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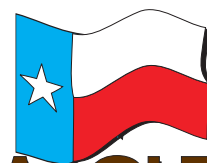


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Shani In the Mix

Blending The Boundaries

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On Middle Eastern Music:

It's almost like a spiritual thing. It feels very mysterious and it taps something that feels exotic and mysterious. It's hard to put into words. It touched me very, very early on in my life which became like my mission. I wanted to be able to represent that to people like myself that have never heard it before.

— Shani

Shani's New Album: AT THE CASBAH



"It was a new twist for me. We worked on the arrangements still trying to keep that stamp of exoticism and a little edge to it, a little mystery to it, so that it would still feel like it was coming from me. It just felt like a new direction I wanted to explore. I also feel it's a real mainstream album. It has songs that are very mainstream in terms of commerciality and singing along that kids can relate to, too."

— Shani

Shani Riggsbee



Utah Stands Against No Child Left Behind Act

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — The governor of an overwhelmingly Republican, pro-Bush state recently defied the president's landmark education act. Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman earlier this month signed a measure against No Child Left Behind Act.

The federal education secretary warned that the bill could cost his state \$76 million in federal aid. State lawmakers doubt this charge.

Fifteen states are considering anti-No Child Left Behind legislation this year, but this Utah bill by far is the strongest action against it.

Under this bill, Utah's education standards take priority over federal education requirements. State education officials say that the federal law conflicts with the state's program. State GOP representatives calls NCLB an unfunded mandates of Bush's signature education law.

Utah measures student achievement with the Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS), which compares achievement as students progress from grade to grade.

— *The Associated Press contributed to this report.*

Protest At Halliburton Meeting Set Wednesday

HOUSTON — Hundreds of peace, labor, and consumer rights activists will gather outside the annual Halliburton shareholder's meeting in on May 18 to protest war profiteering and corporate cronyism as exemplified by Halliburton.

Groups are expected to gather at the green space located at 1000 Crawford (Crawford and Lamar), in front of the statue of George R. Brown, and march to the Four Seasons Hotel, 1300 Lamar Street.

This event is sponsored by Houston Global Awareness, Global Exchange, Code Pink, Latinos Por La Paz, the Maryknoll House, Texas Fair Trade Coalition, Peace Action-Houston, Austin SpokesCouncil, Witness for Peace, Anti-Racist Action, Progressive Action Alliance, Louisiana Activist Network, and others.

For more information, visit Houston Global Awareness' website.

INFO

www.HoustonGlobalAwareness.org

Brief Says Decision For Iraq Invasion Was 'Being Fixed Around The Policy'

LONDON — According to notes of a July 23, 2002, meeting between British Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Bush, the invasion of Iraq was pre-determined and intelligence was "being fixed around the policy."

According to a report by Richard Dearlove, then head of MI6, British in-

telligence, "Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD (weapons of mass destruction). But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy."

The notes were disclosed recently by the Sunday Times of London prior to

Blair's re-election and accused Bush and his aides of misusing limited intelligence to make a case for war.

A summary of the notes explained that "the case was thin. Saddam was not threatening his neighbors and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea, or Iran."

Crawford

Hometown of the President of the United States

Crawford Votes Posten For Mayor

CRAWFORD — In the Crawford mayor's race, Alderman David Posten defeated Alderman Franklin Abel 150 votes to 96 votes.

Mayor Robert Campbell decided not to seek re-election, based on disagreements with the council, not criticism last year after he endorsed Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry.

In the school board race, incumbents JohnMinnix (407 votes) and Jeff Baize (403 votes) were elected to 2005-08 terms. Also receiving votes was Burt Gohlke (310 votes). In all, 660 voted in the election out of 1,601 eligible voters.

RFK, Jr. To Speak About Environmental Challenges

HOUSTON — An evening with Robert F Kennedy, Jr and Mayor Bill White, speaking on "Our Environmental Challenges" will be held at Hobby Center, Sarofim Hall in Houston on Monday, June 13, at 7:30 p.m.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., wrote *Crimes Against Nature*, whose first chapter is entitled "The Mess in Texas." His speech, "A Contract with Our Future," explains how the natural surroundings are linked to people's work, health, and identity as Americans, how good environmental policy is good for business.

Kennedy is senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, president of the Waterkeeper Alliance, and co-host of Ring of Fire on Air America Radio.

Tickets are \$35, \$25 and \$10 with discounts for seniors, students, and groups. For more information, call the sponsor, The Progressive Forum

INFO

Sponsor, (713) 664-0020
info@progressiveforumhouston.org

'Cost of War' Screening Set Thursday In Austin

AUSTIN — A screening of *The Cost of War*, a new documentary by local filmmaker Patrick Phillips, will be showing in Austin on Thursday, May 19th, 7:30pm at Monkeywrench Books, from 8- 10 p.m. Monkeywrench Books is located at 110 E. North Loop in Austin

Patrick Phillips will be leading a discussion afterwards with a number of local veterans against war. Admission is free and half of all proceeds from DVD sales and donations go to The Iraq Veterans Assistance Fund.

This documentary seeks to give voice to truth through the experiences and observations of soldiers, veterans, and their families.

The Cost of War offers only a brief glimpse of the war in Iraq and its incalculable human, personal, psychological and social costs, but it comes from a critical source — the perspective of those who have experienced war first hand.

In *The Cost of War*, Iraq war veterans recount their views prior to deployment, their experiences in Iraq, and how those experiences changed them. Families and loved ones of those called on to fight in Iraq recount how the experiences of their loved ones have affected those they left behind.

Veterans of Korea, Vietnam, and Operation Desert Storm provide a perspective on these current wars, informed by their own experiences in those earlier conflicts and the truths they came to know.

MonkeyWrench Books is an all-volunteer, nonprofit, collectively owned and operated radical bookstore in North Austin. Regular hours of operation for the store are 11 a.m. - 8 p.m., Monday - Friday; 12 - 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday. For more information, contact Monkeywrench.

INFO

www.monkeywrenchbooks.org
(512) 407-6925.



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Shani' In the Mix

Blending The Boundaries

International Music, Film Star

Merging Eastern and Western Understanding With A Cultural Fusion

Interview

By W. Leon Smith

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — Some say that music is the international language. Shani Rigsbee, an international music and film star who hails from Arkansas, is proving it as she blends elements from the Eastern and Western worlds in her music compositions and performances, bringing enlightenment to her audiences as she fuses the cultures, making her “an artist of the universe.”

Shani (pronounced Shay-nee), most recently completed her fourth album, *At the Casbah*, and her song, *El Llamar de Pasion*, is featured in the new Paul Haggis film *Crash* (with Sandra Bullock and Don Cheadle).

Her film credits, for both acting and film scoring, include four feature films: *The Keeper — The Legend of Omar Khayyam* (with Academy Award winner Vanessa Redgrave, in which Shani plays the exotic Court Entertainer and also contributed music to the film); *The House of Sand and Fog*, the highly acclaimed film with Sir Ben Kingsley and Jennifer Connelly; *Sheherazade*, where Shani was a leading actress and singer in this, the first film to be shot in Pakistan and outer Mongolia; and *A Matter of Honor*, an Italian crime drama slated for shooting in the fall of 2005 in Pennsylvania, with Paul Scavino.

She also appeared in *CrossWorlds* with Rutger Hauer, Josh Charles, and Jack Black.

On screen, Shani plays a variety of roles, from sultry femme fatale to a seductive ancient temptress.

Musically, her title track, *Call of the Wild*, can be heard on HBO and in Oliver Stone's *Persona Non Grata*.

According to international public relations consultant Ilene Proctor, “Since the classically beautiful Shani arrived in Los Angeles from Arkansas, she’s been on a Hollywood high — her status cemented as the number one international entertainer, actress, and singer. Perhaps it’s because of her singing style — a sensuous, alluring voice that curves and caresses each vowel when she’s caught in the heat of passion and unleashes sexy tremolos, and when she seems to suffer the agony of love’s heartache.”

In her album *Call of the Wild*, Shani broke new ground creating a global span of sound that combined percussive dance beats with sensual Eastern and Spanish overtones, in the debut of a new sort of ménage-a-music. She has followed its international acclaim with *Velvet* which combines dance and hip hop beats with exotic overtones. With her latest release, *At the Casbah* which contains two updated Cole Porter standards in her highly stylized direction. Along with 11 original songs, she evokes a blend of rhythm, sophistication, and exoticism — free from labels, borders, or boundaries.

As a young girl, Shani would spend hours singing to the artists of the day while her father played drums. Encouraging her passion for the arts, her family threw caution to the winds and relocated to Los Angeles, taking along the Southern cheerleader and choir girl to help her launch her career.

While in LA, Shani began to sing and collaborate with

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Shani performing on stage

• SHANI — IN THE MIX ... Continued From Page 3

some of the international music scene's great talents, working closely with Persian/Armenian star Andy Madalian (Andy) and learning the intricacies of Eastern rhythms and melodies. She was forever hooked on the sensual and hypnotic sounds that would influence her own writing style.

A consummate artist, she has achieved international acclaim as the starring vocalist on *Somnia Memoria* from the soundtrack and video game *Parasite Eye* on Sony's PlayStation singing in English, Latin, and Spanish. She has also enjoyed singing and dancing with enchanting belly dance flair on stage throughout the globe, entertaining audiences from Los Angeles' Greek Theatre to London to Dubai.

Shani will be performing in Houston on June 23 for the premiere of *The Keeper – the Legend of Omar Khayyam*. The Houston premiere is a benefit for the Children's Cancer Hospital there. She will arrive there on June 22 to do local media interviews in connection with the film and the fund-raiser.

In an exclusive interview with W. Leon Smith for THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST, Shani described how she writes her music compositions. She presented her views on "blending the boundaries" of regions of the world through music, to promote unity and a better understanding of neighboring cultures, and she discussed politics, her bout with cancer, and much more:

THE INTERVIEW

ICONOCLAST: You went from Hot Springs, Ark., to Los Angeles, to touring with Andy in the Middle East. What have your world travels taught you about the United States, the rest of the world, and the way the world perceives the United States?

SHANI: Wow. That's a heavy question. As a person I've learned that there is a wide world out there and there is much to be learned, and that I personally would encourage everyone to expand their horizons whenever the opportunity presents itself, because you can never learn too much. There's always something to be learned.

There are cultures that have been around for thousands of years and, you know, it could be something as simple as a home remedy, or a mantra, some kind of little philosophical way of looking at life that you could learn from another culture that can just enrich your own personal view on life, and that has nothing to do with politics or religion or anything. It can just enrich your own personality in the way you approach your life.

I think America's a very young country. It's only been around a few hundred years and the thing that makes this country great is that we've imported all of these philosophies from other regions. Sometimes I think the multi-cultural voice gets watered down because of the way the news perhaps portrays other countries and the way they want us to relate things to our own best interests, meaning those of us living here in the United States. That outlook pertains more to nationalism and not so much about personal growth.

Without making it a political answer, I would just say that there are things

you can learn on a personal level through traveling that is separate from a nationalistic view.

ICONOCLAST: It was reported that Middle Eastern musical acts fared poorly in the United States after 9/11, but then I also hear that there's more of an interest in Eastern languages such as Arabic and Chinese. How has the Middle Eastern music scene been going since the November elections?

SHANI: I think it has been flourishing.

I tour within the Middle Eastern com-

“These are people with a rich history in literature and poetry. That teaches you something about the depth of the way they think. We might glamorize or romanticize, let's say, a renaissance painting of the 15th century time, but if you delve into the poetry of some Eastern poets, whether its Khayyam or Rumi, you realize that this is a very, very romantic people, a very fundamental people. And then if you look into the rhythm and the melodies, there's a festive, happy side. I think you don't always get those pictures when you're just looking at these images on the news, for example.”

— Shani

munity very regularly around the world. It's been much more difficult. Many times I'm traveling with musicians that have a Middle Eastern birthplace on their passport. They might even be an American citizen. It's been really sad for me to be an American citizen born in this country and I don't get pulled aside, but the people that are American citizens who aren't born in this country and have an American passport will be pulled aside just based on having been born in someplace that might look suspicious to immigration. Those kinds of things are still challenging. That's all post-9/11.

But beyond the logistics, I think they're flourishing. I think it's actually grown. I think the non-Middle Eastern demographic has become very interested in the sights and sounds of this kind of world I've been a part of a long time.

ICONOCLAST: Judging by the plot and story of *Crash*, it seems like the makers of this movie, on which your song appears, are consciously making an effort to bridge race relations.

SHANI: Yes.

ICONOCLAST: How did you hook up with the producers of *Crash* to get on the soundtrack?

SHANI: The interesting thing for me was I was referred to the music supervisor and editor by a mutual associate that we both knew. When I went in I really didn't know what the film was about at all. And, to be honest, *Million Dollar Baby* hadn't even come out yet, so I really didn't have a strong reference of what was to come. I was shown a few scenes from the film and I was told it was about race relations in Los Angeles. But what I thought was so, kind of, almost cosmic was that here I am a product of the Los Angeles cultural scene, and having been raised in Arkansas where I wasn't exposed to a lot of Latino influence, and certainly not Middle Eastern influence, all of that came later in my life when I moved to

Los Angeles.

So I kind of thought it's a big irony that I was at the opposite side of the spectrum which is all the positive things that come out of the cultural diversity here. And how strange is it that a girl who has no Latino or Middle Eastern heritage gets chosen to put her music in a film about cultural diversity. And I'm singing in Spanish with Middle Eastern overtones. And I'm just this Anglo girl from Arkansas, so I think there's a whole irony there to draw.

ICONOCLAST: What musical genres do you like to listen to and which ones do you feel comfortable performing?

SHANI: I love all music. I give everything a shot and, especially, if people recommend something highly I will listen to anything. To me, it just has to read truthful. If it sounds a little too manufactured, I usually can sense that and don't respond too much to that. If it feels like it's just really from the heart and it's truthful then usually I respond to it, meaning I don't have to understand the language but if it feels truthful to me, and it's impassioned, I really love it and I can listen to it over and over again, because it's like it's tapping your soul. You don't really have to understand it. That can apply to a country song. It can apply to an Arabic song. You just have to feel like it's touching you in some way.

ICONOCLAST: Where do you get your inspiration when it comes to both composing music and performing it?

SHANI: It comes in the strangest places. Because I'm a lyricist, sometimes somebody just says a phrase and I think, "Hmm. That's a very interesting way of saying that." I write it down and it will sit on a piece of paper for awhile and someday it will just turn into something. It metamorphoses into something later.

Other times it might just be a rhythm. I could be out listening to a band or watching another performer and I hear a rhythm idea that I would like to really take and expand into something for myself. It will be a musical idea that I later will turn into a melody idea. And other times it's a melody. You're folding the laundry and you hear this melody in your head. So it really sort of comes in all different ways, which I'm thankful for. I'm not one of those people that sits down at the piano and then says, "Okay, I've got to make something happen." If it's not kind of divine and comes at you from an inspirational place, I really don't want to force it.

ICONOCLAST: When you're writing the music, at the same time are you performing it in your head?

SHANI: Yes. Yes. Very much so. In fact, I've often told people I don't know where it comes from and I don't want to question where it comes from because usually when the song comes, it comes in a stream of consciousness. It really almost writes itself and it's almost like my hand is just putting it down and I can feel it and hear it and as you said, sometimes even see myself performing or interpreting it and I just have to get it out of my head to the point where I need

to get into the studio and sing it, or I'll sing it into my cell phone and I'll call my voice mail and put it there, because it has to be done. It has to be done right then and there.

If I have to struggle with something, I usually just put it aside. I let it go and come back to it later if it feels forced.

ICONOCLAST: When you write it, do you aim at a certain culture or theme?

SHANI: I used to because, before — I'm going back to my last album *Call of the Wild* in 2001 — the state of the music industry was in a different place and I felt like I had to reach a demographic that was used to hearing things a certain way, and I was trying to bridge the gap. I was trying to expose whatever you call it, world fusion or world music mixed with pop music, dance music. I was trying to expose that to the, what you might call, mainstream audience but still make it digestible to the people that already knew those sounds and rhythms. It's just that I would be singing in English predominantly. And counter to that, I knew that some of the things that might have had more of a mainstream base were being altered with these new rhythms and production choices so I think I was hoping my formula would just work for people, that it would be understood.

But with this album (*At the Casbah*) I really didn't worry about the rules and regulations and genres. I just said I'm going to completely do what feels right to me because I've seen such growth in the music industry in the last couple of years that a lot of rules and boundaries and labels have been thrown out the window. That is what I've waited for forever. It's really exciting. You don't have to feel like you have to edit your material when you're working.

ICONOCLAST: What should newcomers to Middle Eastern music listen for?

“It really almost writes itself and it's almost like my hand is just putting it down and I can feel it and hear it and as you said, sometimes even see myself performing or interpreting it and I just have to get it out of my head to the point where I need to get into the studio and sing it, or I'll sing it into my cell phone and I'll call my voice mail and put it there, because it has to be done. It has to be done right then and there.”

— Shani

What should they take away from it after they listen to it?

SHANI: I think there's a sensuality to the melodies. The predominant thing about Middle Eastern music sound is the mode. We have Western mode and we have Eastern mode. Inside of those there are even many, many musical modes that exist, but it's the scale. The scale of the notes is different. A lot of times people, if they aren't musically trained, don't really know what it is that they're hearing. "Why does it make my head cock to one side when I hear that? That's very interesting." It's the mode. It's not a familiar mode. It's almost like a spiritual thing. It feels very mysterious and it taps something that feels exotic and mysterious. It's hard to put into words. It touched me very, very early on in my life which became like my mission. I wanted to be able to represent that to

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people like myself that have never heard it before. I've never heard people say, "Wow, that's not interesting." I've never heard anything but positives.

ICONOCLAST: Several years ago when I interviewed Van Cliburn, the internationally renowned pianist, he suggested that, to him, classical music is nourishment.

SHANI: Yes.

ICONOCLAST: To listen to it increases activity in the brain and promotes more diverse thought processes. What do you think about that in regard to your music? Do you consider the "learning" of music to be part of better understanding oneself?

SHANI: Absolutely. Learning about oneself and others, most definitely. For me, when I study Middle Eastern music, if you have the

translations done for you for example, when I've sung other people's songs, it's extremely poetic, and so you start to find out that these are people with a rich history in literature and poetry. That teaches you something about the depth of the way they think. We might glamorize or romanticize, let's say, a renaissance painting of the 15th century time, but if you delve into the poetry of some Eastern poets, whether it's Khayyam or Rumi, you realize that this is a very, very romantic people, a very fundamental people. And then if you look into the rhythm and the melodies, there's a festive, happy side. I think you don't always get those pictures when you're just looking at these images on the news, for example. Again, it goes back to that nationalism. You're getting a taste for current events, but you don't really know where all of this art or culture is coming from, from thousands and thousands of years ago. There's a lot to be learned from music and art, most definitely.

ICONOCLAST: Based on that, do you think of music as an international language that can perhaps bridge cultural gaps where politics often fails?

SHANI: Absolutely. It's a cliché, but music is the universal language. It always has been and I believe it always will be. I think you add on to that, dance and maybe the translation of lyrics and poetry which can also be interpreted into art and painting. Art in general just touches people in an individual way because you are able to interpret it on your own without it being filtered through some other source that might have a specific agenda. It just allows you to listen to it on your own, whether it's in your car or at home, much like reading a book is sort of different than seeing a film. When reading a book it's up to you to interpret the imagery. You can see that same story portrayed on a film, but it's being funneled through a director's vision.

I think the power of music is that everybody gets to interpret it and let it touch them in their own way.

ICONOCLAST: Politically speaking,

how do you view the world situation, with the war in Iraq and the tensions among countries?

SHANI: I think it has brought out the best and the worst. What I mean about that is I've always said that about 9/11, which was just the most heinous thing that ever happened. But the flip side is that once that did happen, it grew the consciousness of people that really were not aware of perhaps things beyond their own surroundings and how we all view and affect each other. With things that are happening in the name of America whether it's American business or American growth or commerce, there's a direct effect on people of other regions. To me, it's a responsibility that we have, that we're not alone in this universe. We, being Americans, we're all in-

ter-related and I think there's a big responsibility in that we are a melting pot, all of these cultures co-existing here.

Many people have extended family, extended friendships and things in other regions of the world, so you can't just cut off from the world and think that the sun rises and sets by what's good for America. I'm certainly not anti-nationalistic whatsoever. I think this is the greatest country in the world and I'm proud to live here. I was born here and feel extremely fortunate, but I just think there's a responsibility just like if you're living on a street, if you didn't make the effort to know your next-door neighbor, I think you'd be missing out because you're sharing your life with these people. Someday you might need them. There could be something you could learn from them. So I just think it's a big responsibility for us as American citizens to keep up to speed on what's going on around the world.

ICONOCLAST: If you had an audience with President Bush, is there any advice you would give him?

SHANI: (laughs) Umm. Gosh, it's so easy to point the finger, but it's a very, very difficult job. I just think that the most important thing is to continue to listen. Listening to me? I've only got my own perspective, but I think it's important to constantly keep in mind there are many, many sides to an argument and if it were my job I would try to give as much perspective to all the points of view before making a decision, remembering that there is a price to pay. There is always a price to pay. I think you have to always anticipate what could be the result of certain actions.

You know, history will reveal itself whether what we did in Iraq was ultimately the right thing or not. I think it's just too soon for us to make a decision.

ICONOCLAST: What are your views on the environment and the Patriot Act and some of the top issues of the day?

SHANI: I think the Patriot Act is, basically, something I touched on before when we talked about passport and immigration. There are a lot of people that I know that are good, good friends of



Shani

mine who have become American citizens, who have worked to bring other family members over or have become nationalized by having children here. There were a lot of things that the U.S. government was not being adamant and clear about before and a lot of really good people are now under the magnifying glass and being threatened of being deported or have family members deported because maybe our policies were not clear before or it just wasn't really a pressed issue.

The government, perhaps had not laid out things clearly enough or made it mandatory to do certain things. People have comfortably lived here for a decade, or 20 years, and suddenly they're getting a knock on the door. I hear stories all the time and it's just so unfortunate because they pay, they work hard and contribute to our society, they're good people, and their family members are being slightly harassed, so I think there needs to be a really, really sensitive hand with that. I know we're facing some scary threats, but at the same time, I think if we do our due diligence correctly, other people shouldn't be victimized. That's completely against what the country stands for. That's unpatriotic in my view. In some cases people have risked their lives. Many have ridden on a horse or a camel across a vast distance to escape places that weren't safe for them to live or they disagreed with the beliefs of that particular government, risked everything to come to this country and start over, and live as an honest citizen here, and now they're suddenly feeling harassed by this country this place that they risked everything for to live in freedom. It's so sad. Those of us that were born here just take that for granted. That makes me very sad.

ICONOCLAST: What about the environment?

SHANI: I have strong opinions about the environment. Of course, who doesn't want to have clean water and clean air to breathe and provide for the future generations? I don't see any reason why certain technologies are not explored to the greatest capacity. We're polluting the environment with gases and doing things we don't really have to do.

Here we are in this highly technical age of 2005 and we are able to do these amazing things with satellite technology and yet we're still operating our cars with this liquid that only has a limited existence. This gas. It just seems so very archaic. There must be other ways to power our cars. Not only does it pollute the environment, but it is also causing a lot of political unrest with the way we import the gas. Not having all the answers, I can just raise the questions, at least.

ICONOCLAST: Which artists did you admire growing up?

SHANI: It was a really different time. I remember listening to my parents' record collection, whether it was Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and at the same time the thing that is so interesting to me is there was the disco movement which was a new sound like dance rhythms — a new genre that was born where people would get all dressed up and go to a club and dance. I remember liking that and wanting to do that as a little kid, wanting to be old enough to get to go out and dance like my parents, so I think rhythm influenced me early-on.

There were a lot of artists during that time, whether it was the Commodores, or Earth, Wind and Fire, and a lot of other bands that were very, very rhythmic.

When I was a little bit older, I started appreciating song writing. I loved Sting, and the Police. I also liked Prince because I remember Prince, when I was a teenager, was combining all these genres. You know, this Black guy who was playing this rock guitar, kind of just breaking down all these barriers. I thought that was pretty fascinating.

ICONOCLAST: Do you feel as though you are doing the same thing now?

SHANI: I really do. I really do. But that's just what felt natural to me. I mean, it was a conscious effort for me to use Middle Eastern rhythms and melodies. That was very conscious, but I've also done what has felt natural to me. A lot of people thought, well, just because I came from Arkansas — I've had it said to me so many times — you know, you could have had a career like a Faith Hill or a Shania Twain, and I said, "Yes, I could, but I followed what felt right to me, and I've always responded to rhythm, and I never looked at color or ethnicity or those types of things, or where I came from as limitations as to what I should be as an artist. It just never even made sense to me.

ICONOCLAST: What types of music did you perform as a youth?

SHANI: Pop music. (laughs) What was popular at the time. I remember singing to Barbara Streisand, Diana Ross, Natalie Cole. You know, just great singers. These were records that were in my family's home. I would sing along with great singers and even men as well, but when you're female, your voice has to go where it fits. I love singing along with great singers. My musical influences were sort of broken down. If I really wanted to sing, I would sing along to a great singer. If I wanted to be influenced by music, I would listen to great recordings. Great bands.

ICONOCLAST: Who would you be anxious to work with in terms of music artists?

SHANI: There's so many, but I mean, again, I would say, the people you were so influenced by. When I name people like Prince, that's just like working with an idol. Such a strong — well, if he can do it, you know? And it's so amazing that you can mix all those things, and it works. I always felt as a fan that he always kept me on my toes. "I can't believe it. He's doing this now." That's just something as an artist, you think pushing the envelope is so important. Working with him would be incredible.

I think Sting is another one, and there are a lot of cutting edge people out there that are fascinating. I'm very open-minded with collaborations. I love that.

ICONOCLAST: I understand that you've been recently asked to record a duet half-English, half-Arabic with Arman, originally from Baghdad. Are you looking forward to this?

SHANI: Very much so. It's a great song. It's going to be promoted both inside the Arabic community and outside, and I'm going to do my best to help expose it to my listeners. It would be on his album, but we're doing a music video together. I think it will be exciting. It'll be interesting to see how it permeates in the non-Middle Eastern community

Continued On Next Page

• SHANI — IN THE MIX ... Continued From Page 5

and how it's received.

ICONOCLAST: I've heard your music described as a wide mix of English, Spanish, Gypsy, Middle Eastern, hip hop, sultry, passionate, and the list goes on and on. Does knowing a particular spoken language help in composing a piece of music that matches a certain ethnicity, or is it something more-so from the heart?

SHANI: I did not plan on singing in other languages. That was not something I set out to do, primarily because English is my first language and that's the point of view I know best. But I was asked to start singing backgrounds when I was working with Middle Eastern artists, I was asked to start singing American music in a Middle Eastern nightclub which ultimately led me to singing in Farsi, Armenian and Arabic. It was just a challenge in the beginning. It was an interesting challenge. Then I got a little more confident with things and sang solo. Then I got a little more confident and said I'd record something. It's just been a process.

And I was asked to do the Sony PlayStation, which was in Latin and Spanish, both of which are languages in which I'm not fluent, it was such a challenge and exciting. And then I started to find out that I wanted to do translation of a couple of songs I sang into English that I sang in other languages, and I realized that they just didn't work. I mean, they just sounded better in the languages for which they were written. It read false to me. I'd try and translate it or to even reinterpret that melody in English. It just read false. I really, really tried. I even tried to not translate it to try to just give it new life in a new song, and it just didn't work for me.

I've often found that some songs are better to be in the language they were originally written. So I'll collaborate with people, and I let them do it. I don't tell them how they should say it anymore than when I write in English as I feel pretty confident in that area. It's very interesting. It's hard to describe. It's something you feel.

ICONOCLAST: Yesterday, I listened to clips from your latest CD *At the Casbah*. To me it's a mesmerizing collection of music that tends to transport the listener to a far-off land and cast a spell. Was that your intention?

SHANI: Yes, thank you. Thank you. That was the intention.

ICONOCLAST: Well, it worked.

SHANI: Thank you. Thank you.

ICONOCLAST: That's your latest.

SHANI: That's the latest. It's soon to be released. We're starting to inch it out on the internet and slowly introduce it to the radio. It probably won't be in wide release until July, but I just explored some new stuff with this one. I put a lot of jazz influence into it. I did two Cole Porter songs. An American writer.

ICONOCLAST: I noticed.

SHANI: It was a new twist for me. We worked on the arrangements still trying to keep that stamp of exoticism and a little edge to it, a little mystery to it, so that it would still feel like it was coming from me. It just felt like a new direction I wanted to explore. I also feel it's a real mainstream album. It has songs that are very mainstream in terms of commerciality and singing along that kids can relate to, too.

There are so many great people I

worked with on this album, though. That's why it feels so good to me. There's a lot of great energy in the record. I was really lucky to work with people I did.

ICONOCLAST: I read that a while back, you beat cancer and that you're on the board of directors of the Women's

When I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, I was in the middle of recording an album, and everything stopped. It's one of those things where your perspective completely changes. The completion of an album just seems so irrelevant at that moment.

— Shani

Clinic. Can you tell me a little about this, your experience with cancer, and the focus of the clinic?

SHANI: Yes, when I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, I was in the middle of recording an album, and everything stopped. It's one of those things where your perspective completely changes. The completion of an album just seems so irrelevant at that moment. You're just focusing on your health, your family, and what it all means.

I had a great, great support system. I was one of the lucky people who had a really strong, supportive family and friends that rallied around me. I just didn't allow myself to fall into a slump. I said I'm going to get past this, and of course, I was incredibly, incredibly lucky and fortunate and blessed to be able to do that because it's not something that usually happens with ovarian cancer.

Once I was able to digest what happened to me, I realized that I was put into this position where other people who might have been faced with that would not have been that fortunate. I felt a strong responsibility to give back and be vocal about it. I mean, the symptoms weren't really even discussed when I was diagnosed. I wouldn't have even known. I was so fortunate that a doctor, after many years of having exams and things, kind of suspected something and decided to pursue it. Afterwards, I saw another specialist, someone with real authority on the issue who disagreed with his assessment, and finally saw a third doctor to get to the bottom of it. It took an operation to find that he was right. I realized that there was a lot of misinformation and it just didn't feel like it was being discussed enough and I said, "What better thing can you do than to make it okay to talk about it and try to save other people's lives?"

And of course, since the standpoint of just getting access to medical care was very important for me, I was asked to join the Women's Clinic in Los Angeles, which is a nonprofit. It provides low-cost cross-screening for women, actually for everyone, but it's been called the Women's Clinic for about 25 years so we kept the title. We'll see anybody and make sure they get their exams and follow-up treatments. And now, I'm proud to know that for the past nine years, I've tried to do what I can. It helps my mind to rest a little bit because I know that we have lots of problems with insurance issues in this country. That makes me sad, too. At least I feel like this is one thing I can do.

ICONOCLAST: Great! Hang in there! What is your greatest accomplishment so far? What are you most proud of? And

where do you intend to take your career?

SHANI: I think the greatest accomplishment would definitely be (pause) staying healthy and focused post the cancer episode. I'm most proud of that. I mean, I can sit here and tell you I'm really proud of the fact that I've done four albums or whatever, but I'm most proud of the fact that I survived that, and that it didn't send me off in a tailspin depression. It was a really, really trying time for me and my family and there were some sacrifices involved that affected my future but I think it's the fact that I stayed the course and have been able to integrate that experience into my life in some way, that makes me proud that I didn't feel shamed or say less whole by it.

It did the reverse. It gave me a lot of energy, clarity, responsibility and drive and affected my work as an artist, gave it purpose.

The other thing I'm proud of is that I've been allowed to work in these various communities of cultural difference to myself and that they have accepted me and allowed me to flourish and make a living doing what I like to do. That's a gift anytime you're able to do what you love and you're paid for it, accepted and taken seriously, even when my own industry, the mainstream community, if you will, didn't understand what I was trying to do, I had a home and was able to record and literally be paid to perform

and do concerts all over the world. That's a pretty big privilege

ICONOCLAST: Where do you intend to take your career from here?

SHANI: I'm kind of expanding now in the film world since *Crash*. I have another film coming out next month that I've done music for called *The Keeper — The Legend of Omar Khayyam*. I'm in that briefly, playing the court entertainer, and I did some music for it. Because of these and my past experience as an actress, I've been a lot more involved in the film world, in the production side of things. And I'm involved in a couple of projects that are going to be shot later this year. It's all starting to connect itself. The entertainment industry is starting to get interconnected with film, music, and a hybrid of projects that intermingle.

This is exciting for me because I feel very visually inspired a lot of the time. I'd like to do some more film roles. That's where I'd like to go. Behind the scenes launching projects and visualizing things is a big kick for me. I like the behind-the-scenes aspect, too.

ICONOCLAST: I appreciate you taking the time to do this interview.

SHANI: Thank you, Leon. I appreciate your doing it. I'm very impressed with the things you asked me. I feel like I got to actually say something beyond — someone asked me the other night at the premiere what I was carrying in my purse (laughs) — so this is quite the different interview. I appreciate that.

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Spaniards Settle Rio Grande Wasteland

Two hundred and fifty years ago this week — May 15, 1755, to be exact — a Spanish rancher established the town of Laredo on the wild frontier of New Spain.

Although Tomas Sanchez is rightfully remembered as the founder of Laredo, the real credit for the settlement of the

lower Rio Grande belongs to Jose de Escandon. He turned the vast territory previously dismissed as inhospitable wasteland into a patchwork of permanent colonies.

Picturing himself as a latter-day conquistador, 15-year-old Escandon left

Spain to seek his fortune in Mexico. His exploits as a teenaged cavalryman earned him the rank of lieutenant and reassignment to the thick of the fighting on the Indian front.

Based at Queretaro northwest of Mexico City, Escandon systematically subdued the hostile tribes and negotiated lasting treaties that guaranteed peace. In his spare time, he married twice into wealthy families, social coups which brought him fabulous riches by the age of 40.

In 1746 Escandon was put in charge of Nuevo Santander, a new province that stretched all the way to the Nueces River, the official boundary of Texas. His first order of business was to survey the largely unexplored realm and to evaluate its potential.

Seven columns of a hundred soldiers each set out from Queretaro in early 1747 to examine the mysterious land few Spaniards had ever seen. Rendezvousing months later at the mouth of the Rio Grande, reports from his captains convinced the commander that contrary to popular belief the region was ripe for colonization.

Escandon proposed a jagged line of 14 settlements along the life-sustaining Rio Grande. To make the move worth the risk and hardship, he recommended that prospective pioneers be given land, cash, and a 10-year tax exemption.

The viceroy enthusiastically endorsed the plan, and hundreds of would-be inhabitants jumped at the once-in-a-lifetime chance. Escandon headed north in December 1748 to personally oversee the planting of the new communities.

Working his way up the meandering muddy river that someday would separate two nations, Escandon sowed the seeds of civilization. First came Camargo, followed by Reynosa and eventually 17 more settlements which surpassed his original goal by five.

Exhausted by the six years spent carefully tending his “crop,” Escandon looked forward to resting on his laurels. Although Tomas Sanchez obtained his blessing for another village on the Rio Grande, the only part the weary colonizer played in the creation of Laredo was to name it after a Spanish seaport near his birthplace.

Sanchez’s nine children and two more big families provided his ambitious project with an instant population of 25. Within two years, Laredo had more than tripled in size as 85 persons, each and every one related to Sanchez, called the northernmost link in Escandon’s chain home.

However, while passing through Laredo in 1759, the archbishop of Guadalajara was shocked by the sinful state of affairs. He lodged a complaint with the viceroy alleging the pioneers “were living like heathens, neither hearing mass nor the word of God.”

Sanchez acknowledged the absence of a spiritual presence but argued that the struggle for survival managed to keep the townspeople out of trouble. This excuse failed to satisfy church authorities, who dispatched a priest to Laredo and made the citizens responsible for his support.

The promised distribution of free land was put off until 1767 but was well worth the wait. Ten thousand acres went to each of the original settlers, so-called “primitivos,” while six-year residents received 500 acres less and latecomers a generous 8,800.

Escandon’s reward was a colossal

This Week In Texas History

By Barte Haile



grant of three million acres along the Rio Grande. His riverfront property extended from just south of Reynosa for a hundred miles to the Gulf of Mexico.

As the hands-on city father of Laredo for more than 40 years, Tomas Sanchez closely monitored every detail of daily life. When several saloons opened for business, he imposed a strict curfew. Patrons could choose between going home at nine o’clock or to jail for a month.

At Sanchez’s death in 1796, the population of Laredo was pushing a thousand. The whole town turned out four decades later to cheer Santa Anna on this way to the Alamo.

Though stunned by the setback their hero suffered at the hands of the upstart Anglo-Americans, the Battle of San Jacinto had no direct impact on the border dwellers. While technically the property of the Lone Star Republic, Laredo never came under independent Texas rule.

Even the raising of the Stars and Stripes in 1846 by former president Mirabeau Lamar made very little difference. For generations to come, only on the map would Laredo be a part of Texas.

The Importance Of Friends

I wanted to write today about the importance of friends in our lives. Although there are a few people I consider close friends, they weren’t the catalyst for this column. I was lucky enough to spend a day recently with a group of women who have enjoyed each other’s company for many, many years. Some of them have known each other from childhood. And like almost everyone else in this town (besides me), some are loosely related.

Living most or all of one’s life in a small community has both advantages and disadvantages. I saw a decorative sign in a local store that went something like this, “Thank goodness I live in a small town. If I don’t know what I am doing, someone else always does.” And it’s true. Each time we do any work near a public road, everyone in town seems to learn immediately about the fence we are building or the gate we have hung. Only in a small town can you be out working in the heat, waving to friends, neighbors, acquaintances, — even strangers who might pass by, and have one of those angels return an hour or so later with refreshing iced tea. (You know who you are. And thank you so very much. I understand that you do things like this quite often, sometimes for people you barely know. What a wonderful habit! I hope I can return the favor very soon with my own good deeds).

Even though my experience with friends has been a bit different, even though I have moved around a bit in my life and only recently come “home to roost,” I can experience vicariously the nearness of friends who have been close, both emotionally and geographically, for a lifetime. I was invited to go along with this group, for a day of lunch and shopping, by a friend. I can’t mention any names, of course. I have to protect the innocent. The age range of the group spanned about thirty years, with me being “the baby,” but not by much.

When we are young, we think of age as a great divider, and for awhile, certainly it is. But as we mature, we realize this is not so true. (And age gaps that were once large and important do lessen. There are other, stronger ties that bind as we move through life — such as shared interests and mutual respect). The young believe they are the only ones who could possibly have invented fun, gotten into trouble, or done things their folks would kill them for. As responsible parents, we must perpetuate this myth at all cost, at least until our precious babies reach the age of reason. (Often this is 30 or 40). We all want our kids to think we were too smart or good to

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.

make the mistakes we hope they will avoid. These days the mistakes seem to come with greater risks and larger penalties. And most of us were actually pretty good kids. By today’s standards, we were angelic. If we weren’t, the veil of memory can always fog things a bit when absolutely necessary. (“Gee, honey, I don’t remember”).

But everyone was young once, and there is absolutely nothing new under the sun. This point was never clearer to me than yesterday. I listened with delight to these very respectable ladies laugh up their long-ago memories. A few of the stories were their own, and not so long ago either. Some were told to them of much earlier times — by aunts, uncles and parents. Others were stories told on friends. . . . of “night school” (parking in back of an area high school in the 1930s or ‘40s), beer joints, and “honkey-tonking.”

One woman had played drums in a band. Two had drag-raced, certainly more than once. (One brought home a trophy). There was a story about an acquaintance of a different era, a very young girl, long ago. She ran away from her small town home, took the train to the big city (now known as the Metroplex), found a job and a room in a boarding house. She worked the entire summer, and returned home for the next year of high school as if nothing were out of the ordinary. There were wilder stories I cannot tell (for I have been sworn to secrecy), and tamer stories — like taking the family car into downtown Waco, alone, during the fifties (at age 12 or 13) to pick up parts for a busy father.

All these women have some things in common, and perhaps these are the threads that keep them together — and young! They had and have joy and a generosity of spirit in their lives. They love to laugh and have fun together. Each possesses a healthy sense of humor that bubbles readily and easily to the top. During our out-of-town browsing and shopping, I spied a pillow embroidered with a sentiment that provided one of the chuckles of the day: We will always be friends. You know too much about me.”

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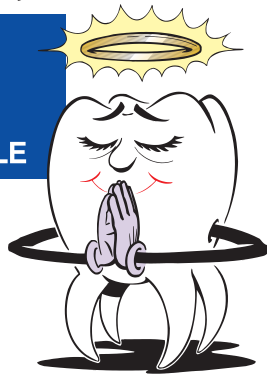
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Nacogdoches To Salute Favorite Fruit

NACOGDOCHES — The brick streets of downtown Nacogdoches will be berried in blue the second weekend in June when the oldest town in Texas salutes its favorite fruit.

The Texas Blueberry Festival, featuring live music, farm tours and delicious blueberry fare, will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, June 11, in downtown Nacogdoches.

As many as 8,000 people are expected to attend the 16th-annual event, which is the only state-sanctioned blueberry festival in Texas. The Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce produces the festival with proceeds benefiting its various community and business development programs.

"We'll have more than 100 vendors downtown on the brick streets offering

everything from tacos to Texas flags to barbecue and, of course, fresh blueberries," said festival chair Darla O'Neill. "As always, we'll have some great live music and plenty of fun things for the kids to do, as well."

Prime growing conditions make Nacogdoches County one of the leading blueberry producers in the state. The festival is a celebration of the harvest, which peaks in early summer.

The fun starts Friday night with the Blueberry Country Concert at Jitterbugs, featuring country music performer Ty England. A Blueberry Pancake Breakfast will kick off Saturday's activities, which will also include a classic car show, 42 tournament, pie-eating contest, pet parade, ice cream- and cobbler-making contests and much more.

Free shuttles will provide transportation from the festival to a nearby farm where guests can pick their own blueberries. Live musical entertainment, ranging from acoustic folk guitar to 50s rock to virtuoso whistling can be enjoyed all day on two stages located downtown.

The Saturday Nite Blues Concert at The Sports Shack featuring singer/guitarist Alan Haynes will top off the evening.

"Like all festivals, ours is a real smorgasbord of experiences with something of interest to everyone," said Bruce Partain, chamber president and chief executive officer.

For more information about the Texas Blueberry Festival, call the Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce at 936-560-5533 or the Nacogdoches Convention & Visitors Bureau at 1-888-OLDEST-TOWN. You may also log onto <www.texasblueberryfestival.com>.

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Fun Run/Walk Honoring Military Set For Corsicana

CORSICANA — The Hometown Heroes Fun Run, designed to honor military personnel who have served in the Middle East conflict, is slated for Armed Forces Day, Saturday, May 21, in Corsicana, at the YMCA at 400 Oaklawn.

The event is a fund-raiser sponsored by the SSGT Jay Fondren Foundation.

Fondren was injured in an explosion the day before Thanksgiving in which he lost both legs and some functionality of his arms.

He has been at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C. since then, but plans to be home for the run.

Registration for the 5K and 10K events is at 8:30 a.m., with the events to start at 9:30.

The 1K begins at 11 a.m., with awards and a celebration to follow around 11:30 a.m. Entry fee is \$15 early and \$20 the day of the event. A T-shirt is included in the entry fee. Door prizes, refreshments, and drinks will be provided for participants.

For more information, call executive director Echo Storch at (979) 575-5717.

Service For U.S. Soldiers Set On Memorial Day

HOUSTON — A ceremony will be held in Sam Houston Park in downtown Houston on Memorial Day, May 30, to honor the sacrifices of those U.S. servicemen and women killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The ceremony, whose theme is "Let Their Sacrifices Be Counted!" will begin at noon on Memorial Day and end when all names have been read at about 5 p.m. The public is welcome to read names, place flags, or just visit.

The event, organized by the San Jacinto Democratic Veterans Brigade (SJDVB) and co-sponsored by many Democrat clubs within the Harris County area, will consist of reading the names of each fallen soldier as a small American flag bearing the casualty's name, unit, and home state is placed in the ground.

A small Texas flag will be included for those lost from Texas. Counting both conflicts, there are currently over 1,700 U.S. military casualties. The flags will be arranged in formation, similar to the arrangement of graves in the Arlington and the Houston National Cemeteries.

The flags will be on display on May 31 around the gazebo area in Sam Houston Park from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m., so those working in downtown Houston can visit and walk among the flags.

To help honor the fallen U.S. troops, contact Jim Rine.

INFO

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Editorial

OP/ED

Opinion - Columns - Letters

— Editorial —

Every State Should Follow Utah's Lead To Destroy Fed's Education Clamp

If every state in the union would follow the lead of Utah, the specter of No Child Left Behind would vanish amid a clear message to Washington: no more intrusion in educational matters that should be the function of the states.

Utah will swallow a bitter pill for its democratic insolence in passing legislation telling the federal government that Utah citizens, not policy makers in Washington, will be running Utah schools. But freedom from Federal mind control has a price tag — more than \$75 million in federal money.

If other governors would assume the bold initiative set forth by Utah Governor Jon Huntsman by openly defying the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), Washington lawmakers might realize that NCLB is nothing more than a federal intrusion on states' rights that actually brutalizes education.

First, it presupposes that Washington knows better what Utah children need to know than their teachers, parents and communities.

Second, NCLB misses the fundamental question that any education system *should* ask: What can the student DO?

NCLB makes no effort to ensure that graduating students can build a house, succeed in a college classroom, repair an automobile, ignore expensive televised hype and make an informed decision about voting or make up his own mind about sex, marriage, child rearing or religion.

Rather, this federal educational dictatorship insists that students only be able to take tests that make elected officials look good. Meanwhile, the feds order students to parrot the government line on history, literature and science.

Further, Washington, not the local school, has decreed that only one percent of students can be handicapped or need additional help to learn.

So far as Neighbor Bush is concerned, the rest of the class can, and will, go to hell.

If Washington bureaucrats are so interested in accountability, why don't they simply look in the mirror and point their fingers at the butinsky appearing before them? Ask the reflection about other areas of accountability and the multitude of failings that are running rampant at the federal level.

Although Utah plans to live up to the ideals championed by NCLB, the new legislation allows the state education system freedom to follow state objectives first if they conflict with the federal NCLB.

If the feds want to establish some education goals or guidelines as suggestions for states to follow, fine.

To threaten to withhold the money they took from taxpayers as punishment is abuse of power and discriminates against those taxpayers and their children.

Actually, the Constitution grants the federal government no authority over education, as the fascist Republicans frequently pointed out *before* they siezed power. Perhaps that is something voters should remember come election time. Let's put people in office who believe in the Constitution, who are eager to obey it, who oppose governmental brainwashing of our children, and who are not heavy-handed with threats and controls.

— Written by W. Leon Smith and Don M. Fisher

summer/fall 2005

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The Overton / Hulen Family Tales

By Jerry V. Overton and Don Fisher

Fisher's note: I was three when this story happened, and it quickly became a family legend. I guess if we had to entitle it, we would call it "How the Lord Saved Leon from the Norther." (Notice, all you etymologists out there, that I call it a "norther," but as the family drifted out of the woods and tall grass prairies out onto the Plains, it became a "northern." Northerns to us were those who carried carpetbags and needed shooting. Further west, we became more charitable and less inclined to believe that everybody from New York stole chickens.)

It is not often that you see a legend born. By now this story has taken on several nuances and more than a few changes in the repeated telling. One version has Leon horseback out on the Plains working cattle when he was caught by the storm. Another asserts the silly notion that he could have saved himself, but would not leave his horse. Still another says Leon was saved by a "mysterious cowboy" who disappeared the next day without leaving any tracks. We're Irish and Choctaw, remember. There's got to be a ghost, fairy or angel in there somewhere, or it's just not a good story. Jerry has written the real story, which to my mind is the best version. But I still find it hard to believe there isn't a deity at work in there somewhere. Leon sure did.

THE BLIZZARD OF '48

By Jerry V. Overton

I was born in August, 1947 in Fort Worth, Texas. I was adopted at birth by Leon and Eula Overton and have a biological half brother that was adopted at birth several years later. The adoption rules at that time were that both adoptive parents must be alive and in the home for at least the first year. If not, the adopted child would be returned to the adoption agency.

When Mom and Dad brought me home to the ranch at Dalhart, Texas, I was on the verge of dying of starvation. This was a two day trip and we spent the first night in Childress, Texas, with my Dad's sister and her family. Aunt Margarette and Uncle Elvin Stone (Uncle Stone) have mentioned many times that they did not believe I would survive the night. I probably wouldn't have survived if Mom had not spent the entire night holding me and feeding me every half hour. They also feared that I had polio, a disease that was widespread at the time. This hourly feeding went on for several days, until I started to gain some weight. That problem has since reversed itself. I now am 6 foot 4 inches and weigh in the neighborhood of 270 pounds and could stand to lose some weight.

It was January 1948 when the big blizzard hit that almost sent me back to the adoption agency. Dad was the foreman of the O. V. Beck ranch at that time. In a straight line, the headquarters, where Mom and Dad lived, was about 25 miles due west of Dalhart, but was closer to 45 miles by the only roads available at the time. The roads were not paved but were well maintained by the county.

Being only a few months old, I don't remember much of this story. I am relying on the stories told by Mom and Dad and other relatives. The day started out nice enough. Temperatures

were normal for January in the Panhandle of Texas: cold, but not unbearable. Dad had to go to Dalhart on business. At the time, this was an hour and a half drive in Dad's 1946 Ford pickup. The weather reporting over the radio in those days wasn't great. Actually, it was very poor. As a result, they weren't aware of the blizzard conditions that were brewing just to the north/northwest in Colorado and Western Kansas. When Dad left for town he was wearing Levi jeans and a long sleeved shirt. His only head covering was his ever present-felt cowboy hat.

While in Dalhart the blizzard blew in as a "blue northern". If you have never felt the wrath of a "blue northern", you really can't realize its fury from a mere description. I have only experienced one that I was old enough to remember. The blizzard hits as a wall of dark blue cold at first. The temperatures can drop by as much as 30 to 50 degrees in a matter of a few minutes. This is followed by strong winds, sometimes gusting to over 40 mph, or more, from the north. This usually is followed quickly by sleet and snow. In the Panhandle of Texas the "blue northern" isn't common, but when it hits, conditions quickly deteriorate and become fit for neither man nor beast.

Animals, wild and domestic, usually have a second sense about these things. At the first hints, and far quicker than man can feel the changing conditions, they begin to seek out sheltered locations. Livestock usually begin to migrate south and keep their backs to the storm. They will seek out any wind break available, and on the plains of the Texas Panhandle, there aren't many of these. Most will seek the "breaks". The "breaks" can be both a blessing and a death trap. This is a story in itself and will be told at a later time.

It wasn't until the temperature rapidly dropped and the wind began to blow that Dad realized that a major storm was brewing. He quickly wrapped up the business he was attending to and began the trip back to the ranch. The first leg of the trip was 15 miles southwest to Romero along what is today Highway 54. Heavy snow began to fall even before leaving Dalhart. The traffic and the wide right-of-way helped to keep the road open enough to travel, although slowly. From there the road to the ranch headquarters was to the north-northwest for approximately 30 miles more. This leg was on a less traveled dirt road maintained by the county. It was narrower than the stretch from Dalhart to Romero, and about half the distance was on ranch roads that were even less well maintained. It was immediately evident that snow drifts due to the winds and the narrower lane between the fences on either side of the road was going to make this part more difficult. After only a few miles the drifts were impassable. Dad's pickup finally became stuck in one of the larger drifts that now stretched from fence to fence. Not even the tops of the cedar fence posts were visible.

Once the pickup was stopped Dad took inventory of what he had with him.

He found an old Levi jacket behind the pickup seat and he had his leather gloves with him. No heavy coat and no head covering other than his felt hat.

He waded the borrow (or "bar") ditch on the upwind side of the road to the fence. He was able to climb over the fence and get on solid ground. The wind was blowing the heavy snowfall so hard he could only see a few feet ahead of him. It was almost a total "white out". He felt that if he stayed close to the fence he could walk the remaining 20 or so miles to the ranch house. Afterwards, he agreed that it would have been better to try walking back toward Highway 54 with the wind to his back and then catch a ride back to Dalhart. His biggest concern though was getting home and back to his family. He knew Mom would be worried and he felt he was strong enough to make the effort.

After a few miles of walking into the blowing snow and constantly having to wade through waist high drifts to keep contact with the fence, he found a cross fence and the lane up to an old home site that was about a half mile to the northeast off the road. By this time he was nearly worn out trying to keep close to the fence. He didn't get too far away from the fence on the plains where everything looked the same. If he wandered to far from the fence, he knew he would quickly get disoriented and lost. And this was no time to be lost on the endless plains. Also, by this time his hands and feet were numb from the cold. His face had little feeling. He knew he was in trouble and that he was already feeling the first effects of frost bite.

Dad decided to follow the lane to the abandoned house and try to get in out of the weather. He knew from being there before that there was an old cooking stove and a wood pile next to the house. If he could get there he could build a fire and keep warm until the blizzard passed. But first he had to cross the lane and the two fences that were buried with snow. He struggled, first to climb the south fence, then waded the chest-deep snow drift across the road to the north fence and climb it to reach solid ground on the other side. By now Dad was close to exhaustion. In the process of climbing one of the fences, the wind blew his hat off and he couldn't retrieve it in the strong wind. He still had approximately a half mile through the driving blizzard before he could hope to find shelter.

Again, he had to maintain contact with the fence line to keep from being lost due to near zero visibility. If anything, the wind strength and the snow fall had increased in intensity. He thinks it took almost an hour and a half to reach the old home place, but he had by this time lost all track of time. He only knew he was there when he reached another cross fence that encircled the old home site to create a yard. After struggling over this fence he immediately found the old out house that was positioned near it. He knew that the house was due north from the out house. He also knew it was approximately 30 yards to the house from the

out house.

He rested for a few moments on the down-wind side of the out house before trying to reach the house. If he could only find the house he felt he could get a fire started even though by this time he had no feeling in his hands and he could hardly stand. He started in what he felt was the right direction, but after a few moments he bumped into the fence again. He had walked in a circle. Without constantly checking his position by walking along a fence, he realized he couldn't walk a straight line in the driving snow. At first he didn't know what to do. He knew he needed to find shelter and find it fast, and the only shelter quick at hand was the out house, but which way was the house? He decided to try to his left. After a few moments he found the out house again. He had guessed right. He rested for a few moments and tried again. After what seemed to be an eternity he bumped into the same fence again. Again he followed the fence to the left and found the out house. Again he had walked in a circle. After resting a moment, he again set out to the north. He knew the wind was from the north and the old house was to the north of the out house. All he had to do was keep facing the wind. But the wind was swirling and he again lost his bearings and bumped into the fence. By this time Dad was totally exhausted and didn't think he could make the attempt again.

In his confused state of mind, frustrated at not a finding the old house, and near total exhaustion, he peered around the corner of the out house and saw a light come on in the old house. Initially, he thought he was hallucinating; staring at the light and wondering if it was real. He didn't think he could go out again and miss the house - he would be to exhausted to make it back to the out house. Then he saw a shadow pass in front of the light. He realized then that it was real and quickly made it to the door of the house. His hands were too numb to turn the handle and open the door so he began to beat on it instead.

After a moment the door opened. The room was dimly lit and it was warm inside. A young Indian woman holding a baby stared back at him as he almost fell into the room.

A few days earlier Ray Thornton and his Blackfoot wife and three-month-old baby had set out by wagon and team to get a load of bundles from a small farm near the edge of the Beck ranch. That morning, when the first indication of a brewing storm was realized, they took shelter in the abandoned farm house. They had spent the day watching the storm get stronger and stronger and laying in enough wood stacked near the old house to weather several days of the storm if need be. They only had enough kerosene for a few hours, so they were conserving it as best they could. Mrs. Thornton had intended to only keep the lamp lit for a few moments but had to change the baby before she could feed it. That was enough time for Dad to see the light through the window and finally make his way to the house. It was nearly 6:00 P.M. when Mrs. Thornton had gotten up to feed and change the baby. Dad had been out in the blizzard for almost

Continued On Next Page

The Overton / Hulen Family Tales

Continued From Previous Page

six hours before finally finding shelter. He always said that it was "the good Lord" that led him to shelter.

Dad spent the night with the Thorntons and by morning the blizzard had blown itself out. He borrowed one of Mr. Thornton's horses and started out overland to the ranch house. He knew Mom would be frantic with worry since he didn't make it back the night before. After a short distance the horse gave out from breaking through the snow drifts. Dad had to dismount and break the drifts himself while leading the horse.

At dawn, Mom had cleared the large drift from in front of the garage where the car was protected. This took her about three hours. She could only work at it for a few moments then come back inside to see about me and to get warm. Finally, she cleared enough to get the garage door open and the car out. She bundled me in blankets, loaded the car with enough milk and food for several days just in case, and set out looking for Dad. Her primary concern, she always said, was to find him alive. If anything were to happen to him, she would have to give me back to the orphanage, and that wasn't going to happen. I think that was only one of the reasons.

The road that led to the county-maintained road, about fifteen miles from the ranch house, was not visible due to the snow drifts. However, the prairie was flat and frozen solid. She drove along the track of the lane and finally made it to the dirt road that led more or less east and west. This road would link to the northwest/southeast road to Romero and the main road to Dalhart. The snow plows were already out on the county road and a narrow lane was open along the road. Mom quickly caught up to the snow plows and followed them until they found Dad's pickup a few miles northwest of Romero. Since Dad was not there she didn't know whether to go on into Dalhart to see if he had caught a ride back that way or to return to the ranch house to wait for him there.

She decided to go into Dalhart since she was close to Romero and the main road. It took her about two hours to reach Dalhart. After checking the only motel in town and the feed store Mom decided that she needed to get back to the ranch in case he showed up there. She says that she doesn't know what she would do if he wasn't there when she got home. She was out of options.

By the time she got back to Romero the roads were fully opened and she made it to the ranch house in only an hour or so. Dad had already made it in and had put the horse away. He was just getting ready to start out looking for Mom on a fresh horse when she arrived back home.

That storm was devastating to the Texas Panhandle in many ways. Since it hit almost without warning and with such ferocity, many livestock and quite a few people perished. Some of the people who died were caught on the roads and tried to weather the storm in their stalled vehicles. They either froze to death or were overcome by carbon monoxide poisoning from the vehicle exhaust.

One neighbor to the Beck ranch was Mr. John Walters. He was caught by the blizzard on horseback several miles from home. He was found face down on the ranch road next to a gate, frozen to

death. Since his slicker was blown up over his head and he was face down, it was theorized that he had gotten off his horse to open the gate. Once on the other side of the gate he had tried to remount, the wind blew his slicker up over his head and in the process, spooked his horse. The horse probably threw him, knocking him unconscious. He likely froze to death before regaining consciousness.

Many livestock also froze before they could find adequate shelter. Some starved after being trapped in the breaks or other remote locations where the ranchers couldn't find them soon enough. Since the season was cold, the snow in many places did not melt for several weeks. Although the flat prairie was pretty much blown clean during the height of the blizzard, many sheltered places had great accumulations of drifting snow that took some time to melt.

Dad was lucky, and I guess I was too. If he had not found shelter in the abandoned homestead with the Thorntons we would have likely lost him. Fortunately "the good Lord", as he always said, was looking out for him — and for us. Dad passed away this past March at the age of 94. Mom is 91 and still living out on the prairie, but in town with my brother now. I talked with her last night. She said she wouldn't want to live anywhere else but on the plains.

We are all blessed.

THE VAN DYKE BRIDGE

By Don M. Fisher

The north branch of Liberty Creek gouged a man-and-horse-deep trench through the rich blackland topsoil until it hit an ancient riverbed, where little boys could find rose quartz pebbles and petrified wood imbedded in the thick, yellow clay.

The Creek bulldozed trees, some of them big around as wagon wheels, into its bed, choking itself so that any storm pushed a brownish gray flood out into cotton patches and pastures where standing water left potential wagon traps for days, barely discernable depressions that would leave you standing on dry ground scratching your head and wondering how you were going to get a loaded cotton wagon out of axle deep mud only a few feet away.

But even in the dry August heat that sent crusted, knee-deep, horse crippling cracks snaking across the prairie, that creek was a navigational hazard. The best crossing was eight feet down and up, never stayed in the same place from one rain to the next and was barely a dozen feet wide. It was too narrow to ford and too wide to jump.

Everybody out on the prairie had a "pinch bar" — I suppose you'd call it a pry bar, six-foot long steel rod used for everything from wrecking decaying barns to gouging dynamite holes beneath stumps — made from one of Dr. Van Dyke's buggy axles, retrieved from the Liberty Creek crossing and thrust into the forge to be straightened amid the sparks showering from the anvil and rapid hammer blows that would render one end to a point. It was the most useful tool in the farmer's inventory; I've never gotten used to the term "pry bar." A pinch bar somehow connoted that we could inflict more pain on opposing forces, be they reptile, flood or stubborn machinery, than they could bedevil us.

We were part of this place, and wasn't nothing going to run us off, not as long as we could hold a pointed buggy axle and a post maul.

But Dr. Van Dyke finally got tired of supplying wrecking tools for the community, and delivered an ultimatum. He would drive not one more hoof on that prairie making houscalls as long as he had to wreck buggies and founder good horses crossing that creek, nor would he wade or swim for his life if every Hulen, Guest or Overton between Fulbright and Detroit whooping coughed their way to an early reward.

The bois d' arc pilings they drove down to hard clay are still there. That which we call "bowdark" and Yankees call Osage Orange and farmers call a curse is in fact God's own tree. Cut it down and it grows back bigger. As a fencepost, it will outlast the dirt and the wire. Boil it and it makes a permanent yellow dye. The bitter, milky fruit is better fodder than corn, even if it does sour cows' milk. It will make a bow that can drive an arrow through a bison. It is harder than oak and more durable than spring steel. And it will not die.

Agent Orange may kill people, but it won't kill bois d' arc. After a nuclear war, cockroaches and fire ants will inhabit a global bois d' arc forest.

That is to say, the bridge we built for Dr. Van Dyke is permanent. The cockroaches and fire ants will use it.

The Van Dyke Bridge became a local landmark. It was a measure of distance: "I chased that heifer to just this side of

the Van Dyke Bridge." or, "His place starts about a half a mile this side of the Van Dyke Bridge."

It also has another distinguishing feature. People keep running off it.

First, it had to be built higher than the creek bank so floatsam wouldn't build up beneath it. Second, the breadth couldn't be too wide for the same reason. Finally, to span a really big rain, it had to be located on the upstream side of several smaller tributary branches, necessitating an "S" curve in the road with the bridge in the middle.

The first time Dr. Van Dyke crossed it in the rain . . . you guessed it.

I think Uncle Bob Hulen got that pinch bar. But things got a little better because we made it better.

And better ain't cheap.

Everybody out there had more to do than they could get done, and nobody could afford to take two days building a bridge (a bridge that is still there, has never washed out and was built with numerous possibilities for failure, by the way, with nar' an engineer nor many who could even read and write among us.) But they were willing to give up their time and effort without complaint for the benefit of sick children and worn out old people, those who would do or had done their part.

And all anybody was going to get out of it was a six foot piece of steel.

There abideth these three: faith, hope and charity.

Did we leave charity out there on the prairie?

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School Finance Plan Passes

After more than 15 hours of debate and two very late nights, I am pleased to report that the Senate has passed our school finance plan. House Bill (HB) 3, the revenue component of the school finance plan, was passed Tuesday night, and HB 2, the education reform component of the school finance plan, was passed Wednesday night. Both bills were amended significantly during Senate floor debate.

I voted for HB 2 and HB 3, because I believe they create an education and school funding system that is better than our current system. The Senate school finance package provides significant property tax relief while putting almost \$3 billion into education. It also replaces our current voluntary franchise tax with a broad-based business tax that is dedicated to education and will apply to all businesses, except sole proprietors and the smallest family businesses.

Highlights of HB 2

- Reduces the property tax cap to \$1.15 for the 2005-06 school year and \$1.10 for 2006-07 and thereafter.
- Maintains most of the current funding formulas but collapses the two funding tiers into one tier.
- Significantly raises salaries for teachers, counselors, librarians and nurses by \$3,500 over the next two school years. Up to \$1,000 can be used by the educators to pay for health insurance.
- Increases the level of funding equity to 92% the second year of the biennium with a phase-in to 98%.

I am disappointed that an amendment relating to the school start date was adopted by the Senate. Beginning in the 2006-07 school year, school districts will be required to begin school after Labor Day and end before June 7. I voted against this amendment, because I believe the school calendar should be decided at the local level.

Business Tax in HB 3

The business tax in HB 3 is referred to as a basket tax. The basket tax applies to all business entities, other than sole proprietorships, for the privilege of doing business in Texas.

Under the basket tax, a business entity may choose to pay the lesser of the revised franchise tax or the payroll tax, but may not pay less than 0.25% of gross receipts. In other words, a business entity calculates its tax liability under both the revised franchise tax and the payroll tax and pays the lesser of the two, however the tax liability may not be less than 0.25% of the business entity's gross receipts.

As with the current franchise tax, a business entity with annual gross receipts of less than \$150,000 is not required to pay the basket tax.

The Revised Franchise Tax

The revised franchise tax is the current franchise tax with the following changes:

- In calculating earned surplus, employee compensation is added to federal taxable income; a deduction of 50% of compensation is provided per full-time employee, up to \$30,000.
- A deduction is provided for employee health benefits paid by employers; the deduction is limited to the lesser of \$150,000 or 10% of the apportioned earned surplus.
- The rate is reduced to 2.5 % (from 4.5%).

The Payroll Tax

The payroll tax is applied to all wages paid to full-time and part-time employees of a business entity. The rate is 1.75%. The tax may not exceed \$1,500 per employee.

Other tax increases

Sales taxes are raised in HB 3 by .5% to 6.75% after a phase-in year with the sales tax rate at 6.50%. Cigarette taxes are increased by \$0.75 for a total of \$1.16 per pack. All other tobacco taxes and alcohol taxes are also increased in the bill.

HB 2 and HB 3 will now be returned to the House, and the House will have the option of concurring with Senate amendments or refusing to concur and appointing a conference committee. I am confident that a conference committee, consisting of five members of the Senate and five members of the House of Representatives, will be appointed for each bill. The conference committees will then review the two versions of their respective bills and resolve differences between the House and Senate. It is important to remember that the two bills described in this e-mail are the Senate versions, and they could change significantly during conference committee deliberations.

Sincerely,
Kip Averitt



High School Reunion Tips

I went to my high school reunion last week, so now I can give you some tips on how to make your next reunion a success.

Forget the diet, forget the Botox. The key to having a successful, even a triumphant reunion, is hair.

If you're a man who still has a full head of hair, you will be a hit even if you are unemployed and have cold sores. If you happen to be bald, be proud of your baldness. Convey the attitude that, "I look great bald, and if you don't think so, you're just wrong." Do not cover up your baldness by wearing one of those things that looks like road kill. For women (and some men) who dye their hair, it's important that the color you choose at least resemble some color that is found in nature.

REUNION DON'T'S

Don't assume that the people who seemed least likely to succeed have become failures. That thug who was always getting into fights may now be a cop. That guy who always cut classes is now a doctor. And don't be surprised if that girl who always wore too much makeup and was kind of slutty, still wears too much makeup and is kind of slutty, but now's she's a member of the clergy.

Don't cover up your photo nametag and go up to people and say, "Remember me?" Several people did this at my reunion, and all it did was create an uncomfortable moment. I had no idea who they were, and then they were insulted. Finally, I came up with an answer: "Remember you? Are you kidding? You're all I've thought of since high school." Then they'd reveal their ID, and I realized why I hadn't recognized them. They didn't resemble their high school photo in any way — except perhaps being of the same species.

Don't count on romance. Some people go to their reunion, hoping that the person they always had a crush on will still look great, happen to be single, and finally realize that they were meant for each other. If you're going to travel thousands of miles hoping this will come true, you should know that the odds of this happening are a lot greater than the airline losing your luggage.

Don't say stupid things. If you ask someone, "Whatever happened to that creepy guy you were dating?" a guaranteed reply is, "I married him." You should also avoid, "Did you meet any nice people in jail?" And no matter how much you're tempted, don't go up to that person you went out with once and say, "I'm a much better kisser now. Really, I am."

Don't pass out your resume or open your sample case. These people are your classmates, not potential customers. However, at my reunion, one guy found a way to tell about what he did rather inoffensively. He said he was an inventor in the reunion book, and each of us received one of his inventions: it's a little light that illuminates your sock drawer, so you can get dressed in the dark and not put on mismatched socks. By giving these away, he demonstrated that he really was an inventor. He also revealed that he spends way too much time thinking about sock drawers.

REUNION DO'S

DO REALIZE that upon entering the reunion, everyone is having the same thought you are: "How did everyone else get so old?"

DO RESUME old friendships without blaming each other for not calling or writing. You'll be amazed at how quickly you'll feel comfortable with old friends.

DO TALK to people you didn't know very well in high school. You may find they're having an interesting life and end up with a new friend.

DO BE A LITTLE SUSPICIOUS ABOUT ATTIRE. Unless it is specifically stated otherwise on the invitation, just dress comfortably. These are not people you need to impress by wearing fancy clothes. However, if you ask an old friend ahead of time what everybody's going to wear, he's probably putting you on if he says, "the reunion is clothing optional."

Have a good time.

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 writes the "Modern Times" column for CBSnews.com's Opinion page and can be reached at lloydgarver@yahoo.com

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Short Takes

• In a recent 95-page report the Rove Regime, aka Bush Administration, assured the U.N. Committee on Torture that the official policy of the United States was firmly anti-torture.

At least within our own borders.

Missing was any discussion of Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez' acceptance of non-military personnel utilizing extreme measures, as laid out by Department of Justice General Counsel William Pryor. Pryor, the architect of Gonzalez' torture policy, is one of Bush's failed and repeat Federal Justice nominees, over whom Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist is willing to destroy fairness in American government.

There was also no mention of ghost detainees, or prisoners the CIA routinely ship off to foreign countries with shoddy record keeping and information extraction tactics to make a Gestapo officer cringe.

Of the 190 instances of abuse by U.S. personnel of detainees at Abu Graib, Guantanamo Bay and Afghanistan, blame is attributed to not one high-ranking commander or senior official.

• I was privy to a conference call with Sen. Ted Kennedy earlier today (the day of this writing). He was quite concerned with the inability of the current Republican membership, and especially their leaders, to accept the "shared responsibility" as provided for at the First Continental Congress.

Our forefathers saw the need to exercise informed judgment on issues, not rubber stamped approval simply because those holding power wanted it that way or this way. Right now, the GOP feels as though they're entitled to the judiciary of their choice.

That's not how it works.

Braver people than I fought and suffered and died during the 18th Century so that anyone who followed them on this continent would not have to be, as Sen. Kennedy put it, "Subjects of a King with absolute power."

We should all be damned before giving Rove and Bush, Frist and DeLay, and the rest of those worthless clowns absolute power!

• Tom DeLay calls him one of his closest friends. He took his conservative Christian ways out of his Pearland, Texas, Baptist church and ran like-minded (yet inept) candidates for city council and the local school board – because he didn't like sex education courses and experimental medical treatments and transsexuals altering their genders.

Then, he united thousands of Christian ministers for his Patriot Pastor network, and helped mobilize people of faith to vote for W. He says it's his goal to give the Republican Party courage, and whenever Sen. Bill Frist wavers he's there to give him a shove. There is nothing more important to this man than the great Christian-based Conservative Republican Movement.

And he has no intention of stopping until he gets Frist to eliminate the right of filibuster for good and shackle the Godless Democrats and their judicial minions.

Rick Scarborough is his name. Remember it, because he's out to destroy your personal freedoms, and so far he's done a pretty fair job of it.

• Nice work if you can get it: Freelance writer Dave Smith was hired in September, 2003 and paid \$1,875.00 apiece for three articles by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The NRCS is an agency of the U.S. Agriculture Department.



Out Of The Blue

By
Jerry
Tenuto

The articles were intended to tout the benefits of NRCS Farm Bill programs to wildlife habitat and the environment. According to a WASHINGTON POST article, they were blindly inserted into hunting and fishing magazines as bona fide informational reading. The original contract called for five articles until Bush pulled the plug when his administration got caught propagandizing with taxpayer money.

• Tom DeLay has all kinds of friends in low places. Jim Ellis and John Colyandro ran DeLay-founded political action committees. For that simple little pleasure, they have been rewarded with felony indictments for money laundering and unlawfully accepting corporate political contributions during the 2002 Texas legislative campaign.

The pair want the charges tossed because, as one of their attorneys put it, the Texas statute is unconstitutionally vague and over-broad. Gimme a break! Like these two schmos, or DeLay actually read any laws before accepting money!

Apparently, Ellis continues to be director of Americans for a Republican Majority, which just happens to be DeLay's Washington-based political action committee.

There's also a question of these two Einsteins transferring some \$190,000.00 in corporate funds to the Republican National State Elections Committee, which then was donated to seven Republican statehouse candidates, and whether that was money laundering.

• The senior Military Intelligence officer who had operational control of the wing where the reservists were seen in the unkind pictures received a slap on the wrists from his commander.

Colonel Thomas M. Pappas was issued non-judicial, or unit, punishment for dereliction of duty — not properly training or controlling his troops; misuse of dogs.

Col. Pappas received a letter of reprimand and loss of half a month's pay for two months. Wow... harsh, indeed.

• The Army ordered recruiters to stand down for a day for counseling. In other words, they were told to lock the doors and got their butts chewed.

With two ridiculously inept and unpopular wars going on, nobody wants to be "An Army of One" these days. So, there has been considerable "fudging" (Army for bulls__ing) on the part of enlistment papers. Like how to get a phony diploma from a non-existent school; phony test scores; lying about police records; etc.

Honestly, patriotism aside, would you want to be embroiled in this mess of a war?

• When those two guys had the unfortunate displeasure of flying over the Capitol, Bush was, as usual, nowhere near the White House. He was riding his bike at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Beltsville.

A bike ride that takes around an hour and a half.

True to form, nobody told him about the incident until his ride was over... and the situation was all clear. In Dubya's case, ignorance truly is bliss.

Does this guy ever put in a full day at the office? Then again, perhaps we're better off that he doesn't.

I think every American would love the opportunity to take an hour or two off in

the middle of the day to screw off, but because of this wonderful President most of us have to work harder than ever before.

Maybe if he put in a little more effort we wouldn't have to!

• One of Bush's failed judicial nominees from 2001 that he's trying to force on America again is Terrence W. Boyle. Republicans have tried to get this North Carolina judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit for 15 years.

Being strongly supported by Jesse Helms you can understand why there is robust Democratic opposition. Dare I say racial issues come into play here?

Boyle was nominated by George H. W. Bush, and that went nowhere. During the Clinton years Sen. Joseph Biden exercised his option to nullify Helms' preference. Dubya brought Boyle back four years ago, but John Edwards was able to stop that as Senator from his state. Now, young George is pushing Boyle on us again.

He just doesn't get it, does he?

• The county of Montgomery, Maryland, was up and running with a new curriculum to teach students about homosexuality and condom use; it was stopped by order of a Federal judge.

This is a progressive, liberal-leaning county, and the backward movement has a number of parents up in arms. The assault on freedom of thought and education was brought about by two groups: Citizens for a Responsible Curriculum; and, Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays. People did not expect a shutdown of open expression to happen there.

These groups claim to not be religiously motivated and in the mainstream, but isn't that what the Christian-based conservatives always say at the outset? If they're not religious, if they are mainstream, then why bring in the Terry Schiavo mouthpiece from Florida?

As one high school parent said, "It looks like we're in Kansas after all. I'm appalled. I'm appalled."

• The editor of the Jesuit magazine AMERICA has quit over "unwinnable" disagreements with the Vatican – since Pope Benedict XVI took command.

The Rev. Thomas J. Reese, a foremost commentator on Roman Catholicism in the U.S., will step down effective June 1 after seven years. He took up positions on the left in his editorials; ran point-counterpoint type essays of controversial subjects; and called for a more open-minded pope who would move into a more modern world.

He often clashed with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger prior to his elevation to the big chair.

So, it looks as though there will be no room for debate in the New Order at Vatican City.

• If Dubya had a thought, it might be this: "Golly, all these things goin' on around th' world are keepin' me away from ever'thing that's messed up right-chere in the States. Mebbe ah shoulda left Afghan'stan an' Irack alone."

• Imagine this –Military contractors have about \$25-\$30 billion laying around. Don't you wish you had invested early in death and destruction? It pays well.

• Okay, so a U.S. interrogator in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, put a copy of the Koran on a toilet to intimidate a prisoner.

Oops, he flushed the toilet, Koran and all. Accidents happen.

How in the hell did it become news on the other side of the world in Afghanistan?

Why does something this insignificant result in a massive anti-American protest, then a riot, and finally a gun battle – all in the name of Allah – wherein four Muslims are killed and no Americans are even present?

Is there anybody in our government who has any idea who we're dealing with?

• So, this jerk minister, Rev. Chan Chandler (what a name) in North Carolina uses his pulpit to preach Bushite politics to his 100-member congregation. Nine people in the church disapprove.

He kicks them out for expressing their First Amendment right.

Two of them, and an attorney who seems to be Indian or Pakistani, show up on national television.

The next day, Chan is gone, resigned his posting.

In the tearful words of one of his faithful, "I don't believe he preached politics. I don't believe anyone should tell a preacher not to preach what's in the Bible."

Ma'am, I think you're a might confused. There is nothing about George W. Bush in any Bible that was ever printed. That's a fact.

• Here's one for the ages: THE NEW YORK TIMES, in an effort to be fair, ran a guest op-ed piece in favor of Bolton's ambassadorship to the United Nations. He's such a stalwart fellow it took two former D.C. bigwigs to write the accolade –

James A. Baker III, Secretary of State under G.H.W. Bush, and Edwin Meese III, Attorney General for Ronald Reagan.

There's no question these guys aren't partisan in any way.

• Does Dubya have chutzpah or what? He's in Russia and tries to pressure Vladimir Putin in being more Democratic. Vlad could break Georgie in 53 little pieces and nobody would ever know or find them – the guys ex-KGB and doesn't scare.

But, while he's still in Europe, Dubya tells the Republican Senate, a body he's never been part of, to skip the Democracy and do away with the filibuster. He wants to control the courts, and that's that.

Does he not think the whole world is watching?

• Way to go, United Air Lines. The most expensive airline on the planet can't pay their bills anymore because nobody can afford to fly them. So they go to Federal court crying broke and the judge said it was okay to screw 134,000 loyal employees out of \$3.2 billion in pensions!

What a great country!

• Despite the suit of the Sierra Club and Judicial Watch, Dick Cheney does not have to turn over records of his secret meetings with Enron and other private companies who met in his office in our White House to make up America's energy policy.

Shortly thereafter came 9/11/2001.

• On the lighter side, a songwriter from Anderson, Indiana, claims to have written a song recorded and copyrighted by the upstart Britney Spears.

Steve Wallace says that he wrote the song "Sometimes" in 1990. It appeared on Spears' first album in 1999, several years after he had made numerous attempts to sell it. He supposedly has an e-mail from the oversexed whippersnappette in which she admits it's his song – but won't do anything about it.

Now, this man in his mid-thirties has a debilitating illness that makes it impossible to talk. With all those millions she made for not having one ounce of talent you'd think she would write the poor guy a check for a couple of hundred thousand or so.

• In the "I'm a bigger man than the President" department, in an earlier column I stated that then BG Karpinski was the only female. Well, I was wrong. One of the other generals was a woman. My bad.

So, Dubya, made any mistakes lately? Like in the past four years or so?

MAILBAG

ICONOCLAST

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor:

Having recently read opinions by people expressing their dismay at the medias neglect in adequately covering such incidents as the Laura Bush driving malfunction, I want to assure them that it has.

Methinks it's time for them to update their definition of media.

This and a hundred other transgressions by Bush and company have been fully documented and never successfully challenged as libelous or shown to be such works of fiction that both parties disavow any connection to them. The Clinton Chronicles come to mind. To quote Fox Mulder, "The truth is out there."

One need only go beyond the daily fluff reports, talking heads and information supplied by the sanctioned, and illegal, government domestic propaganda machine. Perhaps the powers that be believe, and they could be right, as Jack Nicholson said, "You can't handle the truth."

Sadly it's become apparent that the American public is not inclined to test itself and find out. Reality is, in the words of Paul Simon, "man believes what he wants to believe and disregards the rest."

Alan MacFarland, Tallmadge, Ohio
Dear Iconoclast & Leon,

Great paper, from a Texas veteran. Just read your feature on DU on www.rense.com I served in the USAF at San Antonio, 1968-72, and now write Internet columns with a strong base of American history. Feel free to link or reprint.

Douglas Herman ex-Ssgt

To The Editor:

Great News! Karl Schwarz for President!! I couldn't be more pleased. take our country back!

Great Piece, thanks.

Amy Sasser, Merritt Island, Fla.

To The Editor:

What Is Depleted Uranium? Thank you for this good short article.

FYI: This judgment of the ICTA also discusses depleted uranium ("DU") in several places: <http://www.supremelaw.org/cc/gwbush/icta.judgment.htm> .

Keep up the good journalism!

Sincerely yours,

Paul Andrew Mitchell, B.A., M.S.

To The Editor:

I recently was made aware of your investigation into DU.

I traveled to Iraq in Oct. 2003 to investigate DU. My partner and I brought a Geiger counter and found super high levels of radiation on tanks left in the open. You can read all about it our book, True Lies. See http://gnn.tv/articles/717/True_Lies.

You can also see our testing in our documentary, BattleGround, which airs on Showtime on May 26.

See http://www.gnn.tv/videos/20/BattleGround_21_Days_on_the_Empire_s_Edge

Let me know if you'd like more info.

Best,

Anthony Lappe, Editor, GNN.tv

To The Editor:

Your recent series exposing the in-

herent hazards of depleted-uranium weaponry — the ultimate double-edged sword — prompts me to inform your readers that the U. S. military establishment is marching, ostrichlike, toward denial-based self-destruction.

As evidence of that denial, I cite my recent experience with having the following classified advertisement rejected by one or more military-published "civilian enterprise" newspapers (such as the weekly "Lackland AFB, Texas, "Talespinner"):

Blow the Whistle on Depleted-Uranium Contamination in Iraqnam!

One of the underreported/diverted news stories emerging from the U.S."war on terror" has made the latest annual list of such stories being collected by Project Censored at Sonoma (Calif.) State University. The story exposes the extent of radioactive contamination from residue of spent U.S.-made ammunition containing depleted uranium — weaponry that, by some accounts, (1) constitutes more of a threat to Mid-East-based U.S. personnel than does any conventional arsenal of current/potential enemies; (2) has been determined to be a contributing factor in the Gulf War syndrome by numerous medical researchers; and (3) has been declared illegal by UN human-rights officials. Now, you, too, can help blow the whistle on any official wrongdoing associated with the fielding/firing of D-U ammunition and with its staggering, protracted aftermath.

Meantime, here's a key research link for you to pursue: <http://www.mindfully.org/nucs/2004/du-trojan-horse1jul04.htm> .

And who did the rejecting of that ad? Well, it certainly wasn't the paper's contract printer (who has sole authority for accepting/rejecting ad submissions). The censor happens to be the base public affairs officer, who in her role as the paper's publisher invoked the anti-"political"-ads provision of DoD Instruction 5120.4, which sets standards and operating guidelines for all such base/post newspapers.

Trouble is, this government-imposed standard barring CE papers' publication of "political" ads can't withstand the strict-scrutiny test mandated by First Amendment case law. But, rather than simply holding her nose and allowing publication of my ad, the public affairs chief has fallen upon her Sword of Censorship — and, in the process, has helped escalate the matter to a "federal case."

For details on the case in question — Bryant v. Rumsfeld, et al. — see the web site page of <http://www.markskatz.com/complaintlwb2005.pdf> .

Meantime, dear editor, I have a challenge for you: submit an ad to Lackland's "Talespinner" by which you invite USAF personnel to peruse/discuss/debate the findings and conclusions of your D-U expose series.

Larry W. Bryant, Alexandria, Va.

To The Editor:

In regards to your article on DU, thanks for keeping this public. You may

also be interested in knowing that industry uses this material as balance weights on control surfaces of jets. Mostly aircraft manufactured outside the States. Good way to dispose of nuclear waste, I guess. It's heavier than lead so can be fitted into a smaller area. The aviation industry tends to refer to this substance as 'Spent uranium' . Soo.., what are the EMT's to do at the site of an aircraft accident?

God Bless Texas!

Mike

To The Editor:

You all in the media, constantly looking for a scandal and creating news out of nothing! Of course Bush's aids didn't feel it necessary to inform the president of yesterday's potential threat to the White House. Given the seven minutes he spent paralyzed by anxiety during a real emergency on 9/11, why would they?

Jeffrey Kyle Hensley, Plainfield, Ill.

To The Editor:

I wrote this email to President Bush. He won't read it, maybe some will, though.

Thank you Mr. Bush. Many of my friends who voted for you and your friends in the Congress and the Senate are planning not to vote Republican again.

Personally in the next election no matter the party (but really not much choice in my state) will not vote for anyone who is not for the middle American. Sorry, I worked all my life and very hard,

gave up a lot for my family, not you or your base will screw me again.

My vote does count and I will make sure of that. You are taking everything away from middle America. Well, I can't let this happen. You grew up in wealth, not everyone grows up pampered. My children work over the 40 hours work week just to make it. They give to SS and have their 401's. They are for SS to remain the way it is except for one big change. Those making over \$90,000 should give, too.

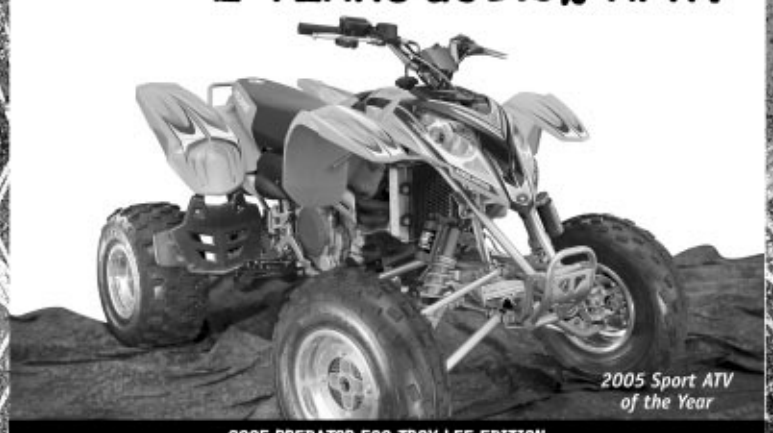
What are your daughters doing? By the way, I worked a high stressed job for 23 years before I retired, no way my body and mind could handle anymore, I retired. Thanks to my pension, another thing you are trying to get rid of, and SS, another thing you are trying to get rid of.... I'm doing okay. If it was not for these two things I would not have been able to retire. I don't have my family fortunes to live off.

Maybe you should wear the shoes of someone who is the middle class, someone who is living from paycheck to paycheck to give their family the best..... try it, you may see things differently. There are no big parties, there are no vacations at a far away ranch or a Camp David.

Maybe you should eat PB&J sandwiches for a week, maybe you should go a few days without food, maybe you should go several years without dental care and healthcare., Yes when things

Continued On Next Page

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MAILBAG ICONOCLAST LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Continued From Previous Page

were really bad I made my own sanitary napkins. Do it, than talk to the American people. I've never experienced a President of the United States who hates and disrespects people the way you do. I pray for you, Mr. President. You need prayers, many of them, because you are making my Lord cry. You have a different Lord than I do. My Lord teaches to be honest and to care for others. He doesn't teach to lie and cheat. My Lord is a good God. I love my God and my God loves me.

I'm sure you are probably shielded from my email, in fact I'm sure you never read your email but I thought I'd send this anyway. I do feel very sorry for you because you really don't know what it is to be really human.

Nancy Markowski

To The Editor:

You can print, forward or ignore. Eighty percent of us are in agreement so it might be pointless to print it. Forwarding would be a good option though.

Wake up America. We're under attack and its not just from the terrorists. Our way of life is facing the biggest threat since World War II, and the cold war. Immigrants have decided to use our Constitution against us to change our country to fit their needs. The sad part is, that some of our leaders still can't see what is going on. The ones that can see are apparently willing to sell our country out, in order to create the illusion of a growing economy. Somehow, they have the impression that the only thing that matters is a growing economy. They conveniently forget all the wars that we have fought to maintain our way of life. Here is what they are doing.

They are using unlimited population growth from both illegal and legal immigration to grow the economy to try to pay for their overspending over the past decades. This in reality is a cancerous growth. The combination of illegal immigrants driving down wages, free trade, military expenditures overseas, and foreign aid is pushing us into the abyss. By the way, when they mention how many jobs were created last month, they also conveniently forget to say how many were lost. We should also keep in mind, that the unemployment figures do not reflect the large numbers of people who give up finding a decent paying job, fall off the unemployment rolls, and end up living with a relative. How did Congress get so out of touch with the American people? Lobbyists and special interest groups.

It seems that every group has a lobby effort, except for the vast majority of traditional America. Congress has conveniently forgotten traditional America, since we are more inclined to go to work every day, and trust that our leaders know what they are doing. Until Congress puts the vast majority of traditional America first, we will continue to watch our country go down the drain. Now, they have not only let our traditional religions be compromised, but they are willing to allow our children to be brainwashed into believing that it is

ok to allow anyone to live here, and change our country to fit their needs. They are even allowing our own television stations to participate in this. Well now they have gone too far. This has all been a political game for decades now, in which we were losing. Now, they have unleashed the power of traditional Christians and traditionalists combined. Here is our trump card to finish these games once and for all.

We must combine the religious people with people who want this country to remain English speaking. We can do this with one combination amendment calling it the traditional amendment. I have a rough draft already. This will easily pass with at least 70% of the population supporting it. This proposed amendment will absolutely not combine church and state, but only restore our way of life and keep it that way. This amendment will protect the pledge of allegiance, prayer before sporting events, and Christmas pageants, along with ensuring our homes, neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and governments remain in English. It also preserves non traditional Americas right to speak whatever language they like in their own home, own family operated business, and protects their right to worship as they please. I wrote this amendment in two hours. Imagine how good lawyers and writers can make it. I'll include it down below.

We should also find a third party willing to commit to these principles. I have been trying to convince the <www.constitutionparty.com> to stand up for traditional America. By forgetting about the Hispanic vote, and going for the Republican and Democratic vote, we can eliminate this catering to the Hispanic vote. There are many more potential votes in those two parties, than in the Hispanic vote. Their current platform is not practical anyway. Perhaps we could all start sending them a copy of the rough draft amendment with their online contact form. Maybe this would convince them.

By the way, there will be no trouble. 80% of the population is on our side, as well as the military. If there is trouble, we can cancel NAFTA, permanently!!

Unlike most amendments, this one needs to be somewhat specific. Congress cannot be trusted to stand up for traditional America. This can be improved, obviously.

Our vision of America is a country who respects all cultures and religions, but also recognizes the importance of maintaining and protecting our traditional language and traditional religions from compromise. It is in this context, that the majority of traditional Americans pass this amendment to insure our way of life remains foremost.

Todd Neufeld

To The Editor:

Found your DU interviews.

Wondered for many, many years if anyone would figure out that DU and related radioactive heavy chemical toxic was causing diseases for the world

for the next 50 million years plus. {With current birth defects in the US at 1 in 28, when will an unexceptable rate be achieved; 1 in 2??} Additionally, the small fine particles after vaporizing are instantly absorbed through the skin and into the blood. This was found to be the case in the AEC/DOE labs when handling the radioactive materials for the last sixty years. Again confirmed in your interviews.

Radioactive isotope half-lives can be increased or decreased easily at low cost by low energy methods and processes. Probably over 200 such methods and processes exist today with more being discovered yearly. A few of these methods and processes have achieved full neutralization and deactivation of the radioactive materials.

At a very competitive cost these radioactive materials could have been eliminated and annihilated from the very beginning; even on the battlefields. An aetheric method was found and considered by DOD in early 2004 and abandoned.

Interestingly, uranium mill radioactive materials was distributed over Texas acreage and then rototilled into the soil to the "acceptable safe level" as mandated by EPA and DOE. These radioactive materials could have been neutralized by one of three acid processes since 1975. As Paul Harvey said in early March 2005, don't throw away your orange juice, use it to eliminate uranium and other nuclear waste. Works very well on uranium mine tailing for full neutralization with potable water as the effluent since 1975.

Larry Geer, Dammeron Valley, UT
To The Editor:

When the first white men arrived in

the New World they bought-off the native residents with cheap trinkets worth virtually nothing. Today history repeats itself with the Senate's approval of a measure that includes reducing property taxes by a paltry 23-percent.

During the past six-year period homeowners were forced to endure yearly increases that totaled up to 400-percent in some districts. How is it even remotely possible to justify such an inadequate resolution when Texas continues to maintain the highest number of home foreclosures ever in its history?

Legislators should be ashamed of themselves in offering so little so late to hard-working Texans. As they continue to hit Texas wallets significantly for property taxes, home insurance, health care costs, higher education tuition, proposed toll plans, increased sales taxes, hidden fees and penalties, etc., one must question the intelligence and rationale of such determinations. After all, how much longer can people continue to pay increased taxes for daily living? Perhaps one day soon the people may celebrate history once more with a "Texas Tea Party" and cries of "Remember the Alamo" will have a more contemporary purpose.

The inadequate and inappropriate decisions by legislators today will NOT make the urgent issues disappear, rather, these reprehensible choices inevitably will come back soon to haunt them and Texas families.

Never before have residents been so oppressed by their elected officials. There is no justification for such a worthless legislative system.

Texans and their children deserve better.

Peter Stern, Driftwood, TX

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Water Wells 101: A Water Well Manual For Well Owners

National Ground Water Association Offers Tips Online

AUSTIN — A properly built and maintained well can be an excellent source of drinking water. The fact that nearly half America's population gets all or part of its drinking water from wells is proof of this.

But how can you be sure your well is properly built and maintained?

The place to start is with a qualified water well contractor, who can drill and/or inspect your well for maintenance, says the National Ground Water Association. There's no replacement for a skilled professional to make sure your well is working properly, according to NGWA.

The second step is to become an informed well owner, and NGWA offers what amounts to a well owners manual through its web site, <www.wellowner.org>. Well owners who familiarize themselves with the content of this web site can make smarter decisions about their wells and take some of the anxiety out of well ownership.

The web site is divided into six main areas: Water Well Basics, Well Maintenance, Water Quality, Contractors, Financing and Ground Water.

WATER WELL BASICS examines some different types of wells and matters to consider when planning a water well. It also discusses septic systems and their relationship to wells.

The WELL MAINTENANCE section explores the importance of annual well maintenance checkups, a homeowner's maintenance checklist, important well records, ways to restore water flow into your well, properly sealing old wells and the problem of iron bacteria.

The WATER QUALITY section discusses a variety of water quality issues such as iron, hydrogen sulfide and bacteria. It also includes information about water testing.

The CONTRACTORS section looks at considerations in finding a contractor, contractor certification, contractor licensing and NGWA's service, "Contractor



Lookup," which enables consumers using <www.wellowner.org> to find a nearby NGWA-member water well contractor with the click of a button.

The FINANCING section contains information on two programs available

to help persons with well construction or renovation costs.

The GROUND WATER SECTION contains some basic information on ground water itself — what it is, how it fits into the water cycle and its use in the United States and around the world.

There are two more sections on the web site:

The ADDITIONAL TOPICS section includes relevant information on drought, which is affecting many areas of America; the use of geothermal heating and cooling, which uses ground water; links to other ground water related web sites; and resources available to educators about ground water and wells.

The last section contains information on National Ground Water Awareness Week and how consumers and ground water professionals alike can promote ground water awareness.

Now, back to the first step of using a qualified water well contractor to make sure your well is properly built and maintained. To find a NGWA-member contractor near you, go to <www.wellowner.org> and click on "Contractor Lookup" at the top of the page.

To get the most results, just fill in your state and scroll through all the contractors to find one near you.

Governor Signs Bill Making Texas More Attractive For Boxing

Bill Also Outlaws Toughman, Other Elimination Tournaments

AUSTIN — Governor Rick Perry Monday signed into law a bill that will make Texas more competitive in attracting top flight boxing matches.

Senate Bill 796, which was authored by Senator Eddie Lucio Jr. and sponsored in the Texas House of Representatives

by Representative Tony Goolsby, caps the amount of taxes Texas will collect on the broadcast revenue from fights at \$30,000. Currently, Texas assesses an uncapped 3 percent tax on the broadcast revenue from televised boxing events. Competing states, such as California and Nevada,

also tax broadcast revenue, but cap the amount of total broadcast tax that is collected.

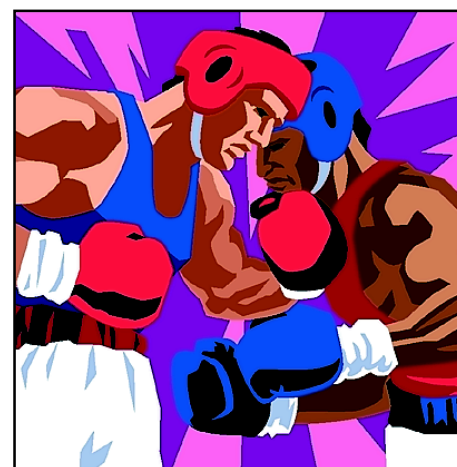
"Texas already is a top location for boxing and this law will make it even more attractive," said Leo Vasquez, chairman of the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation, which regulates combative sports in Texas. "This will make Texas more competitive for top tier fights by giving it the most favorable tax structure among our competitor states."

HB796 also outlaws elimination tournaments in Texas, the best known of which are Toughman contests. Contestants in elimination tournaments are amateurs with little or no training who receive insufficient medical or physical check-ups and who are recruited to fight in winner-take-all fighting tournaments. In the past few years, several combatants have died as the result of injuries they sustained in Toughman events.


"These tournaments are unsafe and unfair because they often match skilled participants against those without boxing experience," said William Kuntz, executive director of the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR). "There also are fewer safeguards to protect the fighters. These fights are dangerous and people die in them."

Two years ago, two Texans died within five months of each other from injuries sustained in Toughman contests. In June 2003, a mother of two in Florida died from injuries she received in the ring in a Toughman contest. Four months ago, a 27-year-old Ohio man allowed by the contest organizers to fight three times in a single night died of extensive bleeding in his brain from repeated blows he received in the ring. The law takes effect on September 1, 2005.

To receive news and updates on the



combative sports program, or any of the programs TDLR administers, sign up for TDLR's email subscription service at <http://www.license.state.tx.us/newsletters/TDLRnotificationLists.asp>.



Earthman Arthur Dent is having a very bad day. His house is about to be bulldozed, he discovers that his best friend is an alien and to top things off, Planet Earth is about to be demolished to make way for a hyperspace bypass. Arthur's only chance for survival: hitch a ride on a passing spacecraft. For the novice space traveler, the most astonishing adventure in the universe begins when the world ends. Arthur sets out on a journey in which he finds that nothing is as it seems; he learns that a towel is just the most useful thing in the universe, finds the meaning of life, and discovers that everything he needs to know can be found in one book: The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.
Rated PG 1 hr. 50 min.

Thurs. May 19 7 p.m. Adults Only	Friday May 20 7 p.m.	Sat. May 21 7 p.m.	Sun. May 22 7 p.m.
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