

Texas Chain Massacre

THE FALL 2003 REAL NEWS



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BUSHWACKED
THE KINGDOM OF ARNOLD
ARMAGEDDON SERIES
NOVACAINE NATION

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BUSH WACKED

SAN DIEGO, CA (10/03)-- And all the President's Men, could not put the Humpty Dumpty Economy back together again. This will be the nursery rhyme they will sing in W.'s great grandchildren's kindergarten classes.

Like father, like son. This will be the conclusion in the history books W's greatgrandchildren will read in their high school history classes. A Gulf War victory; and economic defeat.

In Southern California, there is a long, bitter grocery workers strike in progress. The clerks want increased wages and protection for their

health insurance benefits. The store owners have refused to bargain; they hired temporary workers to fill in. The pickets are lined up around every store entrance.

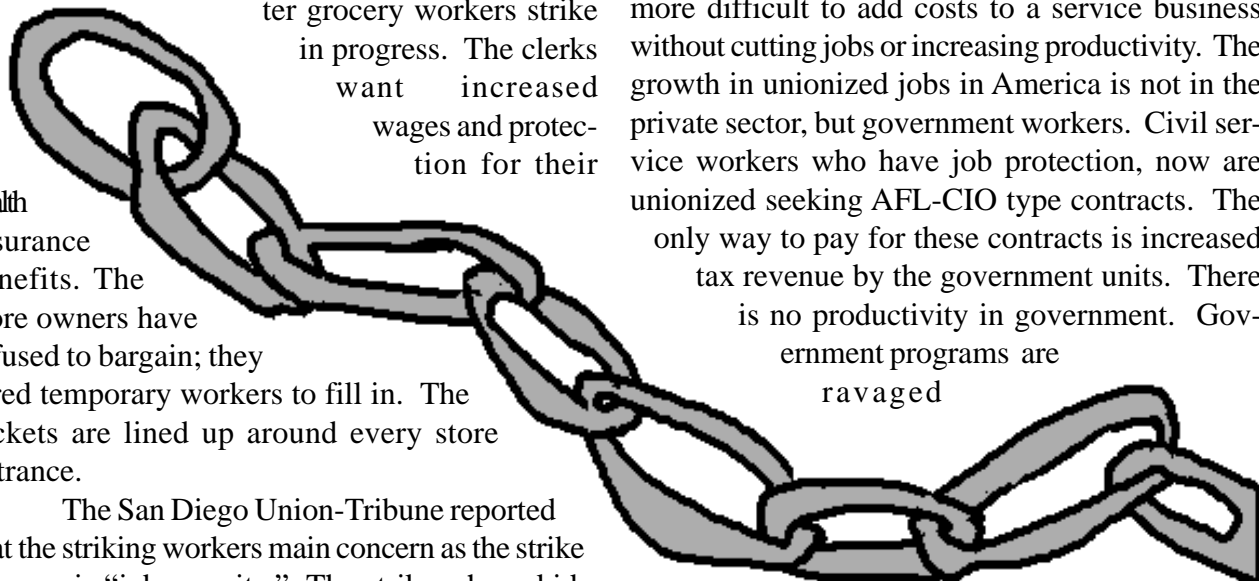
The San Diego Union-Tribune reported that the striking workers main concern as the strike goes on is "job security." The strikers have kids, mortgage payments, and a long history of employment with the food chains.

The replacement workers are just happy to have a job. Several reported that they have been out of work for more than a year. The bills continue to pile up. They have kids to feed. They run the gambit from being white collar workers, airline mechanics, mechanical drafters and homemakers.

As previously written, when American industry decided to export manufacturing jobs to Mexico and overseas, the foundation of the nation's economy turned to be a service economy. It is very difficult to "value-add" on a service like it is to

add -value as one builds a complex piece of tangible machinery or products. The country is now importing more goods that we used to make for ourselves. The balance of trade deficit and the national deficit are rising at an alarming rate.

But the politicians in both parties do not understand or comprehend this significant shift in the economy. Unionized service workers demands can be absorbed in the layers of added value in building an automobile or aircraft but it is much more difficult to add costs to a service business without cutting jobs or increasing productivity. The growth in unionized jobs in America is not in the private sector, but government workers. Civil service workers who have job protection, now are unionized seeking AFL-CIO type contracts. The only way to pay for these contracts is increased tax revenue by the government units. There is no productivity in government. Government programs are ravaged



with patronage, waste and corruption.

With less manufacturing jobs as the base of the economy, when there is a "recovery," it may be a "jobless" recovery. Jobs are scarce. People are overqualified for the clerkships like grocery bagger. But over time, even any job is a job.

Politicians will go into the 2004 election cycle with a new issues: striking worker versus temporary (or long term unemployed) worker over a single service job; cushy government worker on tax dollars versus the unemployed tax payer.

The economy appears to Bushwack the President. But it can also be the fuel to scorch all the powers of the current status quo.

THE KINGDOM OF ARNOLD

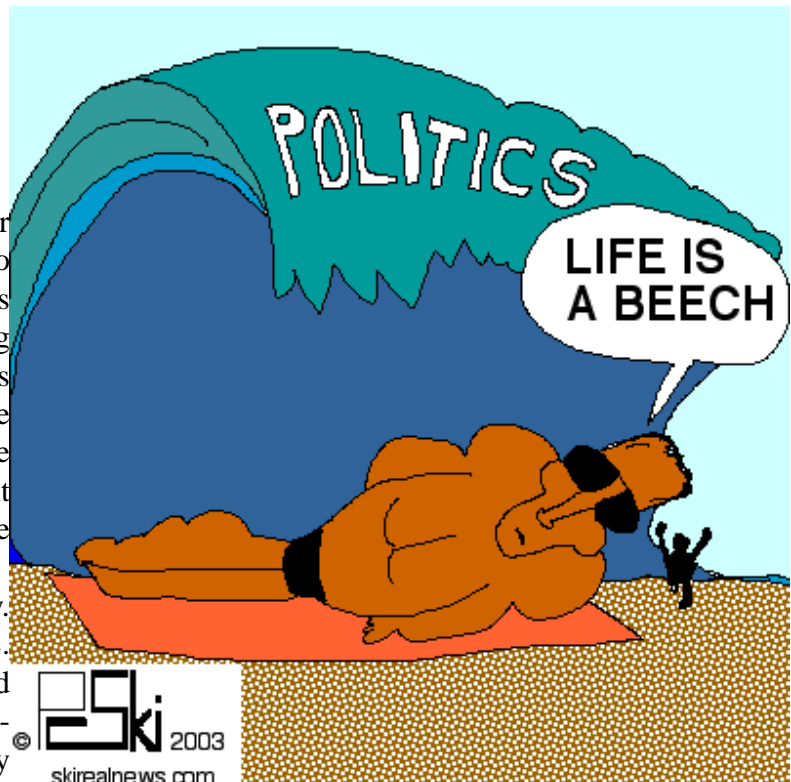
SAN DIEGO, CA (10/03)-- Four days in the Land of LaLa, there were no major news stories or broadcast reports on the pending new Governor, King Arnold. Apparently, the election circus was over and the regional media broke down their camera stands to go to the beach to bake their brains until the next storyline hits them over the forehead like a two-by-four.

California is a different country. There are warning signs everywhere. Alcohol is bad for you. Smoking is bad for you. Low flush toilets are environmentally important (even though they don't flush properly). Conserve water by allowing us not to wash your bath towels each day.

But in the sleepy residential coastal communities, the business of business is secondary to living the lifestyle. In the morning, the surfers get up at 4 a.m. to get a surf report to catch the first waves. The waiters and clerks who work in the afternoon or evening, spread a blanket on the shale rock beaches and bronze to noon. Afterward, the morning clerks and students arrive to take their beach spots. The Porsche driving surf shop owner has his shop door wide open, and no customers. They are all at the beach.

Walk into the restaurant next to the hotel at noon to find that I am the only person in the entire restaurant. The bartender in the other room is the maitre de, waiter and busboy. He may also have been the cook in the back.

In the fast food joints, the lifestyle takes a hard root. Surf dad comes in without shirt and



shoes and buys a single value meal for his kid. He then eats the fries as they get into the car. An underemployed divorced mother of two arrives and orders a single value meal for the two kids to split, with a extra glass for water.

The main street stores do not open at 9 a.m. like the Midwest. They open when the storekeeper decides to show up-- anywhere from 10, 11, noon, or "call for hours."

There is a sense of a mass doldrums that has marinated into the people of Southern California. There is no sense of doom. There is no sense of urgency. The reason? There's always the beach.

So the new governor biggest problem will be on how to motivate the populous to go along with the hard decisions, program cuts, and possible increase in taxes in order to balance the state budget when the state of business is at its low tide and sinking.

ARMAGEDDON

SERIES

CHICAGO, ILL (10/03)--The Fox Network was more responsible for jinxing the Chicago Cubs chances from getting to the World Series than one fan's attempted grab of a foul ball at Wrigley. Fox, taking a page from the NBC Olympic playbook, had destined and publicly wanted a Cubs-Boston Red Sox World Series. It would have had the easy storyline of long suffering, lovable losers with heartbreaking losses on film. Every time NBC highlights the gold medal US Olympic athlete, the athlete usually falls down and fails to win.

The one fan in the stands did not pitch the remainder of the inning, did not commit an error at shortstop, and did not allow eight runs to cross home plate. But the lore of the losing tradition has become more important than the actual game stories.

The Marlins series was actually in the ICU after the fifth game. The Cubs had no sense of urgency. The Cubs had a 3-1 series lead. The Cubs should have pulled no punches and played like it was the 7th Game. Instead, the Marlins won the game and took that victory to Chicago. The pressure built on the Cubs two young starting pitchers, Wood and Prior, who were off their games after a long season and September stretch.

The Cubs and the Red Sox were both five outs away from the World Series. Both clubs lost, cementing the bonds of being long term suffering fan losers. America could not HANDLE that Series. The earth would rotate off its axis. Both teams would find a way to lose Game 7. Or the field would open like a volcano taking the teams to the depths of Dante's Inferno. Or it would be snowed



out. Or Bud Selig would call it a tie and take the players share of the gate.

But the reality of the situation was that most Cub fans felt that they had been speared by a sportsfish. Right on dry land. On their living room sofas. A blood curling blood letting. Another Fox example of "When Wild Animals Attack Humans!"

When the average fan knows that in Game 7 you are at the POINT OF NO RETURN, manager Dusty Baker has to throw his best pitchers, his starters, Clement, Zambrano, for an inning or a batter, instead of going to those washed up batting practice sore arm rejects taking up space in the bullpen. Trader Jack McKeon, the Marlins skipper, who had been out of the Game for years, knew that he'd use his best pitcher, Josh Beckett, until his arm dropped off in the ice bucket. He was dead right. McKeon out-managed Baker. McKeon got his team in the position to win; Baker tried to hang on and not lose.

Such is the real curse of the Cubs.

NOVACAIN NATION

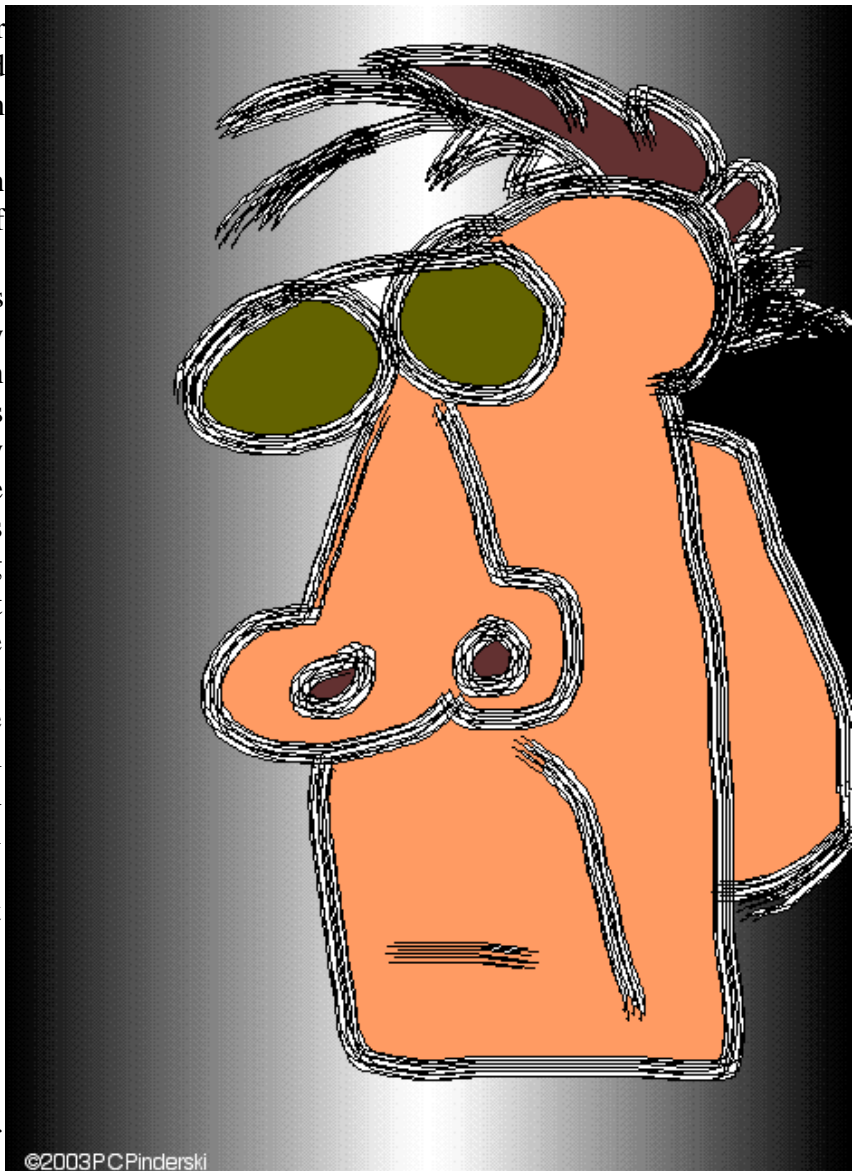
We are turning into a nation of zombies. The television bombards the elderly with the miracle chemicals that will turn them into lab rats or engorged hamsters with serious side effects that take ten pages of agate type to explain to a medical professional. More and more people are just zoning out. Running red lights. Wandering into traffic without paying attention. Letting their toddlers free range in a crowded shopping center parking lot. NASCAR drafting the car ahead of them in morning rush hour commuting, creating massive and deadly crashes, just like the ones on television.

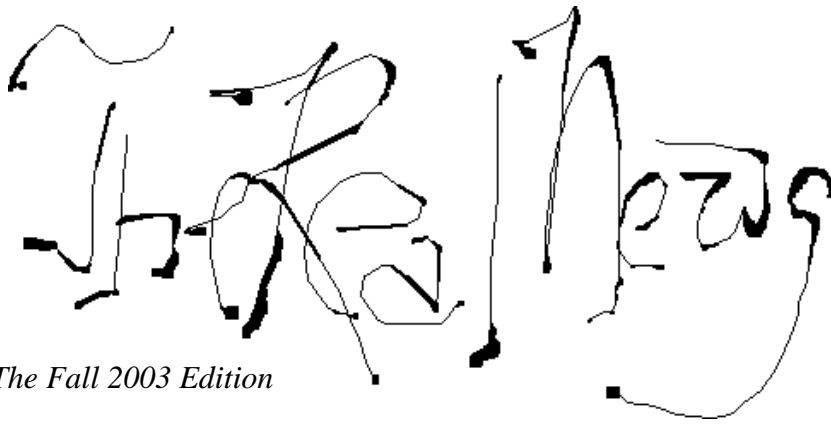
So who turned off the porch light of the collective mind of America?

There was a classic 1960s Cold War James Colburn comedy called *The President's Analyst*. In the movie, the Russian spy tells Colburn that one day his country would change and become more like the United States as the country's political pendulums would swing and cross paths. The Soviets kept communism control of their people by the liberal use of fear and vodka. The nation's crossed paths when the Berlin Wall fell, sending the USSR straight into the American Wild West. The United States political parties have pushed forward a socialist agenda of the government micromanaging most of people's personal affairs: employment, health care and privacy. The US is not using vodka as a control mechanism, but the fear of growing old on Medicare and liberal doses of

prescription medication. The abuse of the system is running amok.

If Rush Limbaugh admits that he pushed his maid into the Florida streets to score him some lethal doses of OxyContin for his pain killer addiction, this country is on the verge of mainlining the numbness of dependency while the semi-sober con-artists and politicians tax and steal your life savings.





The Fall 2003 Edition

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SECTION 2: THE MID-EDITION CRISIS

THE RETURN TO CHARLESTON

CHARLESTON, IL (10/03)--- It had been five years since the last Homecoming Return to Eastern Illinois. 2003 appeared to be the same no-show. After a flood of Cub post-season hysteria emails from around the globe, and just returning from a long California business trip, the prospects of driving three point five hours south did not bode well. Laura emailed in a semi-beg that I should try to attend this year's event. In film noir, it would "round up the usual suspects."

I was grounded at work on Saturday morning. In the trade it is called "catch-up" on an assembly line that never stops and never ends. And endless skipping loop like a broken record player.

Rocky had emailed me a list of reasons I should go to Homecoming. He is in Montana; he can make good reasons since he is halfway across the country



with no intention of making the trip. He gave me a list of things I should do when I get to the old confines.

But halfway through the work morning, staff decided to kick me out to return to a weekend vagabond existence. It was then I decided to ramble to Charleston to surprise the police line-up of the usual suspects. I

email the doubting friends with a graphic attachment that infers a possible appearance. (See *next page*.) At the department reunion, there used to be a computer that alums would use to type in what they have been up to for the newsletter. So after an oil change, a tank of gas, and an empty stomach I am ready to turn Road Nomad.

I motored quickly through the fading construction signs of Rt 53-I-355. The Chicago rock stations on high until the FM signals would fade into Rural Free Radio.

I did not realize until I was past Manhattan-Monee that the University of Illinois-Champaign was also hosting their homecoming this weekend. But there was no real traffic on I-57 South. The Illini got caught up in the early early Big Ten regional telecast, with a tip-off at 11 a.m. So the tailgaters and late arrivals were already off the road by the time I headed south. That apparently included the State Police because there was not one vehicle seen on the way down.

The skies turned a purple gray. A slow, Scottish mist began to settle down around the vehicle. Then a weak drizzle. Instead of turning on the windshield wipers like a normal person, I left it to the wind tunnel effect to disperse the droplets from the line of vision. I was bored. I was attempting to create my own front-projection Fellini movie on the windshield.

That got boring after a while. So the radio scan button was constantly punched like a lab rat getting voltage in a Pavlov experiment. I was looking for some barking thong college radio music. I came up dry in the corporate chain format classic rock station off the bird music block weekends.

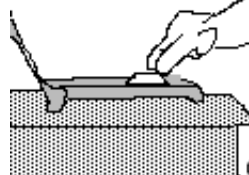
It began to rain steady as I exited the interstate for Route

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SAC MISSILE CONTROL
CODES ACTIVATED
AND CONFIRMED!!**

**WARNING!!!
DO NOT TOUCH
LAUNCH KEY
WITHOUT
PROPER
AUTHORIZATION!**

**WARHEADS ARE
ARMED.**

**YOU ARE AT
POINT OF NO RETURN.**



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The advance Homecoming graphic sent to alums

16. The first change was a new Citgo station near the popcorn silos outside of town. It was selling gas for 30 cents less than in the Chicago suburbs. There was no real change in the development between the interstate and the Coles County Airport. I figured that the county had stagnated like the rest of the nation.

As I hit the city limits, the EIU Foundation has a new large building at the corner. "Welcome Center." Now I know where those donations went to-- bricks and mortar of an administrative palace.

A quick trip down the main drag past the university finds no significant changes to the collective landscape. There

is a new wall and flower garden in front of Old Main. It gives the university administration building the aura of being the prison that it is to some.

Down the heart of campus, the only difference is that there are more parking lots and more parking problems finding an available spot. So after parking, I head back to campus to try to complete Rocky's list of things I should do. It is now raining harder and the campus is deserted. Mr. Hash's booming voice as the PA announcer at the football stadium carries loudly in muffled tones through the 1960s style class buildings.

The memorial courtyard was a fundraising nightmare. I

wandered through the maze of empty bricks to find the ones that contain the messages of the Out-law Eastern Alumni. I must have looked like a scruffy cruise shuffleboard player wandering aimlessly on deck during a typhoon. I needed to get a picture of the WELH plaque for the next campus radio reunion. (*Editor note: see, Kewanee Real News edition*).

Ducking inside the Student Union to get out of the rain led to more weirdness. The inside had been remodeled with the main student area transformed into a food court. Well, actually it was a food “cage,” Thunderdome to be exact.

Another student lounge area was converted into a local bank branch with two live tellers gossiping the afternoon away.

Downstairs, the last main student lounge was walled into a coffee and espresso shops.

I returned to the rain to find a beer. I returned to Marty’s, our local cross campus hangout. At first, there was a long line outside. On this return, I got inside to find a noisy, cramped, crowded sardine can of humanity. After working my way to the far side of the bar, I waited with two other guys waving ten dollar bills for service. But the closest employee was manning the oversized hot plate cooking a burger to qualify the place as a restaurant.

I finished the circuit to see if any of the old gang left the football game early. Finding no

one has come in from the rain, I decide to head uptown where the post-game department party would be held.

I park just beyond the town square and head into another old haunt, Roc’s Lounge. The main old bar appeared to be as I last remembered it. But when I got to the far side, it turned into a waitress/restaurant prep area. Roc’s had turned into an upscale diner in the past five years.

I got a bar stool and ordered a beer. The television was showing the campus television station’s live broadcast of the last few minutes of the homecoming football game (sans sound). It would be helpful to gauge my timing to the next bar.

There were two guys sitting next to me. They ordered their checks from the bartender. He brought back two bar tabs to settle up. For the next twenty minutes they discussed the bills and their payment. They questioned some charges that they forgot about. Then they wanted some credit. Then in the end, they wanted to pay the bills part in cash and part on a credit card. Then, once that was resolved, they wanted to buy some package for the road. However, the bartender would not sell them a six-pack of Stag, the brew they had been drinking all afternoon. (Good gawd, hoarding of that brand of beer? Is there some sort of run on Stag in east central Illinois?)

They left and they were

replaced by three female athletes who ordered normal beers and then some food.

I got the bartender to change the station from PBS Lite programming to the Northern Illinois football game. NIU, being the lone hope for this State’s collegiate football dreams, was ranked Number Ten in the nation. However, they were getting spanked by Bowling Green, to the delight of one of the athletes next to me.

After another beer I left Roc’s to head to the j-bash at the side room of Friends. It was a two and one-half block walk across the square. The rain had stopped and the square was quiet.

I got to the sidedoor. It was locked. No, it may have been nailed shut. A rainsoaked sign said that the party was in the back pool room of the main bar. So I double back into the main entrance and wind my way into the pool room.

I spy the crowd and do not see anyone I recognize until the Wonderful Weavers, a couple who graduated before my time, came up to say hello. I see them more in the suburbs than at recent homecomings.

Then there was Lola and Reed who were surprised to see me. After a short time, they were migrating back toward their students or newly released alums. Then the hat was passed. The crowd honestly looked financially thin, even in a college town. So I gave enough so the bar would not take the sponsor’s

fillings as collateral.

Then the cat dragged in my usual suspects. Laura was extremely surprised by my unannounced appearance. Rich and Brian broke down in loud laughter, explaining that Laura had spent the entire day bad-mouthing me for not coming down this year. Well, the reaction to the surprise appearance was worth its weight in gold at that moment.

Then Brian went into Brian mode. A pitcher of beer in one hand; cursing the Cub fan who got in Alou's way during Game 6. He sloshed through a bowl of chili. Then another beer cursed rave about that Cub fan ruining his life. Rich, a Cardinal fan, just watched him fall a part, just like his team.

As the party was breaking up, the bar runner went by and asked if anyone needed any more chili. Brian, who had dripped much of it on his new white golf shirt, in a pattern that would CSI proud, said something crude. But the young woman, a cute Heather Graham with Ashley Banfield glasses, came back and poked his chest where the stains were and said, "If you want more, here it is."

Later, Brian sighed, "I think I can score with her."

But we knew better. Someone got a hold of the duct tape roll that held up thirty years of alumni pictures. A large "L" was ducted to Brian's chest. He continued to ramble on and demanded more beer.

So we went to Roc's.

Since we were now only drinking, the wait staff sent us upstairs. The World Series was on a small television hidden behind a pillar. So we stood around and drank in near solitude. We kept to our abusive self delusions and humor.

After a couple of rounds, we were suddenly herded out of the bar. Actually, kicked out of the bar. It was not even 11 p.m.

It was decided that Brian was in no shape to drive home to Mattoon. So it was agreed to caravan back to his place.

It was then I was informed that Brian had moved. Apparently, in stead of cleaning his old apartment after a decade of bachelor living, it was just easier to move to a new apart-

ment.

On the way out of Charleston, I stopped by Mr. Hash's house. It was dark with no activity. I figured that he was either at work at the plant (third shift) or the family was asleep. I did not want to wake the kids, or invoke a COPS moment on the front porch. So I moved on.

So our clan regrouped at Brian's new place, a courtyard complex on a quiet street.

Brian staggered into his place. He tossed beers across the room at people. Rich took the remote and surfed for bad old TV shows like Mr. Ed. Brian, semi-collapsed in a new lazy boy that looked retro old trailer. It took him a while, but he finally got the



digits correct for a long long distance call to Germany, then handed off the phone.

Rich was flicking ash into Brian's open beer can, and laughing as it foamed like rising pancake batter.

With Brian passing out in his chair, the party broke before midnight.

He would later recall waking up at 4:11 a.m. and wondering out loud where did everyone go and how did he get home. He also indicated that Sunday as a "rough day."

So the Usual Suspects made it through another homecoming without much fanfare.

Staff Box

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RUSH ROGSTAD

GOPHER: BILL CLINTON.

THE DEMOCRATIC PROBLEM

The rhetoric has run the course, and the core constituency are threatening strikes.

The Democratic candidates for President have been seen and heard less often than those 30 minute exercise machine infomercials.

John Edwards, campaigning in his home states, comes across a member of the public he represents to find she does not know who he is or what he is doing impeding her way.

John Kerry spouts the liberal party line at events but then is caught the next day blasting feathers off pheasants.

Ho Dean classifies himself as a "metrosexual" to build a new fence on the fence he has been straddling to garner special interest votes on the issues.

But the key problem the party has can be summed up in two words: The Clintons.

Apparently, Bill Clinton is on the phone 18 hours a day as each candidate's friend and secret political advisor. He tells one candidate how to stab the front runner, then goes back to the slimed victim to console him. He wants to maintain his alleged power from behind the Democratic throne. The incoherent message of the campaign trail is a direct result of the micromanaging the message that Clinton thinks he has a patent on.

The other problem is the Hillary shadow. The other candidates poor showing puts the spotlight on the Dem Superdelegates (the elite group that really controls the convention votes and the nominee) to go where the cash cow is: Hillary and Friends. The problem is that the GOP would love Bush to run against Hillary because the US is not ready for another Clinton.

‘Why Won’t Anyone Look At Me? I am the President! Hey, You, over there! I’ve got something to say as a native New Yorker, right? When will I be on TV? I should have the secret service set my VCR. Hey don’t go away!’



THE BUSH DOCTRINE REVISITED

The Bush foreign policy doctrine after 9/11 was simple. The US was going to bring all the terrorists and their supporters to justice.

The overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan seems easier than the current street fight in Baghdad. The situation is still a war zone in both locales.

Bush made several errors based upon public opinion, media pressure and long range politics. First, he never should have declared victory when the troops arrived in Baghdad. Since the end of major combat, the media has been tallying the soldier deaths like a telethon scoreboard. Bush made the announcement because there was Beltway pressure to have a "quick victory." Even though he said that this was a different war, a global war, he caved to the politics of a quick headline.

Second, when the troops took the streets of Baghdad, Bush's administration was unprepared to run the central services the people had relied upon under the Saddam regime. In a world where people are used to electricity, water and marketplaces under a dictator, they believe that the dictatorship is the cost for their livelihood. When local businessmen projected themselves as liaisons and new local leaders, the commanders on the ground thought they were interfering with their work, and they

were tossed aside as not being a resource. But in most capitalistic studies, leaders are created when there is a vacuum of power. The local businessmen who wanted to be the go-betweens between the displaced people and normal life should have been embraced as a true resource. The local leaders could have dealt quickly and swiftly with the unrest of the Americans "being in total charge" of their lives. It could have diffused the propaganda and distrust the Iraqi people had of the US before the war.

Third, the perception was that when Saddam was toppled, the troops would come home like after Gulf War I. But when the Iraqi army folded and hid just as the troops hit the Baghdad airport, the end game of the war plan should have been altered to that of fighting a guerilla war. The door to door combat should have swept through the city in order to get a full, and complete surrender of the local populous. The deck of cards cherry-picking of Saddam's leaders was more a PR gimmick that a good military strategy.

Fourth, reversing course on the true cost of the war on terrorism. In Afghanistan, the costs were alluded to with the vast untapped oil reserves of that nation. In Iraq, it was touted that the natural resources would go back to the Iraqi people, after paying

for their liberation. Apparently, neither situation is happening. Bush goes to Congress for \$87 billion in military spending for Iraq. The reaction was a stunning defeat for the President. He then tries to soften the blow by making half of the relief a loan to be repaid by the new Iraqi government. The problem is there is no real strong new Iraqi government. The Middle East perception of the new council is that of a puppet chamber with the strings controlled by the US. The administration has failed to explain why the Iraqi oil reserves have not started to flow to help pay for the liberation and reconstruction of their own country.

Fifth, Bush fears the campaign banner that Iraq has turned into a quagmire. In the cable news environment of instant graphics and solutions, the Iraq problem is too complex to explain in a single sentence. As the months wear on, the commentary gets more and more bitter and backstabbing the policies. Adding fuel to the fire is the Democrats repeated attention to the lack of evidence of WMDs. Critics of Bush are calling him a liar, and that his entire war policy is tainted with lies.

Meanwhile, the Middle East continues to be hot bed for terrorist activity and instability. It appears to pre-occupy the minds of the politicians to the neglect of the domestic issues.

Shootout at the Taco Corral

LA JOLLA, CA (10/03)-

-- Every time I get to California, there is a childhood urge to find long past fast food. Growing up, the first "fast food" stands of any lingering note in the suburbs were Chicken Unlimited, Big Boy and Jack N The Box.

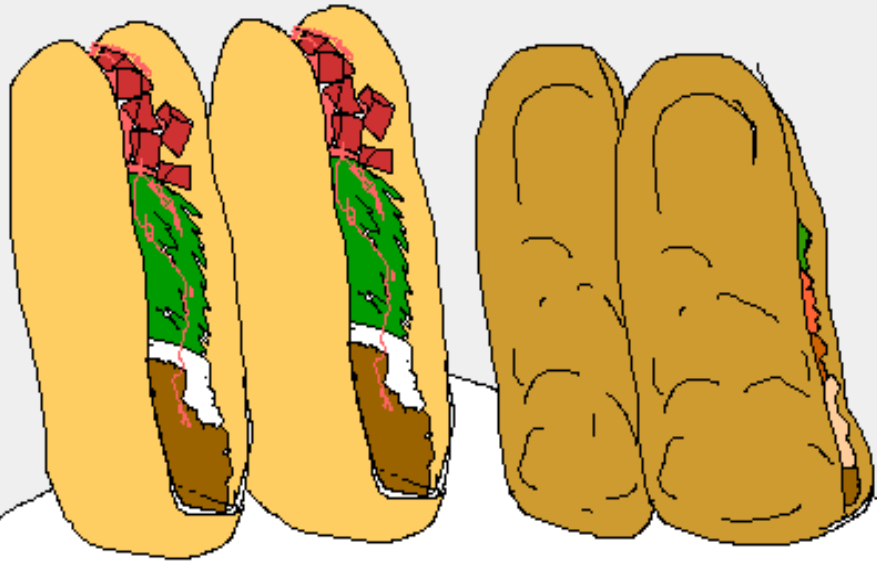
But it is Jack N The Box that held the best memories because it had tacos before the Tex-Mex food explosion. But the local Jack N The Box got into trouble, and closed. Its corner little building turned into a national pigeon roost for a decade before it was bulldozed in a re-development project.

The best national taco chain in our area is Taco Bell for its consistency and price. However, when they dropped the Taco Bellgrande a while back, I was bitterly disappointed with that move. It had been my favorite menu item.

So, everytime I get to the west coast, I try to find local chain like In-And-Out Burger or the Jack.

In the coastal communities in Southern California, real estate is expensive, and redevelopment means increased real estate taxes. So fast food restaurants are not swarming like in the Midwest Main Streets.

It was late and the only joint on the way to the hotel was a Taco Bell. So after checking in, I went to it for dinner. Ordering the standard value meal, I



TACO BELL

JACK N
THE BOX

found the taco shell crunchier and fresher than the ones at home. And the burrito had more taste as well. It must have been the fresh location, or the local demand.

On the second night, I found a Jack as I navigated to a work location. The restaurant was much larger than the Bell and contained an extended menu of burgers, chicken and the other sides of a big chain, McDs or BK. But I was in for the tacos.

Jack N The Box deep fries its taco shells to seal the deal. It has a distinctive taste. And there sauce is hotter than TB. Again, it hit the spot as re-kindling that childhood memory of the early fast food taco.

Both restaurants appeared to be the refuge of the lost surfer and underemployed single parent. At the Taco Bell, a guy in baggy pants, no shirt, no shoes, tried to haggle the most volume of food for \$3. He got a free water. Then he came back in afterward and thought he should get money back, but the manager said the sales tax made it \$3. Oh, he said. Then he bartered a quarter for a large cup of ice and water.

At the Jack, a dad buys his kid a meal for the ride home from the beach, and snarfs the fries on the way to the car. A mother buys one meal to split between her two young kids.

Desperate value meals.

The NASCAR Generation

Only a handful of the 200,000 patrons sitting in the grandstands know the folklore that their spectator sport started as a moonshine revenue run in the deep South. Under the current angst ridden scandal headlines of criminality, the 21st Century's fastest growing sport is based on the mainstream of American morality.

The Good Old Boys. Just having fun. Tearing up the track. Burning rubber. Out-running the law. And those were the men running Enron.

The Billy Clinton Administration in the 1990s claimed to have led the greatest

economic expansion in history. They take no credit today for the growing financial and accounting scandals that are piling up faster than a 100 car pile-up on a foggy interstate. Most of the 1990s expansion was based upon fictitious creation of paper "money equivalent" instruments like IPO stock and "structured finance" instruments (debts disguised as assets).

It is tough to have a re-

covery when there was no real expansion. The NASCAR generation is focused quarter to quarter--- run at full speed. If you don't run out of gas or crash and burn, you are in the winner's circle.

Too bad the South disbanded the chain gangs. Accountants and bankers would have classed up highway crews by picking up their own bankruptcy litter.



THE ICEMAN GOLFETH

It is early November. Saturday afternoon, nature attempts to spit snow. There is an awful February chill brewing. But who is roped into a Sunday 10 a.m. tee off time?

The temperature dropped as fast as the justifications for chasing pneumonia. I arrive with four layers of clothing, a knit cap, and winter golf gloves. And it was still bone chilling; below freezing. The only saving grace was the lack of wind otherwise it would have been insane. But there were only a few other golf-

ers on the course that day. I told my nephew after a single played through that if I ever got to that stage in my life, playing on an intolerable golf day alone, "just put me in a home."

The first green was frozen. It made putting interesting. We theorized that the ice particles as water seek their own level, so there would be no break in the putts. We were right. From all angles, no breaks. Just quick slick putts.

On the fourth hole, my approach shot went into the pond

guarding the green. But when I arrived, I saw the ball on the frozen water's edge. Instead of taking a hazard stroke, I leaned out over the water and slashed down the pitching wedge, shattering the pane of ice and sailing the ball to the back fringe. My first walking on water shot. I retrieved a quarter inch rectangle of ice to show my playing partners.

Through the weather, I had five legitimate birdie putts during the round, but my new tattoo will say, "From Birdies to Bogies."

EIU Homecoming

Since the Alumni Journal comes out as often as Locust making political speechns in Springfield, the Real News documents the actual existence of the 2003 Homecoming. Brian Nielsen attempts to goad Chuck Norris into a full contact kickboxing match in the pool room. Below, Norris, seven credits short of graduation, ponders what is written on Ski's cap.



After being forcibly removed from one alcohol distribution facility, the journalism alumni return to an old haunt, Roc's, to find it transformed into an upscale diner. Upstairs, the second story bar is their personal domain. Below left, Brian wallows in his story, but Laura would rather inhale a whole cigarette instead. Below right, the night ends with Brian saying goodbye to his close friends.

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