

Trees, People and Patriotism

On the day that our National Guard contingents left for Iraq, I got the largest flag I could find on the longest pole I could hold and waved it hard. Lately someone has been installing American flags on cliffs above carved out highways in Jefferson County. Holes that had been drilled for dynamite are holding inch & 7/8 hemlock poles perfectly. Star Lumber donated the poles to the patriot/perpetrator.

I don't know much beyond the outer limbs of trees, yet this one thought may keep your head attached to the neck.... Whoever is more radical about their god and cause, whether good or evil wins...sometimes for long durations.

I'm proud of the patriotic displays that Keith Eldridge, clerk at Hillsboro's post office puts up. This was worth reading again, and again.

When in England at a fairly large conference, Collin Powell was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury if our plans for Iraq were just another example of empire building by George Bush. He answered, "Over the years the United States has sent its fine young men and women into great peril to fight for freedom beyond our borders. The only amount of land we have ever asked for in return is enough to bury those that did not return." It was very silent in the room.

Last July 4th a tree client sent my family to Jerusalem. Sitting outside our hotel with a cup of Arabian Coffee and looking across the Kidron valley, I spied the large concrete wall winding ...the wall that on the front page of the

Jerusalem Post I was reading of all of Europe condemning.

I was glad for that wall. We strolled in markets where innocent families were blown up by people sent by nations of millions surrounding, whose mission statements are Israel's annihilation. Jerusalem is a first target and prize, but we also are listed in such strategic goals.

Think of this. If one busload of Americans were incinerated, the whole country would be outraged. Multiply that by 50 buses, coffee shops and market places and put that in a five-year span of time into a state the size of New Jersey with the population of Missouri... Not very long ago our whole east coast was in lockdown for fear of just two deranged snipers who killed 13 people.

It was comforting to see young men and women in Jerusalem in coffee shops and markets with Uzi submachine guns strapped on their persons. "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me".

I believe we have a short window of time to remember where we came from, why we're here and where our nation is going or someone/something else will.

This winter Frank Rolland, Hillsboro's mayor, catching me outside that patriotic post office exclaimed...

"Phil you should see the list of things the ACLU warned me I can't do about Christmas in a letter they sent me"

O YEA I SAY?! Outlaw Christmas, Remove the pledge Of Allegiance, our "In God We Trust", and someone will have to take brick hammers to rotundas in every capital of this country. Their marble ceilings and stone arches are all engraved with Bible verses and last I looked, still flying American flags.