

## C O M M E N T A R Y

## Ignore opinions—Dan Rather was no liberal

By George E. Curry  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

When Dan Rather stepped down this week after 24 years as anchor of "CBS Evening News," he was frequently characterized as a liberal. However, a review of Rather's career shows that, if anything, he was more conservative than his counterparts at NBC and ABC.

The idea that Rather was politically liberal can be traced to a testy 1974 press conference exchange he had with President Richard M. Nixon. At the National Association of Broadcasters convention in Houston, Nixon called on Rather to ask a question.

When he did, there was a burst of applause for the hometown boy who had made good. Nixon, in an awkward attempt to be humorous, asked: "Are you running for something?" Rather quickly retorted, "No, Sir, Mr. President. Are you?"

Five months later, Rather was replaced on the White House beat by Bob Schieffer who, ironically, is sitting in Rather's seat until the network decides on the format and person or persons to be involved in the post-Rather newscast.

In the meantime, the perception exists in many quarters that Rather is a political liberal. As usual, the excellent researchers at Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) have examined Rather's broadcasts, and they

have arrived at a different conclusion. In a report on its website, www.fair.org, the organization reveals: "...The notion that Rather has used his CBS platform to disseminate left-wing propaganda over the last two decades does not hold up to scrutiny." FAIR scrutinized the broadcasts of ABC, NBC and CBS, which remains stuck in third place.

"If Rather were indeed liberal—or just more liberal than his network competitors—one would think that the CBS Evening News would include more critical perspectives in its newscast, particularly during a Republican administration," the report says.

"But FAIR's study of guests and sources appearing during coverage of the Iraq war (3/20/03—4/9/03) actually found that Rather's broadcast had the highest percentage of official U.S. sources (75 percent) and the lowest number (less than one percent) of U.S. anti-war voices.

"A FAIR study of all the network broadcasts in 2001 found that CBS Evening News had the most Republicans and the fewest Democrats (76 percent vs. 23 percent). The difference between CBS and the other networks was slim, but such analysis belies the



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notion that Rather's network—or any of the others—have a liberal bias." Rather did not show any favoritism toward civil rights leaders, especially Jesse Jackson.

During the 1993 Democratic National Convention, Rather said: "There have always been two Jesse Jacksons. There's Jesse the radical, who preaches rage and Black separ-

atism. That Jesse Jackson has always angered Whites.

And there's Jesse the self-promoter, who preaches desegregation and compromise." Jesse Jackson, a Black separatist? That wasn't true in 1993 or in 2003 or at any other time.

By contrast, Rather provided fawning coverage of Ronald Reagan's death. On June 5, 2004, he said on CBS Evening News that Reagan "was the great communicator, yes. But he was also a master at communicating greatness. He understood that, as he once put it, 'History is a ribbon always unfurling,' and managed to convey his vision in terms of both simple and poetic. And so he was able to act as a conduit to connect us to who we had been and who we could be."

Reagan's White House image makers couldn't have been more effusive in their

praise. The retiring CBS anchor created what has become known as Ratherisms, such as: "In Southern states they beat him like a rented mule." And, "If a frog had side pockets, he'd carry a handgun."

Beneath such cornball is a biased journalist, a self-admitted bias tilted in favor of those in power, not progressive ideas or movements.

In an appearance on CBS's "Late Show with David Letterman" (9/17/01), Rather, who retired a year early because he used fake documents about President Bush's service in the National Guard, said: "George Bush is president. He makes the decisions, and, you know, it's just one American, wherever he wants me to line up, just tell me where. And he'll make the call."

Equally troubling was a speech he gave at Harvard University last July 25. Rather said, "Look, when a president of the United States, any president, Republican or Democrat, says these are the facts, there is a heavy prejudice, including my own, to give him the benefit of any doubt, and for that I do not apologize."

Anyone who called Dan Rather a liberal owes all of us an apology.

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## Bush-leaguers running circles around minor leaguers

By James Clingman  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Used as jargon name for the minor leagues in baseball, the term "bush-league" has sunk to a new low. The term was originally used to point out unpolished manners, ignorance and the lack of class. Interestingly, bush-league is commonly used in baseball parlance and can also be used as a pun for the president's actions.

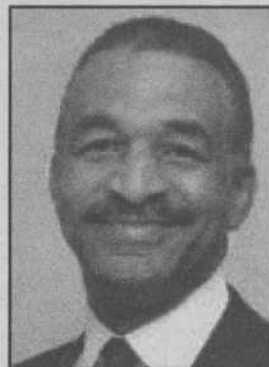
Further, George Bush once owned a professional baseball team, and now he "thinks" he owns this country and a major portion of the world. His actions as a baseball team owner—and as president—give credence and new meaning to the derogatory term "bush-league." We can start with that Bush-league budget proposal sent to Congress? More money for the warmongers and profiteering corporate thieves like Halliburton, KBR, Custer Battles, and other shell companies formed by the Bushites, with less money going to the poor, the disabled and this country's veterans.

"Social Security is in a crisis," reminis-

cent of the WMD scare, is yet another Chicken Little, Bush-League tactic. Two things could be done to assure Social Security's stability: Make members of Congress and the President enroll in the system and have their benefits dependent upon it. The crisis would be over in a heartbeat; they would make sure of that. Second, raise the cap on earnings from \$90,000 to, let's say, \$125,000.

Oh yeah, now we're talking. The lies and deceit just keep on coming, folks. Remember how quickly Bush did his best impersonation of the Apostle Peter when his buddy Armstrong Williams got his tail caught in the wringer? It was Rod Paige's fault! I knew nothing about it! Yeah, right, George.

Bernard Kerik... "We didn't know about his background," was the message sent out to the masses from the White House. Kerik is the same guy Bush put in charge of training



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police in Iraq; sure he didn't know about Kerik's background. What a joke! Has anyone heard from Kerik's mentor, Rudi Giuliani, lately?

Alberto "Speedy" Gonzales and Condoleezza Rice... Gonzales said Bush has the right to detain folks without due process and it's alright to torture them while they're in custody, too. He'll make a good A.G. won't he? Condi, as she is affectionately called by her "husband" (she said it; I didn't), George W., just a few months ago, was soaring right up there with the rest of the hawks, like Rumsfeld and Cheney. She now has the interesting job of playing the dove, and making peace with those she denigrated, intimidated and lied to. Some say she is well qualified for the job; she had better be.

Oh yeah, only now that Condi has been confirmed and the presidential "selection" has been made do we find out about memos and strategies regarding Al Qaeda and its

plans to fly airplanes into tall buildings. But didn't we already know they knew? Richard Clark told us.

What about that mysterious energy policy over which our "vice" president presided? As we now hear tapes of Enron executives laughing about ripping their customers off, we might have vague memories of Cheney saying he would not release the records of his meetings with his energy buddies. As the definition of Bush-league states, "unpolished manners, ignorance, and the lack of class," this Bush definitely meets the criteria.

Manners? Why would any news reporter want to be in the White House Press Corps, (unless your name is Jeff Gannon, or Jim Guckert, or whatever his name is) and ask questions that are never answered, and be insulted and disrespected by Bush during his so-called press conferences? In his last one, Bush allowed one Black female, two White females, and about ten White males to ask questions he never answered. Bush's tone was arrogant and his responses were condescending; the reporters just sat there and took it. They should have walked out in protest, but that would take backbone, wouldn't it?

Ignorance? Well, if you heard Bush's definition of "tribal sovereignty," as he related it to a group of journalists, you would know exactly what I mean. Say what? You have more evidence of his ignorance? You say he knew nothing about the extension of the Voting Rights Act that comes up in 2007? No-o-o-o! Get outta here!

No-bid contracts, Ahmed Chalabi, Abu Ghraib, Jessica Lynch, illegal kickbacks, cost overruns, billions in cash unaccounted for, "bring 'em on," smart bombs and dumb children, denials, lies, deceit, Afghanistan heroin, gasoline price hikes, just say "No" to the Kyoto Protocols. What's left? Oh yeah, gay

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## La Grande

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in 2006.

These budget cuts serve to obscure more than they reveal. Since Bush took office in January 2001, drug abuse has skyrocketed. Hospital emergency cases resulting from illicit drug use rose by 70,000 (led by increases of 30,000 for cocaine and methamphetamine), and drug abuse deaths rose by 2500 to record peaks for 2003.

These cuts could be one of the President's stupidest mistakes. As crime rises there won't be enough police on the street to arrest the guy that murdered your loved one, invaded your home or mugged you at knife-point.

There will be minors in juvenile hall that, instead of learning what it takes to become a productive citizen in society with a clean record, just bide their time and then become the person who mugs you or rapes you at gunpoint when they are 21 or 25.

There will be even more methamphetamine labs cropping up all over the country, drug abuse cases will continue to increase, and drug overdoses will achieve record highs.

Thank you, Mr. President; we feel much safer knowing that you care so much about our communities and the people that live in them. So much that you are willing to pull our safety net from under us.

This is the last article in a series of articles on the proposed Bush budget cuts and the impact it is going to have on Americans—and specifically African-Americans in some cases.

The intent is to inform, mobilize and hopefully call to action all Americans who will be affected. We have an opportunity to thwart some of these cuts, but we must take the next step and let our requests be known to our representatives.

Here in Nevada, you can start by contacting Senator Harry Reid, Senator John Ensign, Congresswoman Shelley Berkley, Congressmen Jim Gibbons and Jon Porter.