

what they're getting into because they haven't known each other for long enough, and they think the paperwork will force them to do so, thus taking marriage for granted.

Some of the most loving couples I know are gay. Most of them have lived together for more than 10 years, some more than 20, sometimes going through hell and back. How much more proof do you need to recognize a true union and a real sense of respect? Marriage is universal, and for any being in love with each other.

Quit being so self-righteous and look in the mirror, what happens behind the door is NOT your business!

*Alby Thoumsin  
Springfield.*

**VOTING FOR DEATH**

In his letter to the editor, George Carlson (9/30) informs us, vote for John Kerry is a vote for death. I would argue that a vote for George Bush is a proven vote for death.

Although Kerry's ability to lead here and abroad is unproven, Bush's leadership is not unknown. His ends-justify-the-means mentality has dragged our country toward a collapse of morale and commerce. We cannot afford to waste one more life on this administration's irrational agenda; nor can we afford the necessary billions (\$200 billion as of this date) spent to keep the war in Iraq going.

With Bush we can expect more of the same: nationalism in the guise of patriotism; fanaticism in the guise of religious conviction; and dishonestly and greed in the guise of compassion for the Middle East.

Four years ago, I voted for Bush. After observing his reactive behavior in the wake of 9/11 and the unconscionable subterfuge of he and his advisors, I have no qualms about jumping off the back of the elephant.

As the bodies of our loved ones continue to be flown home (more than 1,000 men and women), and as countless Iraqis (more than 10,000 civilians) are killed in their homeland, let's be honest about which candidate favors life over death. And let us vote for the one man who will lead from a position of strength and integrity: John Kerry.

*Colette Jonopulos  
Eugene*

**AIDING THE COLLAPSE**

I'm still looking for sufficient reasons to vote for Kerry instead of Nader, but I'm also getting tired of voting against someone instead of for someone. I remember my parents talking about this maybe 60 years ago. It seems like in that time we could have adopted instant runoff voting, as several other nations have done, which would end the problem. We talked about it a lot more around 2000, but still no action.

I much prefer to vote for what I believe in. No, my vote for Nader is not a vote for Bush. My second choice might be to not vote. It strains logic to call that a vote for anyone. No, Nader isn't likely to win, but it's the message that counts most (and it feels a little safer since the first debate).

Voters are a lot like what's said of politicians and statesmen. Some are concerned with the next election and some with the next generation. To me, Nader represents concern for the (eternal) environment, a revival of democracy by giving us real choices, and honesty, which may be what keeps him from

being a viable candidate. Kerry continues to represent business as usual, continued economic growth, which could mean global suicide through global warming. We shouldn't assume he intends good things that he's afraid to talk about at this point. Bush, with his excesses (who is very unlikely to win or lose because of my one vote, or my minor campaigning), could represent a collapse of the capitalist system, which could yet save us.

When business-as-usual people talk about what's good for the economy, do they really mean what's good for the average person, or for America or humanity, or just good for the rich, the capitalist and the corporations?

*Dan Robinson  
Eugene*

**FORGETTING POLAND**

Of the many amusing things that transpired on Thursday, Sept. 30, during the presidential debate between John Kerry and George W., one thing stood out in particular to me. Several times Bush chastised Kerry for forgetting to mention Poland while discussing the countries involved in the war in Iraq.

Obviously Bush was attempting to paint Kerry as an insensitive diplomat, oblivious to the risks being taken by other countries involved in our war. However, in pointing out Poland, Bush was unwittingly admitting to his own diplomatic shortcomings.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Poland has come onto the scene as the leader of Rumsfeld's New Europe anxious to embrace neo-liberal capitalism, ready to stand as an example to other post-communist Eastern European countries, and overwhelmingly pro-U.S. There was hardly a question within Poland that they would be involved in the invasion of Iraq, and people from all sides of the political landscape were eager to participate. They believed that what the U.S. was doing was right, anticipated the windfall of aid, rebuilding contracts, and favor that would surely come their way, and hoped to become the U.S.'s biggest ally in the post-soviet sector, the England of New Europe.

A year and a half later, and opinions in Poland have drastically changed. The Oct. 4 issue of *The Nation* points out that Poland's goodwill has soured since the war's beginning. Poland is feeling neglected. Polish companies watched as their promised contracts went entirely to U.S. companies, the promised aid and military investment have failed to materialize, and the Polish government is frustrated at not having a voice in the re-building and governance of Iraq. Everyone from journalists to Polish officials, (again, of all political persuasions) are now regularly speaking out against their country's involvement.

This is a relatively small example, but a telling one, not only of the way the Bush administration has been treating U.S. allies and abusing international goodwill, but also of the sorts of cynical political games they are playing with the American people in their bid for re-election.

*Jack Baur  
Eugene*

**CHENEY OUT OF TOUCH**

Tonight I watched the vice-presidential debate, amazed at the differences between the two men sitting at the table. Dick Cheney came across as angry, rude, and out of touch with the desires of the average American.

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