

OP-ED

Voice from Hell

Robert Caton
Cap Times Staff

Well, campers, coming up with an actual topic this time around proved too difficult for me. (Yeah, yeah, I know...the guys hauling raw pig iron around with their bare hands at the foundry are really shedding tears for me and my tough job, but, what can ya do?)

So, after literally MINUTES of deep thought as to this edition of the old "Voice", I have decided to fall back on the old standby...Things That Piss Me Off!

Am I the only person in the world that is sick and tired of the senior boxing league? How can you expect guys who get hit in the head, A LOT, as their job to be able to make rational decisions about when to stop getting hit in the head? Getting hit in the head is like playing "Quarters" with shots of Tequila...eventually you end up playing to lose without even realizing it.

Hopefully, seeing Sugar Ray Leonard get stomped by Terry Norris on February 9th will prevent other meatheads with depth perception problems like Larry Holmes from going back into the ring. Sure, people point to George Foreman as an example of a great comeback, but what these inbred morons refuse to look at is the fact that Foreman has fought opponents that would sport losing records even if they only fought gay quadruple amputees.

When champion Evander Holyfield crushes Foreman, hopefully the old guard will go back to doing commercials

for Lifecall and Depends, and we can look forward to Mike Tyson being champ again.

Poor, poor, Penn State University...the big mean ogre in Harrisburg is cutting funds. Gosh, they might actually have to raise our tuition! What an improbable event! Does this football program disguised as a university really think we are so stupid we don't realize tuition hikes are as much a fact of life as Warrant videos playing every 11.3 minutes on MTV? After all, how else can our beloved football team travel to such exotic locales as Alabama and Michigan if students, for whom the poverty level is only a far away dream of prosperity, don't get screwed out of more and more dollars?

What truly annoys me is that this tuition hike will probably pay for the State College International Airport. Yes, you heard me right. Sources in our own fair University confirm that an airport (costing about...A LOT) will be put up. Well, it just wouldn't be fair to the poor, long-suffering football players to have to endure a bus ride all the way from State College to Harrisburg to get their chartered jet, right? What's your problem? Don't you think it's worth having to pay off your student loan until 2137 as long as our football players have it easy?

Well, campers, that should about do it for now...I should always come in to write this slop without any idea where it's going...it's a lot easier to get the venom flowing.

Until next time...

Person-to-person U.S. soldier calls buddy

Jeff Berrigan
Capital Times Staff

I got a collect phone call the other day - from Saudi Arabia (that oughta be a nice bill).

It's 3:30 Monday morning and my roommate answers the phone and says "Collect call from where?!... Hold on... JAZZY!" I answer the phone not really knowing what's going on. I recognize the voice but can't place it. Then I realize it's one of my boys stationed in the Persian Gulf. Boy did I wake up in a hurry!

His unit got lucky and was stationed near a phone outside the Kuwait border and he decided to give his family and friends a call and let us know how he was doing. It's the first time I've really paid attention to what someone was saying for three months (no offense to any of my professors).

For a while now the war has been relatively low key, at least in my eyes. No longer do we have that 24 hour coverage, with quivering voices from scared news reporters. But this phone call I got from my friend who is stationed in the Saudi Desert put the war in a whole new perspective for me.

Just the sound of his voice told me he was scared. When I asked what it was like over there he said, "Man it's dirty, REAL dirty!"

He also added that the Saudi's are so far behind us, technologically wise, it's incredible. "It's like they live in biblical times," he said.

When I asked him if he and his unit have seen any "action" there was a long pause as he said, "You don't know the word fear, until someone starts shooting at you." It is then I realized the war IS for real. The United States isn't just giving Iraq a spanking, we're giving them a war.

We see on television certain soldiers being interviewed and them saying that morale is up and that they are ready to fight. So I asked my boy how the troops were doing and he said, "Morale is up, but that doesn't stop you from being scared... especially at night when you don't know what could happen."

The topic of conversation did move around and he did tell me that he thought the camel was the "biggest, ugliest, smelliest animal" he has ever seen! I then asked him if there was any grass over there and after a pause he laughed and said, "Yea there are some patches of grass... but don't ask me how they grew it!" At least he had some humor left in him.

After about twenty minutes he said he had to go and let some other guys use the phone. He left me with three special, yet frightening, words, "Pray for me!"

Well he doesn't have to worry because my prayers are with him, all my other friends in the Gulf, and all the rest of the troops.

Right before he hung up I said, "I'll see you when you get back", and he told me "Yea, we'll play some basketball or something, see ya Jeff."

I hope we get the chance, I just hope.

Letters

negotiations with Kuwait, and when Kuwait refused dialogue he threatened to invade. The whole world knew and yet nothing was done. The Bush administration cynically turned a deaf ear, even to Iraqi foreign minister Tariq Aziz's promise to target Israel in battle. Iraq never forgot the real issues in this war.

We watched this conflict brew from the beginning and I wonder if we are willing to accept responsibility for what we know to be true. Let us not forget that we armed this dictator. The Iraqi war machine was fueled and subsidized by us. We sustained and applauded Hussein throughout the Iran/Iraq war. Now we are being held hostage by our energy needs. As a nation, we are incapable of giving up the standard of living we are accustomed to. Especially the gas guzzling needs inherent with the excesses of the 70's, 80's and into the 90's. Lastly, are we so egocentric that we think we are the only ones who understand the history and cultural heritage of the Palestinians and all of the Arab-Christian countries; their ill content dating back to the Ottoman Empire! We obviously believe our country has all the right answers.

Try to imagine a United States that seeks peaceful resolutions. What if the

U.S. shared the issues in the Gulf with the European community, especially the Palestine problem? Even if the world closes its eyes the Palestinian people will not go away. There is no "away" for them. Next, is it so absurd to imagine authentic negotiations among the Middle East countries themselves? Maybe even support a commonwealth like Europe has designed, creating rich shared resources, spirituality and cultural diversity. This common market may bridge the cavern between the "have's and have not's."

Finally, I am not suggesting disloyalty to a strong and beautiful country. Rather I challenge all of us to use critical thought on our President's administration and their actions in the Gulf. We have come a long distance from the last war we fought, haven't we learned that peaceful solutions can be viable solutions? When the first load of 40,000 body bags return, draped in U.S. flags, will we still be cheering "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori?" (it is sweet and seemly to die for one's country).

Debra Ghaly
Elementary Education

Letter to the Editor:

With every passing day since the Gulf War began, my phobia over the sound of jet planes flying over our campus makes me shudder, for during that fleeting second I seem to forget that I am here in the U.S.A., safe and sound for the time being. I wondered if it was that my heart was feeling the collective voices of those out there bombing and being bombed. What each of them, knowing and feeling, yet, must hide away in their hearts: that they are killing human beings, ones just like themselves, not just fighting the "enemies," in order that the goals of each side can be met--to destroy the other. My heart cries out for them wondering how each of them would be haunted by those troubling thoughts regardless of the victory or the noble causes that each of them risks their lives for. So many lives and so much are at stake for one irresponsible madman's (Saddam Hussein) aggression.

The decisions in life are never simple and nothing comes from a vacuum. I imagine the decision of a leader of a great nation as this must not be an easy one, especially ordering the young men to go risk their lives for another country. For those who argue that the American

interest in oil pushed us to this war, I have to ask, "what angelic human being does anything out of no self interest?" Further, the issues involved here are much more complex as we are all aware. For those who condemn Bush, proposing peace, I must also ask, "who isn't for peace?" Personally, on the practical side, the Bush administration's decision to go to war on Iraq seems to have enough valid reasons, and like many Americans I back our troops out there.

What troubles me so much then, is not that our troops are involved in a Middle Eastern conflict, seemingly a far away affair, but rather that an inevitable confrontation between one nation's people and the people of the Coalition became necessary ultimately; that like many petty squabbles that each of us engage in with different people from time to time, we (human beings) weren't able to work things out in a less destructive manner. All civilizations that we built along the way have come and gone through many destructive confrontations such as this one. Thus history reminds us of the many human atrocities that we have perpetrated upon

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