

DANGEROUS ALLIANCE

Joan Pierson's response (Viewpoint, 7/29) to the talk David Barton gave to area pastors at the Willamette Faith Center was on the mark. It's hard to believe any thinking reader could choose the politically partisan approach of a visiting Texas fundamentalist instead of the caring and realistic religious statement by Pierson.

But there is a danger in depending on rationality to counter the views of those Christian fundamentalists whose valid faith risks becoming irrational in the hands of political manipulators like Barton. Pierson honored religious belief with her well-reasoned statement. But it did not address the most ominous effect of the GOP strategy enunciated by Barton: to do away with separation between church and state.

That threat is most evident in the dangerous alliance between a president who claims a direct line to his version of a Christian god and a segment of fundamentalists whose agenda welcomes such delusions. Christians of the fundamentalist persuasion need to recognize that danger, and not capitulate to GOP spinners of a strange religious code.

If they don't, the rest of society needs to marshal its efforts to offset votes that mistak-

enly go to George Bush because of his self-serving appeal to well-motivated but misled Christians.

*George Beres
Eugene*

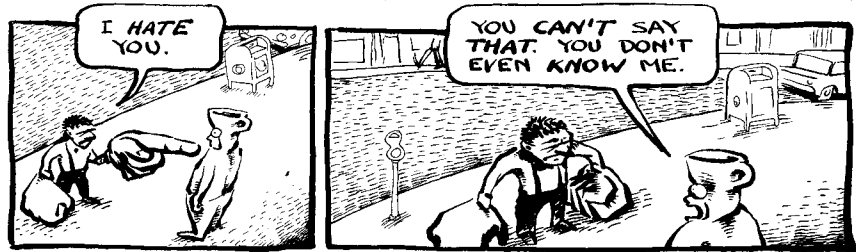
SPEND WISELY

In his letter of 7/29, Christopher Logan wonders if *EW*'s advertising is "encouraging" a lonely, tired working man to "spend his attention and his income on a prostitute." Well, like any other advertising, he can interpret it how he will, and take it or leave it. It's not the responsibility of *EW* to screen ads for the sake of those who can't manage their spending as necessary or those who might somehow be lured into thinking those seductive girls must be interested in their clients' personalities.

Most people spend some of their attention and income on recreation and escape of one sort or another, and sexually oriented businesses, among others, tend to use fantasy as one way of attracting their share of the customers. And since when are the "less intelligent" among us (apparently including this "lonely, tired working man") the only ones who ever pursue such fantasy?

*Ryan L Newburg
Eugene*

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



GETTING-TO-KNOW-EACH-OTHER FRIENDSHIP MONTAGE...



RECIPE FOR DISASTER

After reading Ruth Saunders' letter (729), I found myself shocked and outraged that anyone could be so callow and unfeeling as to

name a drink after terrorist acts ("Irish Car Bomb"). The nerve!

In a spirit of reparations and reconciliation, I would like to offer up a drink recipe

KUMBAYA DAMMIT BY DAN CAROL

Dear John Kerry

A little advice from the sidelines.



I don't know diddly about foreign policy (I've been to all of three European countries), which makes me the perfect person to dispense some heartfelt advice about how best to reach your target audience – Americans who, like me, are less up to speed on global goings on.

So ... please forgive my bluntness. Know that your words on God and country at the convention were felt loud and proud in my heart – because I sensed the strength of the moral vision in yours. Know that you have my vote – and those of my 10 best friends. In that spirit, here we go:

Love ya John, and it's awesome to see those three-star generals and veterans standing by your side. But you still need a Lance Armstrong-style breakout on international affairs and homeland security to bring this baby home.

Your recent riffs about American values and restoring our can-do greatness are great, they are. But the specifics you've offered so far – like more port inspections and 40,000 new soldiers for Middle East troop rotations – are leaving me flat. And the polls seem to suggest that I am not alone.

I'm there with your foreign affairs expert Richard Holbrooke and others who say that you don't need to provide *all* the answers about the mess caused by Bush's War.

But with all due respect, you've got to grab me with some easy-to-understand actions that leave the international nuance stuff behind – save all that for when you and your future secretary of state are meeting with world leaders.

Here then are a few "use 'em or lose 'em" ideas to run by your international affairs gurus:

Ride The Kabul Express

Your political schedulers will freak over the lost days, but how about taking your next barnstorming bus tour not to Canton in the swing state of Ohio, but to the battleground city of Kabul – home turf to the Taliban, ground zero in the war against terror, the site of Bush's first mission (not!) accomplished. Afghanistan: where it's no longer safe for Americans to travel anymore and leading international aid groups like Doctors Without Borders are pulling out after being there 24 years. John, it's clear that the press won't cover this Bush mess unless you go there, so go already! (Note to your schedulers: The three-year anniversary of the Afghanistan War is Oct. 7.)

Operation Better Propaganda

Ever notice how the Republicans are great at naming campaigns with compelling Orwellian language like "Operation Desert Storm," "Enduring Freedom," and of course the big daddy of them all – "Homeland Security." Any chance we might beat them at

their own game? I don't know about you, but I want way more than just homeland security – I'd like homeland prosperity! – plus global security, plus domestic tranquility. As it is, I hate the term "homeland" – it reminds me of other nationalistic countries in the 20th century, like South Africa, at their worst.

So why not trump the debate over the 9/11 Commission recommendations with some better lexicon? John-O, I know you're supporting the commission's reform package – hey, feel free to change your mind – but can't you at least creatively name your way out of this mess for when you take office? Arguably, adding a national intelligence czar on top of an existing homeland security chief will simply lead to bureaucratic and budget bickering that many experts think is doomed to fail. I've got a few decent ideas that don't use tsar, czar or strongman. Call anytime.

Freedom Bonds

Your nomination speech inspired me when you invoked America's can-do spirit and JFK's call on American know-how to reach the moon in a decade. I'm ready to dance with you and take real steps to fight terrorism. Bush wants me to spy on my neighbor – what can I do for you?

Loads of Americans are ready to answer the call – so sound the horn! National service could include a Youth Energy Corps to help weatherize the 13 million homes that remain eligible for federal assistance (many in inner cities) and take other steps to reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil. I'd bet that Americans would buy freedom bonds to invest in new technologies if they knew the jobs they created would stay at home. There are lots more ideas like this, and they all sound better than grouching about offshore tax breaks. So make the call. Soon.

Global Exchange & Girls' Education

There are nine million people of Islamic faith enjoying U.S. freedoms – these are our best evangelists for the American way of life abroad. Bush has burned through two State Department outreach specialists, and his biggest idea in three years to reach out to Arab skeptics is creating a U.S.-funded television alternative to Al Jazeera that no one over there watches. How surprising. Citizen diplomacy was key to ending the Cold War. It could again.

But let's get down to brass tacks – want to reach more soccer moms? Why not stand up for expanding girls' education – the one proven way to move Muslim and other poor societies steps towards democracy and reform. The Global Fund for Women is your one-stop shop for who, how and where.

But you get all this, John. You are a smart man and a brave soul – that's more than proven. So don't be afraid to tell us what to do.

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