

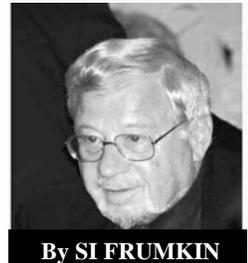
Graffiti for intellectuals



SIMON SAYS



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By SI FRUMKIN

VICTORIOUS CHICKENS AND THE DEFEATED "M"-WORD

I am writing THIS COLUMN A FEW MONTHS AFTER THE ELECTIONS WHOSE FOCUS was on the presidential race; it almost totally obliterated much that

was interesting about the other items on the ballot. For example, few of us have noticed that California's electorate liked chickens more than they did Obama! Proposition 2 on the ballot increased the minimum size of enclosures where chickens and other domestic birds and animals could be kept. The chickens were particularly oppressed – they could hardly move in the confining cages, spending their miserable lives laying eggs, eating and producing the guano that is collected and used for fertilizer. The electorate sympathized and the Proposition passed with a comfortable majority of 63% vs. 37%.

But Obama didn't do quite as well. He won just 61% of the vote - a full 2% less than the chickens!

The Proposition that caused much more controversy than the chicken one is, of course, Proposition 8 – a total of 14 words: **Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.** Its passage angered the gay community and resulted in demonstrations, boycotts and law suits by those who are offended by what they see as a homophobic attitude by the voters and a violation of the human rights by gays and lesbians.



The hubbub somehow drew attention away from the fact that California actually has had a law for almost a decade that gives couples practically all

of the rights that marriage provides. It is the domestic partnership law (DPL). It covers homosexual partners over the age of 18, as well as heterosexual partners where one is at least 62 and who are living together for help and companionship in their old age.

DPL allows the making of health care decisions; grants hospital and jail visitation rights; provides for a right to joint health and other insurance; rights that involve wills, trusts and conservatorships; provisions for adoption, alimony, the right to take on the partner's surname; it may be dissolved through the courts the same way as a marriage. The Federal General Accounting Office in 1997 released a list of 1049 benefits and protections available to heterosexual married couples – almost all of them are available to couples under the DPL. The similarities between marriage and DPL are much greater than the differences – the main thing that is missing is just the "M-word" –

marriage.

To be fair, as a committed heterosexual I am probably not qualified to judge whether the anger, outrage and disappointment by the majority of the gay community were really justified by the 52% to 48% rejection of same-sex matrimony.



The arguments pro and con were passionately discussed and analyzed before and after the election. They will probably be discussed for many years to come. The outrage and the hurt by supporters of same sex marriage are very real as was the subsequent rhetoric and the actions caused by the anger.

The post election fury was directed primarily at two targets: the Mormon Church which opposed same-sex marriage and apparently was successful in directing fellow Mormons to vote against it, and the much more significant opposition from the much larger African-American community which voted an overwhelming 70% in support of the "one man/one woman" marriage. The black vote was noticed and bitterly criticized by the gay leaders; they felt that they had been betrayed by another victimized minority that should have been sympathetic to the gays.

The election aftermath was duly covered and extensively reported by the media. There were angry demonstrations; mobs surrounded Mormon temples, there was some violence, passionate denunciations and accusations of homophobia, calls for boycotts of institutions and businesses that were alleged to be supporters of Proposition 8 and a call for "A Day Without a Gay" - gays

refusing to come to work nationwide on a day selected as a day of protest against Proposition 8.

But throughout, I noticed something strange about the protests: there were no demonstrations at black churches. There were no calls for pickets of black businesses, or black-dominated athletic events. There were no mass marches into the black areas by gays and lesbians. There was much talk – but there was no action!

I think that the reason for the reluctance can be given in two words: self preservation!

A mass march by gays into South-Central Los Angeles would not be as pleasant as gathering with placards at the Mormon Temple in West L.A. The return of the marchers would be problematic – many would not be in very good shape and some may not come back at all. The black community would take offense at being disrespected – *dissed* – and there would be a strong response.



I commend the gays for their common sense. I am sure that quite a few of them proudly display the "War is Not the Answer!" poster on their cars. I have often wondered what the proper answer is. The gay response to Proposition 8 showed me that one acceptable answer for the gays is talking loudly and not getting hurt.

Still, Obama and the chickens won, the same-sex marriage crowd lost and two out of three isn't bad. Ω

BUSH IS A READER

By Karl Rove, Wall Street Journal, Dec.2008

SURPRISING? SHOCKING? AMAZING? IMPRESSIVE? ALL OF THE ABOVE? I THINK SO!

I CAN ONLY WISH GEORGE W. COULD HAVE A SIMILAR CONTEST WITH THE "INTELLECTUALS" JOHN KERRY AND AL GORE—I THINK HE'D WIN WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT... S.F.

With only five days left, my lead is insurmountable. The competition can't catch up. And for the third year in a row, I'll triumph. In second place will be the president of the United States. Our contest is not about sports or politics. It's about books.

It all started on New Year's Eve in 2005. President Bush asked what my New Year's resolutions were. I told him that as a regular reader who'd gotten out of the habit, my goal was to read a book a week in 2006. Three days later, we were in the Oval Office when he fixed me in his sights and said, "I'm on my second. Where are you?" Mr. Bush had turned my resolution into a contest.

By coincidence, we were both reading Doris Kearns Goodwin's "Team of Rivals." The president jumped to a slim early lead and remained ahead until March, when I moved decisively in front. The competition soon spun out of control. We kept track not just of books read, but also the number of pages and later the combined size of each book's pages -- its "Total Lateral Area."

We recommended volumes to each other (for example, he encouraged me to read a Mao biography; I suggested a book on Reconstruction's unhappy end). We discussed the books and wrote thank-you notes to some authors.

At year's end, I defeated the president, 110 books to 95. My trophy looks suspiciously like those given out at junior bowling finals. The president lamely insisted he'd lost because he'd been busy as Leader of the Free World.

Mr. Bush's 2006 reading list shows his literary tastes. The nonfiction ran from biographies of Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Carnegie, Mark Twain, Babe Ruth, King Leopold, William Jennings Bryan, Huey Long, LBJ and Genghis Khan to Andrew Roberts's "A History of the English Speaking Peoples Since 1900," James L. Swanson's "Manhunt," and Nathaniel Philbrick's "Mayflower." Besides eight Travis McGee novels by John D. MacDonald, Mr. Bush tackled Michael Crichton's "Next," Vince Flynn's "Executive Power," Stephen Hunter's "Point of Impact," and Albert Ca-

mus's "The Stranger," among others.

Fifty-eight of the books he read that year were nonfiction. Nearly half of his 2006 reading was history and biography, with another eight volumes on current events (mostly the Mideast) and six on sports.

To my surprise, the president demanded a rematch in 2007. Though the overall pace slowed, he once more came in second in our two-man race, reading 51

books to my 76. His list was particularly wide-ranging that year, from history ("*The Great Upheaval*" and "*Khrushchev's Cold War*"), biographical (Dean Acheson and Andrew Mellon), and current affairs (including "*Rogue Regime*" and "*The Shia Revival*"). He read one book meant for young adults, his daughter Jenna's excellent "*Ana's Story*."

A glutton for punishment, Mr. Bush insisted on another rematch in 2008. But it will be a three-peat for me: as of today, his total is 40 volumes to my 64. His reading this year included a heavy dose of history -- including David Halberstam's "*The Coldest Winter*," Rick Atkinson's "*Day of Battle*," Hugh Thomas's "*Spanish Civil War*," Stephen W. Sears's "*Gettysburg*" and David King's "*Vienna 1814*." There's also plenty of biography -- including U.S. Grant's "*Personal Memoirs*"; Jon Meacham's "*American Lion*"; James M. McPherson's "*Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief*" and Jacobo Timerman's "*Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*."

Each year, the president also read the Bible from cover to cover, along with a daily devotional.

The reading competition reveals Mr. Bush's focus on goals. It's not about winning. A good-natured competition helps keep him centered and makes possible a clear mind and a high level of energy. He reads instead of watching TV. He reads on

Air Force One and to relax and because he's curious. He reads about the tasks at hand, often picking volumes because of the relevance to his challenges. And he's right: I've won because he has a real job with enormous responsibilities.



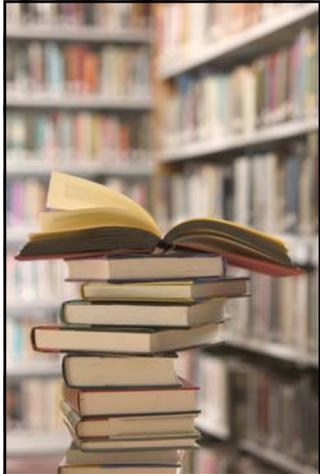
In the 35 years I've known George W. Bush, he's always had a book nearby. He plays up being a good ol' boy from Midland, Texas, but he was a history major at Yale and graduated from Harvard Business School. You don't make it through either unless you are a reader.

There is a myth perpetuated by Bush critics that he would rather burn a book than read one. Like so many caricatures of the past eight years, this one is not only wrong, but also the opposite of the truth and evidence that bitterness can devour a small-minded critic. Mr. Bush loves books, learns from them, and is intellectually engaged by them.

For two terms in the White House, Mr. Bush has been in the arena, keeping America safe and facing down enormous challenges, all the while acting with dignity. And when on Jan. 20 he flies from Washington to Texas one last time, he will do so as he arrived -- with friends and a book nearby.

Mr. Rove is the former senior adviser and deputy chief of staff to President George W. Bush. Before Karl became known as "The Architect" of President Bush's 2000 and 2004 campaigns, he was president of Karl Rove + Company, an Austin-based public affairs firm. His clients included over 75 Republican U.S. Senate, Congressional and gubernatorial candidates in 24 states, as well as the Moderate Party of Sweden.

Karl writes a weekly op-ed for *The Wall Street Journal*, is a *Newsweek* columnist and is now writing a book to be published by Simon & Schuster. Email the author at Karl@Rove.com or visit him on the web at Rove.com.



GLOBAL WARMING FREEZE?

By professor David Deming, Washington Times, December 10, 2008

President-elect BARACK OBAMA RECENTLY DECLARED HIS INTENTION TO mitigate global warming by enacting a cap-and-trade policy that would reduce carbon emissions 80 percent by the year 2050.

But the last two years of global cooling have nearly erased 30 years of temperature increases. To the extent that global warming ever existed, it is now officially over.

This year began with a severe spell of winter weather in China. Observers characterized it as the largest natural disaster to hit

China in decades. By the end of January, blizzards and cold temperatures had killed 60 people and caused millions to lose electric service. Nearly a million buildings were damaged and airports had to close. Hong Kong



Las Vegas

had the second-longest cold spell since 1885. A temperature of 33.6 degrees Fahrenheit was barely higher than the record low of 32 degrees F set in 1893.

Other countries in Asia also experienced record cold. In February, cold in the northern half of Vietnam wiped out 40 percent of the rice crop and killed 33,000 head of livestock. In India, the city of Mumbai recorded the lowest temperatures of the last 40 years. Across India, there was more frost damage to crops than at any other time in the last 30 years.

In the United States, the weather also was frigid. The city of International Falls, Minn., whose official nickname is the "icebox of the nation," set a new record low temperature of minus 40 degrees F, breaking the old record of minus 37 F established in 1967.

Alaska experienced an unusually cold and wet summer. For the first time since the 18th century, Alaskan glaciers grew instead of retreating. In Fairbanks, October was the

fourth coldest in 104 years of record. Last month in Reading, Pa., the temperature stayed below 40 degrees F for six consecutive days - the longest November cold spell there since 1903.

These cold weather events were not abnormal or isolated incidents. Global measures of climatic conditions indicate significant cooling.

A preliminary estimate by the British Met Office says 2008 will be the coldest year of the last 10. The extent of global sea ice is at the same level it was in 1980. The mean planetary temperature, as monitored by satellite, also is the same as in 1980.

Last March, NASA reported the oceans have been cooling for the last five years. Sea level has stopped rising, and Northern Hemisphere cyclone and hurricane activity is at a 24-year low.

Environmental extremists and global warming alarmists are in denial and running for cover. Their rationale for continuing a

lost cause is that weather events in the short term are not necessarily related to long-term climatic trends. But these are the same people who screamed at us each year that ordinary weather events such as high temperatures or hurricanes were undeniable evidence of imminent doom.

Now that global warming is over, politicians are finally ready to enact dubious solutions to a non-existent problem. In Britain, Parliament is intrepidly forging ahead with a bold new plan to cool the climate, even as London experienced its first October snowfall since 1934 and Ireland went through the coldest October in the last 70 years.

This is an absurd spectacle. Our advanced civilization is being systematically

mismanaged by technologically illiterate lawyers responding to political pressures from irrational fanatics. Would someone please tell these people it is impossible to overturn the laws of thermodynamics?

We cannot improve our economy by artificially forcing people to use expensive, unreliable and inefficient energy sources.

Let the politicians take note. People will

not like what you have in mind. California is arguably the most liberal state. Yet last month they defeated, by nearly a 2-to-1 margin, a law that would have forced California



utilities to obtain half their electric power from renewable sources. What the Obama administration proposes is much more radical. Their cap-and-trade proposal will dramatically increase the energy costs of the average consumer and likely drive our crippled economy into a severe depression.

To the extent global warming was ever valid, it is now officially over. It is time to file this theory in the dustbin of history, next to Aristotelean physics, Neptunism, the geocentric universe, phlogiston, and a plethora of other incorrect scientific theories, all of which had vocal and dogmatic supporters

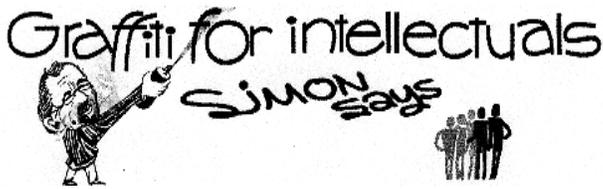
who cited incontrovertible evidence. Weather and climate change are natural processes beyond human control. To argue otherwise is



Snow in Palm Desert, California

to deny the factual evidence.

David Deming is a geophysicist, an adjunct scholar with the National Center for Policy Analysis and an associate professor of arts and sciences at the University of Oklahoma.



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ISRAEL'S RESPONSE IS DISPROPORTIONATE!

By Jonathan Mark, New York Jewish Week, January 2009

I condemn ISRAEL'S DISPROPORTIONATE ATTACK ON HAMAS BECAUSE, SO FAR, IT HAS ONLY lasted four days and I would like to see a proportionate response that terrifies Hamas for seven years, the years that have filled Sderot and neighboring towns with nightmares, death, amputations and trauma coming from rockets and mortars fired from Gaza.

Perhaps a proportionate response would have Gaza's leaders fearful of being killed every day for the next two years, as Gilad Shalit has been terrified of torture and death every day for the last two years in his solitary Gaza dungeon.



Corporal Gilad Shalit

A proportionate response would have Hamas mothers and fathers as fearful for their children's lives as Shalit's mother and father have been fearful for Gilad's life.

A proportionate response would have Gaza's children crying for their mommies and daddies, the way at a Hamas pageant earlier in December a Palestinian actor dressed as Shalit got down on his knees, mock-begging in Hebrew for his Ima and Abba while the Gaza crowds laughed.

A proportionate response would so intimidate Hamas that they will grovel and, as a "gesture," send cocoa and jam into Sderot, the way Israel has groveled in response to rockets from Hamas, sending cocoa and jam into Gaza. Imagine Churchill sending cocoa and jam into Berlin as a humanitarian gesture after - during - the bombing of London.

A proportionate response would be one that will convince Hamas there is no military solution, no solution but surrender. They can then call surrender a "peace process," if they like, just as the mostly unanswered attacks on Jews have convinced some Jews that there is no military solution but surrender to any and all demands. They suggest a euthanasia by the euphemism of "peace process," that Israel become what some are already planning to call "Canaan," a non-Jewish state of all its citizens.

A proportionate response will convince Palestinians that if they insist that the starting point to peace negotiations is that no Jew be allowed to live on the West Bank, the proportionate response will be that Israel's starting point in negotiations is that no Arab be allowed to live in Tel Aviv. Horrible to contemplate? Fine, let there be a proportionate negotiation.

A proportionate response to Hamas, one might gather from the European scolds, would be as if the United States, after Pearl Harbor, would bomb just a few Japanese fishing boats and call it a day, believing the war would have ended with that.

A proportionate response will begin to remind Jews that there is no peace process like victory, just as Israel's decade of disproportionate restraint and self-doubt has convinced young Palestinians that *their* victory is inevita-



Sderot kids taking cover

ble, like Aryan youth in 1933 singing "Tomorrow Belongs To Me."

Let it be said to Israelis and Jews everywhere, in the words of Churchill: "You have enemies?"

Good. It means you've stood up for something." But remember: A war (and Hamas has repeatedly said this is war) is never won if you are disproportionately kind to someone who wants to destroy you and, failing in that, demands with indignation that you not destroy him.



JWR contributor Jonathan Mark is Associate Editor of the [New York Jewish Week](http://www.nyjewishweek.com).