

SEPTEMBER 11TH



Thunder in the wind.
 No rain.
 Peace mourns its passing.
 No pain.
 We are still human,
 But our existence is bane.
 Do we not bleed and die?
 It is always the same refrain.
 Nothing is right.
 Terrorism shakes its ugly mane.
 Are we not all human?
 Do we not feel pain?
 Peace comes to an end
 As the old moon wanes.
 Jets fly overhead,
 We decide to take trains.
 We are struck by horror.
 We are struck by pain.
 What do we do
 When the time comes again?
 Send our boys into battle,
 Watch them die in vain.
 Peace waves goodbye as
 War says hello again.

~JESSI DUNKIN

Jessi Dunkin wrote this poem right after 9/11 when she was 16 and it appeared in the Jan/Feb 2002 *Times Eagle*. She was a member of the cast of *The Laramie Project* performed last spring by Astoria High School students and is onstage this summer as a stand-in for *Shanghai'd in Astoria*. She will be 18 on October 21.

RAY BARTKUS

FOREVER 9/11

The national angst of the past two years since 9/11 has also been a highly charged personal nightmare — that a hijacked jet airplane loaded with helpless captives is aimed at all our windows.

It is a nightmare that has proved very fruitful for the homeland fearmongers of the Bush administration who have kept the terrorist paranoia at high fever since 9/11, the day the calendar stopped whenever the Bushies are questioned or criticized about anything.

The great vehemence is that everything must be done to protect the USA from the rest of the world while simultaneously ensuring the rest of the world is vulnerable to the power and might of the USA — this is the Bush Doctrine, under which the USA is rapidly mutating into the sort of rogue nation it accuses others of being, soon to be the world's major nuclear terrorist.

And it seems that at present the immediate fate of the world is edgily framed by the personality of one man, George W. Bush, which is unfortunate; a graspy little Nero pretending to be Caesar, a war deserter masquerading as wartime Commander in Chief — a Tory imposter claiming the mantle of Super Patriot.

Bush, as Jan de Hartog wrote about another messianic fraud, has "a head of a choleric

and behaves like a phlegmatic. Such a sin against nature can only be the result of a religious conversion."

It is more than remotely possible the real conspiracy of terror against the USA is inspired at the highest levels of government in Saudi Arabia — most of the 9/11 kamikazis were from there, as is of course Osama bin Laden (whose family has long been in business with the Bush family). Saudi Arabians, if not the government itself, have been at the center of world terrorism for decades.

As much paranoid spook literature projects, there might be infinite layers of intrigue impossible to ascertain — even conceivable that separate agendas coalesce for reasons of opportunity or indispensability such as the Bush and bin Laden families in gray conspiracy leading to 9/11. (A former CIA agent has written a book in which he accuses the White House of "selling the country's soul for Saudi crude.")

There are a few certainties among the disingenuousness, principally that two years since 9/11 the war on terror is no closer to closure than the day it ostensibly started with that astonishing surprise attack on the United States that congealed the calendar.

~MICHAEL MCUSKER

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A LAST WORD ABOUT AUGUST

August is a month of memories. To select from a tightly subjective list, the Nuclear Age got its start 58 years ago with the dropping of two atomic bombs on Japan. That same August, Vietnam declared independence from the revival of French colonialism that followed Japan's surrender and the end of World War 2, which culminated in a generation of wars against two Western powers. In August 1964 a fabricated incident that involved two American naval destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin led to a virtual declaration of war by the United States a few days later (the Tonkin Resolution) that began ten years of disaster for both countries. A year later, in August 1965, U.S. Marines fought the first large scale battle against Vietnamese guerrillas known as the Viet Cong ('Operation Starlight'), and at the same time, 37 years ago, what is called the Watts Riot in Los Angeles. In 1970, a quarter of a century after Vietnam began its wars of independence, as part of a growing disenchantment with the American war in Vietnam, a coalition of antiwar groups from the Pacific Northwest challenged the American Legion at its annual national convention, which began in Portland, August 28.

The coalition called itself the People's Army Jamboree in recognition of the theatrical nature of political demonstrations, and was spearheaded by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Although the Oregon National Guard and almost every police officer in the state were mustered against the demonstrators, there was no violence. Governor Tom McCall claimed major credit for the aversion of violence. He had taken the unprecedented step of sponsoring a rock concert which was intended to draw young people away from the protest. The concert (Vortex 1)* was well attended, but not by political activists: there was a tendency in those days for authorities to link all elements of what was called the counter culture.

The news media acted disappointed about the lack of violence and accused the coalition of being lightweights because

it didn't leave its blood in the streets. Out of state reporters assigned to the demonstration went off to cover forest fires instead. One visiting columnist proclaimed that the People's Army Jamboree was a lot like the Lock Ness monster: everyone talked about it, but no one ever saw it.

For the veterans who opposed the Vietnam War, the confrontation against their older counterparts was the start of a journey to the nation's capitol where the following spring more than a thousand hurled their war medals at Congress (and a few of them a week later hurled gobs of fresh chicken defecation at the doors of the Pentagon, which is considered the last major assault upon the Department Of Defense prior to 9/11). It was the second time in the 20th century that war veterans took their grievances to Washington, D.C. (the first was the 'Bonus Army' of World War 1 vets in 1933): both got their start in Portland. The latter visit was spared the bloody rout of the first, although the war continued for four more years and will probably not truly end until the last of its veterans are dead.

The VVAW was the only veterans group formed during the Vietnam War. Unlike the other veterans groups, which have acted as rubber stamps for the Pentagon, it opposed war. More than even such an opposition by war veterans is necessary to counter the war fever that currently grips this nation and the world. It is owed to the dead they left behind and those who will surely die if the present formula of perpetual wars is not reversed. It is an obligation, a lifelong duty for having survived war's slaughter.

~MICHAEL McCUSKER

*HipFish columnist Matt Love has given an oral presentation about Vortex in Astoria and Newport ("When Oregon Rocked: The Far-Out Story of Vortex 1"), and is writing a book about it.



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