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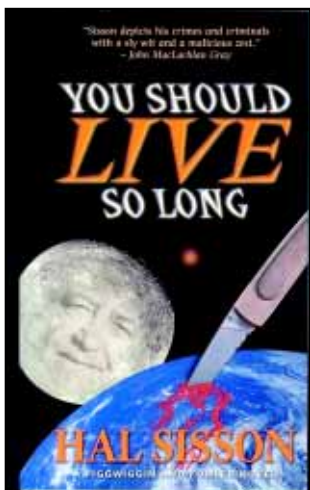
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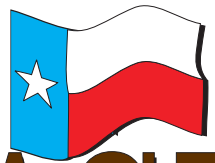
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Wes Sims

Speaking on U.S.-based multinational corporations:
"They don't look further ahead than 90 days, you know. After all, they are not human beings. They don't have a mind or spirit. They just think about profit. That's all they care about."

"If we continue, we'll continue the race to the bottom. In the United States of America, we'll become a Third World Nation. We're moving there very dramatically. This decline of the dollar is just the beginning."

— Wes Sims, President, Texas Farmers Union



DISSENT AT BAYLOR — Baylor University students (from left) Stephanie Baillio, 20, Anthropology major; Leilani Ogujioffor, 23, Biology major; and Matt Hulon, 20, Music Education major, protested President Bush's visit to the largest Baptist university in the world last Wednesday.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

Crashing The Party?

Mystery Surrounds 'American Center For Voting Rights' Group

COLUMBUS, Ohio — A new voting rights group appeared last week, just in time to testify at U.S. Congressman Bob Ney's (R-Ohio) House Administrative Committee hearings on the 2004 presidential election in Ohio. That state was fraught with voting inconsistencies, as documented by Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) in reports to Congress earlier this year.

Investigator Brad Friedman, who sponsors a website at BradBlog.com, last week interviewed Mark F. (Thor) Hearne, II, who provided testimony at the Ohio hearings from the upstart American Center For Voting Rights when it was learned that the speaker had been the National General Counsel for Bush/Cheney '04 Inc. and that hundreds of other, more well established, voting rights groups were not invited to testify.

Friedman, who is propelling an initiative known as the Velvet Revolution, Divestiture for Democracy (VelvetRevolution.us), noted on his website that during the hearings, Hearne failed to mention his "high-level connections to Bush/Cheney and his long history of working with other powerful Republican officials all the way back to his time working for the Reagan Administration."

Friedman says that the ACVR group claims on its website to champion "voter education and outreach" programs as one of its activities, but when he asked Hearne specifics about the programs, the response was "We certainly anticipate those."

Later, when Friedman interviewed Jim Dyke (Communications Director for the Republican National Committee), who was listed as the "contact" person in a press release issued by AVCR, Friedman says that Dyke reported that his group had testified on a compendium of facts from police reports in an effort to put things forward to give people greater confidence in the country's voting system.

Friedman claims that when he asked the name and location of the company that designed AVCR's website, he was told it was done by a company in Dallas, but Dyke couldn't remember the name of the company. Friedman published the

Internic record of AVCR, whose domain name is ac4vr.com, where he says that Dyke is listed as both the administrative and technical contact for the domain and the address is listed as 8409 Pickwick Lane 299, Dallas, which Friedman says is a post office box at the UPS Store located there.

Said Friedman, "They claim to be a not-for-profit, non-partisan, tax exempt 501(c)3 organization, but have neither produced the paperwork for it as required by law, nor do they seek donations from the public on their website."

The Velvet Revolution group in February sent letters to each of the nine major American voting machine companies, asking them to:

- Voluntarily open their hardware and software for independent public inspection and analysis.
- Provide auditable, voter-verified paper ballots for all votes cast.
- Assure that there can be no form of networking on their machines.
- Allow for non-partisan, independent monitors of the vote tabulation process.
- Institute a corporate policy prohibiting the company and all of its executives from supporting candidates for public office or political action groups.
- Disclose all data, codes and records from the last three national elections, if requested.
- Adopt all feasible best practices suggested by a national committee of experts.
- Do all of the above at no extra cost to their governmental clients with which they work.

The movement is giving the voting machines companies a choice:

- Either commit to all of these requests within 60 days and be recognized broadly for their efforts, or
- By not committing, the movement will encourage all Americans to divest from these companies and those with which they are affiliated, and will participate in a massive national boycott targeting them, their affiliates, and their clients, and will launch an extensive education campaign for the American public explaining the ways in which these companies are secretly doing the public's business of handling elections, says the VR website.

According to Friedman, VR has the support of more than 80 affiliate organizations in this endeavor, representing millions of Americans.

Foreign Students Studying Less In U.S. After 9/11

WASHINGTON — Europe and Asia are attracting more foreign students that used to be educated in the United States because of stringent visa policies since Sept. 11, 2001, a perceived discrimination against foreigners, and a rising antipathy toward U.S. policies.

As the numbers of an estimated 570,000 foreigners students decline also goes about \$13 billion a year for the U.S. education industry.

For the first time in more than three decades, foreign enrollment slipped 2.4 percent in the last academic year compared to an increase of 6.4 percent in the year before the 2001 attacks, according to the Institute of International Education.

The Council of Graduate Schools reported earlier this month that foreign graduate student applications fell five percent from 2004 to 2005 following a 28 percent drop the previous year in the United States.

The Council said that while the decline had slowed, a rebounding has not been seen.

Vic Johnson, a senior official at the Association of International Educators, said even governmental efforts to streamline the visa process are not enough to reverse the trend. Loyalty of customers in the international student market must also be won, he said

— Reuters contributed to this report.

Georgia Downs Jim Crow-Era Laws

ATLANTA, Ga. — The Georgia Senate last week struck down four Jim Crow-era laws from the state code.

The Georgia Legislature passed these laws during the 1950s to keep schools racially segregated after the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The laws were not being enforced, but remained on the books.

GM To Cut 'White-Collars'

NEW YORK — General Motors Corp. said last week that it plans to cut its North American white-collar work force by about 28 percent less than a week after the automaker warned that 2005 earnings would fall short of its target.

No time frame was specified for the cuts, nor was an overall number for the expected job cuts.

The company said previously that

this year's earnings would drop 80 percent of its earlier forecast as a result of stalling North American auto sales.

The Wall Street Journal called the cuts a prelude to health-care concessions that GM would seek from its largest union, the United Auto Workers.

— The Wall Street Journal and Reuters contributed to this report.



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Dissent At Baylor

Fair Trade Advocates Blast President's CAFTA

By NATHAN DIEBENOW
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

CRAWFORD — Fair trade would be a better way to treat other countries than free trade, said farm and labor advocates in Texas last Wednesday at the Crawford Peace House. The six panelists urged Congress to not ratify President George W. Bush's proposed Central American Free Trade Agreement because of its negative impacts on the environment, workers, farmers, prices, immigration, and democracy.

Prior to the panel, President Bush met with Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin and Mexican President Vicente Fox for two hours on the Baylor University campus to discuss trade and security measures.

"Clearly, (the trilateral talk between Mexico, Canada, and the U.S.) is a symbolic meeting not to solve concrete social and economic problems caused by actual trade agreements but rather to reinvigorate the public's now faltering commitment to myth that free trade is the answer to all our problems," said Lesley Ramsey, Director of Texas Fair Trade Coalition.

"There was so much dialogue to be had. They can't possibly touch the top of the iceberg," said Becky Moeller, Texas AFL-CIO Secretary/Treasurer.

Indeed, it was reported that the three heads of state agreed only to pledge to help each other in the future and failed to address the problems over trade, immigration, defense, and even the war in Iraq. And President Bush has yet to drum up major support for CAFTA in the halls of Congress.

According to the panelists at the Peace House, CAFTA is an extension of NAFTA as it adds six more countries in the Western Hemisphere to the free trade policies imposed by the United States.

The ultimate goal of the free trade is to insure increased profits to U.S.-based multinational corporations.

"They don't look further ahead than 90 days, you know. After all, they are not human beings. They don't have a mind or spirit," said Wes Sims, Texas Farmers Union President. "They just think



FAIR TRADE RULES! — The six advocates from labor and farm organizations in Texas urged Congress push for fair trade over free trade policies last Wednesday at the Crawford Peace House. The panelists were (from left) Becky Moeller, Wes Sims, Lesley Ramsey, Ann Johnson, and Hadi Jawad. Not pictured are Paul Mitchell, and Mario Fernandez.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

about profit. That's all they care about."

"If we continue, we'll continue the race to the bottom. In the United States of America, we'll become a Third World Nation. We're moving there very dramatically," said Sims. "This decline of the dollar is just the beginning."

Free Trade Hurts Jobs

The panel of advocates agreed that CAFTA would, like NAFTA, fail to produce its promised effects — new jobs, new markets for exports, improved standards of living for all parties of the agreement, and reduced illegal immi-

graduates — are unemployed in their field today because those jobs are no longer available here," he said.

Ramsey noted that Latino workers have been disproportionately impacted by trade-related job loss in Texas.

Continued On Next Page



President Bush gestures while sitting with Mexican President Vicente Fox (left) and Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin (right) Wednesday, March 23, 2005, at Baylor University Armstrong Browning Library in Waco, Texas. The North American leaders will sign a pact pledging to increase border security without hindering the flow of goods or the millions of people that cross the two borders every day.

— Rod Aydelotte/Waco Tribune Herald, Pool

• FAIR TRADE ADVOCATES BLAST PRESIDENT'S CAFTA ... Continued From Page 3

Whereas Latinos represent 20 percent of the Texas workforce, they are disproportionately represented in the second hardest hit by trade related job loss in Texas, especially textiles and electronics assembling. Nationally, Latinos have borne 47 percent of NAFTA-related job loss, she said.

"Free and independent unions are fought by the governments in the countries that we have already talked about. The workers are abused. They're physically and financially abused by the low wage rates and the hours they must endure," said Moeller.

Ramsey said that the effect of CAFTA's tariff removal clause will amount to less than one percent of U.S.'s Gross Domestic Product because the U.S. already has a \$3.2 billion trade deficit with Central America and the Dominican Republic and will undoubtedly remain so under CAFTA.

Free Trade Hurts Families

Sims of Texas Farmers Union and Larry Mitchell, American Corn Growers Association CEO, said their organizations would not support CAFTA because it benefits U.S.-based multinational corporations over member nations' family farmers and ranchers.

What happens in agriculture in the U.S. greatly impacts the rest of the world, said Mitchell, because half the world's population supports itself on farming compared to roughly one million U.S. farmers.

The future effect on these six new member countries — all small in size,

population and purchasing power — can be seen by NAFTA's impact on Mexican farms. Under NAFTA, although estimates vary, between two and 10 million Mexican farmers were put off their land because they could not compete with U.S. corn which is subsidized by the U.S. government. Compounding Mexico's situation is that the U.S. uses genetically engineered corn which increases supply even greater.

On top of that, corn is the food staple of Mexico, an integral part of its farming economy and culture, he said. Without corn to hold the population in Mexico, the farmers leave to find better jobs elsewhere.

"Anyone who has had a lot of new visitors lately who are threatening the infrastructure of your local communities will understand that people pushed off their land have to go somewhere to eat and go somewhere to live. It's devastating not only for farmers in the United States but also Central America," said Mitchell.

As far as NAFTA being a border protection program, Moeller said it was not intended to work as such.

"NAFTA was not created to make our borders safe. NAFTA was a trade deal,

other jobs. They lost health insurance. They can't educate their young. That's a huge amount of our population."

Mitchell recently returned from meeting with farmers and national leaders in Costa Rica at the invitation of Carlos Solis, leader of Upanacional, an organization representing the country's small and moderate-sized farms. He said the Costa Ricans understand the "raw power" inflicted upon them when free market measures are tilted unfairly favoring U.S.-based multinational corporations. The average Central American worker is earning \$2 or less a day,



BAYLOR STUDENTS participated in a protest against the policies of the Bush Administration as President Bush met with the leaders of Mexico and Canada last Wednesday at Baylor University.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

so I'm not sure the border has anything to do with a trade agreement," she said. "Our jobs are going across the borders, and even Mexico is not safe. Mexico is not cheap enough, and now they are going farther and farther, so when you look at 900,000 jobs in this country that are gone, that's 900,000 families that are having difficulties feeding their families. They're having difficulty finding

said Sims.

With CAFTA, countries like Costa Rica must eliminate their import tariffs which protect their farmers from imported goods produced by farmers that receive huge U.S. subsidies, while the U.S. will not reduce its subsidies to its farmers. However, "the disease is not the subsidies," he said.

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PRESIDENT BUSH walks with Mexican President Vicente Fox, right, and Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin Wednesday, March 23, 2005, on his ranch near Crawford, Texas.

— Rod Aydelotte/Waco Tribune Herald, Pool

• FAIR TRADE ADVOCATES BLAST PRESIDENT'S CAFTA ... Continued From Page 4

"The disease is the low price."

"The problem with developing countries and U.S. subsidies is the U.S. can't afford some subsidy to provide the medication to the disease of low prices. Developing countries can't afford that medication. This is not unlike diabetes, AIDS or any other crippling, threatening, or deadly disease. If you get the medication you might survive," he said. "We need a new system in the United States and around the world so farmers all receive a fair price."

Mitchell said that in the last week of March, a letter opposing CAFTA signed by over 100 farm organizations in the U.S. will go to the U.S. Congress. Two weeks ago, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture — the ag commissioners in all 50 states — opposed CAFTA. Texas Farm Bureau has also stood against CAFTA.

"CAFTA will continue the old, failed block policies of the past and continue the race to the bottom for commodity prices," said Sims. "The agreement fails to address the things that cause unfair trade agreements, such as the deflation of currency values, labor and environmental standards, and food, health, and safety standards."

Free Trade Hurts Democracy

The panelists at the Crawford Peace House echoed the concerns of CAFTA critics over the agreement's use of patent rules that limit poor people's access to lifesaving medication, and said they were a part of a world-wide effort to stop free trade agreements from being ratified.

So far, trade representatives from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, the U.S., and Costa Rica have already signed CAFTA. The congresses of El Salvador and Honduras have ratified the agreement, leaving Panama, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and the United States to do so.

Guatemala became the third Central



LARRY MITCHELL, American Corn Growers Association CEO, said his organization would not support CAFTA because it benefits U.S.-based multinational corporations over member nations' family farmers and ranchers.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

American country to ratify CAFTA on March 15. Guatemalan police killed two activists in the highland region of Huehuetenango near Mexico. The police fired live rounds into the crowd of protesters who were calling for a referendum on the trade agreement. Several more protesters have been injured, and many more are missing.

In the days leading up to the ratification, some of the biggest protests in the country's history occurred in its cities

and rural areas. Backed by the army, riot police used water canons and tear gas on the 30,000 protesters, some armed with gasoline-bombs and rocks.

After the violence in Guatemala, U.S. defense officials said last week they were considering giving more military aid to Guatemala, a decade after cutting off such resources due to the Central American nation's human rights abuses during its 36-year-long civil war.

A country now ravaged by gangs, drugs, kidnapping, disappearances and high crime, Guatemala once received military aid totaling about \$30 million during the 1980s. Since the mid-1990s, the U.S. military aid reached the \$3.2 million mark in Guatemala. Economic aid has exceeded \$100 million a year.

Even as this military aid trickled in, millions of dollars were secretly moved from the CIA to support repressive right-wing regimes in their wars against leftist guerillas.

U.S. officials say that given the military downsizing efforts of the Guatemalan administration, the U.S. is now willing to increase military aid.

Fair Trade Rules

Sims said that the alternative to free trade, which was a policy practiced by the Roman Empire for over 300 years, is fair trade — trading goods for goods, not wealth for goods — along with price controls and tariffs that leveled the playing field among countries.

Under fair trade instituted by President George Washington and with tariffs implemented by President Abraham Lincoln, Sims said, the United States became a nation of manufacturers that didn't export its jobs elsewhere to exploit its workers for an average of 10 cents a day.

"Free trade is new to us, not that it hasn't been tried before. Certainly, that's part of what led to the Great Depression of the 1930s, which I hate to say this, but I remember part of that. I was born during that time," he said. "It's because of those so-called free trade policies, and then in the last 20 years, we've gone back into them. We fought a revolution, a civil war, and two major world wars against that very thing."

Last year, the United States had \$1.5 trillion in trade that was equal, but \$618 billion worth was bought and financed with foreign wealth. Within 10 years, it will take three percent of the U.S. gross national product to pay off this trade deficit, Sims said.

When asked, Sims explained that NAFTA and the World Trade Organization's policies did more damage to the U.S. economy than the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11.

Ramsey explained that before NAFTA, the United States had a trade surplus with Mexico. Today, it's the opposite. More good are being imported into the U.S. from Mexico than ever. The cost to people in Mexico is 40 million people living in poverty with wages down and cost of living up, she said.

Like NAFTA's devastating effects on the North American economy, Anne Johnson, Public Citizen representative, said that CAFTA will undoubtedly spoil Central America's ecosystems.



TAKING THE DAY OFF from his day job, Alan Northcutt of Waco takes a stand last Wednesday near Baylor University against torture dressed like a victim of inhumane interrogation tactics at Abu Ghaib prison in Iraq.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

Johnson used NAFTA's laxness on diesel emissions from trucks from Mexico as an example of the serious safety and environmental hazards that are related to NAFTA.

The cancer risk from diesel emissions, she noted, is seven times greater than all the other toxins combined. Mexican trucks emit 30 percent more diesel pollution on average than U.S. trucks. NAFTA-related truck traffic is expected to increase by 400 percent by 2020.

The problem Canada faces with these free trade agreements is the privatization of its social services, like its nationalized healthcare programs, said Ramsey, Director of Texas Fair Trade Coalition.

Free Trade Hurts Puppies!

During the trilateral talks between the heads of Mexico, Canada, and the U.S., about 40 protestors stood at University-Parks Drive and I-35 near Baylor University, braving infrequent bouts of verbal intimidation and receiving sporadic car honks of support.

The demonstrators organized under several banner issues such as anti-war, living wage, fair trade, and women's rights: "How many lives per gallon?" "End the torture now!" and "NAFTA Bi-Products: Femicide in Cd. Juarez."

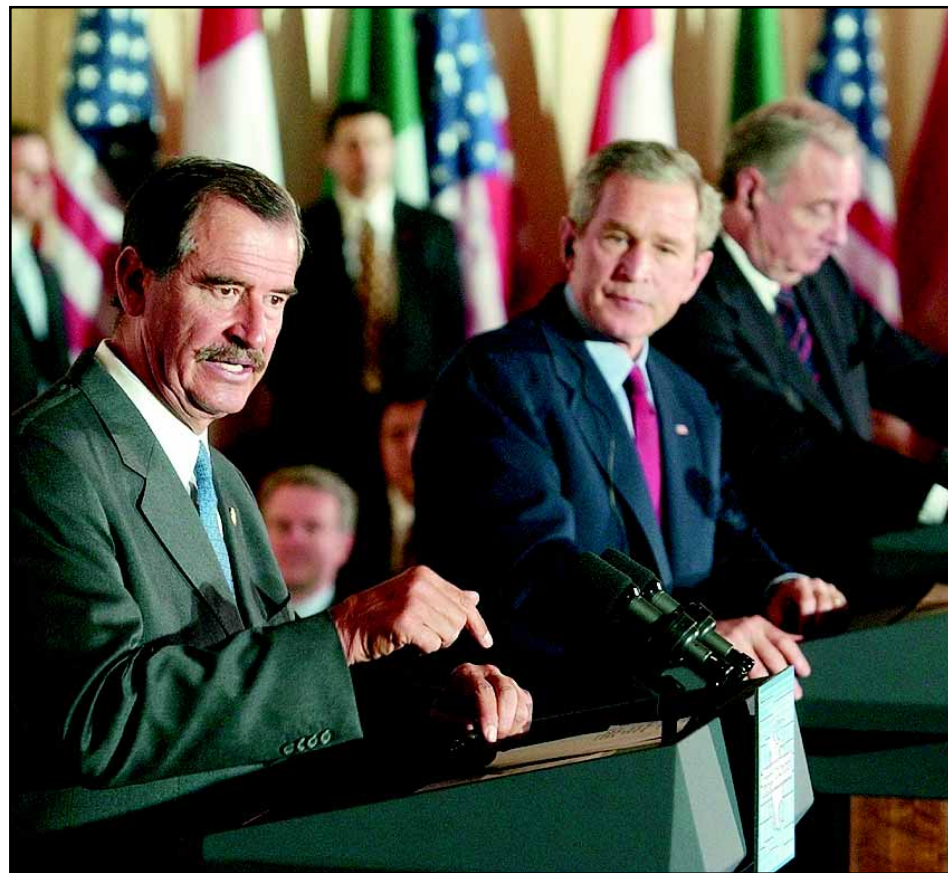
Several protesters were students from Baylor University, while others organized with Waco Friends of Peace and the Crawford Peace House.

Leilani Ogujioffor, 23, a representative for Baylor Democrats and Students for Social Justice, said she participated in Wednesday's protest to show people that not everyone at Baylor University and in Texas agrees with the Bush administration's stance on policies throughout the world and the United States.

"We're out here for real issues. We're not out here spouting whatever," said Ogujioffor, a senior majoring in Biology, minoring in International Affairs. "(For instance,) how is a working person supposed to pay \$2 a gallon to go to work and have money to eat at night when they are making \$5.50 an hour?"

Three members of the Atheist and Agnostic Society, a student group unaffiliated with but that meets at Baylor

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PRESIDENT VICENTE FOX gestures during a joint news conference with President Bush and Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin Wednesday, March 23, 2005, at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

— Rod Aydelotte/Waco Tribune Herald, Pool



PRESIDENT BUSH WAVES while Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin Wednesday, March 23, 2005, at Baylor University Armstrong Browning Library in Waco, Texas. The North American leaders will sign a pact pledging to increase border security. — Rod Aydelotte/Waco Tribune Herald, Pool

Bill Aims To Speed Up TCEQ Decisions By Cutting Public Input

AUSTIN — A bill that was given a hearing in a House committee last week aims to speed up environmental permitting decisions at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality by limiting the public's rights.

The bill filer — Rep. Dennis Bonnen (R-Angleton) chairman of the committee on environmental regulation — said the evaluation process for air-, water- and waste-permit applications takes up to five years in some cases.

A Public Citizen study showed that TCEQ works more efficiently than other states.

The advocacy group's Austin office said that if passed, the bill would hinder the right of affected landowners to request public hearings while strengthening the power of the agency's commissioners to make permit decisions.

Favoring the bill are Texas Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs, lobbyists for waste groups, and environmental attorneys.

— *The Houston Chronicle* contributed to this report.

Motorist Fingerprint Requirement Might Be Removed: Ga.

ATLANTA, Ga. — Georgia's fingerprint requirement for motorists might soon end when the Senate voted 40-10 last week for a bill that would end the mandate requiring Georgians to be fingerprinted to get a driver's license. The bill also requires the destruction of existing fingerprint records.

Republicans say that the requirement has not prevented crime or led to any incarcerations.

The bill will go to the House with several amendments passed by the Senate.

Democrats say that the amendments target illegal immigrants, but doesn't modify existing state law.

• FAIR TRADE ADVOCATES BLAST PRESIDENT'S CAFTA ... Continued From Page 5

University, also protested the three-nation CAFTA summit with the same intensity as the others but with a more lighthearted approach. They carried signs that said, "Think of the Puppies" and "Bush Drowns Iraqi Puppies," even though they had no puppies with them at the time.

"People are very serious, and we thought we'd get our message across with a little humor," said Justin Muller, 18, student of political science and law.

Jay Jackson, 18, said that his biggest "beef" with President Bush is his use of religion in order to garner support for war in Iraq and trade policies that financially harm other countries.

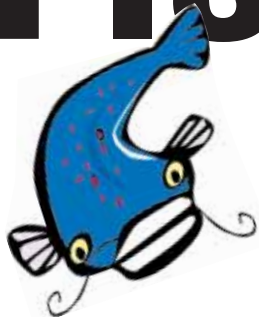
"Part of the reason I became an atheist was because I was tired seeing people's religious beliefs used for other purposes, like when you believe something like that, people can come along and use that to make you do things they want you to do, and that just bothers

me," said Jackson, a psychology major.

The three members of the AAS said that they doubted they would be expelled for participating in Wednesday's protest near the campus.

When asked if the eight Army helicopters flying over I-35 intimidated him, Muller said, half-joking, "We're the longest persecuted minorities in the history of society, so it takes a lot more than black helicopters to intimate us."

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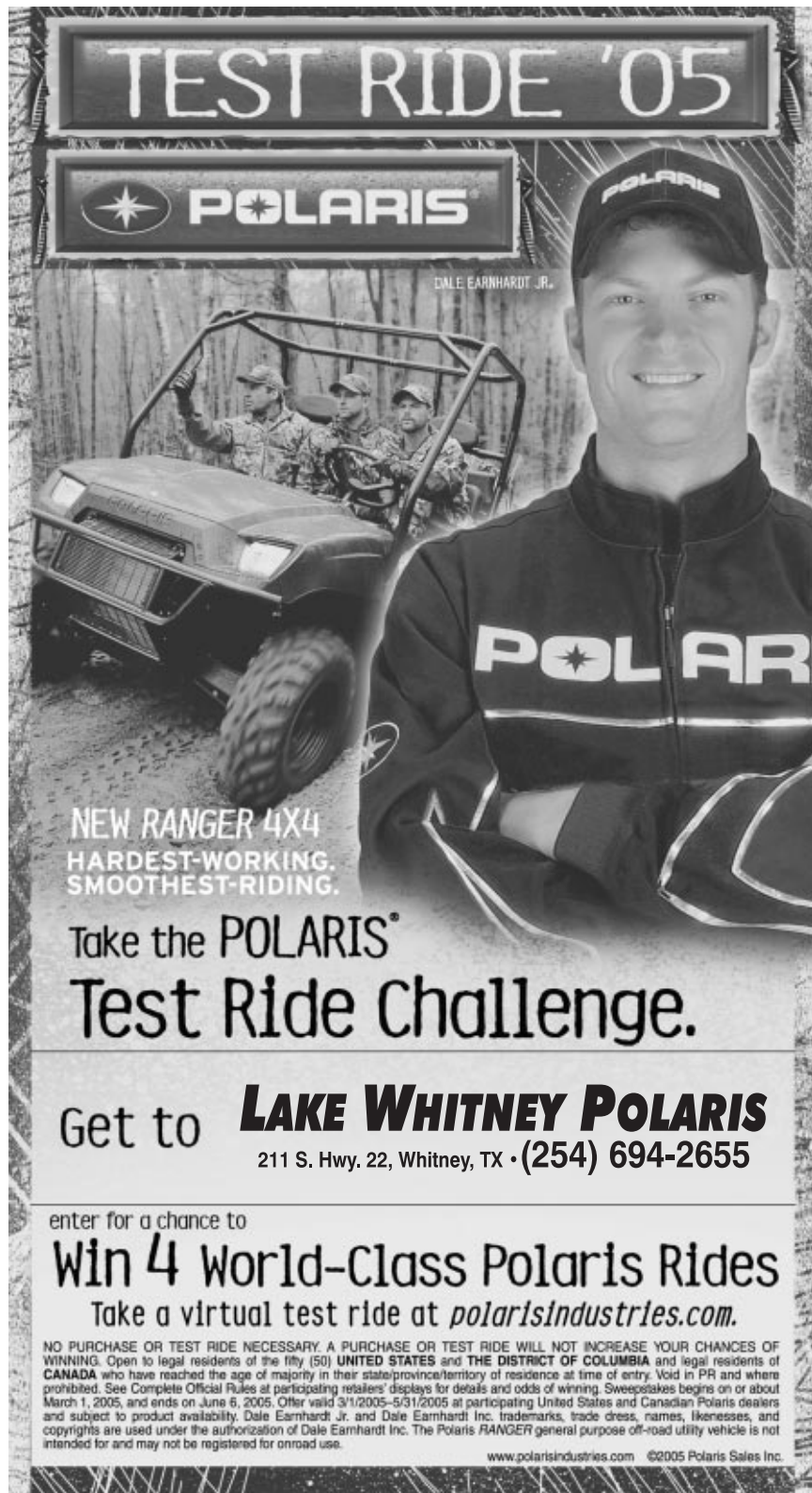
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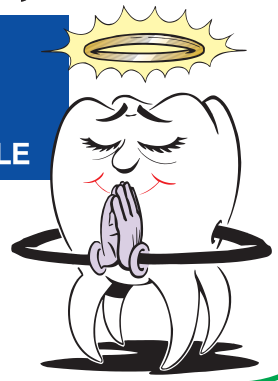
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DATELINE:

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Robbie Ann Hoffmann and Erich Carmen Basilius Birch

Birch, Hoffmann Engaged

CRAWFORD — Robert and Beverly Hoffmann of Crawford are proud to announce the engagement of their daughter, Robbie Ann, to Erich Carmen Basilius Birch, son of Marta Zaricznyi and Erich Birch of Austin.

Robbie is the granddaughter of Gene and Nelda Hoppe of Waco, and of Ann Hoffmann and the late Willie Hoffmann, Jr. of Cuero. Erich is the grandson of Dr. and Mrs. Basilius Zaricznyi of Springfield, Ill. and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Birch of Mobile, Ala.

Robbie is a 2000 graduate of Crawford High School and a 2004 graduate of Texas A&M University with a B.S. degree in Sport Management and Business Administration. She is a Certified Personal Trainer and is currently employed by Gold's Gym in College Station.

Erich is a 1996 graduate of Westwood High School in Austin and a 2002 graduate of Texas A&M University with a B.S. degree in Sports Management and Business Administration. He is currently employed as Director of Basketball Operations for Texas A&M women's basketball.

The couple will marry May 21, 2005, at the Smith Family Chapel in Austin.

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Rally For Texas Libraries Scheduled At State Capitol Wednesday, April 6

AUSTIN — Thousands of librarians from all over Texas, wearing red and beating drums, will gather at the State Capitol Wednesday, April 6, from 4-5 p.m. to send a message to lawmakers: Libraries are an investment that works, and funding for libraries is critical for education and economic development.

The public is also invited to attend the Rally, and to wear red in support of libraries.

High-profile library supporters will address the Rally, including TEXAS MONTHLY editor Evan Smith, author Carmen Lomas Garza, and American Library Association President Carol A. Brey-Casiano. In addition, newspaper editors from around the state will attend the Rally as honored guests, and will be seated on the dais with the Rally speakers.

The Rally will begin with a performance by the performance group Drum Café, to set the tone for what organizers promise will be a spirited and inspiring event. Banners and signs promoting library issues will be in abundance.

The Texas Library Association, representing the 7,000 librarians who work in the state's public, school and academic libraries, will hold their annual meeting April 5-8 in Austin, the first time in 40 years that the event has been held in the state's capital — not coincidentally, during the biennial Texas legislative session.

"Libraries are a critical part of our state's educational and workforce infrastructure," said Patricia Smith, executive director of the Texas Library Association. "Funding for

Texas libraries was \$30 million less in 2004 than 2002, and the impact of those cuts has been devastating to communities across the state," Smith said.

TLA's legislative priorities include:
• Restoring funding for TexShare databases and other online resources so that all Texas communities and school children can have access to world-class online research and instructional materials.

Nearly half of Texas' K-12 students have minimal (if any) access to online reference materials and periodicals, and millions of

public library users and college students have far fewer online resources since funding cuts were made in 2003, putting their ability to learn and their futures at risk.

• Funding for Loan Star Libraries, a direct aid program to strengthen public libraries statewide, allowing them to maintain longer hours and provide better services. Texas spends only nine cents per person for public library support.

• Supporting the continuation of the telecommunications discounts for all Texas libraries that were included in telecommunications

deregulation legislation in 1995. Without such discounts, even the largest libraries will be unable to sustain their current services.

TLA is the largest state library association in the United States with more than 7,000 members who work in public, school, academic and special libraries, plus library vendors and citizens who support libraries.

TLA offers a wide range of services, including an annual conference that attracts more than 7,000 librarians and exhibitors, a leadership development program, legislative advocacy, and publications.

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Slaves To Neighbor Bush's 'Ownership'

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "There ain't nothin' wrong with bein' trash, unless you are and think you ain't."

We are entering a new age of slavery. And the worst thing about slavery is not the effect on the slaves, but on the slave owners.

I can say that with some authority, as the scion of an entire generation that wasted itself in defense of the institution without enjoying its fruits.

When work is relegated to those we consider inferior, then labor itself loses its value. Why should you waste yourself on endeavors of lesser beings?

By the time the War Between the States was declared, few people in the South were working more than about four hours a day.

Not that your average plantation slave was sleeping late, then lying around sipping Julips or picking the banjo; quite the opposite.

But when the owner or overseer turned his back, slaves quit giving much effort beyond a lick and a promise. Meanwhile Ol' Massa bemoaned the laziness of his slaves as he rode past on a horse he was too indolent to saddle himself.

The South lost the War because they were just flat too lazy to win it.

Nobody had the gumption to build a rifle factory or even employ the innovative technology that ordinarily follows war like a vulture.

But we are not slaves, are we?

In fact, more people are enslaved worldwide today than at any time in the 19th Century, but consider for a moment that in all probability, you are a slave.

In this age of Neighbor Bush's "ownership?"

Balderdash!

Most people don't even own their own homes.

The "ownership" myth belies a basic fact that has made America work.

Work itself.

But the greed that pervades our society since the Reagan Disaster denegrates work.

Only ownership, wealth, has any value. Of course most of us are about as liable to be rich as a hog to ice skate.

But then most people really don't want money.

They want *stuff*.

That's why 80 percent of those who win the lottery are in worse financial shape within five years. Most people don't care whether they are rich; they just want to live like they are.

So the owners allow you to imitate rich people and work like slaves.

Work, according to the ownership philosophy, has no value other than a means to acquire *stuff*.

Ownership, not craftsmanship, is our only standard of worth.

So you get a half-dozen credit card applications each month that will allow you (in partnership with a large financial institution) to buy all your stuff.

Cars to cat litter. Vegas to victuals.

Except you are not the owner.

You are owned.

There's nothing essentially wrong with debt.

Without it we're back to barter.

But in the past we who work bought property that would either appreciate in monetary value or at least hold its own in productive worth: homes, tools, property, businesses.

Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



But the ownership philosophy encourages consumption, buying: cars, boats, ATVs, big screen TV, video game players, things with a single eventual destination: a landfill.

And for that, you owe your labor.

Which is becoming less and less valuable because it has no intrinsic value; it is only something we do to pay debt.

Even more insidious now are the equity loan schemes, wherein you can cash in your home, and your children's inheritance, to pay off your credit card debt.

Which increases your credit card limits.

And six months later, you're back on the ol' plantation.

Oh, you invest in the market?

That makes you an owner.

And what do you own?

Can you direct the way your investment is used?

Can you contribute to this "ownership?"

Can you object when your investment pollutes a river or uses foreign slave la-

bor to replace your job?

Or are you just letting somebody else use your money to panel his office or fly to Barbados?

Is there an underground railroad somewhere to lead us to freedom.

Not as long as we believe the workman is not worthy of his pay.

Not as long as we foster the false promise that the ultimate aim of education is to buy a new bedroom suite.

Not as long as we sacrifice pride in our accomplishment for numbers on our paychecks.

Not as long as we believe that we must sacrifice our personal integrity and quality of life to protect us from gay married terrorists.



Editorial

OP/ED

Opinion - Columns - Letters

— Editorial —

'USA PATRIOT' Act Unconstitutional Act Of Treason

Emotions ran high after 9/11 and patriots, or those who called themselves patriots, emerged with a defiance against anyone who threatened the red, white, and blue.

One initiative making the cut to the rush for perceived safety of the country was the USA PATRIOT Act, that on Oct. 25, 2001, was passed by Congress and signed into law the next day by President Bush. The political mindset was deliberately established thusly: "If you aren't for this, you are unpatriotic to the country and what it stands for. We have to do something, by any and all means."

Ignored was the fact that the USA PATRIOT Act contained language that usurped protections guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, and, therefore, the Constitution of the United States.

Elected federal officials take an oath prior to being admitted onto their respective posts. It goes something like this: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of _____, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Upholding the Constitution is as absolute as pregnancy. One isn't a "little pregnant," and it's clear the sanctity of the Constitution does not reside as a law to be dismembered, or in this case flatly ignored, at a paranoid whim. In fact, to attempt to dismember the Constitution is a serious ground for treason, and should be prosecuted as such, from the halls of Congress, to the inner sanctum of the White House, to the members of Supreme Court who closed their eyes to let this slide.

They called it the USA PATRIOT Act as a sugar coating. It is actually a carefully crafted and misleading acronym: USA (Uniting and Strengthening America) by PATRIOT (Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism). Its purpose, boiled down, was to enable the government to develop a pre-emptive search capability on the inhabitants of America, and the hell with the Fourth Amendment (*The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable Cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.*)

In effect, the USA PATRIOT Act has eliminated the Fourth Amendment, which is paramount to both individual and national liberty, and would be looked upon with considerable chagrin by one of our staunchest and most intelligent found-

ing fathers, Benjamin Franklin, who put it this way: "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

No matter how many times some politicians might proclaim that the Constitution is no longer relevant, and no matter the expedient propositions they seek to impose upon it to make it bleed, rest assured, the Constitution is indeed relevant and always will be as long as those who believe in it and protect it will act swiftly to remove those from office who would rob America of its birthright.

One might argue that many who voted for the USA PATRIOT Act did so without reading it, for it was thrust upon them in the heat of crisis and with a short timetable for approval, and the threat of political reprisals was real. One might argue that portions of the Act have proved beneficial and were a long time needed. One might say that, with hindsight, it should have received deeper consideration and that he would now vote against it, that it was a mistake and everyone makes mistakes.

Fine.

If that's so, why is it still in place and why is there a movement by those in high authority to make it harsher, to make it permanent? What of its conflict with the Constitution? Why hasn't the Supreme Court admonished the Congress and the President for striking out against the Constitution? Is the separation of powers so feeble that the high court opts for neglectful fear over what is right?

Let by-gones be by-gones? The damage is done?

Maybe.

If that is so, then the demand is hereby made that someone in Congressional authority take action now to restore the Fourth Amendment to its full value by repealing the USA PATRIOT Act and seeing that it never again surfaces. Without such an initiative, then the pathway for retribution by the voters of this republic has been cleared.

If this means charges of treason against those elected officials conspiring to kill the Constitution, then so be it. Remember, they all took a time-honored oath, not only to God and country but to the American populace they pretend to represent, that they promised to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution — the cornerstone of our democracy.

The Constitution is an absolute, our Ten Commandments as a country. Neither the President nor the Congress and Senate have any business trampling on it.

— Written by W. Leon Smith

The Easter Bunny Is Still Getting Hell From Fathers In Boxer Shorts



By
**Ned
Hickson**
Siuslaw News

Soon, in the wee hours of the morning, something magical will happen in back yards all across America as, one by one, each of them is visited by...

You guessed it!
A half-naked father hiding Easter eggs.

That's right, the same fathers who were stomping on the roof with sleigh bells Christmas Eve will be out in the yard in their boxer shorts with an arm load of colorful eggs not long after sunrise. Their mission? Keep this tradition alive while, at the same time, trying not to step in anything that could elicit a response deemed inappropriate for Easter morning.

This generally follows a week of preparation, most of which is spent looking for the latest advancements in egg-dyeing technology. My parents didn't have to worry about this. When I was a kid there was only one kit available for making Easter eggs. This kit included four colored pills that could be combined to make additional colors or, as I preferred swallowed whole and used to

freak out kids in the rest room at school. The green pill was particularly effective.

The red pill I tried only once because it gave me nightmares.

As I was growing up, there were a number of advancements in egg-dyeing technology. For example, the highly touted "wand" made out of thin copper, which could be used for dipping eggs without making a mess. I know this because the back of the box showed a cartoon family making lots of eggs under the watchful eye of the Easter Bunny who was saying, and I quote:

Look! No Mess!
There were a couple of things that bothered me about this.

First, it always looked like the family in the picture was being forced into coloring eggs by a brooding, six-foot-tall rabbit blocking the only exit from the kitchen. Sure, everyone was smiling, but who's to say they weren't just buying time until help arrived? Mysteriously, this family appeared on the back of the box for several years, and then — poof.

Gone.
I was also bothered by the fact that, despite what I'm sure must have been a rigorous testing and design process, the "wand" usually collapsed on itself and dropped the egg directly into the dye the first time you used it.

After becoming a parent, I took it upon myself to find out who was responsible for this tradition. As it turns out, Germans introduced it to the Pennsylvania Dutch in the 1700s when, in an eager attempt to share their homeland's annual spring celebration, hun-

dreds German children began running around yelling: OSCHTER HAWS! OSCHTER HAWS!

Not knowing it was a call for the Easter Bunny, the Dutch children fled, taking their breakfast of boiled eggs with them and inspiring the first Easter egg hunt in the New World. Eventually, the Easter Bunny tradition was embraced by the Dutch, who — like the German parents — realized it could be used as leverage against their children.

Three hundred years later, little has changed. Good girls and boys still get a visit from the Easter Bunny, and fathers still stumble outside at first light to hide colored eggs. That said, I'll take this opportunity to apologize to my neighbors in advance of Easter, just in case I step in anything left behind by something other than the Easter Bunny.

(You can write to Ned Hickson at nhickson@oregonfast.net, or at the Siuslaw News at P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR. 97439)

Things Falling From The Sky

Rustic Ramblings



By Gene Ellis

Gene Ellis, Ed.D. is a Bosque County resident who returned to the family farm after years of living in New Orleans, New York and Florida. She is an artist who holds a doctoral degree from New York University and is writing a book about the minor catastrophes of life.

Sometimes things just fall on us from the sky. I have chuckled to myself more than once lately over the commercials and print ads for a migraine medication. The ads on TV and in magazines show a huge boulder coming out of the blue and falling on the poor, unfortunate victim of the migraine, squishing him or her flat.

(Admitting that I chuckled over this ad is no doubt, very politically incorrect, and will have migraine sufferers from far and wide writing in to complain. Please understand, I am not laughing about your unfortunate medical condition, only about the ad. Don't sue me. Or the paper). Other things, both good and bad, can hit us like a boulder when they come along, unexpected. Some of the best and worst things in life can hit us like a rock falling from the sky.

I'm not talking about the usual trash that seems to fall from the sky onto the roadsides around here. Anyone who lives one or two beers past the liquor store is well aware of this syndrome. Sometimes, if the culprit has a cooler, you get an empty carton tossed out on your road instead of just a can. And there are the usual feedbags that blow out of truck beds, and food and drink containers people intentionally throw. I don't understand why anyone wouldn't just take this stuff home and dispose of it properly rather than trash up our land. It's such an easy thing to do right (in a world of things that are so difficult to do correctly).

And the stuff that ends up in the creeks and ditches is pretty awful. People dump the most amazing things, using our countryside as their own personal trashcans. They assume that someone else is just dying to run pick up their refuse. (And a deep debt of gratitude to those who DO go walking with a garbage sack, to clean up our neighborhood). Most of the time, though, there isn't anyone who is anxious to come along and erase the trashy mistakes of others. We once found a

muffler and a battery from some huge piece of equipment in a creek bed that flows under the road, between another property and our own. Battery acid is

just what you want in your livestock's water supply.

Anyone who reads my column knows how I feel about the poor, unfortunate animals that "fall from the sky". Don't get me started.

Recently, we had something turn up that I actually considered a great find. This is not usually the case. But one man's trash, as they say, is another man's treasure. Let me preface this by saying that, as an art student in New York City (during another lifetime), I was told by more than one instructor to be alert to picking up good stuff from trash piles. We were told that that some of the best found objects for use in sculpture could be found in the refuse piles of Manhattan. We students were instructed to keep our eyes open and become effective scavengers. (This isn't always good advice. I recall the time a human head was found in a garbage can around the corner, but thankfully, not by me). My mother was horrified by the scavenging habit I acquired. She was a woman who wouldn't have been caught dead at a yard sale.

Another bit of recent history. Bear with me. I know where I am going with this, even if you don't: When I returned to Central Texas, one of the first things I planted was a wisteria plant. I love them. I have since planted two more. And I am patiently waiting for the first one to hit its stride and reward me with cascades of fragrant blooms (like Becky's and Jim's gorgeous plants). Number One Wisteria has finally, after about three years, grown into an unwieldy thing in desperate need of support. I can only hope this means that arms full of flowers are not far behind.

We have recently been discussing possible solutions to the wisteria support problem. The most promising idea involved rebar and cow panel pieces, cut to fit, or a very long piece of cattle panel, bent in the shape of a "U". Zack had promised to make this structure a reality before the spring, somehow fit in its creation and establishment between planting, hay-hauling, feeding, chain-sawing, clearing, fence-building, etc.

When Z was hauling hay the other day, moving the little, old tractor slowly on our county road, he spied something interesting in a ditch. Now this man is NOT a garage saler or scavenger by nature. (I nicknamed his closet "Brooks Brothers South". He is fond of catalogue shopping from places like Williams Sonoma, Orvis, and Cabela's). I have had to instruct Zack on the proper acquisition of second hand items, and he's still not convinced. However, thank goodness, he told me about his find, and we went back for a second look.

Someone had dumped two tall, old pieces of wrought iron porch supports. Much of the scrollwork was broken. The pieces appeared to have been damaged by fire, and at least two different layers of peeling paint were evident. But we pulled them out of the mud and headed back to the ranch. I was ecstatic, and Zack was polite enough to humor me. Before we hit the first cattle guard, the future of the wrought iron had hit me. Here were the sides of my wisteria arbor, fallen like a gift from the sky. With stunning engineering ingenuity, we placed and secured the hollow iron over rebar Zack had pounded into the ground. A scrap of cow panel (coincidentally, just the right size!) was wired on top. When the wisteria greens up this spring and grows long and vine-y throughout the summer, I suspect it will cover most of the structure. Hopefully it will reward us with color.

A grateful thanks to the angel who dropped my new wisteria arbor from heaven. (It is the epitome of shabby chic! Cindy Proctor, eat your heart out!) But please, "Angel," do consult with me before leaving additional "treasures" on our road. And please, no boulders on my head.

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The House In Our Houses

The brouhaha over Terri Schiavo has really gotten under my skin. Being neither a medical professional nor a member of her family I'm not speculating either way regarding her medical care.

My concern is when it was that the Republicans on Capitol Hill become a collective medical brain trust.

And, how did this become the *pre-dominant* story on all of the news outlets the past five days and counting, pushing virtually everything else aside?

All this convoluted rhetoric about the sanctity of life from the sorry gaggle of Attendants to the Knave has befouled our Capitol Rotunda with an aromatic essence not unlike that of early Spring fertilization here in Central Illinois.

In short, they brought the manure inside.

I would like to know exactly which one of these GOP leaders went to personally discuss Mrs. Schiavo's plight with any member of her family down in Florida. Ooh, there's that magic word — Florida.

The object of this 11th hour (literally) call to action with expediency not heretofore known of Congress, Terri Schiavo has been kept alive through a feeding tube since 1990. Court-appointed doctors concur that she is in a vegetative state. Her husband, Michael, has spent years sparring with her family, the Schindlers, over her right-to-die.

Terri's family claim that Michael just wants her dead so he can inherit her estate. That question is for someone else to debate in another forum.

Now, 15 years later, several of the most unethical people to ever litter the landscape of Washington, D.C., have injected themselves into this family's life, while skewing what should be a private issue into a national right-to-life debate.

Piggybacking this particular situation onto abortion issues is a complete sham.

It's the classic conservative tactic of muddying the waters to obscure the truth.

It is smoke and mirrors to divert attention from other, more ignominious misbehavior.

And heading up the charge, spouting the most sanctimonious epithets of moral righteousness and indignity, we have that exemplary American pillar of inscrutability, the aforementioned Knave, Tom DeLay.

Here's a quick overview: In 2001, the Schindler family lost their plea to the Florida Supreme Court to keep the feeding tube inserted. Despite Michael's wishes as her spouse, they prolonged the process with continued appeals.

"Terri's Law," making it illegal to remove Schiavo's feeding tube, was passed and signed by Jeb Bush (surprised?) in 2003, then unanimously struck down by the Florida Supreme Court as unconstitutional.

No court has found merit in the Schindler family's appeals, yet the case made its way out of the hands of the state of Florida, and directly into the chambers of the United States Senate



Out Of The Blue

By
Jerry
Tenuto

— after the U.S. Supreme Court had repeatedly refused to hear the case.

Late this past week the United States Senate, led by the stalwart Dr. Bill Frist, passed a bill, in record time, to reinstate Terri's breathing tube. This esteemed body was provided with the most expert medical guidance available, as Dr. Frist offered his opinion of her condition based upon his viewing "several of the initial tapes," whatever that meant.

The good Dr. Frist is clearly wasting his talents in the Senate. He certainly is America's premiere medical diagnostician, obviously capable of rendering an opinion from 1,200 miles away simply by viewing videotape snippets.

With those kinds of skills, who needs brain scans, lab reports and personal doctor-to-patient observation?

The House of Representatives was then called back for a rare weekend session, the sort of gathering reserved for, say, a massive terrorist attack, or a presidential assassination, or some horrendous occurrence that affects pretty much *all* Americans.

It was now time for DeLay to take up the gauntlet.

How convenient for Ol' Tom to have this situation come to the surface in a Bush state just when he is about to be hog-tied, tarred and feathered, and run out of D.C. on a rail. Could there be a better vehicle to show DeLay's warm and fuzzy side while diverting our attention away from his laundry list of illegals and misdeeds?

Unfortunately for Tom, and fortunately for us, he doesn't have a warm and fuzzy side. His public demeanor runs the gamut from snide and arrogant to self-righteous and superior. His utter insincerity toward Schiavo's crisis couldn't have been more obvious if it had been O.J. lamenting Nichole's demise.

To DeLay, she was just another opportunity to curry favor with an increasingly irate American populace.

Tom DeLay makes Newt Gingrich look like a Boy Scout.

And following in lockstep right behind Grand Pooh-Bah DeLay, there was a tremendous outpouring on the Hill of assurances of the Almighty's wishes. How did so many members of Congress, especially Republicans, know exactly what God wanted for this poor woman? When was a direct line to Heaven installed in the Capitol?

Lest we forget, there's brother Jeb. He continued to be right in the midst of the fray, swingin' and a-kickin', apparently the mediator between the Schindlers and the righteous on the Hill. This wasn't difficult to discern since Jeb proudly boasted to the national media that he was in constant communication with both the Schindlers and Republican leaders in

Washington.

Like he doesn't have a vested interest in this affair.

Keep your name and face in that national media, Jebbie, Ol' Boy.

And how could Katherine Harris live with herself if she wasn't skulking around, sticking her nose in it, too?

We finally learned just what it takes to get George to cut one of his four-year-long vacations short, leave Crawford and fly back to the White House. A major terrorist attack? The threat of war? The gold reserve running dry? A tsunami? No, nothing so inconsequential as any of those.

Brother Jeb and Tom DeLay needed his presidential presence.

So, off into the wild blue yonder went the Prez in Air Force One to be awakened from his sleep in the middle of the night and sign the bill in his robe in a White House hallway. What drama.

Just how much did this Sunday consortium in D.C. cost us taxpayers?

There was no way they were going to let this opportunity to commandeer the nation's news media and attention slip away. The Republican leadership needed some sort of diversion away from all the screw-ups and disasters of the past four years.

Especially those of Dubya and DeLay (kind of has a ring to it, don't you think?).

The Terri Schiavo situation is not all that unique or unusual. So why make a Federal case out of it? Simple: Florida and Jeb Bush. It's time to start setting up the next brother for the continuation of the Bush dynasty. Eight more years.

Interesting how this came up the day after Congress diverted our attention with the Great Baseball Steroid Inquisition.

Think it's coincidence that this is the second anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq?

These were the very "leaders" who wormed their way into the Senate, House, and White House, by scaring everyone with tales of evil elitist Liberals who advocated big Federal government, were against states' rights, and wanted to peek inside our bedroom windows.

Yet, the most powerful and least trustworthy of elected GOP leaders have turned all those ideals inside out. So what if the Federal courts have ruled repeatedly that this issue is strictly state jurisdiction.

The President (that title really sticks in my craw) made an attempt at giving this entire hullabaloo some credence by stating how Dems and Republicans in Congress had come together to give the Schindlers a chance to save their daughter's life. In typical George W. Bush verbiage, he said, "This is a complex case with serious issues, but in extraordinary circumstances like this, it is wise to always err on the side of life."

That jabberwocky is a classic GWB statement. It states loud and clear that he has absolutely no idea what he's talking about.

Two days later Jeb said essentially the same thing at a press conference where he continued to drag out this situation.

Jeb and DeLay are going to milk this

poor woman's plight for every drop of her blood.

Talking about life, George Bush has apparently forgotten about a law he signed as Texas governor which, just days ago, was invoked to remove the life support system of an infant. He has also forgotten about his record number of executions, including the mentally deficient, while governor of Texas, with nary any consideration of commutation.

How about the 100,000 or so Iraqi and Afghan civilians who have been killed by American and Allied bombs and gunfire these past two years?

It must have really burned their grits when their hastily concocted new law was laid in front of a Federal judge appointed by one President William Jefferson Clinton.

As with all the Federal judges who preceded him in this case, Tampa U.S. District Judge James Whittemore upheld the Florida court ruling, finding no merit in the Schindlers' appeal.

More importantly than Terri or Michael or the Schindlers, Judge Whittemore did exactly what he should have for the good of our nation. He did not give in to the fascist bullies who have run amok these past four years without benefit of checks or balances in our Executive and Legislative Government branches.

A panel of three justices in the Tampa district concurred with Whittemore's assessment that this was not within Federal jurisdiction. The Schindler family later pressed the entire Tampa district court with the same result.

When that failed, Jebbie brought in a ringer in the form of a doctor friendly to the right-to-life movement. This resulted in jurists giving still more time to this singular case and extended media coverage. Oh, yeah, and increased airtime for Jeb Bush.

The U.S. Supreme Court *again* refused to consider this non-federal issue, so it was presented, for the umpteenth time, to the same Florida judge who has continually overturned the compulsory insertion of the feeding tube.

He didn't alter his previous rulings, so Jeb's next tactic was to get the Florida Department of Family and Children's Services to come out of left field and accuse Michael of abuse. You may remember that it was these same good DFACS folks who, under Jeb's careful watch, lost a child a few years back (the youngster has never been located). DFACS said they're going to take control of Mrs. Schiavo; the judge has given them an order to stay out of it.

We shall see.

This end run by Congressional Republicans around the sovereignty of the State of Florida, abetted by its governor, has the very distinct stench of the onset of tyranny.

During the past eight years these representatives of their own self-interests have done everything possible to chip away at the personal freedoms of the people whose Constitution they have sworn to uphold.

It has only gotten worse since the election debacle of November, 2000.

Just as we've entered an era of won

Continued On Next Page

• THE HOUSES IN OUR HOUSES — Tenuto ... Continued From Previous Page

drous new audio-visual delivery systems, the entertainment providers have been frightened by the specter of unreasonably huge fines into making all television family-friendly – based on singular complaints within a nation of 300 million. Frankly, I found Dennis Franz's bare bottom ("NYPD Blue") to be a rare thing of beauty.

Movie theatres refuse to accept certain films because they might offend a ridiculously small segment of the population (who wouldn't even consider seeing them, anyway). Michael Eisner washed Disney's hands of Michael Moore's masterpiece, *Fahrenheit 9/11*, which they had bankrolled, because he was afraid that its anti-Bush polemic would result in Jeb and the Florida legislature stripping the company of its lucrative tax shelters.

Several chain stores refuse to carry mainstream, often award-winning books and movies on DVD because of minor content, even in true contexts, that might offend parents with small children or their more "conservatively" sensitive clientele.

Despite being obviously over 50, I must show an ID in many places just to purchase a beer or "Dirty Harry" movie.

Our national anthem concludes with a reminder that the U.S.A. is, "...the land of the free, and the home of the brave." But disagreement with the Bush administration is treasonous. Censorship in all its ugly forms runs rampant all around us.

Countless unnamed prisoners are rotting in prison cells, or worse, for endless months, charged with no crimes.

The majority of our senior elected officials have never set foot anywhere near a regular military unit other than to campaign, or wave good-bye as these young heroes go off to fight and die.

Worse yet, the biggest warmongers in the legislature and executive branches are the same fortunate sons who made

certain they stayed out of active military service or war zones. These paper tigers refuse to honestly extend real credit to their opponents who did serve. Rather, they surreptitiously and wrongly denigrate and debase the record of any brave individual who would dare to challenge them. Do not forget how GWB and Karl Rove blatantly and dishonestly besmirched decorated Vietnam vets John McCain and John Kerry.

Now they've made an overt attempt at elbowing their way right into our living rooms, putting their feet up in our recliners, and stealing the warmth from our hearths.

By the very appearance of protesters around the hospice in Pinellas Park, Florida, Supreme Court building, and elsewhere who are vocally and openly taking the side of Republicans in the White House and on the Hill – damn the law – these guys now know there are citizens who will follow them blindly while they rewrite everything our nation was founded upon and has stood for.

It's as obvious as the nose on our faces that this was just a test drive to see if they could garner support for this kind of late night, secretive session and incursion into our lives. That anyone actually went along with it is terrifying in the extreme.

And just where does DeLay get off vilifying Michael Schiavo by using his position as an elected official, from some 1,000 or so miles and several states away, to question the man's character or motives?

Michael Schiavo, when interviewed on ABC-TV's *Good Morning, America*, had the intestinal fortitude to call out Congress and denounce their action. He called it a sad day for Terri, and "...for everyone in this country because the United States government is going to come in and trample all over your personal, family matters." He nailed it.

I applaud this man for the incredible

courage he has shown by standing up to the Congressional Republicans and George W. Bush!

As for this DeLay guy, he's just a Congressional representative, right. Neither from my district nor even my state. I sincerely doubt he does anything to improve the lives of the constituents within his district (who make less than six figures).

I do know he has done considerable damage to the State of Texas and the state of the U.S. Congress.

It completely baffles me how he keeps getting re-elected. It's some kind of ignorance-inducing additive in his district's water supply or soil, isn't it?

There's no way on this spinning blue planet that I ever could have or would have voted for him. So, why should I have to be affected so profoundly by his misdeeds, past, present and, God forbid, future? And his absurd policies?

Three national elections with questionable results. By his own admission, George Bush has never made a mistake. Every time Tom DeLay is caught with his hand in the cookie jar he manages to get the rules changed *and* eat the cookie, anyway.

Systematic disassembling of The Bill of Rights, practically line by line.

Invading sovereign nations, under false pretenses, which never posed a threat to our country. Imposing Bush-style "democracy" at gunpoint. Alienating the rest of the world while sowing fear within and without our borders.

Disenfranchising entire segments of the American population.

Imprisonment without justification and torture because we can. Placing the guy who approved torture in the attorney general's office; nominating the architect of total world domination as president of the World Bank; assigning a person who advocates the disembowelment of the U.N. as ambassador to that very body.

Meanwhile, a Republican-controlled

regime and Congress that is doing absolutely nothing to even try fixing any domestic problems – other than destroy the Social Security System with yet another harebrained scam favorable only to the wealthiest among us.

Approximately 70 years ago a similar chain of events took place in Europe. I won't mention any names or the country, but if you're reading this then you're capable of making the correlation.

Do you remember Paddy Chayesky's all too eerily prophetic *Network* (1976)? Just as news anchor Howard Beale directed his viewers, I'm going to the window, opening it, sticking my head out and yelling to the world, "I'M MAD AS HELL, AND I'M NOT GONNA TAKE IT ANYMORE!"

You should, too.

A note to you handful of well-intentioned people intent upon ramming your personal interpretation of Christianity and God's will down the throats of the court system, our bodies of legislature, the hospice, and the rest of America, and most importantly Terri Schiavo: It's about time you started *acting* like Christians, get out of that family's business, and start praying for either her recovery or for the Almighty to do as He sees fit. I seem to remember that approach as more in keeping with the essence of Jesus' teachings.

To the couple whose actions resulted in the arrests of their four children, ages 3 through 14, at the hospice: Please seek professional help. It was thoroughly disgusting to see your youngsters (10-14) being handcuffed and placed in a squad car live on international television. You proved nothing. Whatever your belief or intent, this was a traumatic occurrence in their young lives. You most certainly will not find this sort of practice endorsed in a book on quality parenting.

As of this writing, Terri Schiavo is still alive. Whatever the outcome, God be with her.

'Three Amigos' Fail North Americans

By HADI JAWAD
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

While the "Three Amigos" Presidents Bush, Fox and Paul Martin met in Waco March 24 to discuss free trade, illegal immigration, and security issues, members of the Crawford Peace House organized a demonstration near the Baylor University campus and a press conference in Crawford to suggest alternative issues for discussion.

While the term "free trade" sounds innocuous enough, the impact of NAFTA, North American Free Trade Agreement, has been far more deleterious than what both Bush, Fox have claimed. According to Lesley Ramsey of the Texas Fair Trade Coalition, "NAFTA has failed to accomplish its goals, yet the people of all three nations, the U.S., Mexico and Canada have been denied a robust debate about the experience of 11 years under its regimen."



Hadi Jawad

To the detractors of NAFTA and the upcoming CAFTA - Central American Trade Agreements, the key disagreement is that such pacts undermine the poor and working class of all three nations while simultaneously enriching those who already wield considerable wealth and power. In the last 10 years, 800,000 jobs were lost in the U.S. due to NAFTA, 50,000 right here in Texas.

The border has been rendered invisible to the corporation yet for ordinary folks attempting to escape penury in Mexico and Central America, the international boundary, is an insurmountable wall, which some of them die scaling. Poverty is widespread in Canada and the U.S., but in Mexico more than 50 million people live on less than \$1,500 annually. It would have been far more appropriate if the three leaders had discussed ways to bridge the chasm between the rich and the poor inter-regionally and *within all*

— Guest Commentary —

three nations at the summit.

Coordinated North American environmental policies could have a profound affect on global environmental issues. While Mexico and Canada have both ratified the Kyoto Protocol, pressure, presumably from Washington, keeps both nations from fully implementing many of Kyoto's recommendations. The three nations must realize the need for regionally coordinated environmental safeguards. On today's crowded planet, we all live "downstream" from each other.

Perhaps the cruelest blow struck by NAFTA has been the 1.5 million Mexican farmers forced off the land by the predatory practices of agribusiness cartels, dumping from the north a tsunami of cheap corn and bean products. To the corporations, corn is a mere commodity, to the peasant Mexican farmer, it represents a way of life deeply intertwined with culture, history,

religion, and mythology.

"Corporations do not even have a physical existence. How can we expect them to have a soul?" Wes Sims, President of the Texas Farmers Union, told the media gathered at the Crawford Peace House.

Ultimately, the responsibility for the failure of the vision of the meeting must lie with the "Three Amigos" themselves.

"A 'Just' North America," according to John Wolf, founder of the Crawford Peace House, "provides the key to all the problems that the region faces. If we had a 'just' foreign policy that respected international law, compassionate social policies that emphasized the rights of the poor, and the weak, a sound environmental policies that valued *all* life, then we could all sleep a little less fearful, wouldn't we?"

Hadi Jawad is a board member of the Crawford Peace House. He can be reached at (shadijawad@aol.com).

— Guest Column —

It Is Time For Reconciliation

By KAPIL KOMIREDDI FROM LONDON
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

In his concession speech last November, Senator Kerry called for reconciliation, following which the newly re-elected George Bush promised to work toward finding common ground. The dividedness within the United States is still a stark reality. Pre-elections, it was Iraq. Post, it is Iraq and Social Security. America continues to be a divided nation, a battleground for the religious conservatives and the forward-looking libertarians. This battle can neither be won nor lost. It is not meant to be won or lost. It is a perpetual struggle, cursed, and caused, by political chicanery, and as long as it continues, no matter which side scores more, America will be the loser.

America is America because it is the cradle of freedom. However, freedom overseen by a political hierarchy is inextricable from double standards. In spite of that, America has so far done well. By affirmative action, it has attempted to undo the injustices inflicted upon its minorities. By a strident foreign policy, it has expanded the parameters of freedom across the world. It encouraged young democracies to promote individual liberties. It acted to disarm burgeoning dictatorships. But today, there is a terrible gap between America's ideals and its actions. There is gap between what America stands for and what it is doing.

The other day I was having a conversation with a well-read New Yorker turned Floridian, who now teaches medicine in London. As it happens, our discussion turned towards politics. The staunch Republican gentleman was in favour of the war in Iraq, citing, among others, the case of his fellow professor whose family had been murdered by Saddam Hussein. I was, like always, opposed to the war. There is no doubt in my mind that Saddam Hussein is evil. But to extirpate evil, you don't engage in devilry. And war in my view is the greatest devil. I have never participated in one. But, to know that a bullet hurts, does one have to be injured by it?

I asked the professor if his friend would be going back to Iraq, to help in its rebuilding, now that it has been "liberated." Circumlocution was skilfully employed to stave off that question. I may not be able to answer the Iraqi professor, or any others, whose families Saddam Hussein murdered. But will anyone that supported the war be able to answer the thousands of families whose close ones got killed in it? It is a sad fact, but those who suffered under Saddam simply cannot connect with the suffering that, in the process of overthrowing him, has been inflicted upon hundreds of thousands of civilians.

Thus, Iraq remains a divisive issue. But in the domestic arena, there is another one: Social Security. I am not American, and it shouldn't be my business, therefore, to comment on domestic issues. Nevertheless, I will say this much: Social Security, it appears to me, is a great asset of the American people; it is a good cheque from the government to its citizens. Therefore, it is unfathomable to me that it should be subjected to the vicissitudes of the stock market. After all, government is not a profitmaking corporation; it is the guardian of the helpless. The *raison d'être* of the government is its people.

Terrorism is another never-ending issue with which we are constantly pounded. The real problem facing the world today is not just terrorism. We are expected to live in fear, for enemy might strike anytime. Well, people in Darfur, Sudan, are dying as I write. Children in other African and Asian states are succumbing to death right now, this very moment. Let us ask ourselves: As humans, what have we done to alleviate their problems? Can we even understand their issues? Our issues centre on pensions, healthcare, education, stock market, glitterati, literature and ideology. Their issues are food, shelter, clothing and medicine. Can we even comprehend the etiology of creative growth that a 16-year old girl undergoes, sewing shirts for designer wear in Bangladeshi sweatshops? Can we ever fathom the pain a young child experiences when his stomach aches of hunger? Can we ever connect with the mothers of Africa who daily walk tens of miles to fetch a pot of water and go hungry so that their children are fed? This is not Orwell's "Down and Out" or Wilde's "Happy Prince." This is happening right now in our world. If there is a Christ, he is not pleased with us.

There were times when people looked to America for inspiration. Now, however, it shouldn't surprise Americans that they are among the most hated of all nations. A poll taken by BBC soon after President Bush's re-election showed that, except three nations, India, Poland and Philippines, people elsewhere are opposed to President Bush, and this opposition often translates into an irrational hatred of America as a whole. At such a sensitive time, Americans cannot afford to be divided. I am sorry to be encumbering hardworking, good-natured Americans with foreign affairs. But, being a semi-Gandhian, I firmly believe that a collective effort begins at an individual level. And it is time individual Americans took it upon themselves to support, not cudgel, one another.

Politicians are busy haranguing one another. No one in a responsible position is even attempting to articulate the fractures being caused to Americans by the fratricidal fray within. Ultimately, the sufferers, if this chasm continues to expand, will be the ordinary Americans. Whatever their differences, it is time for Americans to stand united, not against a fantastical enemy or a vague ideology, but for one another, and against poverty, disease and hunger. Independence is possible only by interdependence. Americans can no longer afford to castigate or boycott each other. It is high time for reconciliation, for bonding, for helping each other — socially and economically.

· Write to the author at: komired@aol.com

Marriage, Death Row Style

In addition to receiving the death sentence after he was found guilty of murder, lately Scott Peterson's been receiving something else — marriage proposals. Death row marriages are not unusual. I know I shouldn't be judgmental when it comes to matters of the heart, but it's hard for me to see these romances as anything but weird. We often hear single women complain, "All the good men are taken," but marrying a guy "until lethal injection do us part" seems a bit desperate.

We all know unlikely couples who seem to be doing just fine. I know a woman who's a liberal Democrat married to a conservative Republican. At first, you might think how can that work? Doesn't that mean they have different values? Then you realize they must have other things in common that make their political differences seem minor. So, are the friends of women who marry murderers saying the same thing? "Sure, she works in a bank and he's a serial killer, but they have so many other things in common."

Women marrying the most frightening people of our society should make regular, lonely single guys more confident about their futures. I can imagine them saying to themselves, "If Lyle and Erik Menendez could find somebody, there's got to be hope for me."

What makes guys behind bars so attractive to these women? Are we men really that hard to live with? I guess these are women who just don't want to put up with our usual garbage. They'll never have to say, "You told me there were only two minutes left in the game twenty minutes ago" to their husband. Or, "We both work. Why should I have to be the one to put the dishes in the dishwasher?" Or, "She's your mother. Why don't you sit next to her at Thanksgiving?" They won't have to help him find his keys, they won't trip over his shoes, and they won't have to come up with new and exciting things to do together on the weekends to keep their marriage fresh.

There is also the celebrity factor. Our society is fascinated by celebrities, whether the person's fame is related to his doing something good or bad. These killers are on the cover of "People" magazine, right next to the latest celebrity diet. So, maybe the adoring women



By
**Lloyd
Garver**

feel that a little bit of the spotlight that's shining on the celebrity murderer will also shine on them — just as they think that if they go on Jennifer Anniston's diet, they'll look just like her.

Then there's the "bad boy syndrome." An example would be a high school girl who chooses the boy who is constantly in trouble for cutting class over the math genius. But there seems to be a huge difference between that and an adult woman who spurns her shoe salesman boyfriend for a serial killer.

Although women being attracted to murderers is nothing new, the digital age has made it frighteningly easier. There are websites that help direct people to prisoners who may want to get married. I get nervous for my friends who use "regular" internet dating, and now I learn there is a whole new meaning to the term "pen pal." One of these websites contains a warning for those seeking to start a relationship with a prisoner: "Use your instincts and look for sincerity; if you feel something doesn't seem right, it most certainly isn't." Well, my instincts tell me that looking for a date on one of these websites "doesn't seem right."

So, my suggestion for those who are so frustrated with the dating world that they are tempted to start up a relationship with a convicted murderer is this: if you must do it, at least do it as a last resort. Start with people who are guilty of lesser crimes. Don't contact the murderers until you've already dated every man in America who's ever gotten a speeding ticket.

Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier" to "Home Improvement." He has also read many books, some of them in hardcover. He can be reached at lloydgarver@yahoo.com

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MAILBAG ICONOCLAST LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor:

If you think this is going to be about Halliburton, it's not.

This is about a pretty shocking story from Harper's magazine by Naomi Klein. She wrote it last year, and just last week, a BBC report confirmed much of what she wrote.

In brief, Klein wrote that American necons — represented in Iraq by Paul Bremer — had a plan to "privatize" all of Iraq, in order to fatten many a corporate wallet in the USA.

Virtually all of the industry in that country is state-owned — there are more than 200 state-owned Iraqi companies that make soap, refrigerators, etc. — and the US plan was to seize control of the industries after seizing control of the country.

And after that, the selloff to the highest bidder could begin.

Theoretically, it would go something like the privatization of Russian industry went — all of which is now in the hands of "the oligarchs" — only in Iraq, Western corporations would be allowed to buy up the factories.

In order to make this plan work, some half-million Iraqi's would be thrown out of work. And it was such a prospect — of massive unemployment in the wake of US corporations moving in — as well as others equally painful, that fueled the insurgent movement in Iraq.

Here's the link to the BBC story: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/4354269.stm>>.

Donna Knipp

Dear Editor,

Contrary to the opinion of letter writer A. Macdonell, most Canadians are considerably more tolerant of Quebec's unique cultural and historical significance than he would have you believe. Certainly, most of us can tell the difference between a lying weasel politician and political groupie types on the take, and the average Quebecer, who certainly shares a dislike of the above mentioned scoundrels.

As for his use of the phrase "Canadian patriot," it's the first time I have ever heard that term used in reference to Canadians, we usually prefer "nationalist."

Either way, we have a man preaching of a place (Quebec) he obviously doesn't know, and of a people he obviously has no respect for (Quebecers).

Methinks his ignorance is a poor reflection of Canadians, generally speaking.

I suspect that like Paul Cellucci, he's just another Talking Head from the south poking his uninvited nose into places it doesn't belong!

By the way, Wolfowitz at the World Bank?

Sheeeesh!

Marc J.J. McKerracher, Grimsby, Ontario

To The Editor:

President Bush's choice of the hawkish, imperialistic neocon, John R. Bolton, Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, as U.N. ambassador, indicates a stunning lack of vision and judgement, though not surprisingly, in view of their like ideologies.

Bolton, an avowed anti-internationalist and unilateralist, is a diplomat in name only. Well known for his blunt, abrasive and pugnatious style, he openly opposes

the International Criminal Court, is skeptical as to the worth of international law and doesn't believe in the concept of a united nations organization. He's frequently quoted as saying, "There is no such thing as the United Nations, only an international community that can occasionally be led by the only real power left in the world...the United States..." In spite of the recent oil-for-food scandal, the UN is our main hope for resolving international disputes.

Republican senators Dick Lugar of Indiana and Chuck Hagel of Nebraska express strong doubts about the appointment. Lawrence O'Donnell of MSNBC thinks it's "disastrous."

Eleanor Clift of NEWSWEEK describes Mr. Bolton as "a wrecking ball." The sensitive, explosive and volatile nature of the Middle East requires an iron hand, but one that deals cautiously with cultural issues and Mr. Bolton is devoid of such finesse.

President Bush wields awesome power that affects the entire planet. Around the world, he's considered by a majority as more dangerous than Osama bin Laden, than Ayman al-Zawahiri, than Kim Jong II. The threat they pose is contained, but could be jarred, at any time, with destructive force into ineffable violence.

Mr. Bush, appalling in his use of power, is unprecedented as an American president, and in his miopic arrogance and self-indulgence. In tandem with a UN ambassador who is controversial, confrontational and divisive, nascent explosions in the Middle East could be sparked rather than quelled.

What is Mr. Bolton's mission—to reform and strengthen the UN or to nullify it?

If confirmed by the Senate, might he, too, become one of the world's most dangerous men?

Elizabeth Gerteiny, Westport, Ct.

Dear Editor:

I have a little knowledge about gas well production and believe that the GRAND JUNCTION DAILY SENTINEL is right in suggesting we proceed with caution on the announced drilling plans in the Whitewater area.

I tested and supervised the testing of thousands of gas wells in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas in the 50ies and 60ies. The ability of a formation to give up its gas, or enable the gas to move to a well bore, depends on the permeability and porosity as well as the thickness of the production zone.

In the huge Hugoton gas field where over 11,000 wells have been drilled these three factors were very good and wells were drilled on 640 acre spacing. The production zone was very thick and gas could move quite readily to the well bore with this spacing. There has been some infield drilling of late but rarely no less than 160 acre spacing except in deeper zones.

While I am not familiar with the Piceance Basin and the characteristics, we all know the formation is very "tight" meaning poor permeability and porosity. I understand that it is also not very thick. The Rulison project was an attempt to solve that problem but even an atomic bomb could not greatly improve the formations ability to move the gas to a well bore.

The price of natural gas has risen so high that conditions before which were

not economically feasibility now encourage drilling in places like the Piceance Basin. The outer edge of the Basin which is that part north of Whitewater could be even more difficult to produce. I am not clear whether the developers plan coalbed wells or wells from the sandstone and shale zones.

What we have to be concerned about as we see companies drilling to squeeze out the very marginal production is the number of wells needed. We could be faced with well spacing of 40 acres or even 10 acre spacing in the Whitewater area. Disposal of the salt water and other contaminants produced with the gas could be a major problem and the possibility of contamination of our water supply worrisome. These factors would have a great environmental effect on all of us and need to be evaluated carefully.

Since my knowledge and experience is of another time and place I stand to be corrected if others with specific experience in this matter know my concerns to be unfounded. While there have been some improvements in the techniques to increase well production I believe it still remains marginal.

O. Bruce Jones

To The Editor:

Toll issue not so important?

Why aren't newspaper editors focusing more on the Central Texas toll issue? Without continuous information on the issue, the news media is working in the best interests of pro-toll advocates. If approved here, toll roads will appear everywhere. The people need to know that toll roads

will be here forever and they are the largest tax increase ever to plague Texans and their children's children.

Special interests must NOT be able to win so easily.

Change Republican Party

The GOP we all once knew maintained a platform of less government in the affairs of state and in the public domain. This proud party used to believe that less government is better in a democratic society. *So what happened?*

Perhaps the GOP name should be changed as well as the party logo from *elephant*, to perhaps, *octopus*? After all, the long *tentacles* of the current GOP is reaching out flagrantly into every facet of American life.

Saving Social Security

Has anyone considered diverting 5-percent of the total budget slated for the Iraq/Afghanistan conflict and "restoration" towards saving the Social Security system?

House Bill 789

Deregulation of phone service costs


Please vote "No" on this bill. We already voted "yes" to deregulate tuition costs of higher education and Texas families got "*bit in the butt*" on that one. Tuition costs have "*gone through the roof*" and are continually increasing with no end in sight.

Deregulate the phone companies and the same will happen to our monthly bills. The days of open and honest deregulation are over. Greed has overtaken honesty and moderation in revenue collection. Voting for HB 789 would be another major catastrophe in an increasing list of legislative errors.

Peter Stern, Driftwood, Texas

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3 Books, CD... Off The Beaten Path

BY W. LEON SMITH
ICONOCLAST EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Imagine that you are the President of the United States. You are sitting in the Washington White House, but are day-dreaming about being on the farm at the Western White House in Crawford.

Rather than imagining the sounds that permeate Central Texas, you can now take them with you, in a CD entitled "The Environmental Sounds of Crawford, Texas," which was recorded on Dec. 3, 2004, by Dell Little for Caviar Madness Productions.

This is background "music" on which your imagination can both wander and wonder.

Hear birds chattering on the first track, "Morning Town," and hear running water by listening to tracks 2 and 3, Tonkawa Falls (close and far away).

Perhaps the most attractive track to this reviewer is number 8, "By The Tracks," which is the sound you hear when you are waiting on the train to pass by.

Others include "Industry," "House Fire Dogs," "Gift Shop," "Fly By," "Diner," and "Prairie Chapel Road."

The CD is marketed online at <www.pepventura.com>.

We are sure that you'll find that the environmental sounds of Crawford are, like the town, very special.

But if you can't afford to buy the CD,

might we suggest that you open a window and hear many of the same things live. It, of course, depends upon where you are.

While we are off the beaten path, let me tell you about three very different books.

One, "Letters To My Father" by M.J. Flemming, who lives in Houston, is an inspirational journey through the life of an individual who, at

various important junctures in her trek from childhood to adulthood, writes letters to her Father, God, and is answered, revealing a personal relationship through correspondence.

"I have taken you honestly and boldly into my darkest past," writes Ms. Flemming, who chooses to share her life journey that was riddled with turmoil. The theme encourages the reader to not be afraid for he or she is not alone.

The book is available

through <www.authorhouse.com>.

"This Far and No Further!"

Another book is inspirational in another sense: "This Far and No Further!" by Pastor Butch Paugh boldly provides teachings, instructions, and disciplines needed for the final war against worldwide tyranny. On the cover, a sentry is surrounded by these words: "Defenders of Liberty," "No Compromise," "No Surrender," which gives you a hint of the contents.

In the book, Paugh quotes Scripture to enable the reader to recognize how events in the world stack

up against history in the making. He also quotes our nation's founding fathers, including one of this reviewer's favorites, Benjamin Franklin, to provide depth as today is compared to our beginnings when the patriots of yore boldly crafted and fought for our country's initial independence.

Paugh writes: "Whether we stand together in agreement to fight for righteousness, or if need be, to stand alone, stand we must!"

Pastor Paugh hosts a radio ministry, "Call To Decision," in West Virginia that is broadcast at locales throughout the country. His website is: <<http://www.m2ktalk.com/paugh.htm>>.

"You Should Live So Long"

The third book in this review is a novel, written by Canadian author Hal Sisson.

"You Should Live So Long" can perhaps best be defined as political science fiction (isn't most politics science fiction, though?), as the novel tracks the misadventures of two buddies, Phil Figgwiggin and Mike Fowler, as they encounter and attempt to outsmart aliens from another planet on the backdrop of our country's political machines trying to take over the world.

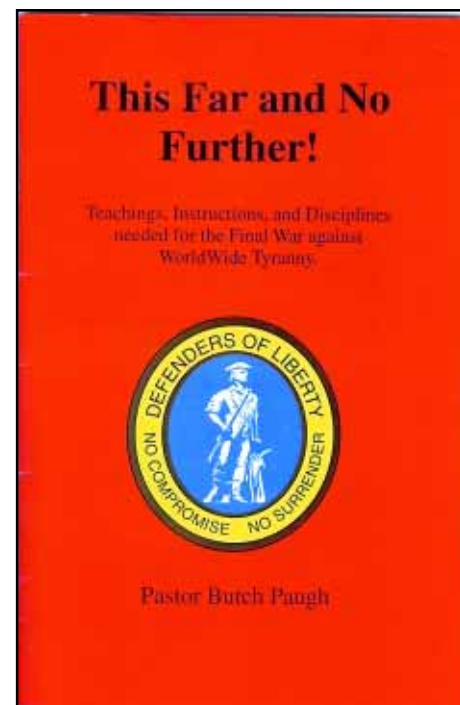
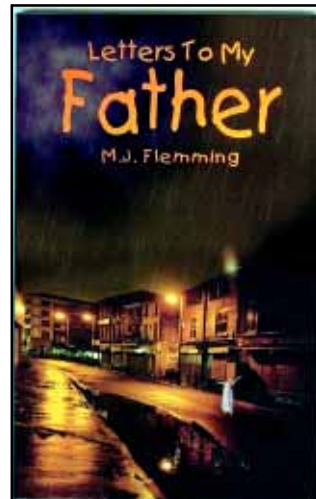
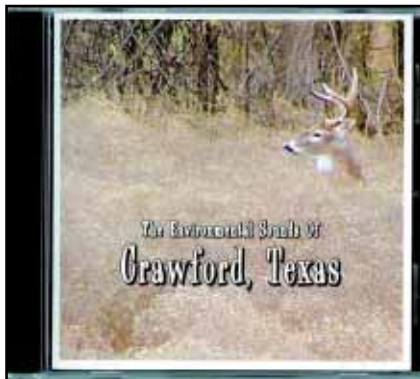
Sisson utilizes a brilliant and witty writing style in this novel that should have great appeal in the United States. In it, nothing is sacred: religion, the government, the secret societies that attempt to control the world, and the President's marionette antics in developing a strange New World Order (oops, now you're supposed to call it a global union being built by the development of trade unions).

There's mystery, comedy, adventure, and a look at current day politics, from a perspective of fiction that exposes factual political truth for what it really is.

Myriads of readers in the U.S. regularly hook up with an author and crave all of his or her works, as a passtime or for illumination. Hal Sisson can write. He has a unique



Entertainment



style that's easy and fun to read and the insight, whether you agree with the postulations of his novel or not, is worth a read. You might find that you can't get enough of his intrepid characters Figgwiggin and Fowler. They are something else!

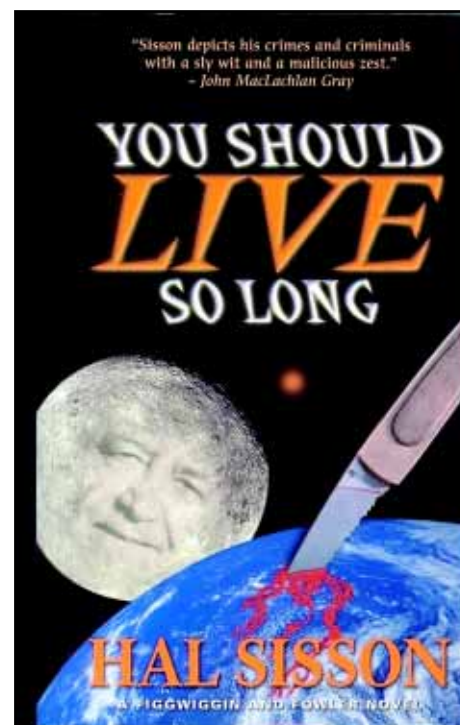
"You Should Live So Long" is published by Salal Press, <salal@horizon.bc.ca>.

Sisson, who was born in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, served awhile as a reporter for the SASKATOON STAR-PHOENIX and practiced law in Alberta for 30 years.

He says he retired in 1984 to devote time to "croquet, marble collecting, and writing fiction."

His other works include: "Coots, Codgers and Curmudgeons," "Garage Sale of the Mind" (a collection of salty short stories), "Maquiladora Mayhem," "A Fat Lot of Good," "Caverns of the Cross," "The Big Bamboozle," and "A Fowler View of Life."

Sisson's personal website is <www.halsisson.ca>.



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