

Season for raw lies, misrepresentation is here

It's already going on, the airing of political campaign ads that say or show ugly things about the opponent. Most disturbing so far was the ad picked up by the TV news commentators that showed the face of Adolph Hitler morphing into the face of President Bush.

The Republican National Committee said the ad came from *MoveOn.org*. That group issued a disclaimer. (The ad had not been released by *MoveOn.org*, but it had been submitted to a contest run by that organization. *MoveOn* is an Internet political group that wants to see Bush defeated in November.) In spite of the disclaimer, the Republican ranting went on about dirty campaign tactics. The anger was understandable, considering the awful implications of linking Bush to Hitler.

But then, surprise! The Democrats pulled out a TV ad that had been effectively used by the Republican campaign of Saxby Chambliss before the 2002 election to discredit Democratic Sen. Max Cleland of Georgia. That offensive ad showed the face of Osama bin Laden morphing into Max Cleland's face. I had not seen that before, and I went apoplectic. Cleland is a long-time friend and, much more than that, he is a Vietnam War veteran who lost both his legs and one arm in battle. How could anyone put out a TV commercial imply-



Antoinette Bosco

The Bottom Line

ing this man is not patriotic! Oh yes, Cleland lost that election.

I met Cleland many years ago when he was addressing a rehabilitation agency dedicated to helping people with disabilities gain independence. Cleland, who had been head of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs under President Carter and was at that time secretary of state in Georgia, was so perfectly qualified for that task.

He talked openly about the day that changed his life — Vietnam, April 8, 1968 — when a grenade explosion left him a triple amputee, but "lucky to be alive."

"Not many people believed that a 25-year-old former Army captain, losing two legs and one arm, could do much after that," he told me.

He spoke honestly of the years after suffering those terrible wounds when he had to pull his life together. He would become so discouraged that he would think "doing the right thing

is ending it all."

He realized then that people who have extraordinary setbacks "have to dig down deeper — to discover more courage" than normally is needed. "Before Vietnam I thought courage was the absence of fear," he said. He learned instead, that courage is accepting fear and turning to prayer so that you can now "focus on opportunity in the face of danger to take disabilities and turn them into possibilities, to turn your scars into stars."

Cleland wrote a book about his journey back to life. Its title, *Strong at the Broken Places*, is from a line in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*: "The world breaks everyone and afterwards many are strong at the broken places." I remember being awed, even by the fact that Cleland had traveled by himself from Georgia to Connecticut. I vowed not to complain about my periodic bouts with sciatica!

I judge that linking this heroic soldier to the master terrorist was about the lowest a group could sink to. But it has had a good effect on me. I shall be ever on the alert for raw lies and hateful calumny in this election year of 2004. It is sad that we, through our political parties, have slipped into such shame.

Antoinette Bosco is a columnist for Catholic News Service.

Two sides to the story on migrants

To the editor:

As a "winter Texan" I have just received and read the Jan. 15 *Catholic Courier*, and I would like to correct some of the half-truths in your migrant farm workers articles.

Let's first remember that the legal and illegal workers get FREE medical, education and day care for a starter.

Why didn't you interview some farmers who have hired illegal migrant workers with forged "green cards" and Social Security cards, which you can buy on the street corners down here.

If these people are illegal, they should be deported, no ifs, ands or buts. And that's no matter how long they've been here. If you escape from prison and live a good life for 30 years, does that mean if you're caught that you don't have to go back to prison?

When it comes to working in the field, we've all done the same job they do and some times for longer hours. Also some of us have also picked corn by hand in the winter. Try that.

When it comes to S. 1645/H.R. 3142 how would the government "track" these people? At the present time the government has 5 or 6 million "guest workers" here legally and they can't

track them.

I think Father Brian Cool's time would be better spent trying to help the unemployed of Rochester, some of which would like to earn \$6 per hour and have FREE medical.

I hope this doesn't sound too hardhearted, but I think charity begins at home.

If you were down here in the Texas Valley country (Harlingen) and ask some of the Mexican Americans down here, they don't feel the illegals should be here either. They feel they should be deported, because it looks bad for the ones who came here legally.

Please give both sides of the story, the good and the bad.

William Granby
North Hamlin Road
Hamlin

Center award well-deserved

To the editor:

I attended a very inspirational Memorial Mass at the new Problem Pregnancy Help Center at 3252 Lake Avenue (Rochester) on January 23. Despite a bitterly cold evening the service was well attended. The Mass marked the anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision which legalized abortion. Father John Reif did an excellent job presiding in the Center's new assembly room.

I was very impressed with the assembly room which will be used for parenting classes and workshops. It had previously been part of an old neighborhood meat market but has been beautifully transformed. The room is now brightly lit, carpeted and painted, with banners of quotes from the Pope and Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, urging us to defend the sanctity of human life.

I strongly endorse the Diocese's decision to award PPHC last year's Consistent Life Ethic Award. It has truly been a beacon of hope and support for countless women and their unborn children in crisis pregnancies. The Center's board of directors recently pur-

Catholic Courier

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1136 Buffalo Road
P.O. Box 24379
Rochester, NY 14624

585/529-9530
800/600-3628 outside Rochester
<http://www.catholiccourier.com>
e-mail: info@catholiccourier.com

President
Bishop Matthew H. Clark

General Manager/Editor
Karon M. Franz
kfranz@catholiccourier.com

Editorial Department

Assistant Editor
Jonnifer Ficaglia
jficaglia@catholiccourier.com

Staff Writers
Rob Cullivan
rcullivan@catholiccourier.com

Mike Latona
mlatona@catholiccourier.com

Jonnifer M. Burke
jburke@catholiccourier.com

Staff Photographer
Mike Crupi
mcrupi@catholiccourier.com

Editorial Assistant

Louis Litzenberger
llitzenberger@catholiccourier.com

Photo Intern
Lauren Long

Business Department

Office Manager
Mary DiPonzio
mdiponzio@catholiccourier.com

Administrative Assistant
Arlene S. Gall
agall@catholiccourier.com

Circulation Manager
Donna Stubbings
dstubbings@catholiccourier.com

Graphics Department

Graphics Manager
Kim Parks
kparks@catholiccourier.com

Graphic Artist
Linda Jeanne Rivers
lrivers@catholiccourier.com

Advertising Department

Advertising Director
Daniel M. Zollo
dzollo@catholiccourier.com

Display Advertising Executives
Jerry Rivers
jrivers@catholiccourier.com

Donald P. Wilson
dwilson@catholiccourier.com