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Why are you all so eager?

As I've walked around campus recently, every so often the same comment comes to the fore.

"We should just kick Saddam's ass and get it over with."

We should what?

Look, I know I'm not the greatest when it comes to politics and all, but am I missing something here? Why are people talking about war like a football game? This is not something that should be taken so lightly, folks.

This is war we're talking about.

I've asked a couple of people about the Persian Gulf War over the past month or so, just to see what people remember about it. The reactions I get are usually the same.

"Oh, we lost a couple of people over there, but it had to be done."

What had to be done?

"Well, we had to put Saddam Hussein in his place."



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George Clinton and his P-Funk friends have it. Isaac Hayes found the magic again. Paul "Heavy P." Sanderford showed cable subscribers that the concept eludes him.

Chumbawamba think they have it in a drunken Englishmen sort of way.

Figured out what I'm alluding to?

Funk.

James Brown may have invented it, but lately I've been wallowing in it.

Ever since classes began, it's been like my brain has decided to stay on vacation. In the last two weeks, my brain has been farting so much that I'm beginning to think my landlord has signed up for a new water service based out of Tijuana.

Here's a little sampler of my follies:

After my friend Erin graciously followed me into a class to let me know that I forgot to lock up my bicycle after our conversation outside of Andrews Hall, I repaid her by breaking off the key to her car's ignition in the door lock — stranding a group of us at Mahoney State Park last Sunday. Who ever heard of separate keys for the ignition and locks? Stupid Mr. Chevy; I hope your grave is nice and cold this winter.

Then there's the lapse of consciousness that had me believe that selling plasma was a good idea. After I stumbled home, I put a frozen pizza in the oven but became so enamored with the "Rockford Files" that I completely forgot about it until the flames from the kitchen started nipping at my toes as I lay prone on the couch.

It was then I realized being in a funk is a lot like having an erotic fantasy about Martha Stewart. You have to find a way to snap out of it before it kills you.

I found the exit from Funksville in my mailbox.

Mr. Stafford had arrived.

Yahoo for free money. Or at least money that can be repaid years from now at a very low interest rate. That Mr. Stafford is such a neat guy. Twice a year he gives me much more money than needed to finance my education and twice a year I live like a rock star.

I hit the town with a big fat bank

In his place? A couple of people? There were 148 people killed in action, 121 in non-hostile actions.

This is the official account according to the government. 249 people — dead. Of the 148 killed in action, the Pentagon estimated that somewhere between 24 to 31 percent of them were due to "friendly fire."

"We still had to do it."

Had to do what? Fight a war over oil prices to give our military something to do and then broadcast the whole thing across the globe?

It is estimated that more than 100,000 Iraqi soldiers died.

More than 100,000 — dead.

I am convinced the price of oil had more than a little to do with it, but I'm also convinced that the military just needed something to do. The Cold War is supposedly over, with the collapse of the U.S.S.R., and here we are with this huge military that has nothing to do. So we find a conflict, decide to get involved and then escalate the thing as much as possible.

Or simply let Saddam do it.

Our fatality numbers look small

in comparison to theirs, obviously, but think of the families of each one of those 249 people. Do you want to try and look them in the eye and tell them that their sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, died over the price of oil?

My opinions aren't always popular ones, I'm more than aware of that, but I find it very hard to comprehend anyone saying they "understand" why we "had" to be over there the first time. Small countries are taken over every day. Revolutions, assassinations, hostile assimilation — it's like the business world only more savage. And the majority of the time, we don't get involved.

But this time we did, and we made a big deal about it. Look at us, we're the mighty U.S. of A. and we're righting the wrongs of the world. Let's get over ourselves, shall we? The army is, in principle, there to defend us from invasion. Anyone remember the last time we were invaded? Anyone?

Don't go thinking I don't want an army. I understand and respect the place of the military, but we don't

need to go force feeding our lifestyle down everyone's throat. We want to push our lives, our culture, our ideas and our concepts onto people in other countries until they want to be part of the American dream because we've convinced them there is nothing better.

It's funny how we aren't trying to shove democracy onto everyone, just the countries of "strategic importance." I think we need to start minding our own damn business.

Inevitably, someone reading this column is going to say "But what about Hitler?!"

Sigh.

Yes, what about Hitler? I know, according to the history books, Hitler didn't seem like a giant problem at first and later he was a threat to the world. Had we stopped him early, the war wouldn't have been anywhere near as difficult as it was.

So what?

Just because we have a military doesn't mean we have to go sending it everywhere we can. Had we stopped Hitler early, we would have been overstepping our bounds by a

lot. There are hundreds of dictators across the world, even today.

When the decimation of people began, and Hitler began expanding quickly into other countries, we knew enough was enough. We waited until Germany had invaded Poland, Denmark, Norway, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Greece and Yugoslavia before we got involved.

We waited, as we should have. We had problems of our own to work out before we went and dealt with somebody else's problems. We should do the same now.

There are more than 23,000 Americans in the Persian Gulf right now, waiting for Saddam to make a move of some kind. CNN's calling it the "Standoff with Iraq" and if we go to war again, it'll be televised just like the last one.

We'll be righting wrongs, just like we did during the last one, and everyone can see that on television — but don't believe everything your TV tells you. Don't even believe me: Go find out for yourself.

Media wars still have fatalities.

Big bullies

America needs to take time with Iraq

In a funk

Animal adoption helps break semester blahs

account and a hankering to bust out of my funk. My first major purchase was something I normally couldn't afford with my serf-like wage from the DN: a large Slurpee. But that didn't do the trick, so I decided that the way to bust out would be to revel in the misfortune of others.

I loitered for hours outside the Folsom Children's Zoo hoping that the train would start to run and thereby derail sending zoo patrons into a funk worse than mine. According to "Real TV," zoo train derailment is an everyday occurrence.

But then I saw a sign. Not from God, but from the zoo. It read, "Adopt a Piece of the Wild."

"Yo, zookeep, can you really adopt an animal? I've always wanted a monkey that I could get in excrement fights with."

"Yes and no," said the astonished Ranger Rick impersonator.

He handed me a brochure that I pretended I knew how to read.

Later that night, as my mail-order bride from Cuba (hey, Castro had to pay for the Pope's visit somehow) tucked me into bed, she read the brochure.

"Now you can join the *Adopt a Piece of Wild* program and help us meet the challenge of providing care for the hundreds of animals that make our family at the Folsom Children's Zoo and Botanical Gardens. Although you won't find a leopard or a baboon at your dinner table, you will find a rewarding experience for you and your family."

With prices that range from \$25 for a porcupine to \$1,000 for a Persian leopard, adopting an animal has many benefits including: a photograph of the adoptee, a real adoption certificate, and a "face-to-face" meeting with your adopted family member.

What a cool concept. Adopting my own animal is the perfect idea for someone who has money burning a hole in their pocket. Besides, it would be much cooler than a GigaPet. What to adopt? Seals are cute; so are river otters. A two-toed sloth would be really boring, as would a pygmy goat. A New Guinea singing dog that sounds a lot like Pavarotti would be fun, but it's also \$250.

With my funds from Mr. Stafford running dry, I found my animal in the \$25 section. I never knew that shipping a person from Cuba could be so darn expensive.

Today, I received a photo of my adoptee in the mail. He's a lovely gila monster with a healthy smile and a wide neck. I've named him Ivan in honor of the Russian immigrant whose donation at the sperm depository made my birth a reality. I hope my little gila monster will do my mystery dad justice. My mom said his jar was labeled "Nuclear Physicist," so I'm sure my outcome would be a bit of a surprise to him.



MATT HANEY/DN