

## President's speech good coffee topic

It was a good speech, to our thinking. Maybe even better than good. President Bush had the attention of the entire country Wednesday night as he unveiled his new approach to the situation in Iraq.

He admitted making mistakes. He took the blame. While this may seem rare, it really isn't. We've heard him shoulder the blame before, something that apparently slipped by, or was ignored by, the nation's media.

We still haven't come to a conclusion on Iraq, even after listening to the president tell us officially Wednesday night that he is sending 20,000+ additional soldiers to that country. He unveiled his new strategy to a weary public and a Congress — controlled by the Democrats, who aren't in the mood to commit anymore American troops to the Iraqi cause.

This will apparently be the president's final push to get something resolved in Iraq before he exits the White House in two years. Iraq will, in all probability, shape his legacy.

The surge of more U.S. soldiers seems to have come a few years too late. The president was told early on in this war that several hundred thousand troops would be needed to successfully complete the mission. That didn't set well with the president, who had Donald Rumsfeld, former defense secretary, whispering in one ear, and Vice President Dick Cheney, whispering in the other. So the war went on with less boots on the ground than the military's top brass determined were needed.

The situation today is bad. We all know that. American dead is approaching the 3,020 mark. The severely wounded numbers many, many thousands.

The president reminded us we are fighting a war unlike any we're ever fought before. He is dead right in that assessment. But we are not totally clear what war he is talking about — the war on terror, on the Iraqi insurgency, or the all-out civil war, as some care to call it. Maybe one size fits all.

The president's speech writers missed a critical point, to our thinking. As the president continues to link the war on terror to everything, and he keeps telling us the war on terror will be fought for many years — and adds that this war is unlike any other we have ever fought — how, then, will we know when it's over and if we won. More clarification is desired.

We have pretty much supported the president's efforts in Iraq since the get-go. After all the vast majority of our United States Senators and members of the House of Representatives were in his corner. We took our cue from them. But as the war became more intense and more American lives were being cut short, many of these early supporters have abandoned the course and adopted a new cry, "Get out!" One thing you can say about President Bush is that he stood his ground, unlike those who supported the war before they decided not to. He's consistent, witness Wednesday night when he unveiled his new strategy, a strategy he clearly knows may or may not work out. But he's still trying, he hasn't threw in the towel, despite growing discontent across the land.

The American public isn't happy with the progress, or lack thereof, in Iraq. They have a lot of questions. Polls suggest a wind down, not a build up. But it all rests on the shoulders of one man: Commander-in-Chief Bush, who is now listening to new voices whispering in his ears. We pray to God those voices just might be onto something that will end American bloodshed in a country that few of us ever paid any attention to before the invasion three+ years ago.

Maybe if we would have stuck with the president when things got really tough, instead of jumping ship, things today might be different. Our own lack of unity has turned out to be one of our enemies.

To the Democrat-controlled Congress we would only say: "Think before you leap. It's a long drop — without a safety net."  
—Tom Dreiling



## Good topic: kids/cell phones, school

Listening to the radio while getting ready to call it a night, I was struck by a story the guest on a talk show was telling the host. It seems that a high school student asked her teacher if she (the teacher, who was lecturing the class) could hold it down because "I am on the phone!" The teacher, according to the conversation between the show's host and guest, escorted the young lady out of class and took her to the office, explained to the principal what had happened and then went back to her classroom. Because I came across the program already in progress, I am sure the key to the issue was discussed earlier and I was hearing only the clean up.

What I heard didn't particularly surprise me. We are living in a new world of excitement, a world that gives everybody on the face of the earth the right to a cell phone if they can afford it. So why should we not be surprised that students carry these things with them to school?

I happened to have been at a high school (outside our area) and was surprised to see a Pizza Hut delivery person carrying two large boxes down the hallway. I asked what that was all about. The school official I was with said she didn't know but was going to check into it, which she did right away. It seems that a student used his cell phone to request a delivery. Four of the students chipped in to pay for the pizza prior to the start of classes that day. They didn't like what the school menu had, so they opted for pizza. Of course the delivery disrupted the class. The four were taken from the room and sternly lectured. They were forced to eat their pizza in detention.

I am trying to think back to my high school days (1950s), of something we brought to school that would have been

### Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



considered inappropriate. At that time I am sure, in jest, that my click of buddies were sometimes considered inappropriate to the school's purpose. But that said, I can't come up with anything that would remotely compare to cell phones in the classroom, unless sneaking smokes between classes could be considered. Smoking was no big deal back then, but discouraged on school grounds. Little did we know what the consequences of smoking were to become. Sad.

Times are a changing and I am sure that school people will handle today's challenges much like those who manned the classrooms way back when. I hear parents today say they feel more comfortable knowing their kids have access to a cell phone in case something needing their attention developed. There are varying arguments for and against that issue. While we hope kids use the phone for the purpose Mom and Dad spelled out, we know they are kids — plain and simple.

Oops, I'd like to continue with this item, but my cell phone just started singing, got to answer it. Hmm, is my office no different than your classroom?

Aren't you getting a little sick of this Rosie O'Donnell/Donald Trump trash? When will the television networks grow up and not treat this as news? I was so disappointed to see NBC's "Today" show

Wednesday morning having this as one of its lead in news items. Even FOX has jumped in the gutter and is playing it as though its news. The networks should just let Jay Leno and David Letterman handle it, because it's worth no more than a joke in passing anyway.

On the sports beat... National League championship series Most Valuable Player Jeff Suppan and the Milwaukee Brewers finalized their \$42 million, four-year contract. It was held up initially, pending results of a physical, which Suppan passed. Also, basketball great Michael Jordan and his wife Juanita divorced after 17 years of marriage. And Tiger Woods, 31, and wife Elin are expecting their first child this summer.

Have you ever wondered why you are supposed to send a particular e-mail to seven people? I don't know how many of those things I receive in a day's time, but it is staggering. And they all say the same thing — "pass this along to 7 people..." Why not 8. Or 10. Or maybe 2. Why 7? When I open my computer each morning, there are no less than 285 messages waiting for me to process. On Mondays there are no less than 670, and at times I've had close to 1,000 messages. It takes time to process because you never know if there's something you will need. Many of those e-mails deal with what I call, "The 7 Club." I usually stockpile those and read them when time permits. I suppose you receive them, too. I don't discourage them because there are some that come from friends I haven't had an opportunity to chat with. But why send it to 7 people?

Have a good evening and weekend. And again the word is "church."

## What is it they don't understand?

As the saying goes, "What part didn't you understand?" I want to scream at our president and others of similar thinking including Sen. John McCain, "What part of the election didn't you understand?" Isn't it interesting how our president interpreted a questionable win at his election as a mandate from the people.

Now the balance of power has shifted to the opposing party, albeit barely, and he has decided to increase the troops in Iraq, a move clearly not supported by the voters. Obviously he doesn't understand the idea of democracy, the votes count, the people decide, nor does he have a grasp of history.

Something that has been driven home to me by this president is the importance of an understanding of history. I must admit I wasn't a great student of this subject

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



in my youth, but as time goes on I see the value of knowing the history of not just our own country, but of our allies and enemies as well. An understanding of the values, hopes and dreams of a culture help us to evaluate situations and incorporate appropriate strategies.

Although Christianity, Judaism and Islam share the heritage of Abraham, many of the similarities stop there. The structure

of society based on royalty, class, even gender has its roots in this shared inheritance however the interpretations make it individual to societies.

And this is where our president parts company with those knowledgeable in the field of history. Be it lack of empathy or compassion or just a total disregard of other's beliefs, he has led us into a situation that has its roots in Biblical history.

Our desire for change in the Middle East is admirable, but it involves more than war and troops. The old saying you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar has much validity and this could be the place to apply this thinking.

We teach our pre-schoolers to approach difficulties not with bullying but with diplomacy.

Maybe we should send our politicians to pre-school.

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