

After the Fourth, expect more fireworks

Just as Washington was about to slow down for the summer, even those who have already fled the city for the beach are abuzz about two big stories brewing. Is **Karl Rove** really the source of the **Valerie Plame** leak, and for how long will he remain like Teflon? And Supreme Court speculation — as predicted earlier in this column: Justice **Sandra Day O'Connor's** retirement because of her husband's illness has set the stage for a huge Senate battle over confirmation for her successor.

President Bush is expected to nomi-

nate a candidate when he returns from his European trip at the end of the week. That means that unless the Senate speeds up the approval process, the nominee will be left to be a target for the media during Congress' August recess. That's when almost everyone who's left in D.C. always looks for a summer scandal. If the confirmation process is dragged out, it appears likely that there could be more than one justice to confirm simultaneously. Expect a tough battle or battles ahead.

Slight bite to the right

This thought bite from former Rep. **Andy Jacobs Jr.**, D-Ind.: "The far-right definition of liberal press: Any news organization that gives both sides."

Shocking Luntz poll on Israel

Potomac attorney and real estate developer **Josh Rales** and his gracious wife, **Debby**, hosted a dinner at their Potomac manse for the **Israel Project** — a nonprofit organization that works to strengthen Israel's image — on a recent evening. GOP pollster **Frank Luntz**, perhaps best known for his strategy on **Newt Gingrich's** Contract with America, presented results from a recent focus group of elite graduate students who will likely be America's future leaders. Results showed that the next generation are anti-Israel due to Arab propaganda.

"The idea of this project was to replicate people who will be running our country in 2020 — looking at the elite, not the av-

erage," explained Luntz, who found that students in elite institutions were 4 to 1 anti-Israel. As a result, he stressed the need to strengthen Israel's image to fight anti-Semitism. Luntz also found that language has changed. The students didn't know the meaning of "disengagement" and thought of a "security fence" in Jerusalem as a "wall."

"Rhetoric is important," he said, "and the need to speak from the heart rather than the head." He was also surprised to find that the students sympathized with the suicide bombers. His shocking findings revealed that "Israel is the Goliath and Palestinians have become the David." "Israel is no longer the underdog," said Luntz, reflecting the words of focus group participants.

Investment for peace

The state of Maryland recently expressed a vote of confidence in Israel by purchasing \$20 million in **State of Israel Bonds**, an investment toward peace in the Middle East.

Developer dollars

Josh Rales, 47, who was courted by the Republicans to run against Sen. **Barbara Mikulski** last time around, has switched parties and is considering running in an already crowded field that includes Reps. **Ben Cardin** and **Chris Van Hollen**, **Marc Ginsburg**, former ambassador to Morocco, and **Kwesi Mfume**, a former congressman and former NAACP president, for the Democratic nomination to succeed retiring Sen. **Paul Sarbanes**, D-Md., in 2006. Word is that Rales may put up to \$10 million of his own money into the race. Lt. Gov. **Michael Steele** is the leading Republican candidate for the open seat. By the way, Steele's sister is **Monica**, former wife and confidant of **Mike Tyson**. Even if he's down for the count, the Man of Islam will likely be a fundraising draw.

Hey, at least they tried

So much for attempting to renew your D.C. driver's license online. Apparently the city government is still behind the times. Although the option is allegedly available for

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renewal notices sent via snail mail, the apparently permanent message online is, "We are currently experiencing technical difficulties." Perhaps their computer geeks took off for the summer.

Sightings

Ragin' Cajun **Jim Carville** has very sexy legs — he can be seen most summer weekdays wearing shorts and lurching on pizza at the very cory A La Lucia near his Old Town Alexandria home. — The cheering you may have heard last week from the Domingo Room at Café Milano was D.C. Mayor **Anthony Williams** and his wife, **Diane**; **Robert Bobb**; **Barbara Gordon**; **Christine Warnke**; and a dozen or so other guests clapping and shouting happily as the mayor's mom, **Virginia Williams**, belted out her favorite tune, "Summertime," and then "My Eye is on the Sparrow" (her son's favorite song). The occasion was her 79th birthday dinner, hosted by PR woman **Jan DuPlain**.

Summer tip

Chef **Jamie Leeds** of 15 Ria cooks up the absolute best soft-shell crabs in town at her newly opened hang-out, **Hank's Oyster Bar**.

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Karl Rove
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