

PoliSnake04

Political Commentary from SnakeStu for the
2004 US Presidential and Congressional election.

This is a transcript of my PoliSnake04 "blog" (Web log), documenting my thoughts and observations regarding the 2004 campaign for US President (and other political races).

This document is published under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs License version 2.0. With the restriction that you may not alter, transform, or build upon this work, and that you must give the original author credit, you are free to copy, distribute, display, and perform the work, including commercial uses. For details, see:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/2.0/>

This Adobe® Portable Document Format (PDF) file was created with OpenOffice.org (see the site of the same name for more details about this Free alternative to commercial office productivity suites).

© Copyright 2004 by Stuart J. Whitmore, a.k.a. "SnakeStu"

For more political commentary, as well as science fiction and much more, see Stuart's site on the Web:

<http://www.just-stuart.com/>

February 29, 2004

YAPRARB...

YAPRARB? Yet Another Political Rant And Rave Blog. :-) [Jolard](#) has his space; I had to have mine. The views expressed here will often be from a Libertarian perspective, but what I think is a more realistic viewpoint than many vocal Libertarians typically offer. My intent is to kill this blog after the 2004 US elections, but we'll see. It will be interesting enough to see whether I can add content regularly enough to make this interesting as the year progresses.

<#> posted by Stuart @ 23:36

March 1, 2004

Same Old Washington Talk?

According to [this AP article](#), it appears presidential wannabe John Edwards is doing the "pot calling the kettle black" routine. It's laughable that he would try to claim higher ground by accusing Kerry of "politics as usual" when that phrase reasonably sums up all the candidates and elected officials in both of the main parties. Both parties and their members want bigger government with more burden on US citizens (where "burden" is not only financial). There are differences in the direction they want the government to grow, but growth is definitely in the plan.

Want something really different from the "same old Washington talk?" Try a political party that seeks a *reduction* in government, with *less* burden on US citizens. Yes, I'm talking about the Libertarian Party (see link in the Links section on the left side of this page). If I hear a Libertarian candidate, or a candidate from one of the other smaller parties, talk about not wanting politics as usual, I'll pay attention. Coming from a "RepubliCrat," I can only laugh in derision.

<#> posted by Stuart @ 00:41

March 3, 2004

An exercise for the reader...

It's headline news: Kerry vs Bush, the race is on! These two contenders will now battle it out for the US Presidency.

Anything missing from this picture? In the minds of far too many US citizens, no, there's nothing missing. But here's a "fun" election year game to play: Pay close attention to the media and how it handles -- or *completely ignores* -- the third largest political party in the US (the [Libertarian Party](#)), or the smaller parties (Greens, etc.). This year, watch how an independent candidate who will probably have **no mathematical possibility** of winning -- literally zero odds of becoming President without an overthrow of the government -- will get more press time & attention than a candidate who *probably will* have greater-than-zero odds of becoming the next US President. It's happened before -- candidates who weren't even on the ballot in every state got more press than the Libertarian candidate who *was* on the ballot in every state. Care to bet that it won't happen again? Only real risk-takers would bet anything valuable on that position. (Try not to think about how the press might actually *gain* from the suppression of parties other than the Republicans and Democrats, because that will take this "fun" game and make it far too depressing.)

Is there anything missing from the Bush vs Kerry picture the press will be focused on until November (and possibly beyond)? You bet.

posted by Stuart @ 21:18

March 4, 2004

Bush Campaign Ads and 9/11 WTC footage

Now that the campaign to keep Bush in office has sunk to the low of using grief-inspiring footage from the September 11th terrorist attacks to promote the idea that he should stay in office, I'd like to point out a simple fact: Following those attacks, which were organized and conducted by Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist organization, Bush has spent untold sums of money and lives promoting and conducting war on *Iraq*. Yes, we went in and made a mess of Afghanistan, and we have troops still there today, but the bulk of the Bush administration's post-9/11 foreign politics and military actions have been against *Iraq* and *Saddam Hussein*. Not Osama bin Laden. Not al-Qaida. (His desperate attempts at drawing some believable link between Hussein's government and that terrorist organization notwithstanding, the only thing we can be sure of is that we attacked and defeated Hussein's Iraq.)

So if you're "lucky" enough to see one of those ads, whether or not you think his use of that footage is appropriate, you should use it as a reminder of what Bush has *not* done. He has *not* focused on proven attackers of the United States of America. He has *not* earned another term in office.

posted by Stuart @ 12:45

March 12, 2004

Nepotism in Iraq Reconstruction? Nah!

The AP is [reporting today](#) that reconstruction business in Iraq is going to firms with strong ties to Washington DC politicians. I'm *sure* this is just a coincidence... I'm *convinced* that contracts are awarded fairly to get the most bang for the buck. We can *trust* our government...

Right. Like this is a surprise to anyone? We can trust our government officials to reward those who keep them in power. So the lesson, dear reader, is to get your financial talons into DC politics before the next ~~oil-plunde~~... um... ~~counter-terrori~~... uh, that is... libera... well, live fire excercise! Hope you're already rich, though, 'cause the poor just get poorer with politics-as-usual from those who make a career of spending your hard-earned money for projects you'll never see.

posted by Stuart @ 12:41

March 14, 2004

Vote For Your Rights

When you head to the polls, vote for someone who wants to restore and preserve your rights, not someone who wants to stomp them out "for your own good." (Yes, that advice would rule out voting for another term in office for President Bush.)

In response to [this AP article](#), I thought the following two quotes would be aptly timed:

"The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

US Constitution, Amendment IV (i.e., part of the Bill of Rights)

"They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Benjamin Franklin

posted by Stuart @ 19:25

March 15, 2004

Has Spain Encouraged the Terrorists?

I am dismayed to hear that the Socialist party won the Spanish election, and not just because I'm generally opposed to Socialism. Of greater concern to me is that this will encourage al-Qaida and other terrorists by *seeming* to prove the effectiveness of terrorism in influencing political outcomes. Had the Spanish wanted to honor those killed in the multiple train bombings, perhaps a better choice would have been to defy the terrorists and *not* change the power structure in their government. By voting in someone who vowed to do exactly what Islamic fundamentalist terrorists would like to see (i.e., removal of troops from Iraq), it would be difficult to deny that they have bowed to the pressure of wanton violence against innocent Spanish citizens, and in doing so have dishonored the memories of those who perished at the hands of the terrorists.

While initially it might not seem appropriate for me, as a US citizen, to judge the actions of Spanish citizens, I believe the result of their election has made this world a much less safe place for everyone. Despite denials that are bound to come from Spain's new leader, and assurances that Spain will continue to fight terrorism, actions truly speak louder than words. The message from Spain, unfortunately, is that terrorism works. Let us hope that governments worldwide eventually realize one of the main points that I gleaned from [The Specialist: Revelations of Counterterrorist](#), that the only way to "deal" with terrorists is to kill them. (In that book, the author relates a situation where he had a terrorist trapped, and the terrorist wanted to surrender. Instead, he killed the terrorist, and in so doing avoided having a terrorist in prison where he could foment more terrorism in a variety of ways.) Poland seems to understand; their Prime Minister (Leszek Miller) commented that pulling Polish troops from Iraq "would amount to an admission that the terrorists are right."

Of course, this blog is supposed to be about the 2004 US election, not the 2004 Spanish election. So it's important to point out how we got into this situation to begin with -- the current US president, who would like to be elected for a second term, took the US and a handful of allies into war against Iraq, which

had *not* attacked the US (unlike al-Qaida). So if the Spanish election results have made the world less safe, and if that is because the Spanish people wanted their troops out of Iraq, and that is because their troops were in Iraq to begin with as a result of the "leadership" of US President Bush, then it is not unfair to point out that the actions of Bush have, yet again, made our world less safe to live in. Keep that in mind as you head to the polls...

<#> posted by Stuart @ 18:07

March 19, 2004

US Invades Nicaragua To Fight Japanese!

In response to the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States vowed to fight back against Japan. In a first response, a United States aircraft flew over Tokyo and dropped a bomb. Initial analysis indicates the bomb did severe damage to the Japanese leadership. Meanwhile, to continue the fight against the Japanese, a massive US invasion force rushed into Nicaragua.

Other than the fact that the above events did not take place, do you see anything wrong with the "logic" of the claimed US actions? Why, indeed, would the US make a big deal out of invading Nicaragua as a response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, after only a paltry counter-attack against Japan itself? It doesn't make sense.

Fast forward to the 21st Century. Why, indeed, would the US make a big deal out of invading Iraq as a response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, after only a limited* counter-attack against the terrorists themselves? **It doesn't make sense.**

As you think about who to vote for in the US Presidential election of 2004, keep in mind that by making Iraq -- which did not participate in the 9/11/01 terrorist attacks any more than Nicaragua participated in the Pearl Harbor attack -- a focal point of his "War on Terrorism," President Bush has done something analogous to the absurdity suggested above. Is this someone who deserves to be re-elected? (Is this someone who deserves to avoid impeachment?!)

Yes, the US had valid gripes against Iraq, just as the US probably had valid gripes against Nicaragua in 1941 (based on the general failure of the US military occupation of Nicaragua less than a decade earlier). But when you're attacked, why respond by attacking a third party? "Joe punched me in the nose, so in response I'm going to beat the stuffing out of Ken." No matter how Bush and his supporters would like to spin the war in Iraq, *it did nothing to*

defeat al-Qaida. If anything, it supported them by helping fill their ranks of supporters by increasing hatred of the US.

Don't be fooled by the Bush administration's attempts to link the war in Iraq to either the fight against terrorism or necessities of national security. The war did nothing positive for either one. In fact, it appears to have done little of positive value for anyone, other than those companies getting reconstruction contracts. Going to war isn't supposed to be a jobs program, but that's a discussion for another day.

We fought back after Pearl Harbor by *attacking the Japanese, who attacked us*. Under George Bush, would we have invaded Nicaragua instead?

* By referring to our actions in Afghanistan as "limited" I do not intend to demean the work done by our military forces there, or to trivialize the casualties. However, when you look at the total expenditure of resources, the war on Iraq far outpaces what the US did, and is doing, in Afghanistan.

<#> posted by Stuart @ 17:14

March 25, 2004

A Trick Question for the Candidates...

If you get a chance to speak with a high-level candidate (for any federal office, and high-level state positions such as Governor), I'll give you -- free of charge! -- a trick question that looks an awful lot like a legit question about a current issue. It's sure to trip them up. Here you go:

"Gay Marriage: Yes or No?"

If the candidate launches into his/her opinion of marriage, or sexuality, or anything related to the question, even if it's just weasel words to avoid taking a stand on the subject -- **they lose!**

Confused? Here, I'll help by providing -- again free of charge, I must be generous! -- some answers that would indicate that the candidate actually has a few clues about the world around them, and understands the importance of their position:

No -- as in, "No, the government shouldn't be mandating what is or is not marriage, nor providing any financial or other incentive to become married since that would make lack of access to marriage an issue to begin with." Marriage is a moral concept, and at the scale affected by my position the government shouldn't be dictating morals. Unfortunately, the precedent of government interference in private relationships is firmly established in this country, so it will be interesting to see how it turns out. Next question.

Let me tell you what homosexuals, bisexuals, and heterosexuals already share equally right this minute: They all share the risk of becoming victims of nuclear terrorism. With extremely grave and urgent issues of that nature to occupy the attention of the government, do you really think it's appropriate to be distracted by social issues that will be meaningless to possibly hundreds of thousands of people, regardless of their sexual inclinations, who could be killed -- some vaporized instantly -- in a nuclear terrorist attack? Next question.

Do you remember your history lessons about George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and other founders of this great nation? The nation you heard and read about in those lessons hasn't existed the entire time you've been alive. The cash-hungry bloated government and power-hungry career politicians have given you a country where the Bill of Rights is virtually meaningless anymore. You'll only have freedom of speech for as long as Disney et al decide you will. The

tyrants of America in the 21st century are career politicians and the massive corporations that support them. When -- or if -- we defeat the tyranny we now face, I may be able to focus on less pressing issues. Right now, the fundamental structure of the nation needs my attention. Next question.

Perhaps you disagree with some, or even all, of those suggested responses. But the main point is, why -- with thousands of US troops stationed overseas (and US personnel being killed and injured on a regular basis), and with the terrorist threat growing rather than fading, and with countless other issues with serious consequences that affect *everyone* -- *why* is there any focus on something that only affects a small minority? I realize "the squeaky wheel gets the grease" but we should all be squealing like pigs at the thought of al-Qaida having nuclear weapons and detonating a warhead in a dense population center or other strategic target.

If you disagree with this premise, though, and you think gay marriage (or however you want to label it) is a valid issue for discussion at the highest levels of our government, I want you justify your position by taking the time to read *both* of these books: [Hiroshima](#), by John Hersey, and [Never Forget : An Oral History of September 11, 2001](#), by Mitchell Fink. After you've read both of them, ask yourself: Is gay marriage really *that* important?

posted by Stuart @ 21:39

April 4, 2004

KISS: Keep It *Stupid*, Stupid.

For any political candidate -- and anyone with a political message they want understood by the public in general (which excludes my blog, since the general public will probably never see it) -- I have an important message. There is one vital rule if you want your point understood. You've probably heard of the KISS principle -- Keep It Simple, Stupid. I think that doesn't go far enough. You have to Keep It *Stupid*, Stupid. You absolutely must write for the lowest possible mentality. Cancel your plans for high-falutin' prose. At all costs avoid irony. Skip the satire. If it all possible, present your message with lots of bright colors, blinking lights, catchy music, a laugh track, and corporate sponsorship. This, and only this, will ensure that people get your message. (Needless to say, the finer points of your message won't fit into that format, so just cut to the chase: "Vote for me" should suffice.) Oh, and if you can get your message presented by Britney Spears or the cast of Friends, all the better.

This revision to the KISS principle became painfully clear to me this past week, courtesy of the fine residents of Everett, WA, and the surrounding area. In

Everett, some rather inflammatory political posters were put up on telephone poles and such. The posters depicted a soldier that looked like a Nazi SS trooper, complete with swastika, but the uniform also showed "USSA" (which *should* be an *obvious* swipe at the good ol' US of A). The text of the poster includes "Join The War Against Terrorism" and "free bag of dead Iraqi children and a can of oil if you sign up today." Area residents were *shocked*. They were *dismayed*. (They were *clueless*.)

According to [this article](#) from a local news station, one glowing example of a teacher -- I pity the children obtaining an "education" from this fool -- asked "how can someone say they want dead Iraqi kids in bag?" Gosh, Mr. Glazer, if you could think your way out of a paper bag, you'd realize that wanting Iraqi kids to be dead *at all* is the *exact opposite* of the message of the poster! But clearly this lack of understanding isn't limited to one teacher; a local police spokesman indicated the police department would get involved if they "deem that [those who put up the posters] have serious motives toward harming someone." Should there even be any question? Obviously the intent of the posters is to *protest* the harming of innocent children in a war for oil! With such an astute grasp of things, should we be allowing those police offers to carry guns?

Whether or not we agree with the source of those posters that the war in Iraq is just for oil, the least we could hope to do is at least understand their point, rather than assuming they're saying the exact opposite of their point! But, whoever created those posters made one vital mistake: They didn't keep it stupid. They didn't target their message for the most clueless, ignorant, sheep-minded fool, and therefore the message was lost. Instead of protesting the deaths of innocent children, they're now being suspected of wanting to kill children.

Truly, it is impossible to underestimate the intelligence of the modern American public.

<#> posted by Stuart @ 14:29

April 13, 2004

Thank Dubya for Ashcroft!

If I were to list the top ten reasons why I would consider moving to a different country, after donating several of my prime young adult years to ostensibly "defending" the US in the Cold War, the fact that John Ashcroft is the Attorney General would certainly appear on that list. (Of course, so would teeming hordes of anti-gun liberals, apathetic non-voting couch potatoes, and bad

drivers, but I digress...) Ashcroft is a scary person to have at the helm of the Department of *Justice*, given his seemingly-wanton disregard for the rights envisioned for us by those who broke this country away from British tyranny and enumerated those vital rights in the US Constitution and its Amendments (particularly the Bill of Rights). Ashcroft apparently would prefer a return to tyranny, especially one in which he gets to call the shots (which perhaps is not a pun).

I wonder if Thomas Jefferson had a real, working crystal ball and saw Ashcroft coming, and had him in mind as he worked on those nation-founding documents. More realistically, I wonder whether Ashcroft has just never read the Constitution and Amendments, or if he's just hostile toward them and the ideas behind them. His actions certainly seem to indicate one or the other of those is true; I would have a hard time believing that he could honestly claim both familiarity with, and respect for, those vital documents.

Today we see just one hint of who Ashcroft is, in the hypocrisy of his blaming prior presidential administrations for weakness in defending against terrorism, and his reported refusal -- scant hours before the September 11th terrorist attacks -- to grant more funding for those efforts under *this* (Bush) administration. But that hypocrisy alone is not the most troubling, for we all indulge in our convenient personal hypocrisies from time to time. What is more troubling is what Ashcroft wanted to do with those funds. Rather than heeding the rising warning signs that a terrorist attack was coming, and working to *protect* US citizens, it seems the Attorney General was more interested in *trodding on* the Constitutional rights of individuals and States, via the ongoing disgrace of the "War on Drugs" debacle. Did he privately rejoice that amongst the nearly 3000 people who died in the 9/11/01 attacks, some of them were probably drug addicts -- maybe even drug dealers? Progress in the War on Drugs, courtesy of bin Laden!

Of course, after the attacks, it appears that Ashcroft saw the light! Not the anti-terrorism light exactly, but how convenient it would now be to infringe on Constitutional rights en masse, by leveraging fear of terrorism. Welcome to the PATRIOT Act. Welcome to the Total Information Awareness project. Welcome, as we can imagine Ashcroft hoping, to the United Police State of America.

In these troubled times, when citizens rightly fear how terrorists might next strike, isn't it comforting to know that the "top man" at the Department of *Justice* is looking out for the safety of the populace -- by [fighting pornography](#)?! You might get poisoned, shot, blown to bits, etc. by terrorists, but apparently it's more important to Ashcroft to make sure you didn't spend your last hours looking at anything that doesn't fit his moral code. Now, if this effort was focused on child pornography -- which infringes on the rights of those too young to legally consent -- then I could understand devoting

resources to fighting it (although despite being a disgusting and terrible crime, it just doesn't compare to a terrorist nuclear device being detonated in a major city). But no! It's not just child pornography, or even the really nasty stuff like bestiality. Remember, this is John "Rights? You think you have *rights*?" Ashcroft at the wheel -- even "soft core" pornography, featuring consenting adults, is under the gun. (That's not a figure of speech; FBI agents on a raid really do carry guns!)

But no matter how scared of Ashcroft you, or any other rights-loving and law-abiding citizen, might be, you don't get to vote him out. Nope. There he sits in office, with no need to worry about gaining or losing your vote. So when you go to the polls this year, don't waste your time looking for the name of John Ashcroft. However, you might want to keep in mind that George W. Bush -- whose name *will* be on the ballot -- inflicted Ashcroft on us. That's certainly not something I'll be forgetting anytime soon.

(I believe that rights, like muscles, must be used if you wish to keep them. This blog entry is an example of exercising my right -- granted to me as a citizen and resident of the US, under [Amendment I to the US Constitution](#) -- to free speech. This should be obvious, but the apparent disregard for the Constitution by our current Attorney General prove that you can't take something being "obvious" for granted...)

<#> posted by Stuart @ 22:02

April 17, 2004

Ah, shoot...

Always a controversial issue, gun control could play an interesting role in the elections this year, since the "assault weapons" ban could expire soon. I won't delve deeply into this topic (yet), but I'll point out two facts:

1. Banning guns does not prevent criminals from obtaining guns, which Tom Mauser should understand but apparently doesn't. According to [this AP article](#), Mr. Mauser -- whose son was killed in the Columbine tragedy -- wants the "assault weapons" ban to be extended because his son was killed with an "assault weapon" -- while the ban was in place. If the ban was effective, wouldn't his son be alive now? And if it's not effective for keeping such weapons away from those who would use them for criminal purposes, what is the purpose of it?
2. The 2nd Amendment to the US Constitution is *not* intended to allow for personal protection, or for hunting, marksmanship, or other sport. The purpose of that amendment is to maintain the "security of a free State" by allowing a common defense against external attackers and, if

necessary, armed resistance against tyranny (thus the inclusion of the word "free"). That resistance can't be mounted without weapons powerful enough for the job. This makes weapons designed for military use the *best* -- not worst -- type of firearm to allow the population to own, at least for the purposes of the 2nd Amendment.

BTW, I keep putting "assault weapon" in quotes because it is a nebulous term intended more to evoke negative emotions than to clearly categorize particularly dangerous weapons. IIRC, some .22 rifles (e.g., the Ruger 10-22) can be categorized as an assault weapon if given certain accessories, but some high-powered bolt-action or lever-action rifles, with much longer range, *much* bigger bullets, and greater overall killing potential, would not. Yes, a .22 rifle can kill someone, and yes, a Ruger 10-22 can expend ammunition rapidly (but still just one round per pull of the trigger). In the hands of a determined shooter, however, the larger rifle is fundamentally more dangerous than the .22 rifle.

posted by Stuart @ 16:26

April 21, 2004

W Man Speak With Forked Tongue

O American taxpayer, please remember that your vote affects the money in your bank, and the freedoms you enjoy. Please remember that you (and your children, and their children) are paying, and will be paying for a *long* time, to "bring freedom to the Iraqis," according to President Bush. Please remember that President Bush is more concerned with the freedom of Iraqis than *your* freedom, as his strong support for the hypocritically-named "PATRIOT" Act indicates. Please remember that a vote for Bush in November is a vote to continue spending *your* money to (ostensibly) set Iraqis free and dispose of your Constitution-granted freedoms.

posted by Stuart @ 11:27

May 2, 2004

Backpedaling 101

Maybe my outlook on politicians is wrong -- maybe I should just be viewing them as grossly-overpaid amateur comedians. It's *almost* funny how L. Paul Bremer expects us to take seriously his [statements of regret](#) regarding his

early-2001 comments about the Bush administration's attitude toward terrorism. Sure, that's reasonable, we would never consider that this is just a stupid attempt at damage control at a time when Bush is seeking re-election and facing harsh criticism of his administration's handling of terrorism before the 9/11 attacks. Nah, it wouldn't even cross our mind...

{cue the laugh track, otherwise the audience will sit there in stunned silence...}

posted by Stuart @ 22:56

May 5, 2004

Promotion of Freedom

Regarding the abuses of prisoners in Iraq by US forces, President Bush stated "The America I know has sent troops into Iraq to promote freedom..." That's an interesting statement for a couple reasons:

First, we've been looking for some consistent justification for the war in Iraq, and that justification has shifted from time to time as prior excuses have failed. Now it was just to "promote" freedom? We could have done that for 1/10th of the financial cost and *no human cost* by opening trading relations with Hussein's government and then flooding their culture with carefully-crafted propaganda that wouldn't look like propaganda -- for example, music that would be embraced by young adults with embedded messages promoting "freedom" (a nebulous term, but that's another story).

Second, if the troops in Iraq are promoting freedom while they're there, could they please promote some freedom when they return? I'd like to see an end to the "PATRIOT" (violate-American-ideals) Act. Perhaps they could use their "creative" ideas for persuasion on our lawmakers. Then again, seeing our various Senators naked would probably be so traumatizing to the general public that their humiliation wouldn't be worth it.

posted by Stuart @ 09:20

May 7, 2004

Irony in Campaign Fundraising

Just a quick post today, but surely I'm not the only one who sees irony in the fact that *politicians* are using the Amazon.com "Honor System" to raise funds for their Presidential campaigns. *Honor?* Politicians?? Oh, sure...!!

posted by Stuart @ 11:35

May 8, 2004

Are You Embarrassed?

Are you an American? If so, are you embarrassed, shocked, and dismayed by the [abuse of Iraqi prisoners](#)? You should be! I know I am. That is *not* how we would want our soldiers treated if they were prisoners. That is *not* how we will win any loyalty from, or even peace with, Arab countries, or any other country that believes in fair and decent treatment of people.

George W. Bush and his administration can claim they knew nothing of the abuses, but whether that's true or not, ***they are responsible***. They put the troops there, and those troops are acting under *their* leadership.

I have little doubt that every US citizen (and even non-citizen US residents, and even close US allies, and their citizens and residents) will, directly or indirectly, be held to task over those abuses, whether by other governments, multi-national organizations, or terrorists. The damage has only started.

If you are in the US, you can -- and should! -- do something *right now* to start resolving this, although the results will be slow and possibly never complete, because we can't "undo" the abuses we are now learning about. That "something" is to disassociate yourself from the regime of George W. Bush, and work to ensure he is not re-elected. I can't outright endorse any Democrat, but **George W. Bush must not stay in power**. If ever the US faced a need to drastically overhaul its power structure, to wipe out the established "rulers" and install [new leaders](#) who will have to clean up the mess made by the old, this is the time when that need is most urgent. We live in a nation where we can "overthrow" our leaders peacefully, by voting. Your duty is clear: Do it!

posted by Stuart @ 13:24

May 12, 2004

A Tip for Democrats Worried About Nader

For any Democrats who are concerned by the so-called campaign of Ralph Nader, which has now [won Reform Party support](#), I have a suggestion. To combat the drain of Democratic votes caused by Nader, you can encourage a similar drain of Republican votes by simply encouraging Republicans who are upset by Bush (as many are) to vote Libertarian instead. There's even a [bumper sticker ready for your car](#), to promote exactly that message.

<#> posted by Stuart @ 15:14

May 21, 2004

Confirmed: It's a War for Cheap Gas

Thanks to Washington State Governor Gary Locke, as [quoted by KOMO News](#) in a story about fuel used by state ferries, we finally have confirmation that our military personnel were, and still are, in combat in the Middle East for **cheap prices at the gas pump**. As Locke so simply put it, "After all, men and women -- American men and women are dying in the Middle East to protect those Middle East countries, and how dare they turn around and raise the price of fuel for us."

Indeed, how dare they? It's not like that oil is theirs to do with as they wish. It's not like they have some sort of sovereign right to their natural resources. It's not like those countries exist as anything other than part of our fuel supply chain. How dare they not show appreciation for the American military's presence? How dare they not give us a few dollars off per barrel in appreciation for the fine treatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib? How dare they not offer a discount on our fuel, to show appreciation for helping them keep their population down by killing innocent people, and providing artistic roadside sculptures in the form of ruined military equipment? How dare they? Indeed...

Since Locke thinks gas prices are an emergency ("...if this isn't an emergency, I don't know what is..."), and he wants immediate action to reduce those prices, I have a suggestion: Cut taxes that comprise a huge portion of what we pay at the pump (including the various taxes that come into play just getting the gas to the gas station). Oh -- not that much of an emergency, Mr. Locke?

<#> posted by Stuart @ 20:34

June 21, 2004

Speaking of Gas...

With ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, many people opine that we need to find alternative energies that would deprive the countries of the Middle East of the money they make on US oil imports. There are also calls for fuel conservation, for the same reason.

I agree that **readily-renewable** energy sources are important to pursue -- but more for environmental reasons than politico-economic reasons. I also agree that fuel conservation is an important thing to promote -- but, again, for environmental reasons rather than what little impact this might have on oil-producing Arab nations.

On the other hand, I wouldn't mind depriving those Arab nations of American dollars, and there's a potentially simpler approach than research into alternative/renewable energy, and a more effective approach than fuel conservation. The idea is based on what we're seeing at the grocery store. No, not the person with 15 items in the 12-item express lane. No, not the baby boomers blocking the aisles so they can conduct their all-(self-)important conversations about what they did last weekend. No, what I'm talking about is the "organic" label.

What does "organic" mean? Well, it might just be a marketing ploy, but what it is *supposed* to mean is that the food product is made without chemicals -- pesticides, fertilizers, etc. -- or other unnatural practices like giving naturally-herbivorous cattle meat-based feed and hormones.

So how does this relate to oil? Well, fellow US citizens and residents, if you don't like your money going to the Middle East just so you can drive down the road, wouldn't you like to be able to fuel your vehicle with "Western Oil?" Or call it "Oil of the Americas." If you look at these [crude oil import figures from 2002](#), provided by the US government, you'll see that three of the top five importers are on the American continents. That means *a lot of oil* is already coming into the US from sources in this hemisphere. That means that, with a little work (much less than alternative energy research), oil companies could produce gasoline that is made from "100% Western Oil." And it could be labelled that way at the gas station, or stations could switch entirely to it. I know I'd pay a little more, or go a little further out of my way, to buy gas that wouldn't send a penny to the Middle East. Wouldn't you? And if a Presidential candidate seemed to endorse this idea, would you consider him (or her!) more than you did before? Hmm...

I'll admit that I am about as ignorant about the oil industry as most Americans, so maybe this is just a pipe dream with no basis in reality. But I think it's an intriguing idea...

posted by Stuart @ 15:11

One Bright Spot

I find this year's election fairly depressing -- the odds of Bush staying in office are much too high, and even if Kerry wins, what do we get from it? Kerry's main identity as far as I can see, so far, is that he's "not Bush." Luckily, I know I won't be wasting my vote, I'll be voting for Libertarian candidate [Michael Badnarik](#). Do I think he'll win? It doesn't matter -- I'm voting for what I believe in, and voting for what you believe in is never "throwing away your vote."

But despite the general gloom I feel about the election this year, there is one bright spot, one thing for which I am very grateful: In this election, Bill Clinton isn't a candidate! There's no chance of Bill Clinton being our next President! Perhaps that seems like a silly point to make, but Clinton has been in the news a lot due to the release of, and signing tour for, his book [My Life](#), and the more I've heard interviews with him and read sound-bites in newspapers, the more I've had my disgust and animosity for him renewed. I hated his two terms in office, and the lack of another term for him is a silver lining to the otherwise dark cloud of the 2004 elections.

posted by Stuart @ 11:33

July 1, 2004

Vote for Liberty!

[Animated GIF ad for Michael Badnarik]

July 7, 2004

A soundbite...

I ran across an interesting "soundbite" from [Michael Badnarik](#), regarding non-RepubliCrat candidates stealing votes from the ReRepublican/Democratic candidates:

...[T]he candidates don't own the votes. The voters do.

Indeed. Vote for what you believe in, not for the name you think will win -- anything less is throwing away that prized possession of a vote.

posted by Stuart @ 12:55

July 10, 2004

Dear Howard Dean...

Since you were unable to [get Ralph Nader to drop his so-called campaign](#) for President, perhaps you'd like to tackle the other angle, and try to siphon off Republican votes from those Republicans who are disenchanted with the direction Bush has taken their party. I have [a bumper sticker for your car](#), if you'd like an easy way to do that.

posted by Stuart @ 02:05

July 23, 2004

New Political Button

For those interested in steering Republicans to vote Libertarian, there are some new products available, specifically a button and a magnet. Discount pricing is available on bulk packs, to help spread the word further. [Check 'em out!](#)

(As a non-political side note, I have collected buttons since I was a pre-teen, and this one is definitely getting added to my collection!)

posted by Stuart @ 11:26

July 27, 2004

Ah.... Ah.... Ah-Choo!

It's official, I'm a sneezer! You can be a sneezer too, but you'll have to do some looking on [a certain political site](#) for details.

posted by Stuart @ 17:08

August 5, 2004

The Joy of (Big) Government

This isn't quite on-target for an election-related blog, but it deals with the role of government, and when you're at the polls, you *should* be thinking about what the proper role is for government, and which candidate supports that role best. (This is why I'll presumably be voting for Libertarian candidate [Badnarik](#).)

Anyway, the State of Washington has shown once again that it has a firm grasp on the "sensibilities" of over-inflated government. As discussed in [an article](#) on the KOMO TV site, the state has indicated that someone must "understand what they're doing" more if they're braiding hair than if they're doing things like CPR, stopping bleeding, treating burns, etc. Is it the role of government to protect us from our hairdressers? Are we in greater danger from having our hair braided the wrong way than having improper life-saving procedures applied in an emergency?

Just say NO to Big Government!

posted by Stuart @ 15:03

August 7, 2004

A Really Bad Sign

Let us all hope that [indirect personal violence](#) as a way to "support" a candidate or fight a candidate's opposition neither continues nor escalates into direct personal violence. This is supposed to be the United States of America where people enjoy freedom of speech and the ability to vote, not Nazi Germany where anyone who politically opposes our current leader faces personal reprisals. This is not a country that has grown on anarchy, and -- as much as I distrust and cannot respect him -- I am fairly confident that

President Bush would also not condone such violence in his name.

(Speaking of violence, non-initiation of force is a core value of the [Libertarian Party](#).)

posted by Stuart @ 22:21

August 13, 2004

Rare Gas, or Hot Air?

Isn't scarcity an interesting thing? We hear a lot about how scarce oil is, which is used for justifying things like opening up more environmentally-sensitive areas to potential drilling, and high gas prices. I bet the oil companies hate it when intriguing facts leak out, like how [land already open for drilling hasn't even been tested yet](#) -- in fact, permits haven't even been applied for to begin the exploration process.

As with so many things, I ask you to keep this in mind as you head to the polls in November. Remember the many times Bush has referred to the scarcity of oil. Remember what it means to have a dishonest President...

posted by Stuart @ 00:18

August 25, 2004

A Fresh Look at Primary Colors

The old-style primary in Washington State was ruled to be unconstitutional, and unfortunately we can't just say what many gun-control freaks say (i.e., "to Hell with the Constitution" as espoused by California Assemblyman Mike Roos, in 1989, regarding the constitutionality of the Roberti-Roos assault weapons ban). Thus, we must come up with a new primary, and the one that looks likely -- although it was thankfully avoided this year thanks to direct action by a governor for whom I have few other kind words -- is the "modified Cajun" primary. This won't be the primary that is wanted by any of the three major parties in Washington (yes, the [Libertarian](#) party has officially reached major party status), but it's wanted by the Washington Grange (why should I have to care about the Grange ["Patrons of Husbandry"], of all things?!) and Washington's elected officials, and Washington Secretary of State Sam Reed. This primary would allow only two candidates to reach the general election, which not only kills any real chance of a smaller-than-Repulicrat party

candidate making a surprise showing against a RepubliCrat, but it also could eliminate a moral choice for a Republican who only finds two Democrats on the ballot, or a Democrat who only finds two Republicans on the ballot. I'm hoping this ridiculous idea never makes it, but I have a sinking feeling that we're going to be stuck with it.

When (or if!) I have time later, I might post here a few interesting quotes -- with my commentary -- from Sam Reed's email to me. But not today.

<#> posted by Stuart @ 22:25

August 30, 2004

Washington's Primary Troubles

I recently wrote to Washington State's Secretary of State, Sam Reed, to express my concern for the "top 2" primary system that is proposed by Initiative 872. In Mr. Reed's reply, he commented:

In looking at all the different primary options and all their variations, I've kept some basic guidelines at the forefront which I believe are paramount to the voters [such as...] that every vote will count... After much careful consideration, it became apparent that a "top-two" primary system... adheres to these guidelines to a much greater degree than any other system."

He mentioned some other guidelines, most of which seemed sensible, but this guideline in particular -- that every vote will count -- is a mighty important one. This was one of the rallying cries regarding the Florida Foibles, i.e., the mess of the 2000 Presidential election. "Every vote must count!" It's a rallying cry for adoption of (highly-questionable!) electronic voting systems. "Every vote must count!"

So with this important guideline in mind, I must ask, does the "top 2" primary really adhere to it? It might seem that way **for the primary only**, but it *does not* adhere to it for the general election, when things are really decided. Remember, the primary is simply a way to reduce the number of choices for the general election, but it (usually) does not actually *decide* anything. The reason the "top 2" primary fails the "every vote will count" guideline in reference to the more-important general election is that it ignores the votes that are "left blank" because the voter doesn't see his or her party represented for a given race. If a Democrat sees only two Republicans on the general election ballot for any given race, and decides to not vote because s/he cannot morally support any Republican, did his or her vote count? Of course not.

By focusing "every vote counting" on the primary, and not the general election, those who support the "top 2" primary are saying that choice is only important in "designing" the general election, but not in the general election itself. When the vote really decides who will be elected, your choice will be limited and **your vote** -- if you decline to vote because you can't morally support someone in an opposing party -- **will not count**.

The way to prevent this is easy: **Vote No on Initiative 872!** They're calling it the "People's Choice Initiative of 2004" but that should be clarified to the "People's Choice (in the primary *only*) Initiative of 2004!"

posted by Stuart @ 14:18

September 7, 2004

Raping the Land for Fun and Profit

The Bush Administration seems to believe in the concept of government "of, by, and for the corporation" -- here is some [food for thought](#) regarding how this will affect many generations to come. I cannot imagine any moral person with an open mind voting for Bush! (I wish I could say that I think Kerry is much better, but I certainly wouldn't be telling the truth if I did say that.)

posted by Stuart @ 01:55

September 13, 2004

Brace Yourselves for the Assault

With the so-called "assault weapons" ban expiring, you can expect to be assaulted with all kinds of nonsense about gun control. You'll get the diversionary nonsense, like comments about how hunters don't need an AK-47 to hunt deer, which ignores the fact that the 2nd Amendment to the US Constitution is all about ensuring liberty and freedom from tyranny and has nothing to do with hunting (or gun collecting, or personal protection, or the various other diversionary topics that gun-control freaks like to bring up). You'll also get the illogical nonsense, like claims that major crimes committed with assault weapons *during the ban* show how effective the ban was, and supposedly prove why the ban shouldn't have lapsed. An example of this is mentioned in a [KOMO news article](#), with a not-surprising source of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.

Luckily, there will be a few voices of reason, such as Idaho State Police spokesman Rick Ohnsman, who said: "[W]hether there is a ban or not, some individuals will find ways to get weapons that are illegal." Fancy that, criminals don't obey the ban! But such voices of reason will be hard to hear amongst all the other nonsense.

posted by Stuart @ 13:36

October 6, 2004

'Tis the Season to Decorate Your Car!

The US Presidential election is drawing near -- which loser will win? Oops, that's not a very respectful way to talk about our politicians! (When they deserve respect, maybe they'll get some -- and no, just because someone has their finger near "the button" doesn't mean I will respect them as a person.)

So pick your bumper sticker, and remember to affix it to *glass* so you don't have a hard time removing it after the election!



P.S. Don't forget, those stickers won't be available after this political season -- heck, they could even become collector's items! And, this blog probably won't be available long after the election either, although it probably won't classify as a collector's item...

posted by Stuart @ 01:36

October 8, 2004

The Media Filters Your Reality

When the media chooses to include, or not include, events in the stories they cover, they filter your perception of the world around you. The more media sources you read or view, the better your vision will be, but you're still subject to the media filtration of your perception of reality.

If two US Presidential candidates were arrested at the same time, would that be a news item? If their arrest was relevant to the political health of the nation, including aspects such as citizen involvement in the political process

and diversity of views and ideas available to the public, would that make it more or less of a story?

As you read about the second Presidential debate on October 8, 2004, pay attention to whether your media source includes the information that the [Libertarian Party](#) and Green Party candidates were *arrested* at the debate. Was it a news-worthy item according to the filter on *your* reality?

posted by Stuart @ 19:55

October 15, 2004

Badnarik and Advertising

I went through the TV and radio ads that Libertarian candidate [Michael Badnarik](#) has posted on his site, some of which are currently running, and I was rather disappointed. Maybe I've spent too much time in digital video editing (not likely, I'm still just at the hobby level), but the quality seemed too low. One [radio ad](#) came out pretty good, but the others... well, let's just say I'd have liked to have worked on those projects myself, because I think I could've improved on them.

posted by Stuart @ 11:07

October 17, 2004

Playing or Voting?

Are there more Dungeons & Dragons players than Libertarians? As a D & D player myself (since 1979 or so), I was amused to see [news coverage of the 30th anniversary](#) of the game. But then I got to thinking... The anniversary of a game merits more news coverage than the arrest of a US Presidential candidate who represents a political party which has been around longer than that game?

posted by Stuart @ 01:27

October 19, 2004

The End Is Near...

The end of this blog, that is. Sure, I could say that the end of Liberty in the United States is near, but actually it probably died somewhere around 1930. Anyway, once the election is over, this blog will be gone. I'm considering starting a fresh one, with a title along the lines of **Where Your Nose Begins**, to discuss the ideas and ideals of libertarianism. If you'd be interested in reading that blog on a regular basis, please let me know. Speaking of Liberty, be sure to check out the new [Liberty Kids](#) store!

posted by Stuart @ 18:28

October 27, 2004

My Vote Is Cast

For what it's worth, my vote for the next US President has been submitted. (I love absentee ballots!) Actually, my vote may be "worth" potentially more than the votes for Bush and Kerry (whom I obviously did *not* vote for), because those votes will get lost in the sea of other votes and nobody will notice. But anyone who helps a non-Repulicrat candidate get noticed by increasing their percentage of votes accomplishes about as much as anyone can, given the role of the Electoral College. Obviously, I don't see voting for a "third party" candidate to be "throwing away a vote" or in any way "damaging" to my ideals.

Now I can go brew a batch of beer, and hope the fermentation is quick, because I'm sure to not like the result of the Presidential election, regardless of which loser wins. The only real happiness I can foresee from the entire election will be if the Libertarian Party retains its major party status in Washington State. But for the rest of it, hopefully I'll have some decent homebrew with which to drown my political sorrows!

The best thing that has come from this election for me is the little bit I've earned from my political products in my various CafePress.com shops. It's certainly not enough to make me rich, but when you're unemployed, even a few dollars is a good thing. (And I made more than "a few" -- but still less than \$100.)

No feedback in support of, or against, a new political blog from me to replace this 2004-election-oriented blog. So that probably means I never established much of a readership, which in turn means I would be wasting my time by creating a new one. (You're welcome to comment to the contrary, of course.)

This may be my last political blog posting -- in which case, I'll just say: Peace and Liberty be with you!

posted by Stuart @ 14:21

October 28, 2004

The Colors of Homeland Security?

OK, this is too good to pass up. According to [this AP article](#), the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security** visited a small toy store (Pufferbelly Toys, obviously not one of the large national toy store chains) in a small town in Oregon. Was this toy store a front for a terrorist operation? After all, this is Homeland Security we're talking about. Well, no -- the store sold a toy called the Magic Cube, which the Feds indicated was a violation of the patent on the Rubik's Cube -- but that patent has already expired, according to the manufacturer of the Magic Cube. So there was apparently no law broken by the toy store.

Even if there was a dispute about the patent, is *Homeland Security* the department that should be involved? Shouldn't it have been the FBI? What's next, the USPS is going to write air traffic control regulations?

When you go to the polls (if you haven't already voted via absentee ballot), and the claims about Bush making our nation safer come to mind, ask yourself: Safer from what? The infringement of expired patents? Or, considering the Constitution-stomping and poorly-named PATRIOT Act, maybe we're just "safer" from enjoying the "Blessings of Liberty" that the Constitution is supposed to provide. If this is no longer acceptable to you, the power to change it is in your vote, at the local, state, and national level. A vote for a Libertarian candidate will make a bold statement that we do not want our government to form itself into an Orwellian "Big Brother."

posted by Stuart @ 15:22