

# VOICES & VIEWS

THE DAY, SUNDAY, MAY 11, 2003

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## SHORT TAKES

### Sleepless in New London, spared handouts to help with rent

By CARLTON KENNEL

**A**wake again at 2 a.m. I haven't been sleeping well lately. It's been about one year since I lost my job. I was making in the low 40's and had decent benefits. I stopped collecting unemployment about three months ago, therefore, I have no money coming in. I've been unable to replace my job with a similar one so it's time to find something in a smaller model, so to speak. I woke up this particular night with the

TV still tuned to C-span. I had the misfortune of waking up to a re-broadcast of the House Ways and Means Committee debate on an amendment that had taken place earlier in the day regarding the administration's tax cut bill.

The amendment, sponsored by Democrats, would use some of the money in the unemployment trust fund to extend federal unemployment benefits to the 1 million people who will run out of unemployment benefits this month.

I heard Democrats plead with the majori-

Thank you, Republicans, for caring about me so deeply that you won't demean me with extra unemployment insurance.

ty Republicans to do the right thing, use the money in the unemployment fund for what it was intended for, to help the unemployed. I heard the Republicans talk about the

"fact" that just handing money to people doesn't help the situation.

Republicans also felt that the \$15 billion dollars cost of the added benefits would be too much. Making this case while pushing a bill to cut taxes by \$750 billion doesn't make sense to me, but who am I? Just a guy awake at 2 a.m. worried about how to pay rent and bills.

As I finally fell asleep, I heard the final vote count — 24 Republicans voted no to the unemployment insurance extension, 12 Democrats voted yes.

I fell asleep with the peaceful knowledge that the Republicans on the House Ways and Means committee are watching out for me. Thank you, Republicans, for caring about me so deeply that you won't demean me with extra unemployment insurance, i.e. a handout. Thank you for sparing my eternal soul from the ravages of evil socialist programs such as unemployment insurance.

God bless us all.

Carlton Kennel lives in New London.

## HUMOR

### Of war and Holy Land headaches

By DANIEL WOLF SAVIN

**T**he pain began a few weeks before this latest Gulf War. To be more precise, shortly after they began to pass out gas masks to non-Israelis at the institute where I work. I was nervous about the impending war. But at first I made no connection between that and the dull throbbing just below and behind my left cheekbone. The doctor thought it was a sinus infection and suggested that it would go away in a week.

The pain got worse. So after a week I tried to make another appointment with the doctor. This was no easy task. Even when his office is open, the secretary doesn't always answer the phone. And the answering machine they have is rarely turned on.

The doctor gave me antibiotics to take for a week. I guess that it was about this time that I realized I was avoiding driving next to buses. I would try to pass each bus as fast as possible while looking in and seeing if there were enough people inside to make it a likely terrorist target. Nearly empty buses I found calming. Waiting at a traffic light next to a packed bus was somewhat less than relaxing.

Meanwhile the pain got worse. It had radiated into my ear, up to my left temple, further up the left side to the crown of my head, and also down to the left side of both my upper and lower jaws. The pain was so bad that it would keep me up at night until I finally fell asleep from exhaustion. I was beginning to wonder if all this were due to my fear of suicide bombers.

At my next doctor's appointment, I got a prescription for painkillers and a referral for X-rays of my sinuses. I called my insurance company to find out where to go. They gave me the phone number and address of a clinic one town over. I drove over there immediately only to find out that the address was incorrect. So there I was walking up and down the main street of this town unable to find any sign of the X-ray place. I called the clinic on my cell phone to get directions and found out that there were no signs visible from the street. Then they began to direct me using landmarks. All I had to do was first find the laundromat next to the bank in the center of town.

About this time the U.S. attacked Iraq and I began to sleep with two backpacks by my front door. One contained my gas mask, snacks, and a few other items that the Israeli Homefront Command recommended one take into the bomb shelter in case of an attack by Iraq. The other contained items recommended by the U.S. State Department: important personal and financial papers and several days worth of clothing in case an emergency evacuation out of the country was necessary.

After the war began, I got the X-ray results and saw the doctor again.

No sinus infection. So he gave me a referral to see a neurologist. Again I called up my insurance company and they told me to go to the local hospital. I called the hospital to make an appointment. Two phone calls later I found out that I had actually made an appointment with a urologist!

By the time I saw the neurologist later that week the pain seemed to have developed into a pattern. I would wake up okay, over the course of the day it would get worse, and at night it would become excruciating. The painkillers helped some but I was still not sleeping much. About now I was pretty certain that the root cause of my pain was the stress of life here.

The neurologist was a woman from Eastern Europe who was not too happy about having to speak English. She took my history, then had me lie down, and using a paper clip began to jab me all over. I imagine this was a technique first developed by the KGB and later taught in medical schools in the former Soviet Union.

Her diagnosis was "cluster headaches" and she recommended that I get a CT scan of my head to rule out other possibilities. So again I called my insurance company to find out where to go. They gave me three numbers to call. The first place did not do such a test and the second two numbers were both disconnected. Eventually with the help of a Hebrew speaking colleague, I got the correct phone number, made the appointment, and got the CT scan. "Unremarkable" were the results of the test. I was relieved. But if there were no obvious physiological causes for the pain, then what could it be due to? By this point I was convinced that between the Intifada, the war in Iraq, and the inefficient bureaucracy, life here was just way too stressful for me and the only cure would be to move back to the U.S.

While this was all sinking in, I went to see a dentist about a filling which had fallen out. He looked at the tooth and took X-rays. While we waited for the X-rays to be developed, I described to him the headaches that I had been suffering for the last month and a half. I told him my belief that they were due to stress and that I would have to leave Israel. He got the X-ray back, looked at it, looked at me, and told me that I could stay in the country; I just needed a root canal.

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## WAR IN IRAQ

### End the United Nations' 'oil-for-boodle' program

By GERALD and NATALIE SIRKIN

*The United States must not permit the U.N., with its terrible record in the Balkans, among the Palestinians, in Africa, in Cambodia, and elsewhere, to inflict its incompetence and neuroses on the people of Iraq.*

— Stephen Schwartz

**T**he voices that rejected a regime-change in Iraq are now calling for the United Nations to be in charge of the new regime. Their proposal sounds like a joke, but the only thing funny about it is that they are serious. Before any substantial number of well-meaning Americans take their proposal seriously, we had better have knowledge about the U.N.'s record.

Exhibit one is the U.N. administration of reconstruction in Kosovo following the NATO intervention. Stephen Schwartz, author of books on the Kosovo war and Islam, who spent time there after the war over a six-year period, has described the U.N.'s performance (April 14 *Weekly Standard*), a description that makes one wonder why this outrageous story is not well known.

Four years after the end of the war, electric power in Kosovo has still not been restored to its pre-war standard, when Kosovo exported power. Today, electricity is on a schedule of four hours on, two hours off. Not that the power facilities were damaged by the war. They were untouched. It is the management, in U.N. hands, that is damaged.

The Kosovo economy is still in shambles. The U.N. personnel "have a strong prejudice against privatization," being mostly from Socialist countries. Accounting and auditing have virtually disappeared. Theft and corruption in government agencies and enterprises are rampant. Money flows out with no record of where it has gone.

The Kosovo education system, which functioned well before the war, has become a wreck under the U.N. Many children receive no schooling. The U.N. says it has no money for education. U.N. Socialism has left the economy unable to produce enough to pay workers a living wage, let alone support schools.

The disastrous performance of the U.N. in Kosovo is not unusual nor unexpected. It is the standard U.N. performance because the U.N. is rotten to the core. How could it be otherwise when it is made up mostly of dictatorships, kleptocracies, crooked governments, countries that cannot govern themselves, countries with no respect for human rights, countries that are in the U.N. for what they can get out of it? For the month of May, Libya is in charge of human rights;



■ An Iraqi Bedouin girl with humanitarian food rations she received from coalition Army civil affairs groups near An Nasiriyah, Iraq.

JULIE JACOBSON  
Associated Press

Saddam Hussein was scheduled to be in charge of disarmament.

Exhibit two is the Oil-for-Food Program in Iraq, about which most of us would know little but for the excellent investigative reporting of Claudia Rosett (op. ed., *New York Times*, April 18). The Program is due to expire tomorrow. The U.N. is fighting to extend and expand it.

Under the sanctions imposed on Iraq 12 years ago by the U.N., Iraq has been permitted to sell oil to buy food and medical supplies. The U.N. manages the Program and, true to its character, runs a crooked operation.

Oil-for-Food has raised and disbursed more than \$100 billion in almost total secrecy. The *New York Times* has been able to gather only scraps of information, but they are enough to show that much has gone to buy goods that don't belong in the Program, like boats and accessories, sports supplies, and television broadcasting equipment.

The distribution of business contracts is weird. France, Russia, and Syria are the chief beneficiaries. Powdered milk is supplied by Libya, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, countries not known for dairies. The Program's 4,000 employees have no obvious purpose, but they do (or did) offer U.N. and Saddam Hussein the opportunity to hand out high-paying and cushy jobs to friends and followers.

The U.N. collects a commission of 2.2 percent of the oil revenues. With all that money, "the oil-for-food program has evolved into a bonanza of jobs and commer-

cial clout," writes Rossett. It is easy to see why the U.N., Russia, and France, too, want sanctions continued, with the U.N. in charge of oil-for-boodle.

No justification exists for keeping the sanctions. The Saddam government, on which the sanctions were imposed, is gone, and so is the dangerous threat that Saddam presented. President Bush should resist the U.N.'s pressures, taking Iraqi oil out of dirty hands and returning it to the Iraqi people.

The U.N., France, and Russia hope to use the sanctions and their control of Iraqi oil to wedge their way into the reconstruction of Iraq and to siphon off more oil money. Iraq has had enough misfortune under Saddam. It doesn't deserve more under the U.N.

President Bush will need fortitude to declare the sanctions at an end, keep the U.N. out of Iraq, and get on with its reconstruction. Even the minor role being suggested for the U.N., the management of humanitarian aid, should not be allowed, in order to keep the U.N.'s foot out of the door. Otherwise, U.N. Socialism will devastate the economy in Iraq as it has in Kosovo.

Old Europe will howl about American "unilateralism." Idealistic Americans will argue that U.N. participation is necessary to confer legitimacy on American efforts. The U.N. cannot confer legitimacy because it has none to confer.

Fortunately, judging from his record so far, President Bush has the fortitude to brush aside fatuous arguments and do the right thing.

Gerald and Natalie Sirkin are residents of Sherman.

## REMEMBRANCE

### A voice for peace is gone

By CHRISTOPHER KEPPLER

**O**ne of the greatest activists of our time and a dear friend of mine is gone. Before he died he was angry, and afraid, not for his own loss of life but for the moral and ethical tide, he fought many years to keep high. For his part, he left few questions unanswered and fewer white-collar crowds untouched by the poignancy of his words. Some of his speaking engagements, at \$500 a plate, caused people to walk out because he charged that the emperor had no clothes.

Episcopal Bishop Paul Moore Jr., former bishop of New York City and Washington D.C., former dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, a seasonal resident of Stonington, used his voice to serve a purpose. At times he endured arrest for his beliefs and actions, but mainly he continued. His saga was about getting people to ask questions and uncovering layers of humanity under government hostility.

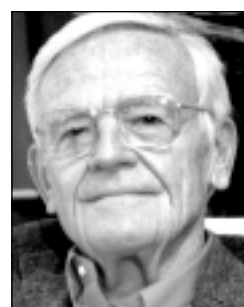
War, by its distortion of the human condition, divides people with ignorance and devaluation of life.

Protest, on the other hand, unites people with a sense of awareness, com-

passion and direct empowerment. Paul Moore was a great champion of protest and self-determination. On the day he died we both stood in direct confrontation with the American regime, which demands war, and blind vengeance at all costs. Even while he was ill, Paul never suffered from complacency, and even though he was incensed about the injustice around him he was happy, because he never sold himself short. He never compromised on what he knew was right in exchange for an unbothered life. He welcomed the tempest of political awareness into his heart the same way he welcomed the homeless into his church.

Many Americans like Paul cried out against the destruction of innocent life and global stability, being enacted in their names. They did so in an effort to summon some of the desperation privately which the government has caused globally. All in preparation for a collective outpouring sufficient to stop an illegal war. Many are weary of those Paul Moore is finally dead.

There is no network to support the loved ones of peace activists. There is no parade for the demonstrators and poets and artists who turn the tide in Ameri-



■ The late Bishop Paul Moore Jr.

can consciousness. There are no medals, or pensions, or clubs where we can drink beer in the shadow of an impotent cannon and talk of all the them we killed and the us we lost, and the us who remain. For us there is no us, or them there are only people, always valuable, never expendable, always vulnerable.

But we who protest will have war stories, stories of how we subverted, blocked and redirected the super highway of American aggression, and murderous economics.

Paul refused to be silent beside atrocity. Last week Donald Rumsfeld appeared in The New York Times autographing a Street sign which a U.S. had stolen from the Iraqi Roadway. Is this how we will rebuild Iraq? By ripping

down their guideposts and monuments? Will the U.S. gain Iraqi trust and cooperation by awarding Bechtel, the contracts to rebuild the infrastructure when they are the same companies responsible for selling Iraq many of its illegal chemical agents? Why cannot Iraq build its own roads? Corporate greed is at the forefront of this war.

The last time I saw Paul Moore he was suffering from a fall, wearing a button that said no war in Iraq. He and his family and I were having a discussion on the importance of direct action at times like these.

A gap has opened where he was, a gap in the fabric of activism and awareness. It is up to us to fill this gap, we must do so meaningfully and with conviction the way Paul did. What I imagine Paul would want most is to do everything possible to prevent the first election of so-called President George Bush. A president who has cut off communication with nations who did not support the war in Iraq.

If we cut off ties with everyone who disagrees with us, we would become what we claim to oppose: a regime.

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