

Just a thought...

by Joanne Barr

It's the beginning of another year and I would guess many of us have talked about the resolutions we plan to make and hope to keep.

Perhaps we have decided to lose weight, stop smoking, make more money, or get better marks. Making resolutions is easy — keeping them is not. The things we resolve to do — or not do — generally involve the most difficult, unsolvable problems in our lives, or bad habits which have taken years to develop.

Perhaps rather than talking about New Year resolutions and the promises we hope to keep, we might focus our attention on the quality of time. It seems it was just yesterday the World Trade Center tragedy took place and we were changed forever, yet life goes on. We need to find ways to live life fruitfully and optimistically. This year might go by as quickly... will it be a productive one? A happy one? Will it be one in which we get closer to our families, one another? Or will this year be one which

will find us just going through the paces of living? The answer to these questions will depend on the choices we make and how well we use this time.

Time is Mine

I stand and hold a new year in my hand,
'Tis mine to do with as I will,
To waste or throw away as running sand,
Or maybe just with idle thoughts to fill.
I'd rather take this gift of precious time,
And do each task ahead with joyful heart.
A moment lost will not again be mine;
Time comes to me, but then will soon depart.

A thought of good or kindly deed, though small,
Along with greater duties to fulfill,
Will help to make these useful hours in all
A happy perfect year, if I so will.
Let Time unfold a carpet to be trod;
This wonderful year is my own gift from God.

E. Lois Duke

It's just a thought....

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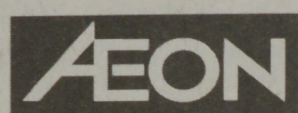
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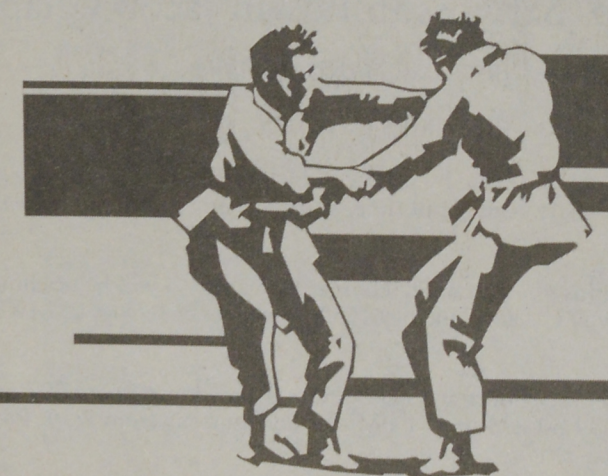
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When plagiarism and dishonesty pay off

by Jonathan Margulies
The Daily Pennsylvanian

(U-WIRE) PHILADELPHIA — When Mike Barnicle was a Metro columnist for The Boston Globe, few other writers could match his wit or his ability to tell a story. Few could craft such dynamic messages out of such simple language. And no one could boast a relationship like the one he shared with readers.

Like clam chowder and Fenway Park, Barnicle was something of a Boston institution. He was a straight shooter, a from-the-gut kind of guy who wrote simply and passionately about the things Bostonians cared about. He was popular with the lawyer, the teacher and the construction worker alike, and at the tail end of his 25-year tenure at the Globe, he even saw his renown expand into the national spotlight, fed by appearances on MSNBC and Don Imus' morning radio program.

Sure, concerns were frequently raised about the veracity of his tales, but most of the criticism didn't stick. Barnicle's free-flowing style, after all, lent itself to the occasional bit of hyperbole, and in hundreds of columns over two dozen years, not one claim of plagiarism or outlandishness ever really dented his reputation.

But that all came crashing down in 1998, when a few verses from one of Barnicle's columns suspiciously mimicked those from a book by the comedian George Carlin. Public debate grew intense, and the Globe's phone lines were soon clogged with messages from thousands of angry readers — some calling for Barnicle's dismissal, others demanding he stay at the paper.

An internal investigation ensued, and the Globe's editors eventually asked their superstar columnist to resign, his career in shambles and his good name ruined by a few instances of careless, irresponsible, maybe even malicious journalism.

Or was it?

Unfortunately, it seems that Barnicle's story is now being played out yet again.

This time, the plagiarist is Stephen Ambrose, a widely-respected historian, author and World War II expert who, like Barnicle, is admired for his lyrical yet simple prose. The victim, along with millions of readers, is Thomas Childers, the University of Pennsylvania's mild-mannered history professor and also an author of several books about World War II.

But this time, the circumstances are noticeably different.

On Sunday, Weekly Standard Executive Editor Fred Barnes first broke the news that Ambrose's bestseller "The Wild Blue" contains passages nearly identical to those in Childers' 1995 book "Wings of Morning." Just two days later, Ambrose released a sweeping,

gracious apology — in which he acknowledged his fault and pledged to rectify the situation.

Today, even though evidence has surfaced suggesting Ambrose has plagiarized before, talk of his journalistic crime has all but vanished from the popular dialogue.

No virulent clashes on the talk shows and commentary pages. No impassioned pleas for justice or truth or mercy. Just one irrefutable accusation. One quiet apology. And one controversy quieted before it even began.

Certainly, that's a credit to the character of Ambrose and the professionalism of Childers, who said only that he was "disappointed" to see his words under another byline. But more significantly — and more unfortunately — the Barnicle case and others prove that this kind of absolution has become all too typical when high-profile figures steal the words of others.

Barnicle, after all, never really suffered the trauma of a broken career after his plagiarism was revealed. More than three years later, in fact, he's now arguably an even more popular commentator than before. His television program, "Barnicle," recently ended its run on MSNBC. He hosts two different radio shows and, ironically, his column-writing skills have found a home in a bigger city with (possibly) an even more passionate lot of readers. He now writes for the New York Daily News.

Delaware Sen. Joseph Biden has also had his own bout with intellectual

treachery. In 1988, he was caught stealing words from the speeches of dead politicians for his own use. Fourteen years later, he remains the First State's senior senator, as well as a leading figure in the Democratic Party.

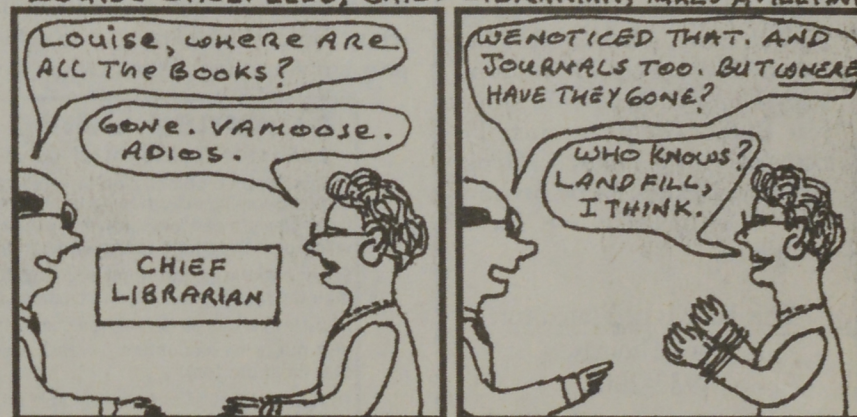
No doubt, the fate that met Barnicle, Biden and others awaits Ambrose. Future editions of his book (which he claims will be corrected to reflect Childers' contributions) will no doubt record higher sales. HBO will continue to rerun episodes of the miniseries "Band of Brothers," which one of his books inspired. And at colleges and universities across America, students whose syllabi still (regrettably) include Ambrose's works will go on reading without missing a beat.

From one perspective, that's a testament to the forgiving nature of the American information consumer. But it's also a sad commentary on the value those same consumers place on truth, integrity and honor. Had Stephen Ambrose written a plagiarized version of "The Wild Blue" for a class at Penn, he would likely have been expelled. Had Thomas Childers witnessed a similar act in the confines of his own classroom, he likely would have taken steps beyond expressing his simple "disappointment."

But alas, such a fate just does not await Ambrose. He will go on writing books. Mike Barnicle will keep flashing his mug on MSNBC. And the rest of us will go on, waiting for the next moving storyteller, waiting for the next opportunity to forgive someone.

IVORY TOWERS

LOUISE SHELFLESS, CHIEF LIBRARIAN, TAKES A MEETING



DOC

Ground zero - a new frontier

by Duncan Teater
Indiana Daily Student

(U-WIRE) BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — "Are you going to visit Ground Zero?"

It was the first question out of my grandmother's mouth. I was visiting with her before leaving on a Christmas trip to New York City. I was shocked that she asked, since she's the same person who refused to take me to see "Schindler's List." "I lived through all of that," she told me. Grandma is not one to dwell on morbidity.

When I came home from the Big Apple, my stepfather immediately asked if I had seen Ground Zero. My mother also asked about it after expressing her dismay at the plans for viewing platforms that will enable on-lookers to get a better view of the disaster site. She spoke solemnly about the religious quiet she experienced at the Pearl Harbor memorial, and of her fear that the viewing platforms in New York would become a commercial mockery of that kind of experience.

"Devastation! Brought to you by the proud Americans at Acme insurance!"

Arriving before the viewing platforms had been constructed, I had to settle with the street level view. It was awful. But to be honest, it was no worse than the photos we've all been digesting for the past several months. The fact of the matter is that an enormous skyscraper complex in the financial district of New York was demolished by two large passenger planes. In the process, thousands were killed. And the dust of the destruction can still catch in your throat.

With an active imagination, that's all the information you need.

The only startling revelation is how far you can see. Normally, in Manhattan you have to crane your neck to take a look at the sky, and the buildings are so close together that it often feels like a cloister of concrete.

But now, turning the corner onto a

blocked-off-block filled with police cars and memorials, you can glimpse a space that seems as wide open as the prairies must have felt for early pioneers.

That's really what Ground Zero is: the last remaining patch of American frontier. We've won the West and walked the moon. Who would have thought that the last bit of undiscovered country would open up in the middle of the most developed, settled plot of land in the entire U.S. of A.? It's a landscape of uncertainty and fear, and just as rugged as the one crossed by the settlers, the gold diggers and the Oakes.

We Americans have such a mixed history with frontiers. We stole one from the natives, settled it with slaves and killed uncounted Chinese and Irishmen in the

process of tying it together with railroads. We've had a bit more luck with the medical and technological frontiers, but there have been serious glitches. Thousands of uninsured children. "Temptation Island."

A frontier is a space of possibility. It can be filled in any number of ways. Right now, a myopic man-hunt for Osama bin Laden is distracting us from contemplating the possibilities. After that, it will be hard not to confront the emptiness in New York. Do we want to fill it with the same greed and hubris that drove Manifest Destiny? Or will we approach this new horizon differently, committed to resettling our country and our culture on the backs of ideals, not the backs of men and women?

Call it a New Year's resolution.

Media circus could prejudice trial

Staff Editorial
The Lantern

(U-WIRE) COLUMBUS, Ohio — Federal officials are opposed to the requests made by Zacarias Moussaoui, the "20th hijacker" charged with conspiracy in connection to the Sept. 11 attacks, that his trial be televised live.

As we sat glued to our televisions on that fateful day, we can never forget the images burned into our minds of jetliners smashing into the twin towers. Or the flames. Or the smoldering, twisted wreckage of the aftermath. Now America needs to see justice done.

However, we feel a decision to televise this trial would be an unwise and premature reaction.

In an ideal world, the trial should be televised. Proponents of the idea feel that even though cameras are typically banned from federal courts, surely this trial must be an exception.

There are many good reasons to televise Moussaoui's trial. The United States could demonstrate to the throngs demonstrating in streets around the world that the principles of freedom and

equality will not be vanquished by grief, by fear, or by vengeance.

A fair and honest trial with the world as its audience should naturally convince the poor and suffering that fanatics who preach the politics of hate and propaganda are the true "Great Satan."

Unfortunately, the world we live in is far from ideal.

We feel a decision to televise Moussaoui's trial would ultimately be a bad idea. The distraction caused by a case of such magnitude would do more to hinder the principles of freedom and equality than to protect them.

We feel the most important issue is Moussaoui receive a fair and constitutional trial.

A media frenzy will make this an insurmountable challenge for jurors, who will most likely have their hands full deciphering largely subjective evidence. Conspiracy cases are already complicated by nature; the pressure and distraction that comes with camera crews will only exacerbate that problem. A lack of cameras doesn't mean a lack of information — reporters will still be there — but only a lack of bias.