Guest Editorial

Close the Shoe-Bomber Loophole

By Rosemary Jenks
NumbersUSA

To fully appreciate the gift Congress just sent al-Qaeda, recall the Christmas season of 2001.

On December 22 of that year, American Airlines Flight 63 was somewhere over the Atlantic, carrying 197 passengers from Paris to Miami, when a stewardess noticed a man lighting matches. As strange as it seemed, it looked like he was trying to set his shoelaces on fire. When she tried to stop him, he bit her.

Fast-moving passengers--9/11 fresh in their minds--flew to the aid of this stewardess. They subdued the match-lighter and lashed him to his seat.

Ten months later, Richard S. Reid--AKA the "shoe bomber"--stood in a federal court and defiantly admitted attempting to blow Flight 63 out of the sky. "I'm a member of al-Qaeda," he said. "I pledge to Osama bin Laden and I'm an enemy of your country, and I don't care."

Who gave this murderous fanatic a U.S. visa?

Truth be told, no one. Under a loophole in the immigration law called the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), all Reid needed as a British citizen to put himself in a position to murder a planeful of Americans was to purchase a ticket on a U.S.-bound flight.

According to The London Daily Telegraph, a laptop captured in Afghanistan contained evidence indicating al Qaeda clearly understood the benefits of Reid's citizenship. "His British passport was described as perfect cover," the paper said.

Reid was not the only al Qaeda terrorist who exploited VWP. "In addition," said a 9/11 Commission staff report on terrorist travel, "Zacarias Moussaoui, an al Qaeda operative suspected of being primed as a possible pilot in the 9/11 plot, entered the United States February 23, 2001, from London, England using a French, 'visa waiver' passport."

Moussaoui was arrested in August 2001 for staying longer than the 90 days he was routinely granted when he arrived in Chicago with this French passport. As Moussaoui later admitted in court, he sat in jail for three weeks declining to warn U.S. authorities of the attacks that were about to happen.

Congress started VWP as a pilot program in 1986. It was designed to facilitate tourism and reduce the workload of State Department consular officers who vet foreign nationals applying for visas. Originally, it applied to only 8 countries, but was eventually expanded to 27. In 2000, Congress made VWP permanent.

Even though VWP aided al Qaeda terrorists Reid and Moussaoui, President Bush announced last fall that he wanted to expand the program and use it to reward our allies in the war on terror with visa-free travel to the United States. Not surprisingly, that decision flabbergasted former Department of Homeland Security Inspector General Clark Kent Ervin. "We ought to be ending this visa-waiver program not expanding it," he told USA Today. "There's a reason why terrorists are keen to obtain passports from visa-waiver countries: They don't have to undergo extensive background checks."

Last week, Congress sided with Bush. It sent him a bill, ostensibly designed to fulfill the remaining recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, which includes provisions making it easier for countries to join the visa-

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The Carlisle Mercury

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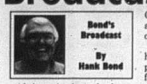
Bond's Broadcast


Bond's Broadcast
By Hank Bond

I have to tell you, there's little that I enjoy more than getting a whiff of the clean smell of a baby.

I probably am not alone in this pleasure, but it's really special to me when Sadie Jo gets a bath, her hair clean and then all greased up with that good smelling baby stuff.

Each day that I age I see more and more clearly that there are lots of things more important than what I have always worried about.

I have chased the dollar a whole lot, and while I will admit sometimes it's necessary to pay the bills, holding Sadie Jo adds a lot to life for me. It's like holding Evan, Antonio (the toe) and Analise (Lisee), they all provide a special joy.

Sadie Jo has had, well up until Monday night, a little gastrointestinal problem. It had been 13 days and she was beginning to suffer. A quick purchase from the drug store and within 20 minutes, after 13 days, 20 minutes it was all fixed.

It probably was one of the most hysterical moments I have ever enjoyed.

Beth had finished feeding Sadie Jo and it had become obvious the problem had been solved with the glycerin. Obvious would be an understatement not only obvious but also apparent.

I will say once the problem had passed, Sadie became much calmer and gave off obvious signs of happiness as well as aroma.

Beth took her to the changing table after deciding she would clean her up a little and then give her a bath.

Beth yells, "Mom, I can't do this here (on the changing table). I'll have to drop her in some water first and then rerun the bath water."

And that's how it was . . .

We had to dunk her about twice after taking the diaper off just to get her to a position to clean her up.

Marilyn took the diaper and made this indescribable face, which turned me into hysterics.

I don't know exactly what it is about babies, but they turn me into a stammering, blithering idiot. Not far from my normal disposition I am told.

This morning, which is Tuesday, she was there on mom's lap when I was ready to leave and I leaned over to plant a juicy kiss on her cheek and she broke out into this wonderful smile, which absolutely warmed my heart, and then, what does she do? She turns her head.

What kind of dis was that?

Now I know where I really rank.

However when I saw her later in the morning she smiled at me and actually let me kiss her.

I'll take those pleasures one at a time.

-HB-

I see where Nicholas County High School is going all out for this year's homecoming.

Parades, bon fires, and the honoring of classes from the past, will all be part of the festivities.

It's a great time for lots of people.

I saw on there where one of the classes invited back to this year's homecoming celebration is the Class of 1988. This class, along with several others, have been invited to come to the game and celebrate high school memories.

I remember the Class of 1988 especially. That's because our oldest daughter Carol was a member of that class.

She moved to Nicholas County in the middle of her junior year. I have to say I know she would have liked to have stayed in Scott County where she had gone to part of middle school then begun in high school in the Scott County system so I know it was tough on her. But she did well here in Nicholas County and now teaches school in Fleming County.

She had a newspaper career, which started when she was 13 and she went from reporter to the youngest publisher in the history of Park Newspaper when she took over the Leitchfield News-Gazette at 22 years old. By the time she was 23 she had 10 years of newspaper experience doing nearly everything, along with a bachelor's degree.

That's pretty good.

I often hear about the education offered in the Nicholas County School District and I can tell you my children did not suffer from the education they received here.

My three girls all went to school here for a period of time. Amy and Beth went to school here for about four years, while Carol went to school here for a year and a half. Michael did not go to school here at all.

Carol graduated from NCHS, cum laude from Morehead State, has her master's and rank 1 from MSU and has done pretty well.

Beth has two degrees from Sullivan University, plus a ton of work experience, including several years in the newspaper business.

Amy Jo has a bachelor's degree from the University of Nevada, Reno and has worked at some big time public relation firms in both Reno and Las Vegas. She too has spent some time in the newspaper business.

I have no problems with the education here. For those who have not succeeded it's not always the blame on the institution. There are so many factors it can be difficult to decide.

I urge you to support the education system in place, as the district's test scores prove the district is moving in the right direction.

As for Friday night, Sept. 28, if you're a Bluejacket you should be there to root on the Jackets as they face Bourbon County for homecoming.

And so, for another week, thanks and thirty.

Veloz Viewpoints

Veloz Viewpoints
By Amy Bond Veloz

Greetings from Nevada! I hope you are all having a great week.

Fall is finally looming! After about four months of HOT weather a cool front has finally come in. The weather here has been beautiful the past few days and from the forecast it looks like it is going to continue. The highs have been in the 90s and at night it has been cooling down into the 60s and 70s. It has been so cool we haven't had to run our air conditioner at night. We have been able to just sleep with the windows open.

I love this time of year. The air has a crisp feeling. I wish it could be like this all the time!

Well, no crawling yet, but we are getting closer. Antonio will get up on his hands and knees with his arms extended like he is ready to go, but he still hasn't mastered putting one knee in front of the other and moving. I definitely don't think it will be long.

He has, however, learned how to use the walker. He is still a little bit short for it, and he walks on his tippy-toes, but if he leans forward he can get it going pretty good. It is so fun to watch him maneuver it around.

Analise has also learned something new. And while it is cute, at certain times it definitely isn't amusing. She has learned to spit while she is eating. She will be taking bites just fine then all of a sudden you will give her a bite, she will grin then stick out her tongue and spit. I have had several different types of vegetables all over me as well as oatmeal cereal.

The worst part is, she is so darn cute while she is doing it that it is hard not to laugh at her. Of course, if we laugh at her, she thinks it is funny and continues to do it. I try my hardest to just tell her no and keep a straight face. I have a feeling I am in for a world of trouble with these two. They look at me and grin and already get just about anything they want. I'm not sure how it will be when they know their smiles and shiny eyes will get them just about anything.

-ABV-

This weekend we helped Ben's parents move into their new house. It is the first real house they have ever lived in. Up until now they have lived in manufactured homes, never a stick built one.

They were both pretty excited and also pretty exhausted when we went by on Sunday for a brief visit before going to the grocery store. Ben helped them move all their heavy stuff on Saturday. I helped pack up a few things in the kitchen and helped around the kitchen at the new house some, but it is difficult to try and do a whole lot when I'm trying to care for the babies.

They have gotten to the stage where they don't like it when I leave the room. I find myself yelling from the bathroom, "It's okay, Mommy will be right back." I have taken to dragging their exersaucers from room to room so I can get things done. In fact, Antonio is sitting right beside me in his talking to me and telling me what to write as I type this. Analise is still sleeping, otherwise I don't think I would be able to get this done.

They are definitely becoming a little higher maintenance, but then again, they are my kids.

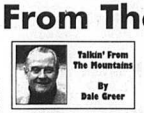
Until next week, make it a great one!

Amy

Editor's Note: I probably could share a few stories about high maintenance when it comes to Amy Jo!

Talkin' From The Mountains

A Return To American Values Would Defeat Terrorism


Talkin' From The Mountains
By Dale Greer

President Bush and shadow President Cheney still believe that the best way to stop terrorism is through military containment. In other words, keep wars like Iraq going all over the world and stop terrorism by demonstrating our military might.

We have sorrowfully learned in Iraq that this strategy, besides being immoral, does not work.

To say military might has not worked is not an indictment of our brave young men and women in Iraq. It is an indictment of the actions of the Bush/Cheney Presidency and the unrelenting resolve of the different factions that want control of Iraq.

Bush/Cheney's so-called surge did not work. Overall violence is not down as Bush claims, and he is spinning when he says he is pulling out troops. The soldiers coming home are overdue to be rotated out anyway. Nothing has changed and we are back to square one with no hope of getting out of Iraq for years to come.

Bush said his surge would allow the Iraqi government some space and time to get all the groups together and come up with a political agreement to stop the violence. It didn't happen.

Now, as he always does, Bush is trying to fool us into thinking there was another reason for the surge and that there was some success. Every time the man fails, he tries to rewrite history to make an excuse for his incompetence.

He tries to sell his Presidency through propaganda and marketing like Proctor and Gamble sells detergent.

Does Bush want to keep the war going so he can pass the horror he created on to another President?

Let's hope not. There is already speculation that the war was started to make huge profits for Halliburton, Bechtel and Carlyle, companies that were controlled by Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Bush and his father.

If our occupation of Iraq is being prolonged to try to save the legacy of Bush/Cheney, it is an evil act.

The United States cannot chase and fight an invisible terrorist enemy across the globe using military might. It only leads to the suffering and death of innocent people.

Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups are everywhere and nowhere.

Conventional warfare will not defeat terrorism, and even if it would work, we do not have the resources to do it. Our infrastructure in this nation is crumbling because of Bush's invasion of Iraq.

General Petraeus, in response to Republican Senator John Warner, was unable to say that the Iraq war was in any way keeping the United States safer from a terrorist attack. Bush's invasion and occupation has deteriorated into a civil war that has nothing to do with our national security or defeating terrorism.

The Bush Administration's handling of Iraq has been incredibly incompetent. Are you aware that the U.S. is supplying money and arms to both the Sunnis and Shias, the main foes in Iraq's civil war? We are arming both sides in a foreign civil war and leaving our troops in the middle to be killed. It's insanity!

Almost 4,000 Americans have been killed and tens of thousands have been wounded or maimed. Little Carlisle, has already lost two National Guardsmen in just a few months. Our youth are being sent to die in a war started by an older man who refused to serve in the last major war. It is wrong.

Should we be involved in finding a political solution? Yes. We sent the man who started the war to the White House. If we are truly a moral nation, we need to

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Fourth District Report

Moving Forward in Iraq

4th District Report
By Geoff Davis
4th District Congressman

Last week, General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker testified before Congress about the current political and security situation in Iraq.

I was deeply disappointed in the personal and baseless attacks on General Petraeus' character and leadership. General Petraeus is a fine man for whom I have the utmost respect. He has served our nation with honor and distinction for over three decades. The assaults on his report to Congress, and on him personally, were unwarranted and, quite frankly, an embarrassing portrayal of partisan politics at their worst.

General Petraeus testified, "Coalition and Iraqi operations have helped reduce ethno-sectarian violence... bringing down the number of ethno-sectarian deaths substantially in Baghdad and across Iraq...Iraqi Security Forces have also continued to grow and to shoulder more of the load...Iraqi elements have been standing and fighting and sustaining losses, and they have taken the lead in operations in many areas. Additionally, in what may be the most significant development of the past 8 months, the tribal rejection of Al Qaeda that started in Anbar Province and helped produce such significant change there has now spread to a number of other locations as well."

Though the security situation in Iraq has seen substantial improvements, the political situation continues to lag and remains an enormous concern. I am disappointed by the Iraqi government's efforts at national reconciliation. But we are seeing progress in healing sectarian divide, especially in some of the most troubled regions in Iraq. In Anbar province for example, Ambassador Crocker testified, "the progress on the security side has been extraordinary. Six months ago, violence was rampant, our forces, were under daily attack, and Iraqis were cowering from the intimidation of al Qaeda. But al Qaeda overplayed its hand in al Anbar and Anbaris began to reject its excesses...Recognizing the Coalition could help eject al Qaeda, the tribes began to fight with us, not against us, and the landscape of al Anbar is dramatically different as a result."

Successes like those described in Anbar Province are not unique. Around the country, Iraqis are joining together for the betterment of their country. General Patraeus and Ambassador Crocker are focused, not only on a national level, but specifically on building reconciliation from the bottom up. This comes in a variety of forms from the development of a process by the central government to share its oil revenues with the provinces to including former members of insurgent groups as part of the Iraqi security forces. Incrementally, we are making progress.

General Petraeus outlined his plan to build on recent successes by transitioning the mission of our troops from leading to partnering to supporting Iraqi forces. This plan prepares the Iraqis to take more responsibility for their own security. As a result of the security improvements seen this summer and implementation of the plan laid out by General Patreaus, some of our troops will return home.

We have come a long way in Iraq in recent months, yet there is more to be done. We all want to see our troops come home, but we also need to remember that the choices we make in Iraq will affect our national security for years to come. After three separate independent reports on Iraq, and listening to General Petraeus' and Ambassador Crocker's testimony, the one thing that was abundantly clear is that turning back now would have dramatic consequences for our national security and for the future of Iraq.

Steve's Report

Steve's Report
By Steve Scalf

Life can be full of dangers. Almost everything we do involves a certain amount of risk. If you believe the statistics on household accidents, you're taking your life into your hands every time you step into the bathroom.

There is no way to completely avoid danger. Instead, we take precautions to either reduce the likelihood that something bad will happen – like lining the tub with non-slip shower daisies, or take steps to protect ourselves when bad things happen anyway – like wearing seatbelts.

Life teaches us to be pessimistic. Experience teaches us: If anything can go wrong, it will. Recently, the CD drive in our computer went bad. When I go shopping, I normally have a pretty good idea beforehand of what I am looking for. When I get to the store, I am more focused on getting a bargain: which item gives me most of the features I want for the best price? I found a replacement at the close-out bargain table and headed for check-out.

As the clerk rang up the purchase, he informed me the store offers up to three years of additional protection for all electronic items and wanted to know if I would be interested in purchasing this protection. My item was cheap enough that it was hardly worth "protecting my investment," but it proves my point. I was purchasing a brand-new product and the store was trying to cash in on this pessimism – it will probably break before I get my money's worth out of it.

We seem to be convinced that the reliability of our purchases is somehow tied to the price tag. The more the item costs, the more convinced we are that something will go wrong with it. This is why we pay so much attention to warranties. Why would anyone purchase a car that only comes with the old 3 year/36,000 mile warranty when a competing manufacturer is offering a comparable model with 10 year/100,000 mile coverage, or the lifetime powertrain warranty that Chrysler has been advertising lately? Either folks have enough money that they don't mind paying the repair bills or they are gutsier gamblers than I am.

It's the same thing with life insurance and medical coverage. Maybe we've heard about people who were never sick a single day in their life, lived well into their 80s, and then went to bed one evening and simply

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