

Key Opinion

No Nudes is Good Nudes

Richard L. Hershatter
Contributing Columnist

*Adam and Eve were quite a pair,
Till Eve ate forbidden fruit;
Because she accepted the slimy snake's dare,
A male must now wear a suit.*

The latest fracas on Longboat Key has now been settled.

After a great deal of fuss and impassioned debate, the decision has been handed down. Commercial interests have lost their drive to overturn the rule against residential rentals of less than 30 days.

The business community argued that shorter rent periods would bring in more tourists and customers, while proponents of the status quo argued that short term tenants tend to be gypsies, careless of property values, accompanied by noisy children and flea-bitten dogs with sharp teeth.

One outraged lady even wrote a letter to the editor of this newspaper claiming that a relaxation of the time-honored restrictions would result — horror of horrors — in half-naked European females sunning themselves on the beaches.

It seems that nudity is still a problem in the Garden of Eden.

It is true that an occasional sunbather or streaker has been spotted on local beaches.

Several years ago, a former chief of police asked the town fathers for additional funds to hire personnel to walk the sands to spot miscreant bare skins. (As a good citizen, this writer volunteered to patrol without pay, but nothing ever came of it, and no moneys were appropriated.)

Now comes a report from the Associated Press that Eve's descendants are not to be slighted after all, but the locale for Paradise is in Pasco County, a mere 20 miles north of Tampa.

Just in time for Florida's steamy season, six nudist resorts have entered into a blistering (no pun intended) competition to woo the clothing-averse to visit, enjoy, and even settle in the area without hindrance.

Accommodations range all the way from tents and rustic cabins to luxurious villas with pools and golf courses.

Affluent retirees looking to permanently shed jackets and ties and all that goes with them, have opted to build stately mansions, complete with spas, attached garages and minimal closet space.

Condo construction has tripled over the last several years, and entrepreneurs are even investigating the feasibility of laying out acreage for use as parks for recreational vehicles.

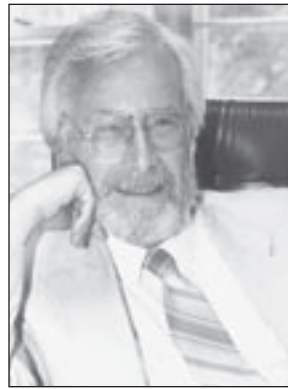
The AP reports that it is not only retirees and the soon-to-be retired who are being attracted to the nudist life style. Although most of the bare bodies soaking up sunshine are definitely middle aged, recent college graduates in significant numbers have also evinced interest.

Pasco County commissioners advise that nudists are contributing nearly a million dollars annually in tax revenue, with sun worshippers flocking into the area from all over the western hemisphere and Europe.

Recent arrivals in the area, clustered near and around Lake Como, explain that they are not merely attracted by the lifestyle. Many insist, without a hint of irony, that they are settling in the region because they "like the view."

And some, like Washington's proponents of telephone tapping, insist that they go naked "because they have nothing to hide."

The Association of American Nudists reports that the



nude lifestyle is growing apace, with over 50,000 members in their association alone.

With its warm and welcoming climate (hurricanes excepted), Florida competes with California, South Carolina and Arizona for the estimated \$400 million that nudists contribute to the global tourist economy. (Not too shabby an amount, for people who eschew pockets.)

Although the burgeoning population of sun worshippers has not contributed to the prosperity of dry cleaners or laundromats, it has been a boon to area dermatologists and purveyors of sunscreen oils.

The descendants of Adam and Eve have found a new Garden of Eden here in the part of Southwest Florida known as Land O' Lakes, which is very reminiscent of the original paradise.

The biblical couple would have felt right at home among the orange trees, palms and occasional snakes.

One major difference, however, exists.

There are no apple or fig leaf trees to be found.

When the call of nature bids us to shed clothing

*And expose our epidermis to the sun,
Some observers may be filled with fear and loathing,*

*For it's a practice not for everyone;
But bear in mind that we are all God's creatures,*

*And naked people need not feel ashamed.
If a European woman bares her features,
The snake that tempted Eve should not be blamed.*

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Huzzas for the United States

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Contributing Columnist

You may be wondering exactly what a "huzza" is. Well, according to an article in the July 26, 1776, edition of the Virginia Gazette, "The Declaration of Independence was read and posted . . . And everywhere was received with loud huzzas and the utmost demonstrations of joy." So it seems "huzzas" are a good thing, usually meant to express elation and approval. We are celebrating the 230th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence this week and it seems we, as a country, have a great deal to huzza about. I am most grateful to live in a country where there are any number of people in authority constantly saying and doing things that confuse me to no end. If this sounds a bit strange to you — think about it. Would you really want to live in a country where the governing class is uniformly logical and sensible? Would this not quickly become boring beyond belief? This is, of course, a moot question as there is no danger of this occurring in the United States.

Take the recent Supreme Court decision in Hamden — that is the case where a five to three decision held that enemy detainees have the same rights in our courts as our military personnel. The Court declared the current version of military commissions violates Article 36 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice — that is the one entitled "President May Prescribe Rules." (They must not have read the title.) The offended justices felt there was too much hearsay evidence allowed by the president's rules and that the rules denied the defendant the right to always be at the trial. Justice Kennedy said he saw no practical need for these deviations in the normal rules of evidence. The practical need is, in the case of a military tribunal, you can't always produce every witness to personally verify earlier statements. It also may be necessary to exclude the defendant if sensitive security information is being presented. With a logic that can only appeal to a lawyer or a judge, they imposed draconian rules on a military commission trying the defendant, but then ruled he may be held for the duration of the conflict without being given a hearing.

The decision is an unconscionable intrusion on the

war powers of the president. It is key here for Democrats not to think of George Bush — think President Franklin D. Roosevelt, or Harry Truman, or John Kennedy, or Bill Clinton, or perhaps even Hillary Clinton. (No one should be asked to remember Jimmy Carter). As the Wall Street Journal noted, "But there's a reason the Founders gave Presidents the bulk of the Constitutional power to wage war, leaving to Congress mainly the power to declare war and then finance it. The executive branch can act with the speed and decisiveness that a committee of 535 simply cannot do. Presidents can also be held directly accountable by voters in a way that a diffuse Congress (and especially the Supreme Court) cannot."

The Supreme Court (or at least the "fantastic five") is not the only source of confusion. Our system of nominating people through primary elections provides vast entertainment every two years. Senator Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.) is now being pressed hard by some neophyte millionaire businessman named Ned Lamont. Lieberman, in case you have forgotten, was the much-hailed Democratic vice presidential candidate in 2000. He has served three terms in the Senate and is a much-respected legislator. His one sin is not opposing the Iraq war.

A state-wide poll shows Lieberman getting 56 percent of the vote while Lamont gets just 18 — but that is only in a general election. Lieberman's problem is that the crazy fringe of both parties usually dominates primaries and he could lose if the primary has a low turnout and is dominated by one-issue voters. The fringe liberal blogs have also targeted Lieberman because they don't think the Democratic party has been hard enough on Bush. Hate to think what they would classify as "hard enough." So we look at a situation where 5% or 6% of the vot-



ers in a state could knock out Lieberman in favor of a guy who made billions in cable TV, but has no political experience. And you can forget the "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" bilge. Frank Capra was wrong. Ignorance of politics and government does not actually make you more honest or more effective — it just makes you dumb about government and politics.

Astronomers can be fun. The Sarasota Herald-Tribune reported, "A large asteroid hurtled harmlessly past the earth early Monday at a distance of about 269,000 miles — slightly farther away than the moon." The astronomers were quoted as believing that if it had hit the earth it would have destroyed several states. They didn't say whether it would be blue or red states but one would suspect that would be left to chance, as asteroids are neutral about such things.

You can be sure that if the asteroid wiped out several blue states, Rev. Pat Robertson would likely attribute it to God striking the secular democrats. If it wiped out some red states, Robertson would intone that it was God punishing them for not being conservative enough. If the asteroid happened to drop on Robertson, some might believe it was God punishing him for his significant contribution to the belief all Christians are idiots. It might also be taken as proof that God does have a sense of humor.

The National Education Association provides many moments of confusion. They are now actively opposing the No Child Left Behind program. The Herald-Tribune reported that, "Union leaders say the basic intentions of the program — quality schools and skilled teachers — are good. But the government's 'obsessive' focus on testing student skills and punishing failing schools undermines education . . ." I have to agree with them. Imagine high school without math tests, college without foreign language exams, law school without evidence or property exams. Another thing, why would you punish failing schools and incompetent teachers? Their only sin is to condemn generations of, mainly, poor kids to inferior education, an education which will condemn them to the lower rungs of employment for the rest of their

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