

December, 2003

Washington Post 12/31/1999, the Moon, and My Ass

Weird not rant. I came home and put some selected Christmas tunes on from my music service. As I was listening to someone sing about peace on Earth, I unfolded the newspaper scrap I use to polish my shoes on. Not thinking much of anything, I got ready to polish and buff. Then I noticed the headline of the whole page article (from the Washington Post, 12/13/1999), "Fear What's to be afraid of? Disease is on the run. Our borders are secure. The Devil is at bay. You are all going to die."

I can agree with the last assumption however the other three lead me to believe that these statements from the late 20th century were a bit off the mark.

Today is World AIDS Day (not to be confused with Congressional Aides Day). Articles published recently in the Washington Post, presumably to bring attention to this day and the current state of AIDS in the world, have noted that while certain countries, such as Uganda, have made great strides in treating and reducing the number of cases of AIDS in their country, other countries, including the United States see AIDS on the rebound with the number of cases per annum increasing.

9/11 Our borders are not secure. It will never be...we can only compromise to a level of security for a certain reasonable cost. Think overall odds here. Sure, if it is you or a relative or a good friend, it sucks. But the odds are it won't be. The Devil is at bay. Who is the Devil today? Saddam Hussein, Kim Chong Il, Burma, Jimmy Stewart, or Osama bin Laden? What are the chances of actually meeting the Devil (unless you are from Georgia). See previous comment.

Wish I had saved that section of the paper instead of using it as a drop cloth for shoe polish and brush bristles. Oh well. I remember that New years Eve fairly clearly since I stayed home by myself, had a couple of beers, and waited to see if all we had done in preparation for Y2K had been worth it. I went to work New years Day...everything looked fine and I never looked back...until today...while polishing my shoes.

You are going to die.

Okay

"Friends" Is an Example of U.S. Cultural Norms?

According to an online NY Times article dated 8 December, the TV show "Friends" is an example of U.S. cultural norms. In this article which covers Dell's decision to switch some of its corporate technical support to U.S. call centers instead of Indian call centers, they discuss the difficulties experienced operating call centers overseas. One issue is that workers do not understand U.S. customs so some customer service employees have been asked to "watch reruns of 'Friends' to acquaint themselves with the cultural norms of American consumers." It is bad enough that we are such a TV-oriented society and our youth is brainwashed. How could we let the rest of the world think that "Friends" is representative of American society?

Large Cache of Weapons and Ammo Found in Afghan Prison

According to the Washington Post on 8 December, in an article outlining the impact of recent attacks on the upcoming loya jirga, or constitutional assembly, authorities discovered a "large cache of weapons and ammunition in the Kandahar prison from which 41 Taliban detainees escaped in October." Who those authorities were is not clear nor is the significance of the escape. What is clear to me is that a "large cache of weapons and ammunition" was discovered in a prison. Who is running this prison? Why are there unexplained caches of weapons and ammo there? If you run a prison, aren't you supposed to know what is going on and what is located in your prison? Has this happened in the U.S. recently? Is there an unexplained "large cache of weapons and ammunition" in Leavenworth?

Brr

It is too cold to ride and I want to ride!

Office Coffee Mess Shenanigans

Why can't people make coffee in the office when it needs to be made? I only drink a few cups a week but invariably winding up making coffee. Today I went in twice to get coffee (one of those days!) and both times both pots were less than 20% full. So I got my cup filled, merged what was left into one pot, and made another. This takes less than a minute even when you rinse out both the pot and the bucket. What the diddlyo? Are we that busy that we can't make coffee for our coworkers? I am going to put an Internet cam in there to catch the frequent offenders and then deny them coffee privilege for a week or set it up so that whenever the coffee runs out over the course of one week they have to come and make the coffee!

High Security Facilities Still Using Floppy Disks?

According to my SANS (SysAdmin, Audit, Network, Security) Institute Newsletter, "A routine inventory of classified electronic storage media at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) found nine floppy disks and one large-capacity storage disk unaccounted for." Why in a national nuclear research laboratory are they still using floppy disks? This seems like a horrible security risk. Sure they are probably using some older computing devices, mainframes, etc. but don't they have a network that allows them to access the data they need with out putting it on a floppy disk? I recommend PC's with no floppy drives or some kind of diskless terminal. Cut the risk...drop the floppies!

Damn Broadband Disconnects

Well, I don't know if it is the holidays or what but my ISP has been less than reliable of late. I am hooked up with cable Internet access through Adelphia, formerly GS Communications, both of whom have had some growth problems and I am not talking about moles or cancer. Adelphia had been rock solid for months but now seems to disconnect me at least once a day. I come home from work and find that I have lost my connection and have to restart my router. Sure, it isn't much but it is annoying and should not be necessary. On Sunday, while doing some downloads I got disconnected about 10 times in 15 minutes. That is unsat!

Freakin' Holidays

This is a work related rant. On Christmas Eve, which I took off, we got off (paid whether salary or hourly) at 1230. Today, New Year's Eve, we got off at 1600. What kind of custom? Those of us who worked today and not Christmas Eve got the ass! Michael Jackson "Manhandled?"

According to the Agence France-Presse article published on www.news.com.au, Michael Jackson said he was "'manhandled' while in custody and locked in a feces-smearred restroom for 45 minutes after he asked to use the facilities." Gee...he wishes. Maybe now he understands how it feels to be victimized (I know, guilty until proven innocent). He's lucky he was not arrested and incarcerated in New York where they play "Hide the Salami" with a police baton. I wonder if he found the "feces familiar?"