Got Moon?

As backwards as we may think the Chinese are, being communists and all, they may have a colony on the moon in the not-too-distant future. While being the undisputed "winner" of the space race of the Kennedy era by landing a man on the moon, the U.S. space program has been largely ignored and its budget drastically cut since then. China, on the other hand, has plans beyond the milestone of a moon landing. In 2001, the Chinese Sheenzhou 2 spacecraft had carried a monkey, a dog, a rabbit, and some snails into space; they have a 90 percent success rate launching dozens of satellites; and are hoping for a moon landing by 2010. According to the BBC quoting Chinese officials, the ultimate goal of all this is "to set up a permanent base on the moon in order to make use of its rich resources."

I can’t say that I know what "rich resources" the Chinese think the moon is holding, but if they ever start a colony up there, I’ll be the first to sign up to learn Mandarin to increase my chances of going along.

I remember when we, in the U.S., had aspirations of colonizing other planets. Ten years ago, the highlight of Disney World for me was a ride that went through NASA’s plans for the colonization of the moon. It was all going to be done by the magic year 2000. So what do we aspire to now besides not being attacked by Muslim extremists and fixing our economic recession? What happened to all those plans? Did we find out it was impossible or did we just stop dreaming?

Kennedy’s dead, but our space program and our dreams of the possibilities don’t have to be. A colony on the moon in the 2010s is no less likely than putting a man on the moon was in the 1960s. The people in a country with a per capita income of about $2,700 are on their way to the moon. Where are the people of our country going, besides Iraq?

～ mjs

Wake Up, Stupid - Do Something

By Conrad Erb
Columnist

It’s not often that the Opinion pages have seen consistent input from a variety of cynics, prophets and pundits over a variety of issues. The recent analytical pieces by Grimsrud, Yoder, Jenner and other outspoken Caucasian males have made for a worthwhile exercise in critical thinking and rhetoric.

While our society needs a good prophet, however, so too does it need a good prophetess. Instead of writing my own words, I share the following excerpt from the senior show of former EMU theater student, Joanna Doyle.

Her words call our attention to the invisible intellectual canvas of our society, upon which we paint as we share our thoughts about any number of issues, from sexuality and the church, to Wal-Mart, to the American flag, to editorial integrity. He who has ears to hear, let him hear:

"Wake up, people! I am protesting stupidity! You think the issues are war, terrorism, AIDS, taxes, and oil drills? Think again. The media uses this stuff as eye-candy so we will all be distracted from the real issue: stupid-it-ty. We’re all trapped in a rat race man, and we aren’t even smart enough to eat the cheese once we get to the end. We just try to find the next maze.

I’m worried. Concerned that we don’t really understand anything. That we have been fooled into letting our brains deteriorate so that we can’t even form an opinion. Most of us don’t even bother to agree or disagree—we just go with the flow.

Georgie W. Bush summed it up perfectly as one of his press conferences: "I think if you know what you believe it makes it a lot easier to answer questions and I can’t answer your question." That was the best indicator of the state of the union that I’ve heard in a long time. And if that thought doesn’t make you too happy, then maybe you need to get your arse out there and find some answers for yourself.

Playing around in the middle of the road isn’t very smart. Whether you like it or not, suck it up, because eventually you gotta cross. And if you don’t you won’t get run over—you won’t get hurt—you just won’t matter.

You aren’t a pawn of your government. In fact, you ARE your government. For the people by the people. It’s sobering and it’s true. If you don’t like that then you better get up and do something about it because there are no guarantees that anyone else will. Why? Because they are all stupid! The middle of the road is full of idiots. And don’t think that spouting off some words will do the trick. You see where that got Bushy-boy.

Action - do something. And for heaven’s sakes, think before you do it. They want us to feel worthless, pathetic and small.

I don’t care about the war on terrorism. It’s stupid. All I care about are the brain cells that are out there blowin’ in the wind without a home.

Claim your brain, man! It’s about time for human beings to get smart about something—themselves. You get me? Wake up man! This is stupid!

That’s all I got to say."
As do I.
Troops Can’t Just Leave

By Drew Roynon
Columnist

I am a Republican. I voted for George Bush when he was elected President. I supported military action in Afghanistan. I supported military action in Iraq. I listen to Rush Limbaugh in the afternoons, and watch Fox news. I was disappointed when Rush resigned from ESPN and even more so to his admitted pain killer addiction.

I supported the California recall, not on strict party grounds, but because it was the right thing to do. I tell you this now so that you, as the reader, will know exactly where I am coming from, and what my personal bias is.

While I was sitting here trying to decide what to write this article on, several things came to mind: the difference between Clinton and Bush’s misinformation, the difference between Limbaugh and Clinton’s discrepancies, and even the California recall. Through all of this, I kept coming back to one issue, Iraq.

Surrounding this issue are many questions, however, did President Bush lie to the American public in those few words that have now become controversial? I tell you this now; he lied no more than any other President has done when confronted with the information given him. These United States and the United Kingdom have a history of sharing information for mutual benefit.

Also, no President can afford to not trust his intelligence, because no matter what we think about the presidency, it is determined by what information he has, which is edited by those that receive it and classify it before he can ever look at it.

The next question is: Was going into Iraq justified? I would say yes. Saddam Hussein has killed his own people for his weapons research, and that by itself (killing his people, not necessarily the weapons) is more than enough reason for military action.

Remember, it was just a few short years ago that we sent our troops into Kosovo for genocide. Kennedy sent troops to Vietnam to keep it from changing governments, and we still have troops stationed around the world in places that the U.S. has gone into for less than what Saddam ever did. Now, none of this justifies a military action, but it does establish historical precedence.

The big question: Are (were) there weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? None that we have found…yet. However, there is concrete evidence that there were programs in place to make both chemical and biological weapons that were unknown to the U.N. These include over two dozen labs hidden in Iraq that had banned equipment. Others include Iraqi scientists taking their work home with them. This includes keeping botulinum toxin (to learn more, Google search it), anthrax, and others, along with equipment, technology, diagrams and documents in their own homes. That is just the start. There is much more going on there than what most people realize.

The most pressing question is should we spend $87 billion on Iraq? Yes, it is our responsibility to make sure that we have not destroyed this country and then fled while it was in ruins because of what we did to it.

This means that we need to rebuild Iraq, make sure that a government is set up, and make sure it can stand on its own before we pull our troops out. Democratic Presidential hopeful, Rep. Dennis Kucinich (OH) wants to pull our troops out now. This is unacceptable. We cannot cut and run. To do so would hurt our image even more, and the U.S. cannot afford to lose any more face than it already has. Another hopeful, Carol Moseley Braun wants to leave Iraq with honor, which sounds a little like the peace with honor that Nixon wanted before he pulled our troops out of Vietnam.

I must say now that using Rep. Kucinich (from my home state) and Fmr. Sen. Braun as examples is not intended to imply that Fmr. Sen. Braun is in any way like the late Richard Nixon, nor that Rep. Kucinich would not make a good President. They were merely examples.

In closing, I urge the student body to keep this issue in mind, whether you are for or against this President, administration, or this $87 billion military expenditure. Because if we do not, we run the risk of having troops there indefinitely, and basically forgotten, like those in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

As we are all aware, some of the issues that we as a community at EMU have been facing have turned into discussions where we do not all see eye to eye. I have great concern for what goes on at EMU and also believe the student newspaper can be a significant factor in the reflection of the campus. This being said, there is obviously reason for concern.

However, it is not the disagreements on the issues that concern me the most anymore, but the way people on opposite sides interact as a result to show what they believe. As people debate and go back and forth, it seems that something has been missing in the process.

While I have pondered this, a song with the words "Life without Jesus is like a donut, with a hole in the middle of your heart" has come to mind. Now don’t jump to a bunch of conclusions where I think people don’t have Jesus, I just believe the concept needs to be put more in the middle of what we are about and how we interact with each other in search of the truth. This includes hearing out each other’s viewpoints by filling our hearts with the love, spirit and understanding of God.

At times this may come in the form of criticism, but it must be respectful criticism (backstabbing, goading, and sarcasm don’t seem to usually work very well).

In the Mennonite environment where we interact, we are at times quick to bash our government and the decisions made on a global level, particularly with Bush when he rushed into war in Iraq while refusing to listen to the rest of the international community. Do we possess the same closed-mindedness and jump to conclusions while failing to truly listen to another’s point of view?

If you get the chance to go curse at Bush about his decisions straight to his face, do you think he will really respect you and listen? We must show respect in the way we conduct ourselves no matter what the differences as we deal with other individuals, which is something President Brubaker stressed in an announcement to our university. This has not always happened based on our own silly conduct that has been put on public display within the EMU community.

We are all in this together as a community and we are all a part of the solution whether left-wing or right-wing, Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative. We must learn to meet people where they are at by listening to them without continually stepping on each other’s toes. May we unite spiritually, not take ourselves so seriously, have some fun, eat some donuts, and look to God, His purpose, and His truth to fill the holes that exist, for the Truth will set us free.

Joe Friesen

Letter to the Editors:
We Are In This Together

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Joe Friesen

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Have a comment? Send it to emunews@emu.edu along with the professor’s name and class.