



Willamette Freethinker



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<http://css.peak.org>

Corvallis Secular Society (CSS) is a Humanist and Freethought society for all nontheists of good will.

CSS is affiliated with the American Humanist Association (AHA) and the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH).

From the Editor:

Concerning George W Bush: Is it just me, or is anyone else noticing that EVERY TIME WE ELECT THIS GUY, A MAJOR AMERICAN CITY GETS TOASTED NINE MONTHS LATER???

I mean, seriously. Katrina was just two weeks away from occurring on the fourth anniversary of 9/11. How spooky is that?

This is like some sort of weird Satanic pregnancy or something. Our country plays kissy-face with Bush, and nine months later, we give birth to a bouncing baby catastrophe. If we weren't all atheists, I'd say God was trying to tell us something.

I would normally, at this point in my column, get serious and launch into a full-blown tirade about how completely and utterly our "faith-based government" has dropped the ball on Hurricane Katrina. How so many people have died, needlessly, due to a series of staggering Bush decisions, from drastically underfunding the building of the New Orleans levees, to appointing utterly incompetent political buddies to the highest positions of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

But by now, you've probably heard it all, already. The whole thing has been SO obscene, that even the docile, Bush-friendly "liberal media" has managed to get riled up about it. And besides, nothing I say can top the simple, straightforward timeline of events you'll find on pages 4-7.

Read it slowly. Absorb it. Feel the sequence of events, as it unfolds. And try to imagine this happening under ANY other President.

There are simply no words to describe this tragedy. And this is after FOUR YEARS of sacrificing EVERYTHING ELSE to the altar of "Homeland Security". Ask the former residents of New Orleans just how secure they think THEIR homeland was!

Remember how Clinton's biggest downfall was a woman named Monica? This month, Bush has faced his biggest downfall, and it turned out to be TWO women, named Cindy... and Katrina.

Reed Byers

Editor, *Willamette Freethinker*

CSS Meetings and Events

POTLUCK TIME!

It's Fall Equinox, and time for our quarterly potluck! Bring a dish to share (and perhaps a checkbook so we can arrange a group donation to a worthy charity), and plan to arrive at Corl House by 1pm.

Calendar:

Saturday, Sep 17 th	1:00-4:00	CSS potluck
Saturday, Oct 15 th	2:00-4:00	CSS regular meeting
Saturday, Nov 19 th	2:00-4:00	CSS regular meeting

Regular meeting time:

Third Saturday of each month, from 2:00-4:00 pm.

Regular meeting location:

Corl House (3975 NW Witham Hill Dr, Corvallis).

A Portrait of Presidential Leadership



September 11, 2001

August 30, 2005

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From the President:

Cinematic Humanism, Part I: Humanistic Movie Quotes

Sources:

<http://www.filmsite.org/afi400quotes.html>

<http://www.saidwhatmovies.com/listfilms.php>

<http://www.webring.com/hub?ring=moviequote>

Movies have been a popular form of entertainment for the past century or so. They can give us a glimpse into the past, distract us from the present, let us experience the full spectrum of emotions, and, at their best, inform and inspire us. In spite of ongoing efforts of the religious and political right to censor films or restrict our access to them, many have been able to express a freethought, humanist message. Below are some quotations from various movies that I feel express this viewpoint.

"Look Dave, I can see you're really upset about this. I honestly think you ought to sit down calmly, take a stress pill, and think things over." HAL (played by Douglas Rain), *2001: A Space Odyssey*, 1968.

"And our bodies are earth. And our thoughts are clay. And we sleep and eat with death." Paul, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, 1930.

"I am sick and tired of being treated like I don't exist." Lester Burnham (played by Kevin Spacey), *American Beauty*, 1999.

"Life is a banquet, and most poor suckers are starving to death!" Mame Dennis, *Auntie Mame*, 1958.

"Jimi Hendrix deceased, drugs. Janis Joplin deceased, alcohol. Mama Cass deceased, ham sandwich." Austin Powers (played by Mike Myers), *Austin Powers: International Man Of Mystery*, 1997.

"Alone: bad. Friend: good!" The Monster (played by Boris Karloff), *Bride Of Frankenstein*, 1935.

"Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship." Rick Blaine, *Casablanca*, 1942.

"We'll always have Paris." Rick Blaine, *Casablanca*, 1942.

"What we've got here is failure to communicate." Sheriff to chain gang prisoner (Paul Newman), *Cool Hand Luke*, 1967.

"They made us all train for this day. 'To be fearless and proud and alone. To need no one, just sacrifice. All for the Fatherland.' Oh God, all just empty words. It's not the way they said it was, is it? I just want someone to be with. The only thing I feel is afraid." Lt. Werner (played by Herbert Grönemeyer), *Das Boot*, 1981.

"Carpe diem. Seize the day, boys. Make your lives extraordinary." John Keating, *Dead Poets Society*, 1989.

"In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart." Anne Frank, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, 1959.

"I am not an animal! I am a human being. I am a man." John Merrick, *The Elephant Man*, 1980.

"He couldn't get his judges appointed. He had trouble getting his legislation passed, and he lost Republican control of the Senate. His approval ratings in the polls began to sink. He was already beginning to look like a lame duck president. With everything going wrong, he did what any of us would do. He went... on vacation." Narrator (played by Michael Moore), *Fahrenheit 9/11*, 2004.

"Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." Ferris Bueller, *Ferris Bueller's Day off*, 1986.

"You find a glimmer of happiness in this world, there's always someone who wants to destroy it." James (played by Johnny Depp), *Finding Neverland*, 2004.

"My mama always said, 'Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get.'" Forrest Gump, *Forrest Gump*, 1994.

"If you are a minority of one, the truth is the truth." Mohandas Gandhi, *Gandhi*, 1982.

"Whenever I despair, I remember that the way of truth and love has always won. There may be tyrants and murderers, and for a time, they may seem invincible, but in the end, they always fail. Think of it: always." Gandhi (played by Ben Kingsley), *Gandhi*, 1982.

"What we do in life echoes in eternity." Maximus (played by Russell Crowe), *Gladiator*, 2000.

"After all, tomorrow is another day!" Scarlett O'Hara, *Gone With the Wind*, 1939.

"Nothing has turned out as we expected. It never does. Life's under no obligation to give us what we expect. We take what we get and are thankful it's no worse than it is." *Gone With the Wind*, 1939.

"Wherever there's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there." Tom Joad, *The Grapes of Wrath*, 1940.

"You think of yourself as a colored man. I think of myself as a man." John Wade Prentice, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, 1967.

"You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din." Cutter, *Gunga Din*, 1939.

"It does not do to dwell on dreams, Harry, and forget to live." Albus Dumbledore (played by Richard Harris), *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone*, 2001.

"If people see this they'll say 'Oh my God, that is horrible,' and then go on eating their dinners." Jack (played by Joaquin Phoenix), *Hotel Rwanda*, 2004.

"Darwin was wrong. Man's still an ape. His creed's still a totem pole. When he first achieved the upright position, he took a look at the stars, though they were something to eat. When he couldn't reach them, he decided they were groceries belonging to a bigger creature. That's how Jehovah was born." Gene Kelly, *Inherit the Wind*, 1960.

"Must a man go to prison because he differs with the self-appointed prophet?" Spencer Tracy, *Inherit the Wind*, 1960.

"Life will find a way." Dr. Ian Malcom, *Jurassic Park*, 1993.

"Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your father's passing." Rev. Sykes, *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, 1962.

"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it." Atticus Finch, *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, 1962.

"One drink's too many, and a hundred's not enough." Bartender Nat, *The Lost Weekend*, 1945.

"To deny our own impulses is to deny the very thing that makes us human." *The Matrix*, 1999.

"Love? Above all things I believe in love. Love is like oxygen. Love is a many-splendoured thing, love lifts us up where we belong, all you need is love." "The greatest thing you will ever learn is to love and to be loved in return." Christian (played by Ewan McGregor), *Moulin Rouge!*, 2001.

"I wouldn't give you two cents for all your fancy rules if, behind them, they didn't have a little bit of plain, ordinary, everyday kindness and a little looking out for the other fella, too." Jefferson Smith, *Mr. Smith goes to Washington*, 1939.

"Fat, drunk, and stupid is no way to go through life, son." Dean Wormer, *National Lampoon's Animal House*, 1978.

"Over? Did you say 'over?'" Nothing is over until we decide it is! Was it over when the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor? Hell, no!" John "Bluto" Blutarsky, *National Lampoon's Animal House*, 1978.

Otis P. Driftwood: "It's alright, that's in every contract. That's what they call a sanity clause." Fiorello: "You can't fool me! There ain't no Sanity Claus." *A Night at the Opera*, 1935.

"A lie keeps growing and growing until it's as clear as the nose on your face." The Blue Fairy, *Pinocchio*, 1940.

"We all go a little mad sometimes." Norman Bates, *Psycho*, 1960.

"Get busy livin', or get busy dyin'." Andy, *The Shawshank Redemption*, 1994.

"Well, nobody's perfect." Osgood Fielding III, *Some Like It Hot*, 1959.

"I have always depended on the kindness of strangers." Blanche Dubois, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, 1951.

"To infinity and beyond!" Buzz Lightyear, *Toy Story*, 1995.

"I learned that, if I ever go looking for my hearts desire again... I shouldn't look any further than my own back yard. Because if it isn't there, I never really lost it to begin with." Dorothy (played by Judy Garland), *The Wizard of Oz*, 1939.

"Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!" The Wizard of Oz, *The Wizard of Oz*, 1939.

"There's no place like home." Dorothy Gale, *The Wizard of Oz*, 1939.

"Toto, I've got a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore." Dorothy Gale, *The Wizard of Oz*, 1939.

"I'm not bad. I'm just drawn that way." Jessica Rabbit, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, 1988.

Are any of your favorite movie quotes missing from this list? If so, please send them to me. Next month, I'll present a list of movies that humanists and freethinkers may particularly enjoy.

John Dearing
President of CSS

"What I'm hearing, which is sort of scary, is they all want to stay in Texas. Everyone is so overwhelmed by the hospitality. ... And so many of the people in the arena here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this is working very well for them."

— Former first lady Barbara Bush about Katrina evacuees housed in the Houston Astrodome

Hurricane Katrina Timeline

courtesy of: **ThinkProgress.org**

<http://www.thinkprogress.org/katrina-timeline>

[Editor's Note: *Nothing that anyone says about the federal response to Hurricane Katrina can possibly be as damning as this straightforward timeline of events, compiled by ThinkProgress.org.*]

Friday, August 26

GOV. KATHLEEN BLANCO DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY IN LOUISIANA [Office of the Governor]

GULF COAST STATES REQUEST TROOP ASSISTANCE FROM PENTAGON: At a 9/1 press conference, Lt. Gen. Russel Honoré, commander, Joint Task Force Katrina, said that the Gulf States began the process of requesting additional forces on Friday, 8/26. [DOD]

Saturday, August 27

GOV. HALEY BARBOUR DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY IN MISSISSIPPI [Office of the Governor]

5AM CDT — KATRINA UPGRADED TO CATEGORY 3 HURRICANE [CNN]

GOV. BLANCO ASKS BUSH TO DECLARE FEDERAL STATE OF EMERGENCY IN LOUISIANA: "I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments, and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary to save lives, protect property, public health, and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a disaster." [Office of the Governor]

FEDERAL EMERGENCY DECLARED, DHS AND FEMA GIVEN FULL AUTHORITY TO RESPOND TO KATRINA: "Specifically, FEMA is authorized to identify, mobilize, and provide at its discretion, equipment and resources necessary to alleviate the impacts of the emergency." [White House]

Sunday, August 28

2AM CDT — KATRINA UPGRADED TO CATEGORY 4 HURRICANE [CNN]

7AM CDT — KATRINA UPGRADED TO CATEGORY 5 HURRICANE [CNN]

MORNING — LOUISIANA NEWSPAPER SIGNALS LEVEES MAY GIVE: "Forecasters Fear Levees Won't Hold Katrina": "Forecasters feared Sunday afternoon that storm driven waters will lap over the New Orleans levees when monster Hurricane Katrina pushes past the Crescent City tomorrow." [Lafayette Daily Advertiser]

9:30 AM CDT — MAYOR NAGIN ISSUES FIRST EVER MANDATORY EVACUATION OF NEW ORLEANS: "We're facing the storm most of us have feared," said Nagin. "This is going to be an unprecedented event." [Times-Picayune]

4PM CDT — NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE ISSUES SPECIAL HURRICANE WARNING: In the event of a category 4 or 5 hit, "Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks, perhaps longer. ... At least one-half of well-constructed homes will have roof and wall failure. All

gabled roofs will fail, leaving those homes severely damaged or destroyed. ... Power outages will last for weeks. ... Water shortages will make human suffering incredible by modern standards." [National Weather Service]



AFTERNOON — BUSH, BROWN, CHERTOFF WARNED OF LEVEE FAILURE BY NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER DIRECTOR: Dr. Max Mayfield, director of the National Hurricane Center: "We were briefing them way before landfall. ... It's not like this was a

surprise. We had in the advisories that the levee could be topped." [Times-Picayune; St. Petersburg Times]

LATE PM — REPORTS OF WATER TOPPLING OVER LEVEE: "Waves crashed atop the exercise path on the Lake Pontchartrain levee in Kenner early Monday as Katrina churned closer." [Times-Picayune]

APPROXIMATELY 30,000 EVACUEES GATHER AT SUPERDOME WITH ROUGHLY 36 HOURS WORTH OF FOOD [Times-Picayune]

Monday, August 29

7AM CDT — KATRINA MAKES LANDFALL AS A CATEGORY 4 HURRICANE [CNN]

8AM CDT — MAYOR NAGIN REPORTS THAT WATER IS FLOWING OVER LEVEE: "I've gotten reports this morning that there is already water coming over some of

the levee systems. In the lower ninth ward, we've had one of our pumping stations to stop operating, so we will have significant flooding, it is just a matter of how much." [NBC's "Today Show"]

MORNING — BUSH CALLS SECRETARY CHERTOFF TO DISCUSS IMMIGRATION: "I spoke to Mike Chertoff today — he's the head of the Department of Homeland Security. I knew people would want me to discuss this issue [immigration], so we got us an airplane on — a telephone on Air Force One, so I called him. I said, are you working with the governor? He said, you bet we are." [White House]

MORNING — BUSH SHARES BIRTHDAY CAKE PHOTO-OP WITH SEN. JOHN MCCAIN [White House]



10:30AM CDT — MICHAEL BROWN FINALLY REQUESTS THAT DHS DISPATCH 1,000 EMPLOYEES TO REGION, GIVES THEM TWO DAYS TO ARRIVE: "Brown's memo to Chertoff described Katrina as 'this near catastrophic event' but otherwise lacked any urgent language. The memo politely ended, 'Thank you for your consideration in helping us to meet our responsibilities.'" [AP]

LATE MORNING — LEVEE BREACHED: "A large section of the vital 17th Street Canal levee, where it connects to the brand new 'hurricane proof' Old Hammond Highway bridge, gave way late Monday morning in Bucktown after Katrina's fiercest winds were well north." [Times-Picayune]

11AM CDT — BUSH VISITS ARIZONA RESORT TO PROMOTE MEDICARE DRUG BENEFIT: "This new bill I signed says, if you're a senior and you like the way things are today, you're in good shape, don't change. But, by the way, there's a lot of different options for you. And we're here to talk about what that means to our seniors." [White House]

4PM CDT — BUSH TRAVELS TO CALIFORNIA SENIOR CENTER TO DISCUSS MEDICARE DRUG BENEFIT: "We've got some folks up here who are concerned about their Social Security or Medicare. Joan Geist is with us. ... I could tell — she was looking at me when I first walked in the room to meet her, she was wondering whether or not old George W. is going to take away her Social Security check." [White House]

8PM CDT — RUMSFELD ATTENDS SAN DIEGO PADRES BASEBALL GAME: Rumsfeld "joined Padres President John Moores in the owner's box...at Petco Park." [Editor & Publisher]

Tuesday, August 30

11AM CDT — BUSH SPEAKS ON IRAQ AT NAVAL BASE CORONADO [White House]

MIDDAY — CHERTOFF FINALLY BECOMES AWARE THAT LEVEE HAS FAILED: "It was on Tuesday that the levee—may have been overnight Monday to Tuesday—that the levee started to break. And it was midday Tuesday that I became aware of the fact that there was no possibility of plugging the gap and that essentially the lake was going to start to drain into the city." [Meet the Press, 9/4/05]

PENTAGON CLAIMS THERE ARE ENOUGH NATIONAL GUARD TROOPS IN REGION: "Pentagon spokesman Lawrence Di Rita said the states have adequate National Guard units to handle the hurricane needs." [WWL-TV]

MASS LOOTING REPORTED, SECURITY SHORTAGE CITED: "The looting is out of control. The French Quarter has been attacked," Councilwoman Jackie Clarkson said. "We're using exhausted, scarce police to control looting when they should be used for search and rescue while we still have people on rooftops." [AP]

U.S. BATAAN SITS OFF SHORE, VIRTUALLY UNUSED: "The USS Bataan, a 844-foot ship designed to dispatch Marines in amphibious assaults, has helicopters, doctors, hospital beds, food and water. It also can make its own water, up to 100,000 gallons a day. And it just happened to be in the Gulf of Mexico when Katrina came roaring ashore. The Bataan rode out the storm and then followed it toward shore, awaiting relief orders. Helicopter pilots flying from its deck were some of the first to begin plucking stranded New Orleans residents. But now the Bataan's hospital facilities, including six operating rooms and beds for 600 patients, are empty." [Chicago Tribune]

2PM CDT — PRESIDENT BUSH PLAYS GUITAR WITH COUNTRY SINGER MARK WILLIS [AP]



BUSH RETURNS TO CRAWFORD FOR FINAL NIGHT OF VACATION [AP]

Wednesday, August 31

TENS OF THOUSANDS TRAPPED IN SUPERDOME; CONDITIONS DETERIORATE: "A 2-year-old girl slept in a pool of urine. Crack vials littered a restroom. Blood stained the walls next to vending machines smashed by teenagers. 'We pee on the floor. We are like animals,' said Taffany Smith, 25, as she cradled her 3-week-old son, Terry. ... By Wednesday, it had degenerated into horror. ... At least two people, including a child, have been raped. At least three people have died, including one man who jumped 50 feet to his death, saying he had nothing left to live for. There is no sanitation. The stench is overwhelming." [Los Angeles Times, 9/1/05]



PRESIDENT BUSH FINALLY ORGANIZES TASK FORCE TO COORDINATE FEDERAL RESPONSE: Bush says on Tuesday he will "fly to Washington to begin work...with a task force that will coordinate the work of 14 federal agencies involved in the relief effort." [New York Times, 8/31/05]

JEFFERSON PARISH EMERGENCY DIRECTOR SAYS FOOD AND WATER SUPPLY GONE: "Director Walter Maestri: FEMA and national agencies not delivering the help nearly as fast as it is needed." [WWL-TV]

80,000 BELIEVED STRANDED IN NEW ORLEANS: Former Mayor Sidney Barthelemy "estimated 80,000 were trapped in the flooded city and urged President Bush to send more troops." [Reuters]



3,000 STRANDED AT CONVENTION CENTER WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER: "With 3,000 or more evacuees stranded at the convention center — and with no apparent contingency plan or authority to deal with them — collecting a body was no one's priority. ... Some had been at the convention center since Tuesday morning but had received no food, water or instructions." [Times-Picayune]

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY DECLARED FOR ENTIRE GULF COAST: "After a natural disaster, short and long-term medical problems can occur. Diseases like cholera, typhoid, hepatitis and mosquito-borne illnesses tend to break out under these conditions." [WCBS-TV]

4PM CDT — BUSH GIVES FIRST MAJOR ADDRESS ON KATRINA: "Nothing about the president's demeanor... — which seemed casual to the point of carelessness — suggested that he understood the depth of the current crisis." [New York Times]

7PM CDT — CONDOLEEZZA RICE TAKES IN A BROADWAY SHOW: "On Wednesday night, Secretary Rice was booed by some audience members at 'Spamalot!, the Monty Python musical at the Shubert, when the lights went up after the performance." [New York Post, 9/2/05]



8PM CDT — FEMA DIRECTOR BROWN CLAIMS SURPRISE OVER SIZE OF STORM: "I must say, this storm is much much bigger than anyone expected." [CNN]

Thursday, September 1

7AM CDT — BUSH CLAIMS NO ONE EXPECTED LEVEES TO BREAK: "I don't think anybody anticipated the breach of the levees." [Washington Post]

CONDOLEEZZA RICE VISITS U.S. OPEN: "Rice, [in New York] on three days' vacation to shop and see the U.S. Open, hitting some balls with retired champ Monica Seles at the Indoor Tennis Club at Grand Central." [New York Post]

STILL NO COMMAND AND CONTROL ESTABLISHED: Terry Ebbert, New Orleans Homeland Security Director: "This is a national emergency. This is a national disgrace. FEMA has been here three days, yet there is no command and control. We can send massive amounts of aid to tsunami victims, but we can't bail out the city of New Orleans." [Fox News]

2PM CDT — MAYOR NAGIN ISSUES “DESPERATE SOS” TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: “This is a desperate SOS. Right now we are out of resources at the convention centre and don’t anticipate enough buses. We need buses. Currently the convention centre is unsanitary and unsafe and we’re running out of supplies.” [Guardian, 9/2/05]

2PM CDT — MICHAEL BROWN CLAIMS NOT TO HAVE HEARD OF REPORTS OF VIOLENCE: “I’ve had no reports of unrest, if the connotation of the word unrest means that people are beginning to riot, or you know, they’re banging on walls and screaming and hollering or burning tires or whatever. I’ve had no reports of that.” [CNN]

NEW ORLEANS “DESCEND[S] INTO ANARCHY”: “Storm victims were raped and beaten, fights and fires broke out, corpses lay out in the open, and rescue helicopters and law enforcement officers were shot at as flooded-out New Orleans descended into anarchy Thursday. ‘This is a desperate SOS,’ the mayor said.” [AP]

CONDOLLEEZZA RICE GOES SHOE SHOPPING: “Just moments ago at the Ferragamo on 5th Avenue, Condoleezza Rice was seen spending several thousands of dollars on some nice, new shoes (we’ve confirmed this, so her new heels will surely get coverage from the WaPo’s Robin Givhan). A fellow shopper, unable to fathom the absurdity of Rice’s timing, went up to the Secretary and reportedly shouted, ‘How dare you shop for shoes while thousands are dying and homeless!’” [Gawker]



MICHAEL BROWN FINALLY LEARNS OF EVACUEES IN CONVENTION CENTER: “We learned about that (Thursday), so I have directed that we have all available resources to get that convention center to make sure that they have the food and water and medical care that they need.” [CNN]

Friday, September 2

ROVE-LED CAMPAIGN TO BLAME LOCAL OFFICIALS BEGINS: “Under the command of President Bush’s two senior political advisers, the White House rolled out a plan...to contain the political damage from the administration’s response to Hurricane Katrina.” President Bush’s comments from the Rose Garden Friday morning formed “the start of this campaign.” [New York Times, 9/5/05]

9:35AM CDT — BUSH PRAISES MICHAEL BROWN: “Brownie, you’re doing a heck of a job.” [White House, 9/2/05]

10 AM CDT — PRESIDENT BUSH STAGES PHOTO-OP “BRIEFING”: Coast Guard helicopters and crew diverted to act as backdrop for President Bush’s photo-op.

BUSH VISIT GROUNDS FOOD AID: “Three tons of food ready for delivery by air to refugees in St. Bernard Parish and on Algiers Point sat on the Crescent City Connection bridge Friday afternoon as air traffic was halted because of President Bush’s visit to New Orleans, officials said.” [Times-Picayune]

LEVEE REPAIR WORK ORCHESTRATED FOR PRESIDENT’S VISIT: Sen. Mary Landrieu, 9/3: “Touring this critical site yesterday with the President, I saw what I believed to be a real and significant effort to get a handle on a major cause of this catastrophe. Flying over this critical spot again this morning, less than 24 hours later, it became apparent that yesterday we witnessed a hastily prepared stage set for a Presidential photo opportunity; and the desperately needed resources we saw were this morning reduced to a single, lonely piece of equipment.” [Sen. Mary Landrieu]

BUSH USES 50 FIREFIGHTERS AS PROPS IN DISASTER AREA PHOTO-OP: A group of 1,000 firefighters convened in Atlanta to volunteer with the Katrina relief efforts. Of those, “a team of 50 Monday morning quickly was ushered onto a flight headed for Louisiana. The crew’s first assignment: to stand beside President Bush as he tours devastated areas.” [Salt Lake Tribune; Reuters]

12PM CDT — BUSH “SATISFIED WITH THE RESPONSE”: “I am satisfied with the response. I am not satisfied with all the results.” [AP]

Saturday, September 3

SENIOR BUSH ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL LIES TO WASHINGTON POST, CLAIMS GOV. BLANCO NEVER DECLARED STATE OF EMERGENCY: The Post reported in their Sunday edition “As of Saturday, Blanco still had not declared a state of emergency, the senior Bush official said.” They were forced to issue a correction hours later. [Washington Post, 9/4/05]

9AM CDT — BUSH BLAMES STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS: “[T]he magnitude of responding to a crisis over a disaster area that is larger than the size of Great Britain has created tremendous problems that have strained state and local capabilities. The result is that many of our citizens simply are not getting the help they need.” [White House, 9/3/05]

“The president said he’s going to lead the investigation into what went wrong. He needs to look only in the mirror.”

**— House Democratic leader
Nancy Pelosi of California**

Grasping the Depth of Time as a First Step in Understanding Evolution

by Verlyn Klinkenborg, *New York Times*, 8/23/05

Submitted by CSS Member Virginia Fillingam

Last month a team of paleontologists announced that it had found several fossilized dinosaur embryos that were 190 million years old — some 90 million years older than any dinosaur embryos found so far. Those kinds of numbers are always a little daunting. Ever since I was a boy in a public elementary school in Iowa, I've been learning to face the eons and eons that are embedded in the universe around us.

I know the numbers as they stand at present, and I know what they mean, in a roughly comparative way. The universe is perhaps 14 billion years old. Earth is some 4.5 billion years old. The oldest hominid fossils are between 6 million and 7 million years old. The oldest distinctly modern human fossils are about 160,000 years old.

The truth of these numbers has the same effect on me as watching the night sky in the high desert. It fills me with a sense of nonspecific immensity. I don't think I'm alone in this.

One of the most powerful limits to the human imagination is our inability to grasp, in a truly intuitive way, the depths of terrestrial and cosmological time. That inability is hardly surprising because our own lives are so very short in comparison. It's hard enough to come to terms with the brief scale of human history. But the difficulty of comprehending what time is on an evolutionary scale, I think, is a major impediment to understanding evolution.

It's been approximately 3.5 billion years since primeval life first originated on this planet. That is not an unimaginable number in itself, if you're thinking of simple, discrete units like dollars or grains of sand. But 3.5 billion years of biological history is different. All those years have really passed, moment by moment, one by one. They encompass an actual, already lived reality, encompassing all the lives of all the organisms that have come and gone in that time. That expanse of time defines the realm of biological possibility in which life in its extraordinary diversity has evolved. It is time that has allowed the making of us.

The idea of such quantities of time is extremely new. Humans began to understand the true scale of geological time in the early 19th century. The probable depth of cosmological time and the extent of the history of the human species have come to light only within our own lifetimes.

That is a lot to absorb and, not surprisingly, many people refuse to absorb it. Nearly every attack on evolution — whether it is called intelligent design or plain creationism,

synonyms for the same faith-based rejection of evolution — ultimately requires a foreshortening of cosmological, geological and biological time.

Humans feel much more content imagining a world of more human proportions, with a shorter time scale and a simple narrative sense of cause and effect. But what we prefer to believe makes no difference. The fact that life on Earth has arrived at a point where it is possible for humans to have beliefs is due to the steady ticking away of eons and the trial and error of natural selection.

Evolution is a robust theory, in the scientific sense, that has been tested and confirmed again and again. Intelligent design is not a theory at all, as scientists understand the word, but a well-financed political and religious campaign to muddy science. Its basic proposition — the intervention of a designer, a.k.a. God — cannot be tested. It has no evidence to offer, and its assumptions that humans were divinely created are the same as its conclusions. Its objections to evolution are based on syllogistic reasoning and a highly selective treatment of the physical evidence.

Accepting the fact of evolution does not necessarily mean discarding a personal faith in God. But accepting intelligent design means discarding science. Much has been made of a 2004 poll showing that some 45 percent of Americans believe that the Earth — and humans with it — was created as described in the book of Genesis, and within the past 10,000 years. This isn't a triumph of faith. It's a failure of education.

The purpose of the campaign for intelligent design is to deepen that failure. To present the arguments of intelligent design as part of a debate over evolution is nonsense. From the scientific perspective, there is no debate. But even the illusion of a debate is a sorry victory for antievolutionists, a public relations victory based, as so many have been in recent years, on ignorance and obfuscation.

The essential, but often well-disguised, purpose of intelligent design, is to preserve the myth of a separate, divine creation for humans in the belief that only that can explain who we are. But there is a destructive hubris, a fearful arrogance, in that myth. It sets us apart from nature, except to dominate it. It misses both the grace and the moral depth of knowing that humans have only the same stake, the same right, in the Earth as every other creature that has ever lived here. There is a righteousness — a responsibility — in the deep, ancestral origins we share with all of life.

The Fall

A semi-autobiographical story by Angela Byers

The early winter wind blew harshly, leaving her cheeks and nose bright red. She had been waiting at the end of the driveway for some time now. Twenty minutes? Thirty? She was a child and what did she know about time. It had been long enough for her hands to begin to turn numb and make her wish she had remembered to wear her mittens.

She watched as the early November winds worked hard to pull the last of the leaves from the nearly naked trees. Like her, the trees knew nothing of time and refused to give up their precious bits of life. One by one she watched as leaves from the big maple were plucked from their branches and tossed wildly upon the wind. They might be tossed about for a few minutes before they were caught in the hedgerow. Or they might ride the wild unpredictable winds for miles until settling on a neighboring farm.

Surely it must have been thirty minutes by now? She thought to herself. What was taking so long? She knew she didn't have to ask that question, she already knew the answer. Her mother was probably fixing her hair or putting on her make-up. Although none of that made any sense as they weren't going anywhere. Maybe her mother had forgotten? Impossible. Her mother told her she would be out in a few minutes. After all, this was an important event. She'd just had her birthday and her Dad had removed her training wheels before he left for work. She felt excited and scared at the same time. Butterflies were swarming in her stomach. Even her Dad had told her that her mother would help her learn to ride the bike. So where was she?

Maybe she wasn't coming? Impossible! She promised! But when had that ever mattered? Even at this age she was beginning to see that her mother rarely kept her promises. They were mostly used as a way of shutting the children up. So why believe her mother now? Perhaps it was that she was young and still had faith in her mother's honesty. She still believed that her mother would rather teach her to ride a bike instead of trying on a half dozen outfits before finding just the right one to wear. The sky was dark gray and the sun was hidden behind the clouds. It was difficult to tell what time it was, but she knew it must be close to an hour already. She continued to stand next to her bike and watch the leaves being plucked one by one from the trees. She began to cry. Slow quiet tears dropped from her eyes and down her nose, finally catching in the wind to be blown away. But she promised! She kept saying to herself. You can't break a promise. As the minutes passed by, her tears came faster. No long single drops but streams that the icy wind blew against her numb cheeks. Deep down she knew her mother had once again betrayed her and she began to sob into the sleeve of her coat.

She felt foolish and stupid for even falling for the trick again. She didn't understand why this happened, but like the many other times before, she began to accept that her mother had lied to her. Slowly her sobs quieted and the

tears began to trickle away. She took a deep breath and walked her bike back up to the house.

As she took one last glance at the maple tree, a large gust of wind tugged hard at the last leaf. It was in the high branches and it seemed as if a tug-of-war was going on. The tree desperate to hold onto its former spring glory while the winter wind was trying to consume it. Unable to watch what she knew was going to happen she went into the house and closed the door. Outside the last leaf was finally plucked from its roots and tumbled and swirled in the wind, finally blowing out of sight. Once again the old maple tree was left to stand out the winter cold, naked and vulnerable.

Newspaper Letters

Corvallis Gazette-Times, 8/23/05

Church finances hidden from view

I strongly disagree with the Aug. 18 editorial: "Rigid view of charity gift serves none," which essentially says: where's the harm in giving a few taxpayer dollars to a church to provide some social services? The implication being that, if this church doesn't supply meals for the homeless, who will?

As a retired public assistance (welfare) caseworker for the Department of Human Services, I can affirm that a combination of federal, state and municipal funds currently provide a broad spectrum of social services to eligible members of this community. In addition to DHS, the Community Services Consortium and Community Outreach administer programs which provide food stamps, emergency food and hot meals.

Being public entities, the budgets of these government-funded services are open for public scrutiny to assure the money goes where needed. Will the church open their books to the public to assure that funds given them are indeed used for humanitarian causes?

It is laudable that religious organizations provide additional needed public humanitarian services. Government recognizes this charity by conferring upon churches of all denominations "tax exempt" status. Some of these churches, such as the Latter Day Saints and Catholic church, have rather extensive financial holdings. But we don't tax them and they don't ask the taxpayer to supplement their budgets.

More disturbing is that the funds given to the Stone Soup program were taken from the capital improvements fund. How do this community's Baptists, Jewish, Buddhists or non-believers feel about their taxpayer dollars going to support someone else's religious-based program?

— Robert Neary (CSS Member)

Hurricane Hits Just Before Homosexual Event

Christian activist: Act of God prevented 'Southern Decadence' festival

by WorldNet Daily (located in Grants Pass, OR), 8/31/05

[Editor's Note: *Yup, you guessed it — it was all the fault of the gays. Just like 9/11.*]

Hurricane Katrina walloped New Orleans just two days before the annual homosexual "Southern Decadence" festival was to begin in the town, an act being characterized by some as God's work.

Southern Decadence has a history of "filling the French Quarters section of the city with drunken homosexuals engaging in sex acts in the public streets and bars," says a statement from the Philadelphia Christian organization Repent America.

This year's 34th annual Southern Decadence festival, which drew 125,000 revelers last year, was set to begin today in the Big Easy and run through Monday.

As writer John d'Addario explained in "Southern Decadence 2005: A How-To Guide" posted on FrenchQuarter.com:

Parades and non-stop parties aside, Southern Decadence may be most famous (or infamous) for the displays of naked flesh which characterize the event — which is only fitting, since New Orleans in early September is generally the closest thing you'll ever experience to walking around in a steambath outside of a health spa. While police have started to crack down on public lewdness and pressure from a local crackpot conservative religious organiza-

tion has caused the five-day festival to become a little more sedate than it was in years past, the atmosphere of Southern Decadence has stayed true to its name and public displays of sexuality are pretty much everywhere you look.

Of course, the massive flooding of the city and evacuation order from Gov. Kathleen Blanco has forced the event's cancellation.

"Although the loss of lives is deeply saddening, this act of God destroyed a wicked city," stated Repent America director Michael Marcavage in a statement. "From 'Girls Gone Wild' to 'Southern Decadence,' New Orleans was a city that opened its doors wide open to the public celebration of sin. May it never be the same."

Repent America says three former and current mayors of New Orleans have issued official proclamations welcoming visitors to Southern Decadence.

"Let us pray for those ravaged by this disaster. However, we must not forget that the citizens of New Orleans tolerated and welcomed the wickedness in their city for so long," Marcavage said. "May this act of God cause us all to think about what we tolerate in our city limits, and bring us trembling before the throne of Almighty God."

Marcavage was one of the five Philadelphia Christians arrested last year for protesting at a homosexual event. The charges eventually were tossed out.

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