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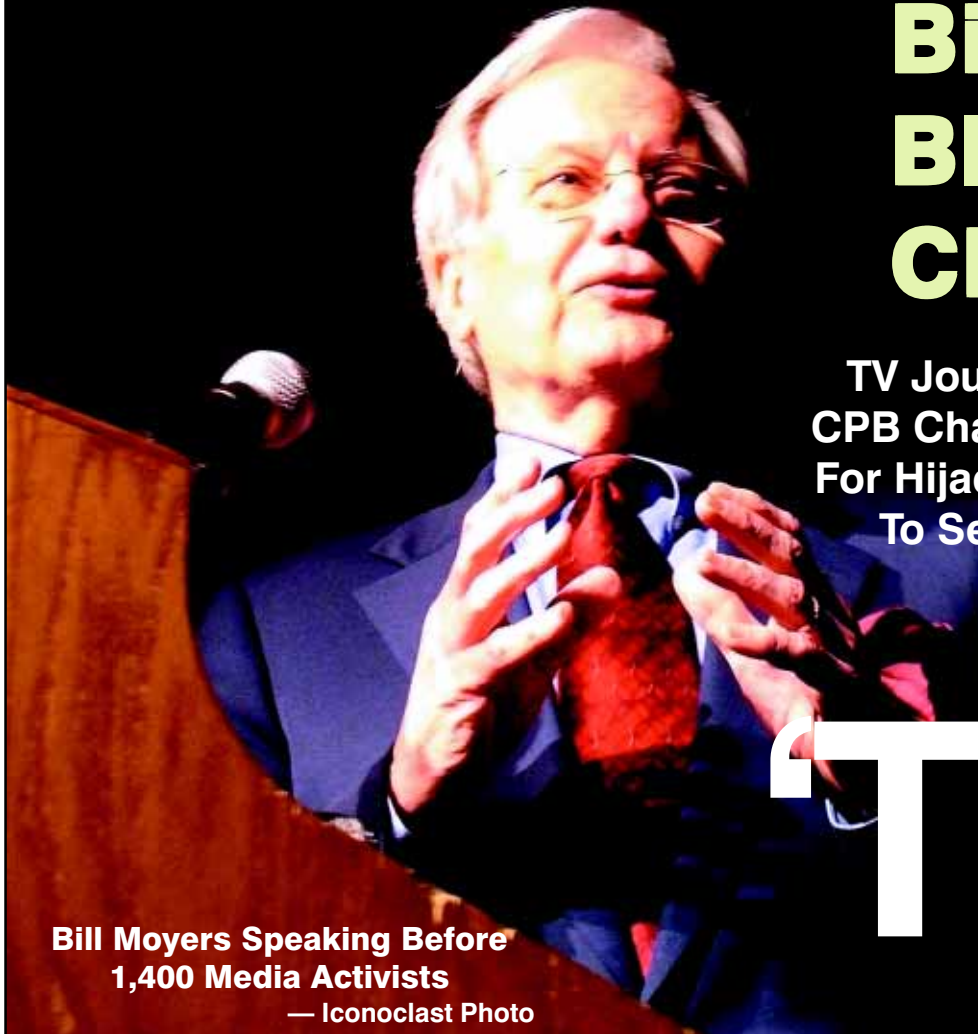
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Bill Moyers Blasts CPB Chairman

TV Journalist Moyers Takes On CPB Chairman Kenneth Tomlinson For Hijacking Public Broadcasting To Serve A Partisan Agenda



Bill Moyers Speaking Before 1,400 Media Activists

— Iconoclast Photo
By Nathan Diebenow

The more compelling our journalism, the angrier the radical right of the Republican Party gets. That's because the one thing they loathe more than liberals is the truth. And the quickest way to be damned by them as liberal is to tell the truth.

— Bill Moyers

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WOMEN WITH BACKBONE, aka members of the national women's peace of social justice movement CodePink, descended on the State Capitol in Austin to express their distaste for House representatives who ignore the war in Iraq.
— Photo By Mara Eurich

Protestors Disrupt Halliburton Meeting

— 16 Arrested, Dozen Trampled By Horses, Say Activists —

HOUSTON — The annual Halliburton shareholders meeting in Houston was interrupted last Wednesday morning by a group of about 300 protestors from around Texas. Twelve activists were said to have gained access to the meeting; four women and 12 men were arrested.

The protestors, marching with puppets and signs to the Four Seasons Hotel, were confronted by over 30 Houston police officers on horseback and a number of undercover cops on foot with others in uniform. Barricades were erected the night prior.

The Houston-based company, the world's largest oil-field contractor, has been criticized over the last several years for fraud as government regulators examine allegations of overbilling. Thousands of Halliburton employees and subcontractors work in Iraq.

Of the 12 activists who found their way inside the hotel, four were escorted out by hotel security and police. The rest were detained. THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE reported that those who sneaked into the hotel wore business attire. Outside, a person dressed like Vice President Dick Cheney (a former Halliburton CEO) reportedly flashed people as activists played a samba and danced.

“Andrea Buffa and Medea Benjamin of Global Exchange got inside meeting

and directly questioned Halliburton CEO David Lesar. Prathap Chatterjee of Corp-Watch had a private five-minute meeting with him which ended in vague assurances,” said the Indymedia report posted anonymously.

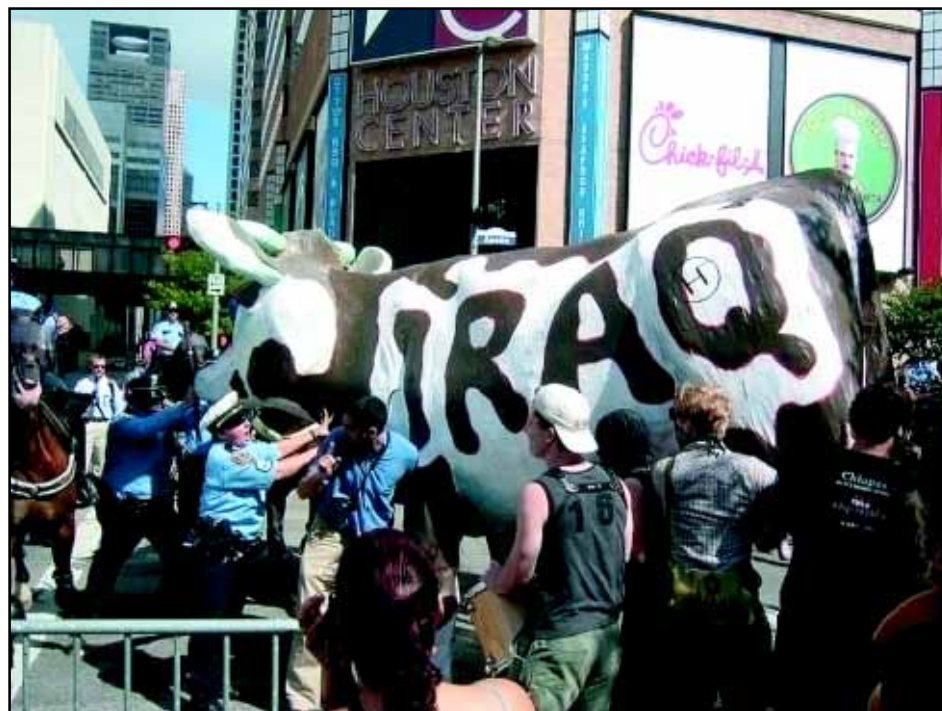
“Outside, things began heating up with pushing, cops on horses and arrests. Some concerns have been raised about cruelty to the horses. The horses trampled several people. Police used pain compliance on occupation inside hotel.”

The crowd from last year's protest was larger than this year's, but last Wednesday's protest was more aggressive, said police.

Officers were said to have given protesters orders to stay off the streets and behind blockades. Television and personal video footage taken of the event that day shows that the police on horseback rammed into the protesters who were on foot holding signs and yelling, “Shame on you!”

The protesters arrested and taken to city jail were charged with evading arrest, trespassing, assaulting officers, and assaulting a police horse.

According to Houston Indymedia, those protesters who were arrested inside the hotel were Herb Rothschild, David Graeve, Katie Heim, Ellie Shenker, Maureen Haver, Diane Wilson,



HALLIBURTON CASH COW, a paper mache sculpture, was created by activists and wrecked by Houston police last Wednesday during a protest outside the hotel where the annual Halliburton shareholder's meeting was held. A group of about 300 protestors from around Texas were said to have participated. Twelve activists were said to have gained access to the meeting; four women and 12 men were arrested.

— Photo Taken By Houston Indymedia Volunteers

Jonathan Kresha and Kendle Greenlee. Those arrested outside included David Solnit, an anonymous male, James Foley, Baku, David Martinez, Andy Peterson, Rolando Maya, Chris McMullen. Two Indymedia videographers, Baku and David Martinez, were arrested while shooting video. Martinez was dragged by his neck by an officer.

In a prepared statement, Halliburton representatives said, “Halliburton supports the rights of protesters. Even if they don't have the facts right, they have a right to speak up.”

The media were not allowed inside the shareholders meeting and subsequent protest.

During the meeting, shareholders elected directors and approved retaining the company's auditor. The company currently has a contract to provide meals, shelter, and other support to the troops.

Another contract is being drawn up to rebuild southern Iraq's oil industry,

while plans to sell or spin off the company's subsidiary KBR is in the works.

— Details of this story were taken from reports on Houston Indymedia (www.houston.indymedia.org) and the Houston Chronicle.



HOUSTON POLICE ARRESTED four women and 12 men during a protest outside the hotel where the annual Halliburton shareholder's meeting.



HORSES, COPS, AND ACTIVISTS were the players outside a Houston hotel during a Wednesday morning protest during the annual Halliburton shareholder's meeting. The Houston-based company, the world's largest oil-field contractor, has been criticized over the last several years for fraud as government regulators examine allegations of overbilling. Thousands of Halliburton employees and subcontractors work in Iraq.

— Photo Taken By Houston Indymedia Volunteers



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The Genuine Article

TV Journalist Bill Moyers Blasts CPB Chairman Kenneth Tomlinson For Hijacking Public Broadcasting To Serve A Partisan Agenda

Bill Moyers Speaking Before
1,400 Media Activists

— Iconoclast Photo By Nathan Diebenow

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — In a speech before 1,400 media activists, television journalist Bill Moyers lambasted Kenneth Tomlinson, chairman of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), for hijacking public broadcasting to serve a partisan agenda.

"I simply never imagined that any CPB chairman, Democrat or Republican, would cross the line from resisting White House pressure to carrying it out for the White House," Moyers recently told a packed room at the National Conference for Media Reform. "And that's what Kenneth Tomlinson has been doing."

Tomlinson, a staunch Republican, has launched a personal crusade aimed at "eliminating the perception of political bias" in PBS programs. He has covertly promoted right-wing programming and tried to install his political allies to CPB's board and executive offices. He even contracted an outside consultant to monitor Moyers' weekly PBS news program, "NOW with Bill Moyers," for signs of liberal bias.

"The more compelling our journalism, the angrier the radical right of the Republican Party gets," Moyers said. "That's because the one thing they loathe more than liberals is the truth. And the quickest way to be damned by them as liberal is to tell the truth."

In his first public statement since the controversy over the CPB emerged, Moyers announced that he had sent a letter to Tomlinson requesting an hour-long program on PBS to debate the direction of public broadcasting. Earlier this month, 50,000 concerned citizens signed a Free Press petition urging Tomlinson to resign.

Moyers also endorsed a call by Free Press, Common Cause, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, and Media Access Project for a series of town hall meetings nationwide so Americans can speak directly to station managers and policymakers about what they want and expect from public broadcasting.

"That great mob that is democracy is rarely heard, and that's not just the fault of the current residents of the White House and Capitol," Moyers said. "There is a great chasm between those of us in the business and those who depend on

TV and radio as their window to the world. We treat them too much like audiences and not enough like citizens. They are invited to look through the window, but too infrequently to participate and make public broadcasting public."

The National Conference for Media Reform, hosted and organized by the nonpartisan media reform group Free Press, brought together thousands of media activists, educators, journalists, policymakers and concerned citizens from across the country and around the world who are concerned with the current state of the media.

"An unconscious people, an indoctrinated people, a people fed only partisan information and opinion that confirm their own bias, a people made morbidly obese in mind and spirit by the junk food of propaganda, is less inclined to put up a fight, ask questions and be skeptical," Moyers said. "And just as a democracy can die of too many lies, that kind of orthodoxy can kill us, too."

Moyers, the former White House press secretary during the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, is the host of numerous PBS programs and series, including "NOW with Bill Moyers."

Congress mandated the CPB to insulate public broadcast programming from partisan politics. But CPB Chairman Kenneth Tomlinson, a staunch Republican, has launched a personal

crusade aimed at "eliminating the perception of political bias" in PBS programs. He has covertly promoted right-wing programming and tried to install his political allies to CPB's board and executive offices. He even contracted an outside consultant to monitor Moyers' weekly PBS news program for signs of liberal bias.

However, a poll taken in 2003 by the CPB itself found that 80 percent of Americans believe PBS to be "fair and balanced." Moyers, whose investigative reporting has appeared on PBS for decades, is the recipient of more than 30 Emmy Awards, nine Peabody Awards, and two Polk Awards, including one for lifetime achievement.

"Tomlinson's partisan witch hunt defies the founding principles of the CPB and is based on unfounded allegations," said Robert McChesney, co-founder of

Free Press, the national, nonpartisan media policy group that organized the National Conference for Media Reform. "The future of public broadcasting truly hangs in the balance."

Earlier this month, 50,000 concerned citizens signed a Free Press petition urging Tomlinson to resign for using his position to promote a partisan agenda. Along with a coalition of consumer advocates and media reform groups, Free Press has called for town hall meetings nationwide so Americans can speak directly to station managers and policymakers about what they want and expect from public broadcasting.

— From Free Press, a national, nonpartisan organization that seeks to increase informed public participation in media policy and to promote a more competitive, public-interest-oriented media system. (www.freepress.net)

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'The Fight For Democracy' Rages In St. Louis

BY NATHAN DIEBENOW
STAFF WRITER

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — John Nichols, THE NATION'S Washington correspondent, said that what started as a conference ended as a movement.

The conference he spoke about — the National Conference for Media Reform — drew about 2,000 people from across the globe to St. Louis, Mo., May 13-15, under the theme "Gathering. Momentum."

From citizen radio groups and culture jammers to celebrities and FCC directors flocked to the Millennium Hotel to find direction, resources, and network from the nation's cutting edge media reform activists on such topics as media ownership, grassroots organizing, public broadcasting, community Internet, and more.

The conference, hosted and organized by the nonpartisan media reform group Free Press, was such a hot ticket this year that people were turned away. The first National Conference for Media Reform was held in Madison, Wis., in 2003.

"Recent years have seen an unprecedented explosion of interest in media issues — from the FCC's attempt to increase media consolidation to the White House's use of fake news," said Robert W. McChesney, co-founder and president of Free Press. "The public is beginning to understand how critical health media are to a healthy democracy. And they are recognizing they must get involved if they want a better system."

The conference made up primarily of

Thousands Flock To Reform Media From Grassroots Up

progressives, minorities, labor leaders, and feminist activists was not without self-criticism of the political representation at the event. Reformers noted that members on all side of the aisle have a dog in "the fight for democracy" in the United States because of the exclusion of diverse voices in local and national markets due to media consolidation.

While Noah Winer of MoveOn.org lamented that "it's unfortunate that not more conservatives are here," Leonard Hill of Leonard Hill Films noted that media reform "isn't a progressive agenda. It's an American agenda."

Conservative groups like the National Rifle Association and the Parents Television Council participated in the "big bang" of the media reform movement in 2003 when the Federal Communications Commission with backing from big media lobbyists pushed to change the media ownership regulations. The change would have allowed media companies to grow bigger and stronger.

As a result of the FCC and Congress receiving over three million complaints

from a wide range of political action groups, organizations, and individuals, the media rules change was dropped. Since then, the fight for media control has raged.

"Let's make it an open democracy, and let the chips fall as they may. Let the better ideas win," said Hill.

The activists say that since media deregulation during the Clinton administration, media giants have immersed, such as Time Warner, Disney, Viacom, Sony, and NewsCorp, centralizing news outlet such that a lack of diversity and local ownership prevades. The reformers argue that a 500 satellite TV channel world is nowhere near competitive when a handful of companies own the whole ball of wax.

"Regulation is the most fundamental need," said Hill. "We need diversity. Let local markets dictate decency."

Mark Gruper of the Consumer Federation of America said that media reform will come because the law is on their side. The freedom of expression and fair use is deeply embedded and ingrained in "our DNA." He noted that by law, the airwaves are the public's, not the corporations.

However, activists like Malkia Cyril, Director of the Youth Media Council and co-founder of the Media Justice Network, see the media reform movement as winnable but necessary to change the structural racism and gender inequality that fuel social injustice in America. The increased instances of discrimination and violence towards the Arab-American community since 9/11 is but one example.

"I mean, are we winning? (A number of media activist groups) teach me every day that we are winning. We can win," she said. "But there continue to be questions about who we are."

Cyril, 31, argued that since "white nationalists" founded the United States of America, people on the margins like women, blacks, homosexuals, and other minorities have not had the same freedoms of the press as their racial, gender, and class counterparts. "Whoever controls the news controls our destiny," she said, paraphrasing musician George Clinton.

"The problem with the U.S. Media is a problem for the entire world," Cyril said. "The free press is our right, and we're damn sure going to fight for it."

Amy Goodman, author and host of Democracy Now!, reminded the confer-



AL FRANKEN, comedian and host of an Air America radio show, served as emcee at this year's National Conference for Media Reform in St. Louis. Franken had fun and traded lighthearted jabs with Patty White, the stenographer who operated the teleprompter on the big screens beside the stage.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

ence-goers that the media must recognize the mechanisms of change that are successful social movements. She cited those who launched such movements like Dred Scott against slavery, Rosa Parks for civil rights, and Pacifica Radio for independent radio programming.

The role of the media, Goodman said, is to inform the people through thick or thin — even by going in the homes and hospitals of the "enemy" to report the horrors of war. "The Pentagon has deployed the U.S. media, and we have to take it back," she said. "I don't like the whole reality TV craze, but we do need a little reality TV when it comes to war."

Sidney Levy of The Media Alliance offered a few strategic pointers for grassroots organizing for media reform: connect media policy to social justice, listen to the community then act, raise yourself up with the community, organize from the ground up and build a base, share the resources of the movement, and use key moments to push media reform.

"It's not about the conference. It's about what's going on at home," Levy said.

Continued On Next Page



AMY GOODMAN, author, journalist, and host of Democracy Now!, spoke at this year's National Conference for Media Reform in St. Louis.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

• 'THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY' RAGES IN ST. LOUIS ... Continued From Page 4



PEOPLE HAVE THE POWER, was performed by Patti Smith, poet, songwriter, and activist, and guitarist Shawn Michael Dargen (not pictured) at this year's National Conference for Media Reform in St. Louis. On stage, Smith stated: "We're not here to bash the media. We're here to fix the media." — Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

Janine Jackson of FAIR said that information is a public resource, and that the response to bad television has been to just turn it off doesn't solve the problem: it's like saying if there is polluted air, just stay inside your house. "Media reform is not an academic exercise. Media reform is a fight for our lives," she said.

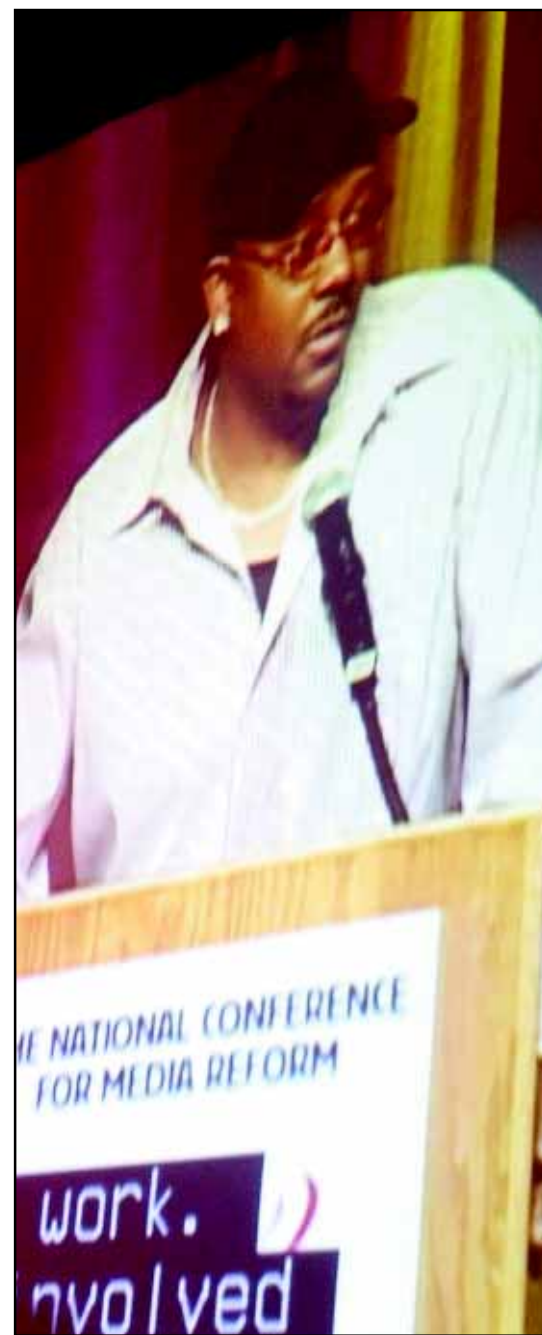
Fighting for PBS and his show "Now with Bill Moyers," journalist Bill Moyers expressed for the first time his thoughts about the recent controversy over partisan interference at PBS. In the town were publisher Joseph Pulitzer, after whom the famous journalism prize was named, started the St. Louis Post Dispatch.

Others speaking at the conference were FCC Commissioners Michael Copps and Jonathan Adelstein, U.S. Reps. Diane Watson (D-Calif.), Maurice Hinchey (D-N.Y.), and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), comedian Al Franken, author and political commentator Jim Hightower, television host Phil Donohue, Kim Gandy of the National Organization for Women (NOW), Naomi Klein, author of *No Logo*, David Brock of Media Matters for America, SEATTLE TIMES publisher Frank Blethen, DJ Dave "Davey D" Cook, and more.

— Facts From Free Press —

- Five corporations control 95 percent of nightly national news viewership.
- The four largest radio corporations account for an average of 90 percent of radio revenues.
- Clear Channel owns over 1,200 radio stations.
- Cable rates are skyrocketing.
- In two-thirds of U.S. cities, a single daily newspaper dominates.
- Diversity and local opinions are shrinking.

— Taken from *Mobilizing Media Reform DVD*. <www.freepress.net>



DJ DAVEY D, hip-hop historian and radio personality, spoke at this year's National Conference for Media Reform in St. Louis.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

Veterans For Peace To Hold Convention This August

IRVING — The Veterans For Peace National Convention 2005 will be held at the University of Dallas, 1845 East Northgate Drive, in Irving this August.

Dallas Peace Center Benefit Set May 29

DALLAS — A Bridge of Remembrance Memorial Day Concert and Silent Art Auction Exhibition will be held on Sunday, May 29, at the Cathedral Santuario De Guadalupe, 2215 Ross Ave., in Dallas.

The reception and art auction exhibition is from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m., and music featuring traditional Iraqi music performing artists and classical symphony string quartet is from 7 - 8:30 p.m., honoring the lives lost in the U.S. Iraq conflict.

Tickets are \$10 each. Proceeds benefit the Dallas Peace Center and the work of dismantling racism.

For more information, contact the Dallas Peace Center.

INFO

Center, (214) 823-7793.

This is 20th year for VFP's annual convention as veterans from all over the nation gather to stand against war and move forward the cause of peace.

Registration will open on Wednesday, Aug. 3, at 2 pm. Registration fees have not been finalized. The first set of workshops begin Thursday, Aug. 4, at 1:15 pm. Official opening is 3 p.m. Welcome and social mixer/ BBQ is at 6 p.m.

On campus residence hall lodging is available. Register for campus lodging with Veterans For Peace National Office. For off-campus lodging, call the Radisson Hotel in Dallas. Discount travelling and hotel fees are valid Aug. 1-10.

For more information, visit the VFP website.

Impeach Bush

The Veterans for Peace are actively seeking actions to impeach President Bush and to remove him from the Office of President of the United States.

In a letter sent to each member of the U.S. House and Senate, Veterans For Peace stated that "this administration's war on Iraq, in addition to being increasingly unpopular among Americans, is an unmistakable violation of our Con-

stitution and federal law which you have sworn to uphold. In our system, the remedy for such high crimes is clear: this administration must be impeached."

David Cline, a decorated Vietnam War combat veteran and VFP President, said, "We do not make this call lightly and as former members of the U.S. armed forces, we take our responsibilities as citizens very seriously.

The Veterans of Peace official said that the Iraqi War violates Article VI of the U.S. Constitution, the War Crimes Act of 1996, and "numerous interna-

tional treaties which are legally binding on our nation."

"We are not the first group to call for impeachment. All the reasons given for the invasion have shown themselves to be half-truths or misleading," said Cline. "It is clear that George Bush does not intend to change course in an effort to right this great wrong. He has had enough time in his second term to begin a shift and he has not. It is time to remove him from office."

INFO

www.veteransforpeace.org/

'Democracy Fest' Set June 17-19 In Austin

AUSTIN — Democracy Fest will be held from Friday, June 17, 7:30 p.m. to Sunday, June 19, 9 p.m., at Threadgill's Armadillo Headquarters in Austin.

Democracy Fest is a gathering of progressives from around the country. There will be workshops, campaign training, nationally recognized speakers, and great entertainment.

The \$55 cost includes training materials provided on CD, a Democracy Fest T-shirt, breakfast on Saturday, and dinner and a celebration of Texas music on Saturday night.

Space is limited, so register now to ensure a spot!

For more information and to register, visit the website www.democracyfortexas.org/Demfest/

Pennsylvania Attorney Philip Berg Joins Jimmy Walter's 'Re-Open 9-11 Investigations Campaign' European Tour

AMSTERDAM, The Netherlands — Philip J. Berg, a Lafayette Hill, Pa. attorney, joined multi-millionaire Jimmy Walter, an American currently living in Europe, for a seven-country eight-city tour, for conducting research with a team of experts on the attacks on the Pentagon and the Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001.

According to Walter, "The research team uncovered some very disturbing facts that cannot be reconciled with the information provided by the U.S. government and media."

Berg has a RICO (Racketeer Influenced & Corrupt Organizations) Act lawsuit pending against President Bush, Vice President Cheney and 54 other defendants for: (1) foreknowledge of 911; (2) failure to warn; (3) failure to prevent; and cover-up. Federal Judge Robreno just issued an Order transferring the case [Rodriguez vs. Bush, 04-cv-4952] from Philadelphia to Federal Court in New York.

Berg's client, William Rodriguez, is also on the tour.

Rodriguez is a 9-11 hero who rescued many victims from the WTC, where he was a janitor in the North Tower; he accompanied firemen up the fire tower and let them onto the floors with a master key. For his acts of heroism, President Bush honored Rodriguez at the White House.

"Later," said Walter, (Rodriguez) realized that the "official" story is a lie. Rodriguez says he heard "explosions" in the North Tower before the building fell, confirming the 2+ Richter scale seismic recordings prior to the fall of each tower. Rodriguez was the last person out of the North Tower and is alive today because he dove under a fire truck.

Like thousands of others, Rodriguez still suffers from health problems brought on by the unhealthy conditions at the WTC, noted Walter, "disproving another Bush administration claim: EPA Administrator Christy Todd Whitman came to the WTC site on 9/13/01 and said all was well."

At a Press Conference in Amsterdam on May 18, attorney Berg said, "Bush and his cronies either made 9-11 happen or let it happen. If they let it happen, then they made it happen; and they must be held accountable."

Berg continued, "It is very difficult for many to believe that the U.S. government could be involved. However, I draw your attention to 'Operation Northwoods,' a 1962 documented plan that has now been declassified, in which the joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. military called for the military to destroy American property and to injure and kill American citizens, blaming it on Cuba, in order to win support for a war against Cuba. President John F. Kennedy said 'No.' If you change the words from Cuba to Iraq, you have the same situation."

Berg concluded: "I know many of you recall Golfer Payne Stewart. His plane was off course and fighter jets were called out to check on Stewart's plane — as fighter jets did 62 times in the year prior to 9-11. They saw no evidence of life and followed it to South Dakota,

where it crashed. Likewise just a week ago, on May 11, 2005, when a small plane wandered off course toward the White House, it was intercepted within minutes by fighter planes. Now, question — Where were the fighter jets on 9-11? They had about an hour to intercept an airliner that had left its flight path and was heading for Washington D.C. But

they never even made it into the air before the Pentagon crash."

Together with a panel of scientists and journalists who support the investigation, Jimmy Walter will tour through major cities in Europe for panel discussions. The aim of the tour is to point out new non-truths with regard to the investigation as spread by the media di-

rectly after the attacks, and to raise awareness about the topic and plan to launch what he deems a "true" 911 investigation. The tour began in Amsterdam on Friday.

The schedule follows for speaking engagements in: Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris, London, Madrid, Vienna, Manchester, and Rome.

Election Investigation/Reform Rally, Teach-In, Public Hearing June 3, 4 In Cleveland

CLEVELAND — The public is invited to participate in a rally, teach-in, and public hearing on "Election Investigation and Reform" on June 3 and 4. Keynote speaker Friday will be nationally known election reform advocate Bev Harris of Black Box Voting. Plenary speakers include Bob Fitrakis of the FREE PRESS, Bob Koehler of Tribune Media Services, Jonathan Simon of Verified Vote, Dorothy Fadiman, documentary filmmaker, and the Reverend Marvin McMickle of Antioch Baptist Church.

Also on June 3, a rally and film showing will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. at Antioch Baptist Church, 8869 Cedar Ave.

The public hearings, workshops, and discussion groups on everything from campaign finance reform to reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act will be held on Saturday, June 4 from 9 a.m. to 5

p.m. at the Tri-C Metropolitan Campus.

Suggested donation is \$20 with advance registration (\$10 for students / seniors / low income) and \$25 on the day of the event. However, no one will be turned away for inability to pay.

To register in advance, send name, address, phone number and email to: Ohio Vigilance, P.O. Box 18336, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118.

"Indicate whether you would like to give a three-minute testimony on Saturday about any election irregularities you witnessed. Any donation to help cover our costs will be appreciated," noted Victoria Lovegren, Ph.D., founder of Ohio Vigilance. "You may also register and/or make a donation at <www.ohiovigilance.org>."

The 2004 Ohio contest was not "a model election," as J. Kenneth Blackwell claims, said Lovegren. "Saturday's workshops and discus-

sion groups will cover a lot of ground. Attendees will learn about the media lockdown and watch videos describing countless Americans who were disenfranchised in this latest presidential election. The need for grassroots communication, organization and action will be discussed as attendees learn how to be videographers, bloggers, and reporters - how to obtain public records, monitor election boards and 'become the media.'"

"Expert speakers explain the unprecedented shift in exit poll numbers by 5.5%, unexplained by mainstream news media sources. Topics like voter suppression and intimidation tactics being used in America today will be tackled head-on. The public will have a chance to learn, firsthand, about the different types of ballots and equipment being debated in Ohio, what went wrong with Ohio's 'recount' and what is going on with the 'Real ID' Act."



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Dell Opens Customer Contact Center In McGregor

McGREGOR — Dell has selected a facility here for its new Waco-area customer contact center, which will provide sales support to new and existing consumer customers in the United States.

Dell selected the new McGregor site based on several considerations, including the town's business-friendly community as well as the availability of an appropriate building. McGregor is approximately 15 miles southwest of Dell's former downtown Waco facility and is considered part of the greater Waco area.

"Dell's goal is to provide customers with the best products and services at competitive costs and our customer contact centers help us achieve that goal. McGregor and the greater Waco area provide us with great access to a skilled work force that helps us meet

our customers' desire for superior sales support," said Mike George, vice president and general manager of Dell's U.S. Consumer Business.

The McGregor location will add to Dell's other U.S. sales operations in Austin, Texas; Nashville, Tenn.; Oklahoma City, Okla.; and Roseburg, Ore.; where the company provides home and

home office sales to North American customers for its Dimension desktop computers, Inspiron notebook computers, and a host of electronics and accessories, including Dell printers, Dell TVs, and Dell handheld systems.

Chris Blaine will serve as site lead for the new facility and will manage its day-to-day operations.

Halliburton Counter-Recruitment For Potential Employees Set May 27

HOUSTON — Houston Global Awareness will have two counter-recruitment "open houses" for potential Halliburton/KBR employees at an open house at 50 Grove St (a block off of 3200 Clinton, at Grove and Clinton) on Friday, May 27.

One is at 8 a.m. and another at 12 noon.

The purpose of the gathering is to inform potential employees what awaits them in Iraq. Halliburton/KBR's operations are an essential part of the U.S. occupation of Iraq, impose real political, social and economic costs on them for war profiteering in Iraq and undermine the war effort.

Within the past weeks, family members of Halliburton/KBR employees killed in Iraq have filed a wrongful death class action lawsuit against the company for misleading the employees about the working conditions and failure to protect their lives. Another Halliburton/KBR employee working in Iraq was beaten within an inch of his life on Easter Sunday by eight co-workers and abandoned on the streets of Baghdad for dead after complaining about poor security and massive corruption.

The location is subject to change if Halliburton/KBR move the recruitment open house.

For more information, email or visit Houston Global Awareness' website.

INFO

email hgac@riseup.net
www.HoustonGlobalAwareness.org
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Waco Public TV Station Surpasses Challenge Grant

WACO — Thanks to an overwhelming response from listeners, viewers, Central Texas businesses and other friends of KWBU, the local public broadcaster has surpassed the conditions to qualify for a \$37,500 challenge grant from the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Foundation.

The challenge was issued by the Waco-based foundation on May 3 to help the radio and television stations close a \$75,000 gap in its budget by the end of the fiscal year on May 31.

Over the ensuing week donors contributed more than \$42,000 to apply toward the match.

"We are profoundly grateful to the Rapoport Foundation for issuing this challenge and to the many people who responded by contributing more than enough funds to surpass the goal," said Larry D. Brumley, chairman of the board of Brazos Valley Public Broadcasting Foundation, which operates the stations. "The generosity of the Rapoport and the individuals and businesses who contributed to the drive will

allow us to finish our fiscal year in the black and give us a strong start to the next fiscal year."

"The Foundation is delighted to participate in the challenge of meeting the financial needs of KWBU and the Public Broadcasting Service," said Bernard Rapoport. "It is the one guarantee we have that the public can always have a voice that is unstilled. First Lady Abigail Adams said, 'If we do not lay out ourselves in the service of mankind, who should we serve?' Citizens who participated in this effort have answered the call as she would have hoped."

Affiliated with National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), KWBU serves more than 80,000 people a week through its public radio, television and educational outreach programs. It is a service of Brazos Valley Public Broadcasting Foundation, Baylor University and its member listeners/viewers and underwriters, and is one of only 76 joint licensees (public television and radio) in the nation.

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Connecticut Senate Okays Bill To Study Health Effects Of DU

HARTFORD — The Connecticut Senate last Wednesday approved its part of a measure to have the state study the health effects of depleted uranium and other toxic substances on military personnel.

The vote was 34 to zero, and now awaits action in the Connecticut House.

The Senate legislation establishes a health registry for Connecticut

veterans and military personnel returning from Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere.

THE ICONOCLAST published a feature story two weeks ago about concerns over soldiers becoming seriously ill after being exposed to radiation in war zones and the federal government ignoring mandates for testing.

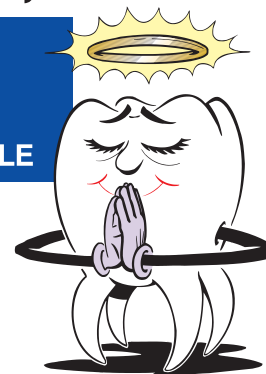
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Editorial OP/ED

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— Editorial —

Anti-Education Bias Prevails At State Capitol

The Texas Legislature proved its anti-education bias again this week. Fresh from the debacle of sacrificing our children's future to the Republican tax cut god last week, this slimy body of political carrion raised their own pensions this week and cut the pensions of future teachers and reduced the cost of living for current teachers.

This when Texas is facing a teacher shortage approaching 50,000.

House Speaker Tom Craddick will retire with approximately \$110,000, with the taxpayers picking up the \$1,000 per month tab for his health insurance. A teacher with the same years of service would get about \$12,000 after paying for virtually all his own insurance.

Any secretary in Craddick's office will retire with a larger pension than a classroom teacher with the same years of service. While their salaries are about the same, the secretary and other state employees from janitors to bureaucratic bosses have their pensions calculated at a much higher rate than teachers. And the state workers, who constitute an automatic lobby group because the Legislature depends upon them to do all the work, get free health insurance.

While gouging the taxpayers for a life of a rich and famous House Speaker might be worth the cost if we could be rid of "Creepy" Craddick, it is still heartless ingratitude for teachers who dedicated lives that could have been more remunerative, if less rewarding.

The Texas Education Agency announced this week that 21,000 Texas high school seniors will not graduate because they could not pass even the statistically dumbed down TAKS test. (Students had to pass less than half the questions to be promoted.) That is a record number of test failures since the fascist Republicans convinced Texas to base its education system on tests and statistics instead of teaching.

Further, while five percent of whites overall passed, around 14 to 15 percent of blacks and Latins didn't. Perhaps we should have said we base our education system on RACIST tests and statistics.

This means that the majority of those 21,000 students are condemned to a life on low-paying, no advancement jobs and welfare rolls. History shows that virtually none of them will complete a degree of any kind.

Even more insidious, seven percent of Texas third graders and a whopping 36 percent of fifth graders will be told they are too stupid to pass because of the Legislature's test.

That raises the real question: Who is *really* stupid here?

Is it students being judged on only one of an infinite number of talents that make up success in either school or life? Is it the students, who may be gifted in math but not in writing, who may be accomplished musicians, artists or artisans who will never have more than a rudimentary interest in other disciplines? Is it stupid to wake up to your potential later in life and have trouble catching up with the state's timetable?

Or is it the Legislature that is stupid? Could it be a pack of self-serving politicians who know that teachers can be forced to force their students to improve their performance on an abstract, arbitrary and meaningless multiple choice guessing game? Is it stupid to throw away the lives of 21,000 young men and women so these greedy, cynical politicians can point to higher manipulated statistics to brag about how they "improved education?"

We call upon Gov. Rick Perry to veto these anti-education bills, even though we doubt he will. He has shown no will to improve education in Texas, and is part of the right-wing plan to scrap public education and educate only the sons and daughters of privilege in taxpayer-financed private schools.

If Perry has not the guts or decency to insist on a better future for Texas children, it remains only for the ICONOCLAST to ask the voters:

Had enough yet?

— Written By Don M. Fisher

Did you get the memo?

A secret government memo released this month contains disturbing and shocking information about how our government was dead set on taking the US to war..

As early as July 2002, the memo reveals that:

- Iraq was not as significant a threat as North Korea or Iran
- The case for the Iraq war was "thin"
- The administration's "intelligence and facts were fixed"
- President Bush's attempts at diplomacy were all a sham

Were we deliberately misled into war?



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Recognizing Crap When You See It



Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher

The reason for the “test ‘til they puke” failure is yet another fascist education mythology. They believe only teachers teach.

Little is learned through classroom instruction; although there is a great deal to learn in school. Ultimately, your education is up to you. The teacher, the state, the parent is powerless against that fact: Children learn because they want to, and the rest of us have little control over what they want to learn. We can only introduce them to learning, then ensure they have all the tools they need.

Carlson, as I mentioned earlier, was abused by a private school, but has no knowledge that he was abused. He, in fact, probably sees the abuse as a positive; he was cloistered in “positive educational environment.”

Like some kind of science fiction hot-house with precisely computer-controlled temperature and humidity to germinate and cultivate perfect little bow-tied brahmans until they spill from their opening pods to take their places on your television screen.

So, Tucker, I thought I’d fill you in on exactly what you missed below your window box at St. George’s School for the Incurably Pretentious in Newport, Rhode Island.

Like he’s gonna actually *read* this plebeian derision.

In public school I learned to talk to a kid who lives on cornbread and beans. I learned that some people are so lazy and worthless they neglect their children in favor of working two jobs just to feed their children cornbread and beans. And the system then blames the kid for the end result of neglect. I learned that for some children, Tuesday is a good reason to get a beating. I learned that those children defend themselves the best way they can, and that sometimes the best thing you can do for them is let them take it out on you. I learned how the system makes bullies, and against them you are on your own. I learned that “majority rules” is another way of saying, “crucify him!” I learned that the most dangerous tyrant on earth is a democratic majority. I learned to be sneaky in the presence of litigious, authoritarian bureaucracy. I learned to cheat the state without cheating myself. I learned that the system is wrong and can never be trusted, but it is never completely wrong, but still can never be completely trustworthy. I learned that there are no victories against injustice and stupidity; only battles. I learned that you always have friends, even if they’re not the friends you thought you had or thought you wanted. I learned that in education, there are no mistakes that you learn from; we call those “lessons.” I learned that you cannot teach me that which I do not want to know, but you can make me memorize it. I learned that you can learn from a teacher who is full of crap. The most valuable lesson out there is to recognize crap when you see it.

And I recognize Tucker Carlson.

Carlson’s pasty-mouthed babble came to mind when I heard that 21,000 Texas high school students won’t walk the stage this month because of the TAKS test.

That is, for all practical purposes, the population of a town the size of Kerrville, Texas, will drop out of life this year. Those who do not graduate high school, statistically, will make a stab at a GED, then spend the rest of their lives trying to get one of those jobs that Neighbor Bush claims only migrant Mexicans will do.

Now, to silver-sucking Yankees like Tucker Carlson, that may not seem like much. But then they don’t live in Kerrville.

Why would that remind me of Carlson’s burble?

Because he is a drop-out.

Oh, he made it through his child-abusing prep school. (All private schools abuse children, but more on that later.)

He dropped out of college.

For god’s sake, Carlson, I managed to get my undergraduate degree, and I was drunk!

Of course my daddy wasn’t a TeeVee exec and my step-mama didn’t inherit Swanson frozen foods, so I had some incentive to finish college.

I had to make a living, and I was tired of working.

Of course Tucker Carlson never gets tired of work.

Like I never get tired of menstrual cramps.

Carlson asserted that of all his teachers, only one or two were any good.

Tempted as I was to giggle agreement, I couldn’t with a straight conscience.

Obviously, the boy can read, write and cipher some, so his contention was clearly a lie.

So what, other than his penchant for mendacity, would make a man of even his marginal mother-wit sucker punch himself in the lucidity like that?

He was making a common judgment error.

He assumed that if he did not like a teacher, he got no benefit from his instruction.

Usually, the more you like a teacher, the less subject matter he or she teaches you. Your affection for that teacher stems from his reinforcement of that which you already know, or, more to the point, what you already believe. Good Ol’ Dr. Loving makes you feel good about yourself, convinces you that you are smart, are capable, are worthwhile.

Teachers like that are important. They are even necessary.

But they don’t necessarily teach you anything except that it is important, and fun, to learn.

Teachers who make you do work you don’t want to do, force you to confront the illusionary comfort of your favorite myths and who make difficulty necessary are rarely the instructors that students like.

Those are the teachers you play tricks on, try to make look foolish, seek to belie the bitter truth that they are right.

And they are the teachers that Tucker Carlson would like to make it easy to fire. That’s the whole purpose behind the fascist attack on education that began with the Reagan-inspired “A Nation at Risk” lies.

Fascists see education as mind control.

Schools should teach people to behave themselves and always give the right answers.

Exactly as the government gives them to you.

And any teacher who doesn’t teach that should be reeducated so that we will be safe from doubt, dissension, and disestablishment.

And after a generation of indoctrination testing, America’s students are more poorly educated than ever.

26 Pizzas

Tomorrow is my birthday. I’ll be 26. Twenty years ago, though, I wasn’t so sure of my existence.

One afternoon, while fighting over the TV remote, my big brother Steven told me I was adopted.

Stunned, I immediately underwent an existential crisis that continued the rest of the day. It would have made Woody Allen’s oboe curl and knot.

I first ran to my pastor-Dad and asked how I had come into being. Dad was on his way out the door to a meeting and had time to answer me in only two words: “Martin Luther.”

I had to wait until my Mom got home before I could ask her, “Who’s Martin?”

“Martin? Hmmm, I think we used to be—,” she said, thinking back. “No, wait, yeah, we were just friends. Why do you ask?”

“Dad told me about him. He said Martin Luther is the reason I’m alive,” I said.

“Oh, Martin Luther,” she replied. “Your silly father.”

When her chuckling died down, Mom explained that 500 years ago, Luther legitimized the practice of pastors taking wives and having children of their own—

“So am I or am I not adopted?” I asked, interrupting her with the grammar befitting a 60-year-old. “Steven said I was adopted!”

“You’re not adopted, Nathan,” she said. “Your brother was just being silly, too.”

“Well, are there any other strange guys I should know about?” I asked — just to make sure.

Mom thought for a moment and mentioned quite a few folks on both sides of the Atlantic. As she ran through the list, I relaxed, and my crisis faded away.

One “strange guy” that caught my ear was German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. He persuaded the king of Germany to institute publicly funded health and accident insurance, as well as pensions for people who are elderly and/or handicapped in the German empire.

That was in the 1880s, which is amazing, considering Germans still rely on their social insurance pro-

The Rubber Cement Index

By Nathan Diebenow



grams to this day.

About 70 years later under FDR, the United States created the first of its own social insurance programs, which have since expanded.

Now, about another 70 years later, kids my age doubt they’ll ever see one red cent of their Social Security benefits.

Why?

I mean, Social Security, as well as Medicare and Medicaid, can be adapted to meet the basic needs of current and future taxpayers way beyond 36 years from now.

In fact, my generation — any generation — could keep these social systems solvent if we believe that our country should take a high moral stand and prioritize people over profits.

We’re not there yet, but I believe we’re getting closer.

Take the Terri Schiavo case, for example. The way she was treated two months ago showed the hypocrisy of the GOP: what sustained Terri for 15 years through her vegetative state and her families’ legal battles was Medicaid, the very social program the GOP wants to abort!

Are the Republicans ready to grant the same “right to life” for single, working mothers who have terminal cancer — and their children?

At the same time, even though in the world’s wealthiest country, 40 percent of its citizens don’t have health insurance, Democrats fail to support the creation of programs that provide healthcare for every American.

The only way to insure a quality existence and quality healthcare for all Americans is for us to first believe we can do it. The rest is a piece of cake.

Speaking of which, I need to begin the first of my birthday rituals — that is, pranks on my brother.

This year, he gets 26 pizzas from Vito’s Italian Cafe delivered to his office.

I believe this is going to be fun!

With Whom Are You At War?

You know, I'd really like to write a column that's light and fluffy and full of good cheer. Something really fun to read.

For instance, in the infinite wisdom of the State of Illinois I am licensed as a Substitute Teacher. Earlier this week it was my pleasure to spend the entire day with a classroom full of wonderful 2nd graders. For lifting your spirits and sheer joy, there's no better way than to marvel in the innocence of children — especially those who have not yet reached double-digits.

And nothing's quite as eye opening and engaging as experiencing them as a group within their own world.

Children are truly amazing at that point in their development. They're adaptable, they open up readily (about everything, whether you want to hear it or not), and they go out of their way to be helpful. It's incredible how smart they are, too.

Do you realize that in 2nd grade they know what the symbols < and > mean? Back in the Dark Ages I wasn't privy to that information until 7th Grade.

Sure, these little tyros will tattle on each other, but you learn to shrug that off. An assistant principal once taught me that the general rule is, "If you didn't see or hear the alleged infraction yourself, there's nothing you can do about it."

Be forewarned, enter their cosmos feeling old with a diminished energy level and they'll tire you out before lunch. Fortunately, their teacher scheduled a movie for the middle of the afternoon so I got a little break.

This was an inquisitive group that was obviously intrigued with the concept of an older male replacing their 30-something female teacher. After several hours, my longish hair could no longer be ignored. "Are you a rock star?" "No." "Do you play country music?" "Never!" The youngsters were fascinated when I told them that long ago, before they were born even, I was a rock disc jockey on the radio.

They did have a little trouble conceptualizing that I write a column for a newspaper in Texas.

The sad thing is, what's going to be left for them after the Party of Rove puts the last nail in the coffin bearing the corpse of that which we once knew as American Democracy? Are they to be little more than missile fodder for the War Without End our self-serving regime has wreaked on the Earth?

The Republicans are mounting assaults against basic human freedoms on so many levels at such a rapid-fire pace it's impossible to stay informed. We true sons and daughters of American Liberty need scorecards to keep track.

Every morning I receive web versions of several large newspapers from the Eastern part of the country. I also get headlines from another, and a handful of other outlets send regular updates. There is just too much to read and comprehend!

When the Republicans aren't pulling some outrageous blitzkrieg upon Constitutional freedoms or questionable financial scheme, the evangelicals are forcing their quarter-of-the-population minority will onto everyone else. And when the Democrats or Liberals or Libertarians, or those who simply want to enjoy their personal freedoms, stand up for their rights, the two aforementioned groups band together and say all who disagree with them are "at war with people of faith."



Out Of The Blue

By
Jerry
Tenuto

WAR? What hogwash! I'm not at war with anyone. That phrase must have surfaced at least six times this past week alone, attributed to six different individuals — all of whom were politically motivated militants for Jesus, including Janice Rogers Brown, another of the Rove/Bush nominees rejected in 2001 being pushed through again in 2005.

Just the use of that phrase should be enough to indicate why Rogers Brown is far too Christian-oriented in her thinking to be a Constitutionally fair-minded Appellate Justice. She is African-American, yet has alienated others of her race by denouncing affirmative action and welfare programs. When referring to FDR's New Deal programs of the 1930s, she labeled them as "socialist" and "slavery." As for a woman's choice, Rogers Brown has written opinions foisting her own religious convictions upon everyone else, with obvious disregard for current law.

Any individual who uses, or buys into, phraseology such as those who seek personal freedom are at war with people of faith needs to seek out some new direction regarding what the word of Christ is all about. If you think this way, then you should be thoroughly ashamed of yourself, because at the very foundation of Christianity are the tenets of peace, understanding, tolerance, and love for your fellow human being.

Texas Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson spoke in favor of the nomination of Priscilla Owen this morning on the Senate floor. Her comments followed those of Sen. John Cornyn, also of Texas. I guess this was a new variation on the Texas Two-Step. Anyway, in an effort to be fair and open-minded, my son and I attempted to listen to Ms. Hutchinson. We really did.

But there's nothing fair or open-minded where these hardcore Republicans are concerned. As my son, Pete, put it, it's not a matter of confirmation — the only thing they're interested in is conformity.

She began by saying that because Owen had waited four years she should be automatically voted in as a Federal Appellate Judge. However, after Cornyn's spin on this judge's glowing public record, it was absolutely too much listening to his cohort drone on and on about Owen as a private person.

Whatever can be said about Owen as a private person does not alter the fact that she puts her personal religious convictions into her reading of laws. Time and again Owen's colleagues, including Atty. Gen. Alberto R. Gonzalez, have criticized her for interpreting laws to fit the result she wanted.

Over and over it has been the Republicans, from George W. Bush on down to Tom DeLay and so forth, who keep saying that we need Federal judges who rule by the letter of the Constitution, not their own personal interpretation of it.

For example, Owen dissented in a case involving a pregnant teenager seeking abortion because the girl did not show

that she knew there were religious objections to abortion. Her then colleague, Atty. Gen. Gonzalez, wrote of this position as "an unconscionable act of judicial activism" because it created barriers to abortion not enacted by the Texas Legislature.

Owen once delayed an opinion for one-and-a-half years while the victim of a truck accident was on a respirator. Due to the delay in deciding the appeal, the man's family could not pay for continuing care. As a result, he died.

Craig McDonald of Texans for Public Justice calls her, "...a serial activist, often in service to corporations and the powerful."

But, Owen is a good person. So what if she's divorced? She takes care of her mother. That's some sort of positive family value, isn't it?

Her pastor calls her "monastic" and says she's the longest-serving Sunday School teacher at his church. She even helped established his church, because she preferred his sermons to those of her old pastor.

Just what the appellate court needs — a Bible-thumpin' shut-in. How much could she possibly know about the real world if she divides the preponderance of her time between home, church, and the courthouse?

Well, okay, junior Georgie Bush never traveled too much, didn't even leave the U.S.A., before Rove stole the 2000 election for him, and Georgie hasn't done too badly getting along our friends and neighbors around the planet...

This afternoon I heard Ted Kennedy's speech regarding Owen, et al. Unlike the Republicans, he sounded alive. Why? Because he actually believed what he was saying. Not only did Mr. Kennedy go into great detail as to Owen's unsuitability to be a Federal justice, he discussed the multitude of judges in Texas, Republicans as well as Democrats, who find her inadequate.

Mr. Kennedy performed a virtual lobotomy on the Republican legislators with the deft touch of a master statesman, something all these new schmoe lack. He never even mentioned any of their names. They make it simple, actually. All he had to do was bring up some of the people who had passed through the Senate in history and spoke out for what was right despite overwhelming consequences.

Another thing Mr. Kennedy demonstrated was the amount of rules and votes and procedural rigmarole it would take to destroy the right of the minority Senators to filibuster. I couldn't read the chart, and certainly can't remember all the steps Frist would have to take, but the plethora of checks and balances is mind-numbing.

And as Mr. Kennedy said, who believes that after the Republicans went through all this they would not use it for anything else?

Why is Priscilla Owen so important to the Bush Regime? For the answer one would have to ask Guy-Who's-In-Control-Of-Everything Karl Rove.

Owen was a mere fly on the wall Houston lawyer doing insignificant infrastructure busywork when she was selected by none other than Der Karl to be part of his personal Texas Supreme Court Republican Makeover. He found an opening for Owen when, in 1994, incumbent Democrat Justice Lloyd Doggett ran for Congress. Rove scored considerable fi-

nancing for her campaign from lawyers and others with "business before the court," including a tidy fee approaching \$250,000 for his firm.

Talk about your fast track — from oblivion to the Texas Supreme Court literally overnight.

Atty. Gen. Gonzalez was against Owen being put back on the nominees list again this year. We know of his flawed perception of legal acumen, yet even he has not been thrilled with her past performance. However, to show whose antlers are biggest in the White House, Der Karl wanted her re-nominated and that was that.

Oh, yeah, in the interim, when the Texas chief justice was retiring Gov. Rick Perry wanted to nominate Owen for that post. It has been strongly suggested by unnamed Republicans (I hate to use unnamed sources, but they're probably scared to death of Rove) that she called Der Karl for advice and he told her to stay on the market for the Fed job.

Some time after the 2000 November coup I heard that only some 35% of the people who voted for Bush even heard the name Karl Rove. Now, using what we called in the Army the SWAG method, or Scientific Wild-Ass Guess, I figure that no more than 25% of those people had any inkling of who Karl Rove was.

That comes to about 9%. Even if 50% of the 35% knew all about Rove it would still be less than 20% of Bush backers, an incredibly small minority.

These poor saps had absolutely no idea that they were actually casting votes for Karl Rove for Ruler. They probably still don't know about Der Karl.

He doesn't profess to be a churchgoer, yet he's the guy who put Jesus into the campaigns. And it spread like a plague across both the Republican Party and evangelical faithful.

They follow the party line without thought or rationale. It's frightening when people are quoted as equating their pastors' (illegal) use of the pulpit in support of Bush with preaching the Bible.

How did we get so screwed up in this country that people can't tell the difference between a nation that used to be filled with fun and vitality and what we have now, which is the groundswell of a one-sided takeover by Karl Rove's Republican Schmuck Brigade?

We're living under the specter of the worst Presidential figurehead in our history. He has befouled everything he's come in contact with, and somehow people actually call him great. And he's not even the one in charge.

The 21st Century was supposed to be a time of hope and wondrous achievement. It has turned into a dark and dangerous nightmare. How did this happen? How could it happen?

Who in the hell is Karl Rove; how did he take over Texas, and then steal America?

It's the bottom of the ninth and two out. They're ahead by two runs, and we need some base runners. Then, with a couple of well-placed hits we'll be across the plate with the winning run.

If we don't dump the Republicans in 2006 and 2008, there won't be a 2010 for the U.S.A. of Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Revere, Lincoln, Grant, the Roosevelt's, JFK, Carter, and all the others who fought and sweated and died for her.

And it won't be there for that terrific group of kids I was privileged to spend a day with as they enter their teen years.

A Third Way For The Filibuster Dispute

Despite the countless urgent issues pressing the nation, the U.S. Senate remains consumed in a dispute over one of its own procedural rules. In classic Washington style, political opportunists of all stripes are pandering wildly and advocacy groups on both sides of the aisle are shelling out millions for advertising and organizing. Yesterday, the two parties' leaders officially threw in the towel on negotiations, paving the way for a dramatic, no-holds-barred showdown on the Senate floor. The reality, however, is that the rule — known as the filibuster — is simply not worth all this time and attention.

In short, the filibuster enables a minority of 41 senators to prevent a vote on the Senate floor. Democrats have employed it on 10 of President Bush's nominees for federal circuit courts, and Republicans have countered with a threat to ban its use in such cases.

A quick look at the two parties' positions reveals an unfortunate reality: this entire debate is a sham and has nothing to do with the filibuster itself. Democrats pitch the rule as the crown

jewel of deliberative lawmaking, the lone savior of democratic governance. Meanwhile, Republicans decry it as an obstruction to the process and a ghastly blemish on the system.

Both positions reek of insincerity. Many prominent Democrats defending the filibuster today called for its abolition when they held power in the Clinton years. Now, as members of the minority party, they claim to have had an epiphany concerning the rule's inherent worth.

The Democrats' only saving grace is the fact that Republicans toeing their party's line are on even weaker footing. Senator Frist and his allies, beyond their own shifting perspectives and opinions, find themselves arguing that changing politically inconvenient rules is a sensible and responsible way to lead the government.

As the filibuster dispute continues to

gather steam, a traditional compromise seems increasingly unrealistic. What's needed is a fresh approach.

So here's the third way: the Senate should bring the filibuster to the floor, debate it and vote on it. One hundred senators, one vote each, majority rules. If the senators vote to keep the filibuster, then it stays. And if they vote to abolish it, then it goes — exactly six years later.

The six-year gap would work wonders for the filibuster debate. It would eliminate the corrupting influence of short-term political motivations, highlight the rule itself and its role in making the Senate a more deliberative body than the House, and force a serious, although not absurdly long and unnecessarily charged, debate on the actual issue.

As recent history has demonstrated, six years is an eternity in Washington politics. Six years ago a Democrat held the White House and Republicans both

houses of Congress. Six years before that, Democrats ruled all of Washington, much like Republicans do today. And six years before that, a Republican held the White House and Democrats both houses of Congress. So it's fair to say that a vote next month to abolish the filibuster in 2011 would not be tainted by political power plays, because no one would be able to project the power balance six years down the road.

Perhaps the senators would vote to end the filibuster in six years; it's doubtful that the nation's democratic foundation would crumble as a result. It's likewise doubtful that the Senate would fall apart with the filibuster still intact, whether for six more years or indefinitely.

Granted, this option might not resolve all the disagreements over President Bush's judicial nominees. But at least it would put an end to the filibuster debate, which no longer has anything to do with the filibuster.

Patrick Mulvaney is a freelance journalist based in New York. He has written recently for The Nation and several other weekly and monthly publications.

Atz Builds Texas League Dynasty With Cats

Baseball fans from the Red River to the Rio Grande mourned the May 22, 1945, passing of Jake Atz, greatest manager in the history of the Texas League.

Professional baseball in Texas began in 1888 with the creation of a six-team circuit named for the state. But two clubs folded midway through the maiden season, and the other four soon called off the campaign.

The Texas League limped along until 1902 without ever finishing a full season. For the next four years, the association was composed entirely of northern towns, while several southern cities competed in a separate league.

The stronger clubs from the two alliances regrouped in 1907 under the banner of the Texas League. Those charter members represented Dallas, Fort Worth, Waco, Temple, Austin, Houston, San Antonio, and Galveston.

That same season Jake Atz, a mediocre infielder who had bounced around the bush leagues for most of his career, got his second shot at the big time. He had changed his name from Zimmerman after noticing that players at the end of the alphabet often went unpaid.

Atz hung around with the Chicago White Sox until a beanball in 1909 sent him back to the minors for good. Five years later in Fort Worth, he signed on with the Texas League Panthers as a player-manager.

After finishing second in 1917 and 1918, "Atz's Cats" topped the regular season standings only to be upset by Shreveport in the post-season play-off. But it would be 1926 before they lost again.

In those days prior to the so-called "farm system," minor-league teams were not picked clean of promising players by greedy parent clubs. Ambitious owners willing to pay top dollar could assemble a permanent cast of pennant-winning performers.

This Week In Texas History

By Barte Haile



Panther president W.K. Stripling built a Texas League dynasty by making it worthwhile for star ball-players to stay in Fort Worth. Some even passed up big-league offers because leaving the Lone Star State meant losing money.

During the Panthers' championship streak, the premier pitchers were southpaw Joe Pate and spit-baller Paul Wachtel. Both won at least 20 games for six straight seasons and had a combined record of 292-121.

To complement their near-perfect pitching, the Panthers brought power to the plate. From 1918 until 1924, the slugger was Big Boy Kraft, who hit 55 home runs in his final season, the best

in organized baseball, and a Texas League record that stood until 1956. Replacing Kraft in 1925, Big Ed Konetchy contributed 41 homers and 161 runs batted in.

For six story-book seasons, Atz's Cats reduced the Texas League pennant race to a fight for second place. Never winning fewer than 96 games, their margin of victory ranged from 15 games in 1921, 1922, and 1923 to a mind-boggling 29 in 1924.

For three amazing weeks in the summer of 1922, Wichita Falls steadily narrowed the gap with league-leading Fort Worth by not losing a single contest. When the Spudders' winning streak finally ended at 24, they trailed the Cats by a scant half-game. That, however, was as close as Wichita Falls came, and Atz captured the third of six consecutive championships.

Advancement to Class A in 1921 put the Texas League on par with the Southern Association, the precondition for a post-season showdown. Only in 1922 did the champion of the rival

league best the Cats, who won four out of five Dixie Series under Atz.

The aging Panthers stumbled in the home stretch in 1926 and slipped to third behind the Dallas Steers and San Antonio Missions. The Fort Worth faithful forecast a comeback in 1927 but watched in horror as the hometown heroes dropped to fourth place and a game below .500.

After two more disappointing campaigns, Jake Atz and the Panthers parted company. Fort Worth would not win another Texas League title until 1948, three years after his death, and the immortal manager would fare no better than fifth in short stints with four other franchises.

Before television and expansion by the majors pulled the plug on the minor leagues, Texans by the thousands spent entertaining evenings at the local ballpark. Team names like the Orphans, Submarines, Sun Kings, Sandcrabs, Moore's Marvels, and Cannibals were worth the price of admission.

Many future Hall of Famers passed through the Texas League on their way to the major leagues or in the twilight of memorable careers. Grover Cleveland Alexander pitched for Dallas, Dizzy Dean for Houston and Tulsa, and Carl Hubbell for Fort Worth and Beaumont. The list of legendary hitters included Tris Speaker (Cleburne and Houston), Hank Greenberg (Beaumont), Duke Snider (Fort Worth), and Bill Terry (Beaumont).

But the 9,000 unsung players, who never made it to the majors much less to Cooperstown, were what the Texas League was all about. They were the guys content to play the game for the fun of it.

"Best of This Week in Texas History" Vol. V available for \$10.95 plus \$3.25 postage and handling from Barte Haile, 1912 Meadow Creek Dr., Pearland, TX 77581.



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Never Finished

My cousin sent an email the other day, even after I had begged him not to include me on forwards lists. But this one was pretty good. It was entitled, "How I Spend My Time Since I Retired." It humorously chronicled one morning's intentions and movements of a retired person. The poor guy went (almost) from one chore to the next. He was constantly distracted by other things before he actually started any project, never really accomplished anything. Some

days, this is the story of my life, although I am certainly not retired.

Sometimes I start thinking of all the things I should/could do, and never actually do any of it. I become so overwhelmed, it sort of immobilizes me. If I should paint a door (before I can hang that screen), I head for the painting supplies, spy the drooping flowers out front and decide to water them. On my way to the hose, I remember that I have wet clothes to hang up or put in the dryer. I

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.

notice that the grass under the clothesline has grown long, so I think of the lawn mower. On the way to the barn, I remember that I need something from the other little farmhouse. Before I make it that far, I decide to turn on the water to the garden. But then I think, before it gets wet, I should wander in to check on the veggies and do a little weeding. Before I get too far with that, I remember that I need the sevin dust from the barn. That brings me back to the lawn mower. And I never seem to get around to painting the door that started the whole mess in the first place. So the screens still aren't in.

If I really should cook or bake, I invariably need some ingredient from the store and end up in town to do errands. I always tell myself I will be away only a short time, will just pick up the one thing I need and return to the ranch to put in a full day's work. Somehow, it never happens quite that way. I end up visiting with people. I stop at other places. I browse the antique stores or pick up a prescription. The time passes, and the morning or afternoon disappears.

Logging onto the computer "just to check my email" always turns into another marathon session. I either find an old friend on the Instant Messenger or have a sudden idea for a column. It's getting to where I hate to sit down to my desk, because I know when I look up, an hour or two or three will have passed (just as it has right now).

Besides being easily distracted, I do everything very slowly. Are any of you like this? And I admit it. I'm always the last to finish a meal; I even eat at a snail's pace. My kids can attest to the fact that I have always been this way, but it seems to be getting worse. Zack jokes that there are three kinds of time around here, "Zack time," real time, and "Genie time." When we must be somewhere at, say 7 p.m. he starts reminding me about 4, telling me I have less time (than I really do) to be ready. It's the only way for us to arrive anywhere

on time. This must drive him crazy, for he is a man who is always quick, punctual, and often early. Bless him for his patience and sense of humor.

When my son was visiting, he grew tired of hearing me whine about my 10 extra "chocolate pounds." He assembled my new treadmill and set up a free-weight and exercise program for me. "OK, Mom, now you have no excuses." Gee, thanks, kid. So now I have yet another major, time-consuming, repetitive item to jam into my day, another thing to feel guilty about missing. (Yes, I know it will be good for me. I kept telling myself that ranch work would keep me in shape no matter what I ate, but it wasn't so. If it were, all the farmers and ranchers around here would look like weight lifters with abs of steel. And... well... most of us don't). Even if I begin my workout very early, I will still be even later than usual for everything else all day long. Everything will be thrown off kilter (as if that weren't the natural order of things for me anyway). It seems I just can't win.

One of my problems is that I never want to admit that there's anything I can't do. So I attempt to do it all (not always so successfully. And since Zack is the same way, we both try to do too much, take on too many tasks. It sets up a no-win situation when we simply can't keep up with our own expectations. We'll never catch up, but we won't admit it. Things would work better if there were, say, 72 hours in each day rather than 24).

Sometimes I think my life would be a lot easier if I were the kind of woman who couldn't change a flapper valve, balance her own checkbook, bake bread, pound in a T-post, get out the sewing machine to mend a rip or cover a hassock. What if I really couldn't hop on a riding mower or paint a door? I could just bat my eyelashes and act helpless, try to con someone else into doing things I know I can do. Or hire it all done... if I had very deep pockets.

So I blunder from morning to night, move from one chore to the next, on sort of a need to do basis, trying to take the most crucial items first. I hope I can avoid distraction long enough to complete at least one or two major projects, going as fast as I possibly can. And invariably, Zack, who moves at lightening speed, will ask me, "What in the world did you DO all day?"

My answer is always the same, "I read movie magazines, ate bon-bons, and watched soap operas. Would that, just once, it were so.

Listen To The Children

Anyone who knows me or is familiar with this column probably would guess that I follow sports scores a lot more closely than I do art auctions. Nonetheless, one of my favorite recent news stories involved Christie's, Sotheby's, and more than \$20 million worth of art. Takashi Hashiyama, president of a Japanese electronics firm couldn't decide which auction house to use to unload the company's art collection. Did he ask them to enter a bidding war? Did he split the collection between the two auction houses? Did he ask around to find out which one had the fastest-talking auctioneer? No. He decided to use a decision-making process that kids have been using for generations: rock, paper, scissors.

In case you've been living under a rock — or a paper or scissors — in this game, rock breaks scissors, scissors cuts paper, and paper smothers rock. What I love about Mr. Hashiyama's decision to use a children's method to decide the fate of all this art and money is that it was so pure, so fair, and so much more fun than having some MBAs making a bunch of charts based on some fancy theories.

Sotheby's decided to leave its decision to chance, and had no particular strategy. Christie's, on the other hand, turned to some experts: the children of their international director of the impressionist and modern art department. The 11-year-old twin daughters immediately told their dad to go with scissors. Their reasoning was that, "Rock is way too obvious, and scissors beats paper." So, Christie's chose scissors, Sotheby's chose paper, scissors "cut" paper and Christie's got the deal.

Using this method for the art auction deal, there were no kickbacks, no back room deals, no back stabbing. It was just done in a fair (and fun) way. Maybe playground ethics should be a model for other forms of adult decision-making.

Take international relations. Kids today are taught, "Use your words, don't use force." That's a nice one for a lot of world leaders to try — at least as a first resort.

And think of all the lives that would have been spared if, instead of waging war every few years, the Germans and French would have just tossed a coin to see who got Alsace-Lorraine. And what would be wrong with the policy of "I'll show you my



By Lloyd Garver

nuclear weapons if you show me yours?" And heads of state could play pin the tail on the donkey, with the winners getting to say that their form of government or their religion is the best.

In business, playground rules would be interesting, too. How many of you would be willing to shoot free throws against your boss to determine if you're going to get a raise? And how about thumb wrestling your colleague to see who gets the corner office? Or racing your competitor around the block to see who gets the prized Noodleman account?

In Kid Rules, fairness is the most important thing and everyone has to have an equal chance to win. Lying and cheating are bad, telling the truth is good. Sharing is good, bullying is bad. Making up lies about others is against the rules. Apologizing for doing something wrong is required. It's all so simple that one wonders why so many adults seem to forget these rules as they move from the classroom to the boardroom or the war room.

But before you ask your Senators to try to pass Kid Rules as the law of the land, remember that it's a package deal. You can't just adopt some of the ways kids do things. So, operating under playground ethics, this is what would probably happen if someone were to say, "That wasn't fair and it wasn't right when you said Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destruction. And you never even admitted you were wrong or apologized." Then the culprit would just smile — or smirk — and say, "Hey, I can't be punished for it. I had my fingers crossed."

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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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editors and Writers,

Thanks for your important coverage on DU recently.

I have been telling many people about it. I particularly appreciate the mention of the state bills (and Louisiana law already) about required radiological testing.

Regards,
Mark Whitaker

University of Wisconsin-Madison
environmental sociologist

To The Editor:

Is there any point, now that November's election is behind us, in revisiting the history of the Iraq war? Yes: any path out of the quagmire will be blocked by people who call their opponents weak on national security, and portray themselves as tough guys who will keep America safe. So it's important to understand how the tough guys made America weak.

There has been notably little U.S. coverage of the "Downing Street memo" - actually the minutes of a British prime minister's meeting on July 23, 2002, during which officials reported on talks with the Bush administration about Iraq. But the memo, which was leaked to The Times of London during the British election campaign, confirms what apologists for the war have always denied: the Bush administration cooked up a case for a war it wanted.

Here's a sample: "Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and W.M.D. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy."

Why did the administration want to invade Iraq, when, as the memo noted, "the case was thin" and Saddam's "W.M.D. capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea, or Iran"? Iraq was perceived as a soft target; a quick victory there, its domestic political advantages aside, could serve as a demonstration of American military might, one that would shock and awe the world.

But the Iraq war has, instead, demonstrated the limits of American power, and emboldened our potential enemies. Why should Kim Jong Il fear us, when we can't even secure the road from Baghdad to the airport?

At this point, the echoes of Vietnam are unmistakable. Reports from the recent offensive near the Syrian border sound just like those from a 1960's search-and-destroy mission, body count and all. Stories filed by reporters actually with the troops suggest that the insurgents, forewarned, mostly melted away, accepting battle only where and when they chose.

Meanwhile, America's strategic position is steadily deteriorating.

Next year, reports Jane's Defense Industry, the United States will spend as much on defense as the rest of the world combined. Yet the Pentagon now admits that our military is having severe trouble attracting recruits, and would have difficulty dealing with potential foes - those that, unlike Saddam's

Iraq, might pose a real threat.

In other words, the people who got us into Iraq have done exactly what they falsely accused Bill Clinton of doing: they have stripped America of its capacity to respond to real threats.

So what's the plan?

The people who sold us this war continue to insist that success is just around the corner, and that things would be fine if the media would just stop reporting bad news. But the administration has declared victory in Iraq at least four times. January's election, it seems, was yet another turning point that wasn't.

Yet it's very hard to discuss getting out. Even most of those who vehemently opposed the war say that we have to stay on in Iraq now that we're there.

In effect, America has been taken hostage. Nobody wants to take responsibility for the terrible scenes that will surely unfold if we leave (even though terrible scenes are unfolding while we're there). Nobody wants to tell the grieving parents of American soldiers that their children died in vain. And nobody wants to be accused, by an administration always ready to impugn other people's patriotism, of stabbing the troops in the back.

But the American military isn't just bogged down in Iraq; it's deteriorating under the strain. We may already be in real danger: what threats, exactly, can we make against the North Koreans? That John Bolton will yell at them? And every year that the war goes on, our military gets weaker.

So we need to get beyond the clichés - please, no more "pottery barn principles" or "staying the course." I'm not advocating an immediate pullout, but we have to tell the Iraqi government that our stay is time-limited, and that it has to find a way to take care of itself. The point is that something has to give. We either need a much bigger army - which means a draft - or we need to find a way out of Iraq.

N.M.

To The Editor:

HB 6008 concerning testing soldiers for depleted uranium was researched, developed, written, and introduced by me. It has been supported by many good people in Connecticut, and its language was used as the basis for the successful Louisiana initiative. As I write, the Connecticut legislature has not acted as quickly as Louisiana, and the full House has not yet taken up the measure, although it has passed several committees. I am hoping it will be adopted before we adjourn in mid June.

I am also a subscriber to your paper.
Rep. Pat Dillon, D-92, CT General Assembly

To The Editor:

Republicans just don't seem to understand that compromise is a good thing. In fact, compromise to a Republican is a bad thing.

Look at the state we are in today in this country because Republicans will not compromise.

We don't have a social security bill

because Republicans will not compromise. The private accounts fight, which have nothing to do with the solvency of the Social Security program, is being allowed to stop all work. Republicans simply will not compromise. If they would simply remove private accounts from the table a Social Security bill would be finished in no time. Of course the real problem with that is that Republicans don't honestly want to save Social Security. Their real intent is to destroy it.

Let's look at the Judges issue. The Democrats have said they would compromise if the Republicans would back off from a) extreme judicial nominees and b) agree to not blow away the filibuster. Nope. Nada. Not going to do it. The Republicans once again will not compromise. It's their way or the highway. The concept of reasonable is just not part of their worldview.

Then, of course, we have the case of John Bolton. "Mr. I'm a bastard and never mind that I firmly believe that the ends justify the means" is obviously not the best nor right person for the UN's Ambassador's position. Instead of admitting that the nomination was a bad one, the Republicans decide to take their usual approach to being wrong - "push it through, no matter what." Republicans compromise? It simply isn't in their vocabulary.

We live in a complex world made up of a virtually unlimited color scale of gray. The Republican's black and white, good and evil, I'm right and you're wrong approach to everything has become the problem.

Until The Republicans step down from their high horse this country is going to be slowly torn apart, piece by piece. Its time real people tell these yahoos to stop. It's time that folks other than the religious right had input into these matters. We've got to take our country back from extremists who do not compromise.

Angie Pratt

To The Editor:

Newsweek publishes an article that touched off some small-scale rioting in Afghanistan and the White House is all over it, somberly stating that such erroneous fact-finding is lax in the extreme, that an apology is insufficient, calling for 'heads to roll', and so on. And yet, with credible evidence from MI-6, England's intelligence service, that the Bush White House knowingly and purposefully manufactured "evidence" that would turn the country and the world toward the U.S. invasion of Iraq, nobody seems to see the extreme irony. Tens of thousands of American and Iraqi citizens die in a manufactured invasion and journalists are almost completely silent, and yet 12 or 15 people die in Afghanistan and the president's spokesman calls for investigations. Has our country gone to sleep; have we become hypnotized? How in the world is it possible that we don't hear loud cries for impeachment of this president?!

Tim Slack, Newburgh, IN

To The Editor:

There is so much going on right now with toll legislation, proposals, backdoor legislation and "behind the scenes" activities and power-plays that I doubt it can be covered in one short document. That having been said, I'll briefly highlight, as I see them, some of the chief facts, data, issues, and problem areas re: the toll road status:

Gov. Perry WANTS toll roads, in par-

ticular that part of his dream of a Texas Toll Corridor initially originating from Oklahoma to Mexico, but then beyond that including Canada up north to Central America down south. The governor is being "romanced" by special interests to proceed "full guns" on ensuring toll roadways throughout Texas. It also reinforces for the GOP the issue of "NO new taxes"; however, what are tolls if not taxes?

In order to fulfill this mission, Perry has "Yes-man" Speaker Tom Craddick heading the house who is also "gung-ho" toll roads and anything else Perry wants. Craddick ensured house compliance and pro-toll direction by selecting Mike Krusee as the Chair of the Transportation Committee. Krusee has been the most influential member and prime-mover of the house in promoting toll roads to the legislature and big business. Krusee also sits on the board of CAMPO and persuaded the house and senate to approve and implement the bill for the Regional Mobility Authorities (RMA) - several - which currently determine the roadways for various counties. Currently Krusee is trying to ensure a stable long-term pro-toll RMA by getting his bill passed that will give RMA members a longer term of six years. Under the guise of maintaining "experienced" members, it will ensure a stable pro-toll membership for a six-year term. Furthermore, the Central Texas RMA is comprised mostly of Williamson County residents/special interests who are determining the toll future of Travis and surrounding counties - meanwhile, they are bypassing most of their own county with their future toll plans. Krusee is the representative of Williamson County and had no real opposition when he was recently reelected several months ago - only write-in candidate Karen Felthausen - Krusee got more than 90-percent of the votes.

As the key point, Krusee is one of the main reasons that the toll road issue has become such a force here in Texas. He voraciously has ensured, along with Perry and Craddick, that the gasoline tax has remained the same for the past decade, which has inhibited the amount of taxes available to build and maintain roads throughout the state. In addition, TxDOT has been sitting on vast amount of pre-paid tax dollars by holding up on various transportation projects. Furthermore, TxDOT was "advised" by the governor to come up with "creative methods" for quickly building and maintaining roadways - hence, pushing the governor's toll road plans.

Krusee helped to increase the authoritative power of CAMPO, TxDOT and the RMA while not mandating their accountability to the people of Texas, as may be seen by the CAMPO and TxDOT request for public input on tolls and then CAMPO voting anyway for tolls after more than 90-percent of the response was anti-toll.

Recently, many of us - Sal, Linda, David and other individuals and groups - successfully demanded that the crossover bridge on S. MOPAC and William Cannon Drive be taken-off as a toll-way, the reason being that the project was already paid for by gasoline taxes. Thanks to ongoing public involvement and mounting pressure, that piece of completed highway now is free to drivers. If not for this effort, we'd be paying a toll on that stretch of MOPAC at this

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very moment.

Currently, there are similar toll issues prevalent. One is the proposal to toll Highways 290 and 71 near the "Y" in Oak Hill. These roads were built and paid for with gasoline taxes. Now TxDOT, CAMPO and the RMA want to charge tolls for enlarging the scope of those roadways. Point of fact is that the state cannot charge tolls on already paid for thorough-fares — but with the help of Krusee and these three committees they are trying to do so. There is a move by TxDOT to build an above-ground section of highway over the existing road, which it then defines as a new road, thereby attempting to circumvent the law against tolling already paid for existing roadways. We are all fighting this as we did with the S. MOPAC overpass project. So far, the "Y" area is projected still as a toll project.

Up in part of north Travis County toll booths have already been set up and the plan is to build a toll way on existing roads. Public groups are still fighting this for the same reason as mentioned with the two previously mentioned toll projects. These are existing roadways.

To expedite toll projects, special interests e.g., CINTRA, the world-wide toll maven, has agreed and offered to pay the state \$7 million dollars for its consideration as the primary toll building and management company for Texas toll road projects. One of my complaints to the Office of the District Attorney is the illegal nature of such a maneuver and obvious conflict of interest.

There is a measure in the legislature being considered to place a moratorium of two years on the building of any and all toll roads — until an independent investigation is completed to learn whether toll roads are the only and/or most viable means of building and maintaining Texas roadways. Public opinion has spearheaded the bill and has pressured legislators to reconsider the current toll plan.

Basically, toll roads are more than a 90-percent certainty unless the public vocalizes its anger and disagreement with the state's special interest drive for toll roads. While there are other alternatives to tollways, few have been or are being reviewed. One of the reasons that tollways are being pushed so vehemently is that TxDOT has "frightened" counties and legislators with the prospect of losing millions of state and federal dollars if toll roads were not voted for before a miniscule period of time. Consequently, this premeditated "persuasion" was very effective and instrumental in getting boards, committees and legislators to become proactive for tollways, and why the vote by CAMPO succeeded within such a short span of time.

Because of this "persuasive" tactic, myself and others have formally complained to the Travis County DA, Ronnie Earle, to investigate the actions and motives of those pushing for toll roads.

Those I named in the formal complaint range from the governor and house speaker to Krusee and TxDOT. The investigation is being performed as I write this synopsis, and hopefully, it will uncover some illegal activities and conflicts of interest prevalent in this massive push for tollways.

There is much more going on at this time, but that's a VERY brief summary of the toll road status within the state. There is a toll road conspiracy afoot. If we all sit back and watch, our children's children will be paying toll taxes forever. We need to be extremely vocal to elected officials and to demand alternatives to toll roads throughout the state.

People must be made to comprehend what this means. Many are being misinformed by the Office of the Governor and by legislators who tell them that state law requires that there be alternate comparable roadways to every toll project; however, that is a sham. Many people believe they have an option whether or not to pay the tolls. **THEY DON'T!!!**

They may have the option whether or not to go on the toll roads; however, EVERYONE in Texas will pay a toll tax at the "cash register" when they buy goods and services. Businesses will pass along their toll costs to the consumer. In this manner it is estimated that EVERY Texan could pay a yearly total toll TAX of up to \$6,000!!! People need to hear this, because those in charge do NOT admit to it.

Furthermore, it is historical fact that once toll roads are built they remain forever — even when the roads have been fully paid for with tax dollars. Only once in my lifetime do I recall a toll road system being removed. That one in the late 1970's was the toll system for the Southern State Parkway in New York; however, there were some "behind the scenes" political reasons for that, which I won't go into here.

I have written the governor and legislators MANY times regarding the toll issue and NONE admit to prevailing agendas and negative impact on the community, even though it is a REALITY.

Feel free to contact me with any further question on toll roads. I am dead set against them. I have lived in areas that have extensive toll systems and have seen first-hand that they do NOT work. In fact, for a brief period of time I worked for the Transportation Dept. in NYC and have recognized that tollways are ineffective and inefficient. While people are told that they will free-up traffic congestion and decrease air pollution, that is contrary to what actually occurs. In addition, there is an increase of noise pollution and frequently extensive ecological and physical destruction occurs to the immediate environment. Toll roadways change the entire lifestyle of a community and overburdens its residents. Toll roads are NOT cost-effective, are a bad idea and should be considered ONLY as a very last re-

sort.

So, what can we do?
Communicate the above facts to EVERYONE! We must educate the entire community. That includes store owners, residents, and even legislators who know almost as little as everyone else. Only by an ongoing commitment to communicate our disagreement to lawmakers, do we stand a good chance of eliminating the toll-road-itis that has become a contagion among elected officials. The people must be in control of their transportation fate. We must present alternative options to toll roads. Even raising the gas tax is an option, though the governor doesn't admit that. The office states that people don't have an option to pay the gas tax. That is bogus. People do have an option to fill their gas tanks, to cut down on their driving, and to develop car pools to save money.

The problem is that gas taxes have remained the same for almost one decade. It's time they are updated and used properly to build and maintain roads. Furthermore, legislators determined years ago that part of the gas tax goes to higher education. With the recent deregulation of higher education tuition, we need to divert that portion of the gas tax back to transportation alternatives. Special interests continue to keep all this as status-quo. We must voice our disagreement and demand realistic long-needed change.

Only when communities join together and demand things persistently in a unified manner will our elected officials listen and act accordingly.

"The squeaky wheel DOES get the oil!" — especially when there's a lot of squeaking going on!

Peter Stern, Driftwood, TX

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CodePink Delivers 'Pink Slips' To Naughty Texas Legislators

AUSTIN — Local and national members of CodePink, a national women's peace and social justice movement, on Monday, May 16, hand delivered "pink slips" in the form of women's lingerie to five Texas representatives at the State Capitol to show the true cost of war on Texans and ignoring pressing domestic issues.

"The targeted members of the Texas House were "laid off" because they have put aside championing real issues of substance facing the state of Texas, such as realistic education funding, Children's Health Insurance Program, ethical campaign financing, and the horrifying reality of more than 29 Texas troops dying in Iraq during this legislative session," said Kim McIntosh, CodePink Austin representative.

"They have, instead, waged egregious assaults on Texans' basic rights by allowing pharmacists to refuse to fill women's birth control prescriptions, removing children from homosexual and bisexual foster parents' homes, demanding intrusive personal information from women seeking abortions and even legally banning cheerleading moves that may be considered promiscuous."

Rep. Robert Talton of Pasadena was "fired" for fostering neglect of children in the state's custody when he attached an amendment to the Child Protective Services reform bill (SB 6). The amendment calls for a ban on homosexual and bisexual foster parents. This would be the first and only ban of its kind in the nation.

"While it is likely that Mr. Talton's goal is to limit the rights of homosexual and bisexual citizens of Texas, he is actually limiting the rights of the children in the custody of the state," said McIntosh. "There is already an overwhelming shortage of foster and adoptive homes due to cuts in funding and a ban based solely on hate and discrimination would only further leave them



TRUE COLORS — Members of CodePink Austin showed their true colors at the State Capitol Monday for peace and justice as they gave "pink slips" to five House representatives. — Photo By Mara Eurich

without a safe and protective home while in the state's care."

Representative Phil King of Weatherford received his "pink slip" for trying to deny teenage females control of their bodies. King's recent HB 1212 calls for parental consent to be necessary for a minor female to seek services related to termination of a pregnancy, regardless of rape or medical necessity.

"In a time where there are 12- and 13-year-old girls becoming parents

and access to birth control and adequate education is being denied focus on restricting humane options are taking center stage while other Texas teens are being killed in Iraq," she said.

Rep. Frank Corte Jr. of San Antonio was "fired" for the numerous bills he has authored and supported that the sole purpose of is to deny women their right to health care services. HB 16 would allow pharmacists to refuse to fill birth control prescriptions even if the prescription is for a medical condition. HB 811 and HB 979 are regarding licensure of certain health care facilities that specialize in women's care. HB 1469 would require physicians to inform women in writing about a mythical link between abortion and breast cancer and other false information.

Rep. Al Edwards of Houston was "fired" for making Texas politics the "laughing stock of the nation." HB 1476, governing dance moves of cheerleaders and drill teams, has been mocked on national television since its introduction.

Speaker of the House Tom Craddick of Midland was handed his "pink slip" for "ethical ambivalence," according to Code Pink Austin.

"It is no secret that Mr. Craddick is a close friend and ally of Tom 'The Hammer' Delay and often carries out Mr. Delay's wishes, including the re-districting of Texas. An investigation of Mr. Craddick and his Texans for a Republican Majority PAC by the Travis County District Attorney's office documented evidence of illegal campaign financing that Mr. Craddick was directly involved in (he delivered the checks)," McIntosh said.

"With the campaign finance reform

bill (HB 1348), Mr. Craddick had the opportunity to prove to Texans that they, instead of money and Mr. Delay, are more important, but despite being authored by a republican representative and having almost two-thirds of the House's support, it was killed before it even came to a vote. CodePink only wanders if Mr. Delay picked up the phone or made a personal visit as he did with the re-districting bill."

During the 79th Texas Legislative Session, 30 Texas men and women have been killed in Iraq. In the month of January, 18 Texas soldiers died while the Texas Legislature shut down for an entire week to attend the inauguration of President Bush. "The war in Iraq is draining the life-blood of states that should be used to fund struggling programs in our state," said CodePink Austin.

To date, the cost of war to Texans is to the tune of \$13 billion and over 151 dead Texas servicemen and servicewomen.

The "pink slip" action was performed in conjunction with National CodePink co-founders Jodie Evans and Diane Wilson, in Austin last night for a book signing at Book People for CodePink's new book, *Stop the Next War Now: Effective Responses to Violence and Terrorism*. The book is a collection of essays about how the global peace movement can successfully stop the next war by 70 of the world's most visionary experts and activists.

Evans and Wilson are among protestors who disrupted both President Bush's acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention and President Bush's inauguration address, by shouting, "Bring the troops home now!"



HIGH KICKS DON'T IMPREGNATE — Activists with CodePink Jodie Evans of Los Angeles, Calif., and Fran Hanlon of Austin (from left) show off two of the "pink slips" used to "fire" five Texas representatives for ignoring the true cost of the Iraqi war on Texans. — Photo By Mara Eurich