatly miscalculated the mettle and insitutional loyalty of the CIA. The humiliated spooks decided to do more than get mad – they decided to get even, and demanded appointment of an independent prosecutor to investigate the source of the leak. In response, the President stood up like a tin soldier, saluted, said he didn't know

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who the leaker was and he would like to know and the White House would fire anyone responsible for it. Now he explains that he will fire anyone who is convicted of leaking, which in lawyer-speak means, anyone who is convicted, whose criminal appeals have failed, and who is somehow ineligible for a Presidential pardon. Under those circumstances, Karl Rove might be fired. It is probably more likely that Karl will be stuffed into a 2.5 liter soda bottle and fired into low-earth orbit.

Betrayed by The Fickle Media

No, breaking the law is not Cheney's problem, nor is the President his problem, nor are his sleazy friends and their unethical schemes. It is the fact that his pet reporters in the media might roll on him. Right after the offal began striking the turbine, reporter Robert Novak cut a deal, and even though Miller did over eighty days in jail, she got out by agreeing to testify and thereafter lost her her job and a lot of credibility points when she claimed she had forgotten who told her that Valerie Plame was a CIA agent, even

though she wrote the name "Valerie Flame" on a notepad while she was talking to Rove. The loss of a scumbag like Miller is a grievous one for Cheney. Before the Iraq war that Cheney so deeply desired to incite, Miller worked the bellows at the New York Times, channelling anti-Saddam rhetoric and false intelligence churned out by Cheney's office. Miller and the New York Times gave credence to WMD fantasies propagated by international criminal Achmed Chalabi. Miller stoked the neocon fantasy that our soldiers would be welcomed as heroes, liberating Arab people for the very first time. Now, she's on the sidelines, nursing her wounds, of no use to anyone but her detractors.

Yes, aside from Bill O'Reilly, Republican media personalities confronted with Cheney's slime-trail these days barely have the courage to unload their usual barrage of abusive epithets. Perhaps they are afraid that one day soon, being Dick Cheney's friend could turn into a liability. Perhaps they realize that TV viewers are beginning to catch on to the verbal tricks and sleight-of-camera the media uses to cloak a lawless thug like

Cheney with impunity. Certainly they want to avoid the possibility that one day, having opened their mouths to publish another batch of pro-Cheney propaganda, their smarmy lies might be greeted by a volley of hurled TV remotes smacking screens hard enough to break them, accompanied by the massed voice of an enormous viewing audience shouting "Shut up!" ♦

*Hear Dick Cheney
sing "The Folsom
Prison Blues"*

@

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It is legal to drive a car after drinking alcohol. That said, you may be arrested anyway because of the factual distortions and omissions taught to our local police by mandatory training and testing on the written materials provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). When truth and science gets in the way of the agenda of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, NHTSA yields. MADD definition of drunk driving is driving after drinking any amount of alcohol...period. In essence, this is what our police are instructed to believe, and why you will probably be arrested if you admit to drinking alcohol...even though you are fine! To that extent you do lose, but you shouldn't.

DUI is considered by some to be the witch-hunt of the new millennium. If you thought that the public had been riled up against citizens accused of being communists during the McCarthy era... think about what the governments "public service announcements" have done to strip us of the presumption of innocence in DUI cases? You Drink. You Drive. You Go To Jail! If You Drink And Drive You Will Lose More Than Your License! You Drink. You Drive. You Lose! These

government paid for, MADD endorsed, advertisements are pure scare tactics and have an insidious, subconscious effect on potential jurors. This increased hysteria and the "dumbing down" of the definition of what is an "impaired" driver to include responsible social drinkers has logical yet absurd ramifications. Based on the current police officer (MADD endorsed) definition of the term "impaired", some people (logically) are asking why it isn't a crime to drive while fatigued, or ill, or old, or on the cell phone, or with screaming children in the car, or animals in the car, or eating, or drinking,, or smoking, or taking allergy medication, or taking prescribed medications even when your doctor says it is O.K. to drive, or speeding... because each one of those driving factors cause the same if not more "impairment" than the social drink. Should those folk go to jail? THINK IT OVER. Do we have to drive with the precision and coordination of Air Force fighter pilots on pure, military grade, methamphetamines in order to be deemed "safe" drivers by law enforcement?

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