

wants to express our deep concerns about the continued destabilization in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Israel/Palestine. We decry the inhumane treatment of prisoners of war in Iraq, as well as the daily loss of life on all sides. The strategic preferences of leaders to use violence and force, rather than numerous alternative means to de-escalate conflict and rebuild societies, has contributed to growing anti-Jewish, anti-Muslim, and anti-American sentiments across the world.

As members of this global community, we call for world leadership to respond, to cease participating in cycles of retaliation, and to present alternatives based in nonviolence and reconciliation. We are all connected to these conflicts. These are our families and friends. Our actions as U.S. citizens and U.S. residents make a difference. We are a group of Muslims, Jews, Christians, and others who do not always agree, but have found ways to coexist. We know that groups tend to remember and identify with their own sufferings, but may not recognize the violence they have done to others. We all need to take responsibility. We call on our national and world leaders to step up and do the truly difficult work of reconciliation.

*Mark Eichinger-Wiese, et al  
Eugene*

**CLEARER SIGNALS**

As the popularity of the Global Positioning System continues to grow, so does the number of stories about it in the media — most of them replete with errors. Eric Hendricksen's "High-Tech Hunt" (*Out There* 4/29) contains many.

GPS has never been "used exclusively in the military." On the contrary, civilian applications began as soon as the first few satellites became operational. President Clinton's decision to zero out Selective Availability — the intentional degradation of the civilian signal — made cheap civilian receivers about five times more accurate overnight, thus enabling such applications as car navigation systems.

It's nonsense to say that "at any given location four or more satellites are within range." The question is whether the user has a clear view of the sky. If you are standing in the middle of a Kansas wheat field or the Sahara desert, up to half of the satellites (there are currently about 30, not 24) will be in view; if you are in an "urban canyon," such as New York's Fifth Avenue, or a natural canyon, only two or three satellites might

be in view; if you are under even the thinnest of roofs you will not receive any signals at all.

GPS does not work on the basis of triangulation, but of trilateration. Different geometry, different math.

Actually, Hendricksen's lead paragraph reveals his inexperience: he recalls "wondering which way was north." All GPS receivers will tell you in which direction you are moving and, anyway, an experienced hiker carries a compass.

*Matteo Luccio  
Editor and Publisher,  
GPS User Magazine*

**UNJUST INVESTIGATION**

A second grand jury has convened to investigate the 2001 Romania arson. Having served on a grand jury, I'm curious why the U.S. attorney's office was unable to get any indictments in the first grand jury convened three years ago. Only one side of these biased "investigations" are presented, by the prosecutor. No one is able to cross examine the witness, and no information is presented indicating that there might be another side to the story. There is no requirement for the prosecutor to present conclusive evidence, and the person being questioned does not even get an attorney. The only person new jurors can get instructions from is the prosecutor (a.k.a. their new friend). If they have questions about how to be a juror, the prosecutor is the only one there to help. If that isn't crooked enough, the prosecutor only needs to get a simple majority of the jurors to vote for an indictment. And you wouldn't vote against your friend, right?

The secrecy with which grand juries operate contradicts the open system of justice our government is based upon. Secrecy breeds abuses and does not provide for accountability of those with the power to put people on trial.

So, the prosecutor has a closed room full of people who do not know what their rights are as jurors (except what the nice prosecutor told them), the prosecutor does not have to present credible evidence, and the prosecute only needs just over half of the jurors to vote for the indictment. Doesn't sound very hard to me. As New York Judge Sol Wachtler said, a grand jury could indict a ham sandwich.

Can we get some justice with that sandwich?

*Jim Flynn  
Eugene*

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