

My brain, like the nation, is divided on Iraq

I watch reality TV in order to escape from reality.

You see, I used to take mind-altering drugs to escape from reality, but then I learned my drug money was supporting terrorists. I quit cold turkey.

Anyhow, this week Joe Millionaire gave me a reason to believe in the beauty of the human race. It turns out that a good-looking guy with a rock-hard body and the personality of an ape will triumph over a good-looking guy with a rock-hard body with \$50 million any day. Who says romance is dead?

After the show I was so overwhelmed with love, I decided to go out and look for a woman of my own. I figure I have way less money than Joe Millionaire and I am about half as stupid, so I thought I had a good chance at making my own love connection.

Unfortunately, on the way to the adult video arcade (by the way, there are no video games there) my SUV ran out of gas.

I was appalled when I saw the price of gas. I thought to myself, "Who the hell do you have to bomb around here to get a decent price on gasoline?"

Oh yeah, I forgot. See, I used to be against a war on Iraq. But Colin Powell's power point presentation convinced me. It is obvious that Saddam Hussien is up to no good. Sure, he hasn't attacked us, yet. But why take a chance?

But we can't go to war because the French don't support us? Well, let me tell you something. The French are a bunch of Mary Andrews. Why do we need to listen to what the French say,

anyhow? What are they going to do? Snob us to death?

We are the United States of America, dagnabit. What is the point of being the most powerful country in the world if you have to listen to the French? Just remember how the French messed up pizza. That's right, French bread pizza. What the heck is that? Doesn't anyone realize we are on Orange Alert? Orange, for goodness sakes. Homeland security director Tom Ridge advises to stock up on duct tape (to seal a room in case of biological attack) and bottled water (because it just tastes better than tap).

I don't know about you. But I have been duct taped inside my bedroom for the last week and I really have to go to the bathroom from all that bottled water. I am sick of living in fear.

If there was another option besides war, I would be for it. I don't think there is a choice. Hussein has to be removed from power. It is unlikely he will step down. It is unlikely he will suddenly become a nice, trustworthy guy like Joe Millionaire.

Much of the international community is against this war. I haven't heard any options besides giving the inspectors more time. True, inspections must take place in Iraq. But then what? Something has to be done some time.

Honestly, I hope this conflict can somehow be resolved without war. Since they say duct tape can fix anything, why not just duct tape Iraq? Problem solved.

Maybe it could work on the economy, too.



Kevin Fallon



5 Reasons Why...

NASCAR racing isn't just for rednecks, anymore

For a long time there was a stereotype that almost all NASCAR fans are 'rednecks' who wear camouflage Dale Earnhardt hats and drink Busch beer. Though racing was dominated by one class of people in the past, it is rapidly becoming more popular to all people. Here are five reasons why:

1. Speed. Most people with a driver's license have sped at one time or another. Many do every day. Some push the limits as to how fast they can get away with driving, but this can be costly. Personally, I got caught going 100 miles per hour and it cost me a decent chunk of money and my license for 75 days. But I got off easy. Many people are involved in high speed accidents and do not live to tell about it.

This is where the fine folks at NASCAR come into play. You get to watch people go between 100 and 200 miles per hour with no risk of being pulled over and only a chance of being seriously injured.

2. Road rage. Nascar is also a good outlet to view road rage. Again, most people experience road rage, some every day. When some idiot is going 40 in a 45 and you just can't get around him, you're going to be angry. When you're on I-80 and someone cuts you off, you're going to be mad. The same things happen in NASCAR, except they don't get mad, they get even.

If Dale Jarrett was to bump Sterling Marlin for not letting him pass, then Jarrett is going to get bumped later. If Bobby Labonte is trying to pass low and Jeff Gordon comes down and cuts him off, Gordon is going to get hit. It has been a trend in recent years to even go after people once the race is over. Last year's points champion Tony Stewart got mad and slugged a few people for various reasons. One driver even walked onto the track while the other cars

were still driving, and threw equipment at the driver who wrecked him. Again, the drivers are doing what we wish we could on the road.

3. Tony Stewart - Tony Stewart is following the road paved by Dale Earnhardt before him. He has two huge groups of NASCAR fans follow him. Half of



Scott Soltis

them think he is God's gift to racing, others feel he is the devil himself. As many watch Stewart race on Sundays to hope he wins, other watch to see him lose or get wrecked.

In this way NASCAR is popular for the same reason the WWE was immensely popular a few years ago when it was still the WWF. Pro wrestling was popular because people loved the good guys and loathed the bad. There were also those who pulled for the rebellious bad guys and so big fan bases were formed.

Love him or hate him, Stewart is the defending Winston Cup Champion and this only adds fuel to the fire. He is a great driver and as long as he is near the top, the battle will continue.

4. Dale Earnhardt Jr. - Tennis has Anna Kournikova, NASCAR has 'Little E'. The difference is Earnhardt is actually good and wins.

Just as guys love to watch Kournikova, many women are just as fascinated by Earnhardt. Despite the fact that Stewart won the Points Championship last year Earnhardt has been prominently featured on many of the 2002 season recaps and 2003 previews.

Also, you have to admire his courage to race. How many people could honestly work alongside their father, watch him die at work, and continue the profession? You would have to be heartless to not feel bad for what has happened to him. Despite the tragic loss of his father at Daytona, Earnhardt Jr. continues to race his heart out showing virtually no fear. For that he deserves much respect even from his harshest critics.

5. The NHL and MLB - The weakness of our "national pastime" and pro hockey have given NASCAR a big boost. Forbes ranked the value of all of the pro sports teams of the NFL, NHL, MLB, and NBA. The bottom 20 teams on the list included 16 NHL teams and four from MLB. The lack of money flowing into these sports has left the door wide open for NASCAR.

The NHL and MLB are both talking about contraction of their bankrupt teams. Those two sports are shrinking, and Nascar is growing.

Drivers are getting younger and younger, attracting more and more female fans. Successful drivers are emerging from places other than the deep South, which attracts more fans from the North and West. As these trends persist NASCAR will continue to grow out of its redneck roots into the mainstream of sports culture.

You're at dollar shot night. So, where are your children?

Paige Miles

All of us who grew up in the 80s have known that Michael Jackson has been about five Bud Lights short of a six pack for at least the past 10 years. Recently he revealed that he enjoys sleeping next to little boys in bed. The documents that have been released (smokinggun.com) regarding his child molestation suit are bound to make anyone's stomach churn. And yet, he is still allowed to raise three children. I don't care who he is or how much money he has; how dare he be permitted to subject these kids to his ways.

Obviously, not everyone should be a parent, yet unfortunately there is no screening test available to decide who should be allowed to reproduce and who shouldn't. Yesterday, I was watching Maury; the topic revolved around 8-year-old kids who were abusive and disrespectful to their parents. One little girl, who looked like a complete angel, admitted to smoking cigarettes.

Maybe I'm a little sheltered, but I could never imagine my 8-year-old sister lighting up a Marlboro. Aren't 8-year-olds supposed to play with Barbies? Don't they watch SpongeBob, instead? But the mothers sat on stage weeping, claiming that they couldn't control their children. Well, why the hell not? Can't a grown woman control a 70 pound, four-foot child?

Ok, maybe I don't have kids of my own so I can't fully appreciate the difficulty of being a mother, but I have watched my own mother raise four kids. None of us smoke, steal, or beat her up. She obviously did something right, and I'd really like to know what her secret is just in case I have children some day.

It seems that parents aren't willing to accept the responsibility of their offspring. I hate it when I'm in Wal Mart at 3 a.m.

and I see a parent with their children in tow. These kids should be in bed. I would love to give the parent the benefit of the doubt, but this happens more often than not. When I was 8, I was in bed by 9 p.m. every night (unless "Doogie Howser" was on...that was my treat night).

I recently turned 21. I've seen people my age who I know have children out at the bar on any given day of the week. Of course, these parents are allowed to have fun once in a while and get away from their children. But it becomes wrong when the parents are out every night of the week, blowing their money while the child sits home with a babysitter. Some of these children don't even recognize who their real parents are.

And couldn't the money spent on massive amounts of alcohol be much better spent on feeding and clothing the child—especially when the parent collects government assistance? Honestly, if I had a child at this age, and decided not to give it up for adoption, I wouldn't be spending my money on frivolous crap. I would realize that the child comes first in all things I do.

So maybe bad parenting is one of the biggest problems in this world. If a parent can't handle a child, that child should be given up for adoption. There are so many stable, loving couples who would love to parent an American newborn. When those of you who don't already have children plan on it, take care of them. Love them. Pay attention to them. They haven't messed up their lives yet; don't let them.

Do you have an idea for an article?

behrcoll@aol.com