

It is hard to believe that it was only a year ago that I woke up in my own bed for the first time after a historic (for me) jaunt to Iowa to take part in the campaigning for the caucuses, the infamous "Scream" still ringing on the public airwaves. My account of that trip, to the "Perfect Storm" for Howard Dean (which proved less than perfect) is still on line here:

<http://politics.postilion.org/deanjournal.html>

It was the experience of keeping that online journal (which the digerati insist on calling a blog, which sounds to me too much like bog) that led to my creation last May of this mailing list. I guess you have to lay blame someplace...

Of course, my man wasn't going to stay down for long. As anyone interested in such things surely knows by now, Dean is in the running for DNC Chairman. You can hear all about it on The Week, with George Stephanopoulos, Sunday morning at 9:30 (Milwaukee time).

My friend and cohort Geri sent me a reminder that even though we had lost the battle, the mood on the floor of the Val-Air ballroom was not all gloom and doom that night, just over a year ago. Her video record is here:

<http://www.ouoldhouse.com/geri/postcaucus.mov>

Reading the post-coronation wrap-ups in the press this morning was enlightening if, like me, you only heard the speech in late coverage, and not fully surrounded by the hype of the live broadcast. While William Safire in his waning days at the New York Times ranked the speech "among the top 5 of the 20 second-inaugurals in our history," this despite Bush's "unmodulated delivery." (ooch)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/21/opinion/21safire.html>

Some of us, my self included, do not rank it that high. Granted, I have only witnessed four of these second inaugurals, but using my customary listening-from-the-next-room-so-I-am-not-suckered-by-the-pomp technique thought that while it was a good speech, it was too lofty. Loft is good in such a speech, but without any grounding risks just drifting away. While people may still remember "soft bigotry of low expectations" from Bush's first inaugural, I wonder if anyone will remember this year's

"cannot carry the message of freedom and the baggage of bigotry at the same time." We'll see...

I am always amazed when it happens, but I do find myself in agreement with the Cato Institute for once. Today the Washington Times, that bastion of conservative parrots in Rev. Moon's back pocket, ran this in their coverage of the speech:

William Niskanen, chairman of the Cato Institute, criticized Mr. Bush's call for a more activist military role in the world as "dangerous, eloquent nonsense," rejecting the implication in the president's remarks "that anyone's lack of liberty threatens us."

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20050121-122815-4709r.htm>

Meanwhile, Deborah Orin, in the New York Post, that bastion of radical conservative parrots in Rupert Murdoch's back pocket, writes:

Bush's speech was a ringing reaffirmation of his belief that freedom is the best way to keep America safe because free societies don't breed terrorists.

<http://www.nypost.com/news/nationalnews/38585.htm>

Now I may be remembering this wrong, but wasn't the worst act of terrorism on American soil, prior to 9-11, the attack on the Murrah office building in Oklahoma City, carried out by an American? Where was he bred?

And one must wonder what the reaction of more conservative southern religious supports will be to this nugget from the speech:

America will not pretend that jailed dissidents prefer their chains, or that women welcome humiliation and servitude...

One last comment on the speech. Can anyone be surprised to here the Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi say yesterday:

"In the fight against the arrogant American tyrant who carries the flag of the cross, it is being

crushed emotionally and morally," he said, according to a translation from Reuters. "Our battle with the enemy is a battle of streets and towns and has many tactical, defensive and offensive methods. Fierce wars are not decided in days or weeks."

<http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/ssistory.mpl/world/3002168>

within hours of Dubya, in his address, saying:

That edifice of character is built in families, supported by communities with standards, and sustained in our national life by the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the words of the

Koran and the varied faiths of our people.

<http://www.cnn.com/2005/ALLPOLITICS/01/20/bush.transcript/index.html>

But enough of that, how about a little levity? My friend Russ sent me this link:

<http://www.dubyamovie.com/>

A couple of recent news bits that you may want to take a look at if you missed them: First, one of my favorites, Frank Rich, writes a pretty good column in the Sunday Times art section. His entry from Jan. 12th was precious:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/16/arts/16rich.html>

And this piece from Wednesday about Leslie Moonves's plans for CBS Evening News in a post-Dan Rather era contains an interesting deal:

As part of the overhaul he indicated he would even consider a role for Jon Stewart of Comedy Central's "Daily Show." Mr. Stewart has emerged as both a late-night comedy star and a biting commentator on the news...

...Mr. Moonves said his thinking was quite broad at this point, as his consideration of Mr. Stewart made evident.

Mr. Moonves, who is also the president of CBS's parent company, Viacom, noted that because Comedy Central is also owned by Viacom, Mr. Stewart is available for such consideration. "Jon Stewart is part of our company and we speak regularly about all sorts of different things," Mr. Moonves said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/19/arts/television/19cbs.html>

Hmmm.

Well, enough for now