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They want to see a gesture on United States' part. They have not seen one. A gesture being like the truckload of apples or truckloads of medicine, of things they can actually use. They're tired. They're very tired of seeing truckloads of troops kicking in doors looking for insurgents. The insurgents would melt away if they would just do something positive for the masses, and they won't.
— J.T. Moseley

Next EU Constitution Vote Slated For The Netherlands

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APPRECIATION PLAQUES were given to J.T. Moseley, 49, of Clifton by chaplains in Iraq for his work as a MWR officer in charge of building the morale of U.S. troops station at Camp War Horse last year. Moseley recently returned from Iraq after his contract with KBR Halliburton expired earlier this month.
— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

Peace, Veteran Groups Form 'AfterDowningStreet.org'

WASHINGTON — A coalition of veterans' groups, peace groups, and political activist groups announced a campaign today to urge that the U.S. Congress launch a formal investigation into whether President Bush has committed impeachable offenses in connection with the Iraq war. The campaign focuses on evidence that recently emerged in a British memo containing minutes of a secret July 2002 meeting with British Prime Minister Tony Blair and his top national security officials.

John Bonifaz, a Boston attorney specializing in constitutional litigation, sent a memo to Congressman John Conyers of Michigan, the Ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, urging him to introduce a Resolution of Inquiry directing the House Judiciary Committee to launch a formal investigation into whether sufficient grounds exist for the House to impeach President Bush.

Bonifaz's memo, made available late last week at <www.AfterDowningStreet.org>, be-

gins: "The recent release of the Downing Street Memo provides new and compelling evidence that the President of the United States has been actively engaged in a conspiracy to deceive and mislead the United States Congress and the American people about the basis for going to war against Iraq. If true, such conduct constitutes a High Crime under Article II, Section 4 of the United States Constitution."

In February and March 2003, John Bonifaz served as lead counsel for a coalition of United States soldiers, parents of U.S. soldiers, and Members of Congress (led by Representatives John Conyers, Jr. and Dennis Kucinich) in a federal lawsuit challenging President George W. Bush's authority to wage war against Iraq absent a congressional declaration of war or equivalent action. Bonifaz is the author of *Warrior-King: The Case for Impeaching George W. Bush* (NationBooks-NY, 2004, foreword by Rep. John Conyers, Jr.), which chronicles that case and its meaning for

the United States Constitution.

The organizations forming the AfterDowningStreet.org coalition include: Global Exchange, Gold Star Families for Peace, Democrats.com, Veterans for Peace, Code Pink, Progressive Democrats of America, and Democracy Rising. These organizations,

beginning today, will be urging their members to contact their Representatives to urge support of a Resolution of Inquiry.

For more information, visit the website.

INFO

www.AfterDowningStreet.org

Antiwar Festival Slated Sept. 24-26 In Washington

WASHINGTON, D.C. — An antiwar protest, march, rally, festival, and lobby weekend is scheduled to be held Sept. 24-26 in Washington, D.C. to "Hold Bush and Congress Accountable for the Deaths, the Destruction, the Lies, and the Toll on Our Communities."

More than two years after the U.S. invasion of Iraq, more than 1,600 U.S. soldiers have died, at least another 15,000 have been wounded; even the most conservative estimates of Iraqi deaths number in the tens of thousands. Iraq, a once sovereign nation, now lies in ruins under the military and corporate occupation of the United States; U.S. promises to rebuild have not been kept and Iraqis still lack food, water, electricity, and other basic needs, according to the protest sponsor United For Peace and Justice.

The three massive days of action against the war begins with a major march, rally, and festival on Saturday, Sept. 24; an interfaith religious service and day of grassroots trainings on Sunday, Sept. 25; and a large-scale grassroots lobbying day and mass non-violent direct action and civil disobedience on Monday, Sept. 26.

"A majority of Americans believe that this war never should have happened, but our elected representatives in Washington continue to rubber-stamp the Bush Administration's disastrous Iraq policies," said a spokesperson. "They have given military recruiters nearly unrestricted access to our schools — and the Pentagon nearly unrestricted

access to our tax dollars. At a time when our vital social programs are eroding or completely decimated, an overwhelming majority in Congress recently approved Bush's request for an additional \$82 billion in war funding, and there's already talk of another \$50 billion appropriation this fall."

This antiwar mobilization will coincide with the meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, "whose economic policies place corporate profits ahead of basic human needs worldwide," said a UFPJ flyer. "We will speak out against the corporate theft of Iraq's resources and the decimation of the Iraqi economy through privatization and 'free trade.'"

The spokesperson added: "These three days of actions will send a clear message to the White House and Congress: The Iraq war must end. It's time to bring all the troops home, leaving no U.S. military bases behind, and to stop the corporate theft of Iraq's resources. Instead of draining our national treasury for endless war, we demand that our tax dollars be used to repair the damage done to Iraq and to fund services in our communities. We call for an immediate end to our government's assault on immigrants, the unethical pressures on our young people to join the military, and the undermining of democracy through relentless attacks on everyone's basic rights."

To contribute financial support to make this mobilization possible, visit the UFPJ website <www.unitedforpeace.org/donate>.

Next EU Constitution Vote Slated For The Netherlands

PARIS — France became the first country to turn thumbs down on the proposed European Union Constitution, although the ratification was supported by President Jacques Chirac. On Sunday, French voters rejected the measure, with an estimated 55.5 percent voting against it and 44.5 percent for it.

French officials have indicated that a "non" vote will not be accepted and a re-vote will likely occur.

Next up is the Netherlands, where Dutch voters are expected, according to opinion polls, to give a nee to the European constitution in a Wednesday referendum.

So far, nine European countries have ratified the proposed constitution, including Germany, Austria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luthuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain.

The 448-article constitution, which must be ratified by all 25 countries to take effect in 2006, would allow Europe to have a permanent president and foreign minister. When the European Convention was held in Laeken, Belgium in mid-December 2001, its purpose was to draft proposals on three subjects:



- How to bring citizens closer to the European design and European institutions.

- How to organize politics and the European political area in an enlarged union.

- How to develop the union into a stabilizing factor and a model in the New World Order.

The EU Constitution would provide a greater role for the EU in more aspects of life of members of the union. Its laws would trump those of national parliaments: "The Constitution and law adopted by the Union institutions in exercising competence conferred upon it by the Constitution shall have primacy over the law of the member states."

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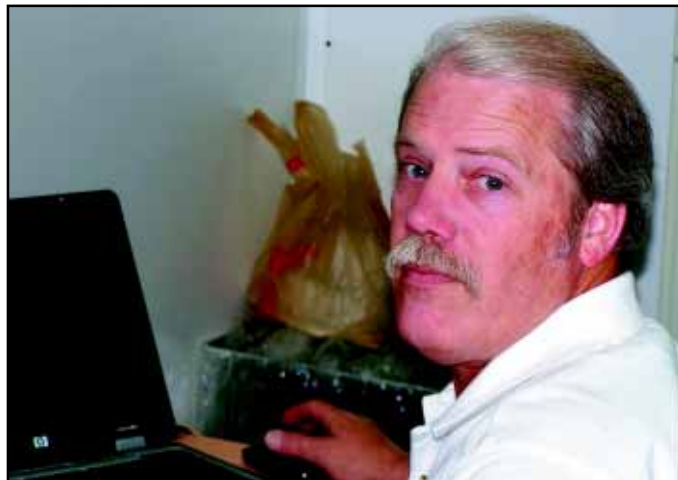
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Halliburton Division's 'Questionable Priorities'



BY THE COMPUTER, J.T. Moseley of Clifton sits while working for KBR Halliburton in Iraq last year.



CAMP WAR HORSE was where T.J. Moseley of Clifton was station during his time in Baqubah, Iraq, as an employee of KBR Halliburton last year.

Former Texas Employee Home From Iraq Says Money Wasted

BY NATHAN DIEBENOW
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

CRAWFORD — As new ads by The Richards Group in Dallas aim to splash positive images of Halliburton employees across the airwaves, one former KBR employee from Central Texas wants to set the record straight about Vice President Dick Cheney's former company.

T.J. Moseley, 49, of Clifton recently returned from Iraq after working with Halliburton subsidiary KBR, formerly known as Kellogg, Brown, & Root, at a camp called War Horse. His job as a morale, welfare, and recreation officer (MWR) was to build the morale of the U.S. troops by setting up games, tournaments, and activities for them during their off-time.

Moseley said that under contract, he he practically had no off-time for himself, as he worked a minimum of 12 hours a day. He said he is thinking about joining a lawsuit along with a growing number of former KBR employees to fight for their back pay.

Since Halliburton received no-bid contracts at the start of this leg of the U.S.-Iraqi War, the company has faced increased criticism. Two weeks ago, 16 activists were arrested in Houston during a protest outside of Halliburton's annual shareholder's meeting. In California, families of Halliburton employees have filed a lawsuit over the deaths of their loved ones in an Iraqi ambush.

Websites like HalliburtonWatch.org have popped up with their own guerrilla ads. One of its ads depicts a banner over a Houston freeway with the character from the popular board game "Monopoly" saying, "Halliburton: Making a killing." To date, the firm has lost 68 employees or contractors to the war.

Founded in 1919, Halliburton employs more than 100,000 people in over 120

countries, making it one of the world's largest providers of products and services to the oil and gas industries. KBR, Halliburton's engineering and construction subsidiary, employs more than 60,000 people in 43 countries.

Taking time off his self-imposed sabbatical with his son, Marcus, Moseley spoke with the **ICONOCLAST'S** Nathan Diebenow about his former employer's treatment of its workers, the U.S. government's problems fighting the insurgents in Iraq, and the concept of supporting the U.S. soldiers overseas.

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ICONOCLAST: So how are you doing?

J.T. MOSELEY: Tired.

ICONOCLAST: How long have you been back from Iraq?

MOSELEY: I got into the States on May 17.

ICONOCLAST: How long were you there?

MOSELEY: Twelve months.

ICONOCLAST: What did you do? What was your position?

MOSELEY: Morale, recreation, and welfare officer. I supported the troops.

ICONOCLAST: What did that entail?

MOSELEY: We devised a great many recreational activities as best we could, and basically, we kept the morale up.

ICONOCLAST: Like with board games and stuff?

MOSELEY: It entailed a little more than that. We'd have little flag-football games. We'd have basketball tournaments. We'd have volleyball tournaments. We'd have PlayStation tournaments.

When I first arrived there, they had some Internet service, but it was somewhat of a happy coincidence that I was also a network engineer and I took what they had — I think they had 10 stations — and expanded it into 20 stations, and

eight telephones, so we were able to expand that portion of it.

A big draw for the troops was being able to have communications. They certainly enjoyed the other activities as well. They piled into our building at the rate of a thousand per day to get on the Internet and telephone.

ICONOCLAST: Do you have a rank? Were you a part of the military organization?

MOSELEY: No, I was a contractor, and so that is all contracted out. The military does what the military does. They do military things. Everything else, every other aspect you would normally associate with military, like food, recreation, building things, that's all done by contractors.

ICONOCLAST: Who did you go with?

MOSELEY: I was with KBR. Basically, the military builds nothing. They're out there to tear it down.

ICONOCLAST: How long have you been doing that? Is that your profession?

MOSELEY: No, not by any stretch of the imagination. My history in it is obviously those 12 months. But prior to that, being a single parent, since my son here is now 16 and a half. So I have a great deal of background working with children's groups and things like that, and a lot of children all the time. By and large 90 percent of these kids are his age — just a year or two older.

ICONOCLAST: So what line of work were you in before? Were you in teaching?

MOSELEY: Network engineer.

ICONOCLAST: So why did you join KBR?

MOSELEY: I'm a victim of the Bush depression. I worked with a company called Computer Sciences Corporation out of Houston. That job was offshore also along with a number of others. So I

found myself unemployed for 13 months. When this particular position became available, although I applied as network engineer, a recruiter there, her name was Deborah Drain, she called me up. She was a former network recruiter but moved over to the MWR side, and asked me if I wanted to do this. I said well sure. Basically, even a drowning man will grab the point of the sword.

ICONOCLAST: So everything outside the military is brought in by KBR? Are there any therapy groups brought in as well?

MOSELEY: No. The only therapy anybody has out there's the MWR people. They have the chaplains. The chaplains are good guys. I worked with them quite a bit. As a matter of fact, I've gotten a couple of plaques from them for the work I've achieved because a lot of times, the kids won't go to the chaplains and talk, but they will talk to somebody who is like an uncle figure to them such as what I was for most of those kids?

ICONOCLAST: What do they come to you with?

MOSELEY: Oh, you know, I don't know how to explain it. My son can probably explain it better. I'm fairly easy to approach and talk to. Most kids pick up on that, and they talk to me about everything. Whatever is on their mind. Whatever they say to me stays with me. It ranged from "My girlfriend left me" to "I really hate it outside." And the death of friends. There were no set rules as to what they could talk about.

ICONOCLAST: Your ethic of what stays between you and the guys, is that something you decided to do on your own?

MOSELEY: That's my own personal ethic, much like when I decided that I was going to take this position, I kept to myself that no matter what my politics

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• INSIDE KBR ... Continued From Page 3

may be I'm not going to drag them over there with me. I kept true to that.

ICONOCLAST: You still keep in touch with the kids over there?

MOSELEY: Oh, yes, all the time.

ICONOCLAST: How many guys you keep in touch with?

MOSELEY: The camp at any one time — let me give you an idea — when I first got there, the 1st Infantry Division, 3rd Brigade in February 2005, that division left, rotated out, and the 3rd infantry division came in. So I worked exclusively with the 3rd Brigade of both divisions. In any one time, I had 2,000 people I was in contact with. The MWR personnel have a great deal of face time with what we call the customer, which is the military, more than anybody else. The only other people that have more face time with them are the military themselves. So the answer to the question is I still email and chat with many of the people that are still over there and a great many people who have left.

ICONOCLAST: Where were you located?

MOSELEY: I was at a camp called War Horse, which was the brigade headquarters for 3rd Brigade of 1st Infantry Division and 3rd Infantry Division. That was in Baqubah, Iraq, 30 miles northeast of Baghdad, right in the heart of the so-called Sunni Triangle.

ICONOCLAST: How big is Iraq, by the way?

MOSELEY: I think it's about the same size as Utah or Idaho.

ICONOCLAST: So you were mainly just hanging out with the troops. Did you have any contact with anyone outside the base?

MOSELEY: I did. I had contact with the local nationals. We also had a battalion of the Republic of Georgia — Georgian soldiers — on our camp as well. I had a great deal of contact with them. The local nationals I had contact with by and large were the ones that came on to the camp to do various odd jobs, mostly labor type work. Some of them were interpreters. Some of them were merchants. They had on the camp what we called a local national market. It was just three stalls set up inside a hangar where they sold their goods.

ICONOCLAST: What did they sell?

MOSELEY: All kinds of things that you couldn't get at the PX, like rugs, memorabilia from Iraq. They also had some computer pieces like Mice and USB hubs. Things like that.

ICONOCLAST: I guess they were pretty friendly. How were the Georgians culturally?

MOSELEY: They were the best. They were absolutely the best. They have a different way of carrying themselves than Americans do. Far different. I mean most of it is good. Some of it is strange. The good part of it is that they have an enormous amount of respect for everyone. Then some of the strange things are there's no such thing as lines, it's only mobs, so that is pretty much prevailing around Eastern European the old Soviet block where I visited before, as well.

ICONOCLAST: I think I know what you're talking about.

MOSELEY: They don't stand in line. They stand in mobs. It's just culture, but the Georgians are really great guys. I still have a lot of contacts with them. It helped that I spoke Russian.

ICONOCLAST: You do? Where did

you pick that up?

MOSELEY: Oh, just learning. Languages are very easy for me. I can pick them up fairly quick, fairly easily.

ICONOCLAST: How many languages do you know?

MOSELEY: Five. Korean, Russian, Georgian, English, and Espanol. Six, if you count sign language.

ICONOCLAST: What else do you want to talk about? What's going on over in Iraq that we don't know about from your point of view?

MOSELEY: I don't know what you hear about what's going on in Iraq, but I can pretty much imagine that what you hear is not entirely accurate.

ICONOCLAST: Like what?

MOSELEY: Well, let me give you an example. When we were first told we were going over there for weapons of mass destruction, it evolved into we're freeing the Iraqi people. You know, I can tell you right now that the 100,000-plus Iraqi people who died would argue that point. And that's why they have the insurgency right now. I do still have contacts, and I still talk to them over in Baqubah. Nationals. The one thing that I've always maintained even before I left here is that, you know, I bet there wouldn't be an insurgency if the United States had packed up a few truck loads of money and started spreading it around. I was telling this to a friend of mine there. His name is Ibrahim. He said, you know, if they had packed a few truck loads of apples, they would have voted to be the 51st state in the United States. But they've done nothing, absolutely nothing to show that they are there for them. That's the fact. All they've done is showed destruction. That's it. "We're stronger than you, so we must be right."

ICONOCLAST: Is the contractor KBR/Halliburton basically just helping out the people of Iraq directly?

MOSELEY: KBR and Halliburton is the same thing. KBR does nothing for the people. KBR does nothing for the Nationals. Absolutely *nothing*. That's the end of that story there. If the military does something for them, that's completely invisible. I can tell you this with absolute fact. KBR does nothing for the local Nationals. What they do do is what they call the services. They construct things on the camps where the military camps. And some really strange things, too.

I think their priority is just the oddest thing I've run into. Let me give you an example. You've probably heard that the troops are living in tents and it's horrible and all this other stuff. Well, that's not entirely accurate either. The troops don't live in tents unless they are transient, and they're moving from one camp to another. There are plenty of tents on each one of the camps. They don't live in them. They make the coalition forces live in them. I'll give you an example of priority problem that I see. Though you have people living in tents. They felt it was more important to spend \$3.5 million to build a gymnasium at War Horse. They also felt it was more important to build a \$2 million theatre on the camp instead of building housing for the troops.

ICONOCLAST: A theatre like a movie theatre?

MOSELEY: Exactly.

ICONOCLAST: So there are questionable purchases going on?



AMONG FRIENDS — J.T. Moseley (center, left) worked as a morale, welfare, and recreation officer (MWR) in Iraq to build the morale of the U.S. troops by setting up games, tournaments, and activities for them during their off-time. Pictured with him are (from left) Republic of Georgia commandoes Samkanashuili, Wasia, and Ika.

MOSELEY: Not questionable purchases. They are all authorized 100 percent. I'm saying they are questionable priorities. What's more important, for people to go to the gym and sweat when they could sweat in their tent or to go to a movie theatre and cool off before they go back to their tent and sweat?

ICONOCLAST: That's beyond me.

MOSELEY: It escaped me immediately. When you first get into that country, one of the first things you'll notice on any base is what they call a DFAC, short for "dining facility." You may have heard about the one in Mosul that allegedly a suicide bomber ran into and killed a few people. There's another story to that as well, but anyway, the DFAC is a dining facility under a great Big Top. This huge Big Top tent is where at any three points of the day, you can have up to 300 to 1,000 people sitting inside eating.

The first time I saw one of those DFACs, I thought to myself, "What an incredibly bad idea that is! Why don't you just go up there and paint a bull's eye on the top of it?" Nobody checks in with me, so sure enough, and I really hate it when I'm right all the time, something did happen in one of the DFACs. It was the one in Mosul where allegedly a guy ran in there and blew himself up; however, everyone there knows better what happened was — the local insurgency is just people. It's not what they may want you to believe. It's not ex-military people. No, it's just regular people like you and me. So they have gotten a hold of some weapons that they haven't gotten a clue what they're doing with, like with mortars and rockets. They just know, like light firecrackers, and set it off, and let it go! So as a consequence, they are very poor shots.

My roommate and I used to sit by the porch area we made and watch the rockets go overhead and miss the camp entirely. They'd fire them from the DIALA River and go completely over the camp and harmlessly off to some farmer's field, but even a broken watch is correct twice, and that's what happened in Mosul. A rocket came through the roof right during lunch and killed all those people. But I think what they wanted everyone to believe was that an insurgent

had infiltrated the camp and blew himself up. The reason they wanted everyone to understand and believe that is because you can fix that. You can't fix a rocket hitting you. So as a consequence, they beefed up security all over. DFACs everywhere. That's not going to stop a rocket. Anyway, it looks better that way than it does knowing that it was a rocket that came through there.

The reason they have DFACs, these great big gigantic DFACs where up to 500 to 1,000 people at a time are inside of it, is because it's less expensive than it would be to have six or 12 smaller dining facilities.

ICONOCLAST: They make money.

MOSELEY: Follow the money trail.

ICONOCLAST: What did you think about the protests in Houston last week during the Halliburton shareholder's meeting? Did you hear about that?

MOSELEY: No. What day was it?

ICONOCLAST: Wednesday, May 18.

MOSELEY: That was the day after I got back.

ICONOCLAST: Oh, okay. Yeah, well, the Houston police arrested 16 protestors. The police were mounted on horses, chasing them into a park area and bumping into them to push them back on the sidewalk. They had a guy with a Dick Cheney mask wearing a trench coat flashing people. When he pulled open the coat, you could see attached to his crotch was an oil rig. It was guerrilla theatre.

MOSELEY: Sometimes I wish people wouldn't be on my side.

ICONOCLAST: (laughs) I know you said you left your political opinion on the U.S. shore before going to Iraq, but when you went in, did you already have some preconceived notions about what you might find over there?

MOSELEY: I'm prior service so I had a fairly good idea what was going to happen. However, what I expected and when I got there were more cases than not two different things.

ICONOCLAST: What armed forces were you in?

MOSELEY: I was in the U.S. Army from '73-'76.

ICONOCLAST: What was your rank?

MOSELEY: First Lieutenant.

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ICONOCLAST: So what were your notions before going into Iraq? Did you talk to anyone prior to going, like with former KBR employees?

MOSELEY: No, I didn't know anyone else who has ever been in Iraq.

ICONOCLAST: You just took the ticket to ride.

MOSELEY: Yeah. As I said early on, even the drowning man will grab the sword. It wouldn't have made any difference what my preconceived notions would have been. I still would have gone.

ICONOCLAST: Would you go back?

MOSELEY: No. (pause) I would go back, but I wouldn't go back with KBR. And anybody else, and you can substantiate this with any other KBR employee, they wouldn't go back either with KBR.

ICONOCLAST: When you were on your off-time, would you travel out of the base?

MOSELEY: There is no off-time. Let's get that straight right now. It's 12 hours a day minimum everyday, holidays included.

ICONOCLAST: That's what the contract says?

MOSELEY: That's minimum 12 hours a day. Mostly, it's between 14 and 18 a day, so there is no off-time.

ICONOCLAST: So when you talked to people —

MOSELEY: I was doing my job. Now the program KBR had set up was four months on, 10 days off, so during the 10 days off, you could go anywhere you wanted. But it was a complete hassle to go anywhere. It takes two to three or sometimes five days to get out of the country, and a week to 10 days to get back in. Those days that you're trying to get in and out is dead time, dead money. You're making nothing. Halliburton charges the military for it anyway.

ICONOCLAST: So basically, you're sleeping when you're not working.

MOSELEY: That's it.

ICONOCLAST: So did you have any nightmares? Was the sleep good?

MOSELEY: I have had no nightmares, at least not yet. I got there when a lot of the heavy stuff was still going on. The nickname for Baqubah was "Baka-boom" because we used to get mortared and rocketed everyday. That was bad enough when we'd come in during the day, or during early morning or late evening hours. But when you're asleep, and they start coming in and exploding around you, that's as close to a nightmare as you can get. You can't run from them because, as I said before, they're poor shots. You never know when the next one is going to hit. You could be running into it. The only thing you can do is get down and hope for the best.

ICONOCLAST: Find a bunker, maybe.

MOSELEY: There were bunkers everywhere, but like I said, if you run to the bunker, you could be running into it. So the best thing to do is to lay low, give it a break, and see what happens, then go to the bunker.

ICONOCLAST: So have you met with these former KBR employees?

MOSELEY: I'm the first one back of my group.

ICONOCLAST: I mean former employees that are back here?

MOSELEY: No, I wasn't going to seek them out.

ICONOCLAST: Do feel like you have

no reason to?

MOSELEY: Not that this time.

ICONOCLAST: Do you know of any former employees forming together — I mean, is there a clause in the contract that states you can't talk about KBR after you come back to the States and aren't working for the company any longer?

MOSELEY: No. What the clause in the contract says is that you can't talk to the media or anybody else for that matter about anything that goes on there or here while you're under contract. My contract expired May 16, so that's probably why you guys get no information at all.

ICONOCLAST: So is there a lot of roll-over among KBR employees?

MOSELEY: There are a great many people who roll over. It's incredible, but not for reasons you might think. It's not because of the booms. It's because of the KBR.

ICONOCLAST: What do you mean?

MOSELEY: Each one of the camps, and I can only speak to the one I was at, although I've been to several of the other ones, and they are pretty much of a cookie cutter design — each one of the camps are run pretty much like a fiefdom. They're not run like a business at all. There's no business sense at it at all. At each one of the camps there is a person called a camp manager who is more or less a noble lord than he is a manager.

And in most cases — I can speak absolute about the camp I was at — they have no business being a manager or anything, much less than a camp of 160 contractors, but they put people in there because KBR can't attract the correct management types. So they'll take anybody. They'll take homeless people, and they have. They go up and down the streets looking for people because they get paid based on body count. They're not based on what they do.

As I said earlier, about the dead time, we get paid based on the first 40 hours of the week we work, and we work a minimum of 84 every week. On those first 40 hours, we get what is called an "uplift." It's hazard pay or combat pay, and that's where the bulk of the money is at. The other 40 hours of that 84 — to make the math easy — we get nothing for that. Absolutely nothing. KBR and Halliburton still charges DoD (Department of Defense) for those 40 hours, and they just put that in their pockets. They're making a fortune. They don't care what the quality of people are they are sending. They absolutely don't care. It's just body counts.

ICONOCLAST: So they don't care if you're a drug addict or you've got AIDS or you don't have teeth?

MOSELEY: There's lots of toothless people there. They usually weed out the derelicts, the drug addicts as you've said, but they don't care what your background is. As long as your not wanted for anything, you're our boy or woman because it's a body count thing.

Now STARS AND STRIPES, speaking of body counts, reported in March of this year, that pound for pound when you look at the percentages, more contractors have been killed than military people.

ICONOCLAST: I've heard that.

MOSELEY: It's because we're targets! We're just walking targets all the time, and in addition, this is something



HUNGARIAN HELICOPTER — Former FBR employee J.T. Moseley knew the soldiers who flew this helicopter before it crashed in Iraq killing all aboard last year.

you may or may not have heard, KBR personnel have a bounty on them by the so-called insurgents: \$50,000 for a guy and \$100,000 for a woman. It may be a \$150,000 now.

ICONOCLAST: Why is that? Why for the bounty, and why are women worth so much more?

MOSELEY: Well, the reason they want KBR people — contractors will do — is because it makes good press when they cut somebody's head off, but it makes excellent press if they can cut a woman's head off.

ICONOCLAST: So it's not the culture?

MOSELEY: They want the press. That's it. They just want some good press time. KBR people, by and large, I think at last count there was 38,000 KBR people over there. It could be more. It could be less. Who knows? I don't know if they'll ever be able to maintain that number, but that's allegedly what the number was. You can see that there's 38,000 — which is the entire armed forces of some countries — unarmed all the time. They're easy targets.

ICONOCLAST: And how do the insurgents, these common everyday people, know who these KBR people are?

MOSELEY: That's easy. Each one of the camps — and once again, I speak for the one at War Horse — everyday they bring in X number of local nationals to do the labor work. Out of that X number, "the Talk," which is the military's command center, even acknowledge that there's a certain number of those who are casing the joint out for insurgency. It's something you deal with, but this is their way — it's crazy in my mind — of supporting the locals by allowing them to come on and make \$10 a day when as I said before, all they have to do is bring a load of apples and that would have made them happy.

ICONOCLAST: Any other contact you've had will Iraqi nationals? What's their point of view? What do they want to see happen?

MOSELEY: They want to see a gesture on United States' part. They have not seen one. A gesture being like the truck load of apples or truck loads of medicine, of things they can actually use. They're tired. They're very tired of

seeing truckloads of troops kicking in doors looking for insurgents. The insurgents would melt away if they would just do something positive for the masses, and they won't.

ICONOCLAST: But Iraq has a new government, right? Aren't they in control of their country now? Hasn't the U.S. military had stepped aside for the most part?

MOSELEY: The Iraqis are not stupid people any more than the Americans are. They absolutely know where Saddam Hussein came from and that's exactly what they see in this new government. It came from the same place, and why should they think it's going to be any different? That's their concept. Nothing's changed. If anything, it got worse. As a matter of fact, the argument can be made that it is far worse with Saddam not being there. Lawlessness everywhere. The insurgency by and large is not being run by local people. It's being run by criminals coming out of Jordan and Syria, not Iran. Iran doesn't care. It's just criminal elements. They get what they can, stir up as much trouble as they can, and it's no different than — just on a different scale — than gangs here in the States that paint signs on billboards and whatever. So the Iraqi people, the ones I've talked to, they all say the same thing without any prompt, all they want is a little gesture on our part that we're actually there for them.

ICONOCLAST: What about al-Queda? Is that a factor?

MOSELEY: Yeah, it's a factor. It's a great factor for the Republicans. As long as they can make that connection, war is a good thing. There's no connection. There was never any connection before until this Abu Musab al-Zarqawi ran out of money so he pledged homage to Bin Ladin.

Now there is a school of thought — I can't calibrate it one way or the other — that there is no Musab al-Zarqawi. He's a fictitious character. No one has ever seen him. No one!

ICONOCLAST: No photographs?

MOSELEY: No photographs. Nothing.

ICONOCLAST: No Social Security card? (laughs)

Continued On Next Page

• INSIDE KBR ... Continued From Page 3

MOSELEY: Nothing.

ICONOCLAST: No identification?

MOSELEY: No, but you know, it makes pretty good sense in this kind of conspiracy stuff. It makes pretty good sense because it's easier to focus your hate on one person than it is on a concept. "So let's hates this guy!" "Well, what guy is that?" "Well, let's make one up."

ICONOCLAST: So the unsubstantiated idea is that he was constructed by whom?

MOSELEY: Who knows? Who would have a reason to do something like that?

ICONOCLAST: I'd imagine Americans.

MOSELEY: Oh! You jumped to that pretty quick. Every war has to have a Hitler, doesn't it?

ICONOCLAST: It seems like it. It helps. And a whole lot of Eichmanns.

MOSELEY: Indeed, sir. So that's unsubstantiated. It's purely conjecture, but a lot of other people feel the same way. There is no Zarqawi. There are just a bunch of people who are mad as hell and a bunch of criminal element out there stirring it all up.

Now why would anybody want to blow themselves up? I think it's been said throughout history many, many many times: the worst thing to have is a well-armed enemy, except a well-armed, starving enemy, and those people are starving to death. They are a religious group, and they believe whether rightly or wrongly that when they die, they're going to go to a better place. Why sit here and starve when I can go to a better place?

ICONOCLAST: Are you talking about al-Queda?

MOSELEY: No, I'm talking about suicide bombers. Al-Queda and suicide bombing are two different things. You probably heard recently — what was it? March when the helicopter was shot down? The Hungarian helicopter? Sky-line? I knew all those guys. I have pictures of me with those guys and that helicopter. One thing that happened by the way, three different groups claimed responsibility for it until Musab al-Zarqawi took responsibility for it. Well, all of a sudden it's all him. What happened to the other three groups? As soon as his name was mentioned, it was all his fault.

ICONOCLAST: Switching gears, so what are you doing now that you're out of Iraq and back in Central Texas?

MOSELEY: When I left, I actually left on May 6, and I went to Europe and spent a lot of days there to kind of deprogram before I came back here to get my kid. I really needed the deprogram time. It's still something that's probably going to bother me for a while, although not as bad as the soldiers, but still nonetheless, loud noises, sudden moves, still they are ingrained in me. And these are things that I need to work out of my system before I actually jump back into the social structure, the social fabric of being back into the states.

ICONOCLAST: What do you do to deprogram yourself? How do you do that?

MOSELEY: Oh, that's not a simple thing. It's got to be qualified in stages, the first one being that going to Europe was very pleasurable because they actually enjoy freedom there. Then coming back here to the ranch, we have 50

acres right outside of town and have had it since 1959. It's isolated. I don't have to deal with anybody. It's very good for me. Just staying away from people. I know I'm in a hotbed of Republicanism here, so it's best for me to stay away from people right now, because, you know, something I noticed on your door right there. I've seen it on some of the automobiles around here, the little ribbon "Support Our Troops." What exactly does it mean to anybody? How do you support the troops? Nobody can answer that question. It's just fun to have it, I guess. I don't know. "I support Bush, so I support the troops?" If you support the troops, you wouldn't support Bush — period — or any other Republican. But anyway, these are the things I need to stay away from. It's a part of deprogramming. I need to stay away from those kinds of people. It's hard to do if I hang around town and look for a job in Houston or Dallas.

ICONOCLAST: Are you getting any treatment? Are you talking to anybody about it? I know it's been a week since you've been back, but —

MOSELEY: No, I mean, I don't think I need to go that far, at least not yet. I don't think so. It's been good being with my dad and my son and close to people of a like-mind. That way I don't get upset when somebody says the wrong thing, and they inevitably do. They inevitably do. "I support the troops." Ah, that would set me off right now. Not in a violent way. I'm not a violent person, but God help me if they try to match wits with me. Those are the things I'm trying to avoid.

ICONOCLAST: What about depleted uranium? Have you been tested for it since you've been back? Depleted uranium, have you heard of it?

MOSELEY: (shakes head "No")

ICONOCLAST: Depleted uranium is the byproduct of a nuclear reaction inside a nuclear power plant. It's used by the military to pierce armor plating. It acts like a hot knife through butter.

MOSELEY: Whose armor are they going to pierce? Their own? They're the only ones who have armor!

ICONOCLAST: Well, since it's also a strong material, we use it to armor our war machines. It's a radioactive material.

MOSELEY: I've got to tell you. This is the first time I've ever heard of anything like that. It's science fiction where I came from. I was around those vehicles and those people, as I said, a minimum of 12 hours a day, every day, and never once did I hear anything like that. You would have thought I would have.

ICONOCLAST: What's so interesting is that it's something that isn't being talked about in the mainstream press. I think it's just a very good weapon, and the U.S. government wants to keep its effects hidden from us.

MOSELEY: What makes it a better weapon than just a lead bullet? That's what I don't understand.

ICONOCLAST: It's one of those weapons that is radioactive so it causes cancer and birth defects in its victims over time. It wipes out generations before they have the chance to live.

MOSELEY: I see what you're saying. You're talking about collateral damage as opposed to just —

ICONOCLAST: The weapon is designed not only to kill the enemy soldiers but also their families.

MOSELEY: They're not fighting soldiers. They're fighting regular folks like me and you or worse yet like the criminal elements that I'm sure even exist here. There is no military objective from the other side, but as far as the uranium stuff, this is the first time I've heard of it. And I can't imagine why they would want to use it. I mean, dead is deal. Once you're dead, you're dead unless what you're saying is that they're looking for collateral damage, and if that's the case, I was there during Fallujah. I lost four friends in Fallujah. I can only see the logic in it being for collateral damage, to damage people beyond the grave.

ICONOCLAST: In closing, do you

have any final thoughts?

MOSELEY: Regardless of anyone's political views, be proud of our soldiers because most nation's soldiers would have revolted by now. But our kids are out there doing what they are told to do. They're good kids. They're well disciplined, and they're doing what they're told to do. They don't know why they are doing it. They're just doing it. The "why" changes. It's like a sliding scale. "Why are we doing it today?" "Well, because of this." "What happened to that?" "Well, that was before." Whatever. It doesn't make any difference. We all should be proud that they're not turning their guns on us because many other nations would have.

Halliburton Public Relations Responds To Former KBR Employee's Comments

HOUSTON — Jennifer W. Dellinger, Halliburton Public Relations, in response to questions drawn from the ICONOCLAST's interview with former KBR employee T.J. Moseley of Clifton, submitted comments in defense of Halliburton and its subsidiary. The comments are as follows:

By all accounts, KBR's logistical achievements in support of the troops in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan have been nothing short of spectacular. In fact, to date under the LOGCAP III contract, KBR has:

- Prepared more than 200 million meals.
- Washed more than 8.5 million bundles of laundry.
- Produced more than 1.5 billion gallons of potable water.
- Transported more than 500 million gallons of fuel.
- Hosted more than 30 million patrons at MWR (Morale, Welfare & Recreation) facilities.
- Delivered more than 40 million pounds of mail.
- Logged more than 50 million miles transporting supplies and equipment for the military (with more than 700 trucks on the road on any given day).

Please reference the company's news release announcing this competitive contract win on Dec. 17, 2001, via the following link: <www.halliburton.com/news/archive/2001/kbrnws_121701.jsp>.

Additionally, please see the company's news release highlighting our many accomplishments in improving the lives of soldiers and Iraqis via the following link: <www.halliburton.com/news/archive/2004/corpnws_031804.jsp>.

Every potential employee receives very specific warnings about the dangers of working in a war zone. Not one of our employees leaves the United States for Iraq without thorough and repeated briefings on the dangers in Iraq. In fact, during the training process, we spend most of our time giving recruits all the reasons they should *not* accept this job. In Iraq, however, we have a situation that is constantly changing. Both the military and our employees have to change with it.

In addition to extensive medical screening and preparation to ensure the potential employee is fit for working in a potentially harsh environment that may involve limited medical care, the company also prepares potential employees for the possible threat of nuclear, biological and chemical attacks as well as extensive security and detailed safety briefings prior to being deployed to the work site as well as upon arrival at the new work location.

All KBR personnel are professionally competent in their career area of expertise. The employees may choose to return home at any time. For example, following an increase in violence in Iraq in April 2004, a very small percentage (less than one percent) of employees requested to return home from Iraq. KBR's employees work in Iraq on an at-will basis and remain dedicated to continue supporting the troops.

We are proud of KBR's 50,000 men and women who daily face danger and hostilities to ensure that our troops have the best food, shelter and quality of life possible. Sadly, 68 KBR employees and subcontractors have lost their lives performing this work, yet KBR has never wavered from its commitment to support to the troops.

All KBR employees have access to services from the company's Employee Assistance Program, or EAP, which is staffed with licensed mental health counselors.

In Iraq, the company has strategically placed EAP counselors, and 24-hour access via telephones, internet and e-mail to stateside-based counseling and support resources are available. Family members from the states can call the company's 1-800 number 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for EAP counseling services, or be referred to individual counseling services right in their local communities.

KBR's EAP program, which services employees around the world, was established in 1980 because the company recognized the importance of helping employees resolve personal problems so they can work safely and productively. In addition to counseling for general stress-related issues, counseling is available for a variety of other life issues such as family problems, parenting, eldercare, relationships, substance abuse, legal and financial problems.

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McLennan County Residents Showcase Talent At Annual Texas Folklife Festival

SAN ANTONIO — Wow! They sound amazing! Those are just a few reactions from visitors after hearing local McLennan County residents Cedryl Ballou and the Zydeco Trendsetters perform Zydeco at the Texas Folklife Festival.

The 34th annual Texas Folklife Festival celebrates the diverse cultures of the Lone Star State from Thursday, June 9, through Sunday, June 12, at the Institute of Texan Cultures in downtown San Antonio.

“We are proud to showcase the talents of Cedryl Ballou and the Zydeco Trendsetters at this year’s festival,” said Jo Ann Andera, TFF director. “The festival would not be the success it is without their creativity.”

Visitors can savor the flavors of more than 150 authentic ethnic foods prepared by 40 cultural groups, enjoy 10 entertainment stages of world music and dance, and browse through nearly one-fifth of a mile of Texas arts and crafts.

Advance discount adult tickets (13 and older) are \$8 and children’s tickets (ages 6-12) are \$4. Advance tickets and



Cedryl Ballou and the Zydeco Trendsetters bring family, fun and flavor to annual multicultural celebration

food coupons are available through June 1 via the festival’s Web site,

www.texasfolklifestival.org <<http://www.texasfolklifestival.org>>. Tickets at the gate are \$10 for adults (13 and older) and \$4 for children (ages 6-12); children 5 and under are free.

For more information, visit <<http://www.texasfolklifestival.org>> or call (210) 458-2390.

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Berkeley Resolution Helps Canadians Reject Bush's National Missile Defense

BY LEUREN MORET

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION

BERKELEY, Calif. — Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin survived a razor-thin vote of confidence on May 17, when the House of Commons voted 152-152 on a confidence vote which put his minority government in peril (1). It survived by a single vote when the Parliament speaker gave the minority government its one-vote victory. "It is the first time in Canadian history that a speaker has broken a tie on a confidence vote" (1). Martin said after the vote: "The margin of tonight's vote is very narrow — indeed that is an understatement." (1)

A few months earlier, Canadian citizens opposed to a secret National Missile Defense (NMD) agreement between Prime Minister Paul Martin and President George Bush, forced Martin to reverse the agreement contributing to a crisis in his minority government. After the Berkeley City Council had passed a resolution in 2002, "Endorsing the Space Preservation Act and Companion Space Preservation Treaty to Permanently Ban the Weaponization of Space" (2), the historic resolution swept through cities in Canada and helped gather thousands of signatures opposing Canada joining NMD. When citizens appeared in the Canadian Parliament with piles of paper covered with thousands of signatures, Martin was forced to reverse his secret agreement with Bush and the Canadian government rejected NMD.

For several years I had wanted to personally thank the Mayor of Bowen Island, the first municipality in the world to adopt the Berkeley resolution. In the summer of 2002, with the help of Vancouver lawyer Alfred Webre Jr., we created the space preservation resolution (2), which was introduced by Berkeley City Councilmember Dona Spring, and passed by the Berkeley City Council on September 10, 2002. The resolution was inspired when I read the language of the bill and the "definitions" of weapons intended for space as described in HR 2977 (3), the "Space Preservation Act of 2001," introduced by Congressman Dennis Kucinich:

SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.

- Inflicting death or injury on, or damaging or destroying, a person (or the biological life, bodily health, mental health, or physical and economic well-being of a person);

- directing a source of energy (including molecular or atomic energy, subatomic particle beams, electromagnetic radiation, plasma, or extremely low frequency (ELF) or ultra low frequency (ULF) energy radiation) against that object [individual or targeted populations];

- through the use of land-based, sea-based, or space-based systems using radiation, electromagnetic, psychotronic, sonic, laser, or other energies directed at individual persons or targeted populations for the purpose of information war, mood management, or



CANADA BACKS BERKELEY NMD RESOLUTION — Helping North Americans understand the dangers of a nuclear missile defence are (from left) Geri and Alfred Webre Jr., Mayor Lisa Barrett, and Leuren Moret, City of Berkeley Environmental Commissioner, on Bowen Island, British Columbia on April 10, 2005.

mind control of such persons or populations (3).

When I seemed incredulous that these weapons were even possible to develop, Kucinich, a member of the Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee, assured me that these weapons exist and "those people who control them are deadly serious and intend to use them if we don't stop the weaponization of space...." That was the moment when I decided to do something about stopping it. I had no idea what to do, and it seemed overwhelming but the idea of a resolution seemed like a good first step.

Just a month ago, in early April I was traveling by bus to Vancouver to meet with Lisa Barrett, the Mayor of Bowen Island. Sitting on the bus from Seattle and reading a pile of Canadian newspapers, I was alarmed to learn that right on the heels of the NMD fiasco, Martin's Liberal Party government was embroiled in a corruption scandal. The opposition insisted he no longer had enough support to govern, which threatened a government crisis (1). I was unaware of the impact the Berkeley resolution had on the Canadian decision to reject NMD, and how it tied into the minority government crisis. But a few days later during my visit to Bowen Island, I discovered just what role the Berkeley resolution had played in Canadian Foreign Policy.

On Sunday, April 10, 2005, Alfred Webre Jr., his vibrant wife, Geri, and I traveled by ferry from Vancouver to meet and thank Bowen Island Mayor Lisa Barrett. The ferry trip was beautiful through the mists of the inland passage and deep fjords of British Columbia (BC), and I was especially excited to finally meet Mayor Barrett. Bowen Island is a town much like Berkeley, with an interesting mixture of writers, artists, musicians, lots of bicycles, and a progressive flavor to the political landscape. We met in an art

gallery where a local artist was having an exhibit, and together we nibbled on the artist's homemade gingerbread cookies while mingling with citizens and artists. I even talked physics with another city council member.

A tall slim blonde and young mother, Mayor Barrett was very pleased to hear that Berkeley had adopted the Kyoto Protocol (4). She pointed out that even though the Canadian government had already signed on, it was still necessary that locally, towns like Bowen Island must also make efforts to meet the standards. She firmly stated it is even more important for cities like Berkeley to act when the U.S. government refuses to be a signator to the Kyoto protocol. It was energizing and exciting to know that, even though we are on different sides of the border, citizens of Canada and the United States can work together, and that our collective impact leads to positive change. We can learn from each other by implementing and sharing our ideas on issues such as energy choices, divesting pension funds from weapons manufacturers, stopping the U.S. Navy from shooting depleted uranium weaponry in U.S. and Canadian coastal waters, and sharing information about the spider web relationships between U.S. and Canadian corporations. She told us that the U.S. Navy is shooting depleted uranium weapons into the waters around Nanaimo, poisoning their fisheries just as they did around Seattle and in California. Lockheed Martin Marietta has bought a controlling interest in the ferry systems of B.C., privatizing an essential public transportation system — and raising the cost of the services.

The very next day, during an interview Alfred and I had on CO-OP radio CFRO 102.7 FM (5) in Vancouver with Gail Davidson, co-founder of Lawyers Against War (6), we discussed the extent of Canadian government pension fund investments in U.S. weapons

manufacturers and the Carlyle Group (the Bushes, Bin Ladens etc.). Gail exposed B.C. pension fund (British Columbia Investment Management Corp. - BCIMC) and local Vancouver city pension fund investments and involvement in U.S. corporations and weapons manufacturers. This interview helped Vancouver listeners focus on the issue, which quickly became a push for pension fund weapons divestment as part of their main election this month, driven by the labor unions. As of March 31, 2004, investments were estimated to be \$4.6 billion in 251 companies that provide goods and services to the U.S. Department of Defense or are otherwise involved in military production (7). Missiles (17 kinds), bombs (16 types), and bullets (300-500 million per year by SNC-Lavalin alone) are produced for the U.S. Armed Forces by Canadian corporations (7).

Vancouver antiwar activists said in an April 26 letter (7) to NDP leader Carole James, "What this means is that every nurse, physiotherapist, floor cleaner, and pharmacist in every hospital in the B.C. health care system, every kindergarten teacher, college instructor and university professor, every city worker, garbage collector, computer programmer, firefighter, ferry worker, B.C. transit driver, ICBC employee, B.C. Hydro worker — in fact, virtually every municipal and provincial public sector employee — is involuntarily supporting the U.S. invasion and occupation, because of decisions taken behind closed doors by the BCIMC."

U.S. war crimes and the use of illegal weapons such as depleted uranium (8) was also a top concern. Gail described how she had filed a lawsuit against Bush in a Vancouver court (6). This action discouraged and impacted his visit to Canada, and he did not visit the Canadian Parliament nor make any public appearances except in a small town in eastern Canada — for a photo-op with the media. She was a party to a second lawsuit filed in Germany charging Rumsfeld with war crimes, preventing Rumsfeld from visiting Europe in February 2005 with Bush and Rice (6).

This trip to Canada made me realize that the need for citizen oversight and participation in local government is greater than ever before. Many things that we see happening locally, such as election fraud, are actually broader trends, the result of global corporatization and militarization. The vast looting of pension funds began about eight years ago and will continue until we stop it. Enron was just the beginning and CalPERS, the California state government workers pension fund, is in the crosshairs now for privatization and looting. The extent of pension fund investment in the U.S. military industrial complex is shocking. We are actually unknowingly supporting and benefiting from wars we oppose. Divesting from weapons of death takes the profit out of war. Subtle implementation

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• MORET ... From Page 8

of police state policies — such as RFID tags in the Berkeley library — must be stopped. There are many things that can be done locally and through “cross fertilization” of ideas across borders. We are the only ones who can make this happen... and it can start with something as simple as a Berkeley resolution, Canadian paper ballots, and a determined citizen lawyer.

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- * (for identification purposes)

Depleted Uranium Bill Introduced Into Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congressman Jim McDermott (D-WA), a medical doctor, on May 17 introduced legislation with 21 original co-sponsors in the House of Representatives that calls for medical and scientific studies on the health and environmental impacts from the U.S. Military’s use of depleted uranium (DU) munitions in combat zones, including Iraq. The McDermott bill also calls for cleanup and mitigation of sites in the U.S. contaminated by DU.

“The need is urgent and imperative for full, fair and impartial studies,” McDermott said. “We may be endangering the health and lives of U.S. soldiers and Iraqi civilians. All we’ve gotten so far from the Pentagon are assurances. We need facts backed by science. We don’t have that today.”

Because of its density, the military

uses DU as a protective shield around tanks, and in munitions like armor piercing bullets and tank shells. DU tends to spontaneously ignite upon impact, disintegrating into a micro-fine residue that hangs suspended in the air where it can be inhaled and falls to the ground to leach into the soil.

DU is a by-product of the uranium enrichment process; it is chemically toxic, and DU has low-level radioactivity. About 300 metric tons of DU munitions were fired during the first Gulf War, and about half that amount has been used to date in the Iraq War.

“I’ve been concerned about DU since veterans of the first Gulf War began to experience unexplained illnesses, commonly called ‘Gulf War Syndrome’ that remain mysterious,” McDermott said.

McDermott added that there are re-

ports from Iraqi doctors and others today of seemingly unexplained serious illnesses including higher rates of cancer and leukemia, and even birth defects.

“We pretended there was no problem with Agent Orange after Vietnam and later the Pentagon recanted, after untold suffering by veterans. I want to know scientifically if DU poses serious dangers to our soldiers and Iraqi civilians.”

The Depleted Uranium Munitions Study Act of 2005 has 21 original co-sponsors, all Democrats, including: Reps. Charles Rangel, Pete Stark, Sherrod Brown, Peter DeFazio, Maurice Hinchey, Raul Grijalva, Jan Schakowsky, Robert Wexler, Sam Farr, Tammy Baldwin, Robert Andrews, Bob Filner, Jay Inslee, Jose Serrano, Lynn Woolsey, Earl Blumenauer, Bart Stupak, Mike Honda, Tom Udall, Barney Frank and Ed Markey.

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El Salvador's National Snack At Texas Folklife Festival

Award-Winning Recipe Offered

SAN ANTONIO — When you see the line at the Organizacion Salvadorenna-Americana San Antonio's booth at the Texas Folklife Festival, you'll wonder what all the fuss is about.

But, once you taste a pupusa, El Salvador's national snack, you'll stand in line, too, for this delicious homemade treat.

The secret of this Central American's cultural group's success lies in their award-winning pupusa recipe.

Pupusas are one of more than 150 foods prepared by 40 ethnic groups at the 34th annual Texas Folklife Festival, which begins Thursday, June 9, and continues through Sunday, June 12, at the Institute of Texan Cultures in downtown San Antonio.

Visitors can enjoy exploring 22 acres of cultural activities that also include 10 live entertainment stages, nearly one-fifth of a mile of arts and crafts vendors, artisan demonstrations, carnival rides and more.

To purchase tickets online, or for more information about the festival, visit <<http://www.texasfolklife festival.org>>, or call (210) 458-2390.

Pupusa Revuelta Recipe

Courtesy of the Organizacion Salvadorenna-Americana San Antonio
Preparing the meat:

Ingredients: 5 lbs pork, 1 medium bell pepper, 1 medium firm tomato, 1 medium onion, 1 tsp salt

Cut 5 lbs pork meat in small pieces and fry. Chop bell pepper, tomato and onion and add to the meat as it is cooking. Refrigerate until meat is cold (45°). Before adding to the tortilla dough, add 1-1/2 lbs Monterrey Jack cheese and mix in thoroughly with pork.

Preparing the masa:
Ingredients: 3 lbs MASECA (corn tortilla mix), 1-1/2 cup cold water.

Mix the MASECA with the water into a dough.

Making the pupusa:

Cup masa dough in your palm. Palm the dough like making a small round circle. Fill the inside of the hole with the prepared pork meat and cheese. Cook over the griddle for about 6 minutes on each side.

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AND THEY'RE OFF! — Dozens of runners participated Saturday morning in the annual Prairie Chapel Heritage one mile and 5K Run, the proceeds of which benefit the restoration of the oldest school house in McLennan County, coincidentally not far from President Bush's vacation ranch. The benefit race was sponsored by The Prairie Chapel School Association and organized by the Waco Striders Running Club <www.wacostriders.com>.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

Uranium Waste Starts Trip To Texas This Week

LUBBOCK — The State of Texas is set to receive tons of uranium byproduct waste from a Cold War-era processing plant outside Cincinnati, Ohio, this month. Several trips by trucks to Texas will occur through the end of the year.

At least two trucks will leave Ohio during the week of May 30 and take between two and four days to reach Texas, according to Jeff Wagner, a spokesman for the Fluor Fernald, the U.S. Department of Energy contractor in charge.

Global positioning satellites will track each truck, which is designed to haul two containers weighing an average of 40,000 pounds together.

Using interstates primarily, the trucks will travel around Indianapolis, St. Louis, and East St. Louis, Ill., and Oklahoma City on bypasses. The trucks are to enter Texas on Interstate 40 and travel through Amarillo and Lubbock to get to the site in Andrews, just north of Odessa.

The waste — produced in reactors to

make plutonium for nuclear weapons up until 1989 — is contained in about 5,000 large, sealed containers mixed with concrete. Wagner added that the material radioactivity will not kill humans.

However, environmentalists point to two accidents made by Fernald in 1997 and 2002 that show the risks of shipping hazardous materials.

No contamination occurred, and no people were injured in both instances, but shipments stopped for a period of time while modifications were made to the containers.

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Lake Waco Claims Crawford Man's Life

WACO — Brian Thomas, 20, of Crawford, was the first drowning victim of the year in Lake Waco

The accident occurred on Sunday, May 22, after he and another man presumably fell off a boat and never resurfaced near Airport Park near the middle of the lake,

The Waco Police Department reported that the other man climbed back into the boat and called for help. It was unclear why the boat swerved, he said.

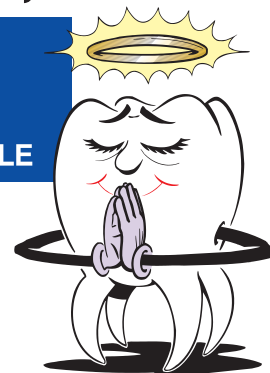
Thomas was presumed dead Sunday evening, according to the Waco Fire Department.

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National Anti-War Group Seeks Summer Interns

WASHINGTON, D.C. — United for Peace and Justice, the largest antiwar coalition in the U.S., is seeking summer interns for organizing, outreach, research, and more. The main focus of UFPJ's work is on ending the Iraq war and bringing U.S. troops home now.

"Our ongoing campaigns include efforts to counter military recruitment, to challenge the use of National Guards in the war, inform and educate the public, pressure Congress, and organize a massive antiwar protest this Septem-

ber," said a spokesperson. "Interns will gain valuable experience while strengthening our coalition and making UFPJ's September mobilization as successful as possible."

Specific tasks will vary throughout the summer. Some administrative work will apply, but the interns are encouraged to take on significant responsibility. The internship will include contacting the organization's many member groups and/or organizing other volunteers to do the same. Interns

may participate in recruiting new member groups, particularly in key underrepresented constituencies; they may also organize and/or participate in street outreach in New York City.

Other tasks may include designing leaflets, developing educational materials, and maintaining its database. Interns will work with organizers on staff and potentially with members of the national steering committee.

Who Should Apply?

Specific qualities United for Peace and Justice is looking for in candidates include being articulate, politically aware individuals with good critical thinking skills and a demonstrable commitment to peace and justice. Prior organizing experience, multilingualism, and/or computer skills are preferred, but not required. Candidates should support UFPJ's campaign goals. People of color, women and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered people are strongly encouraged to apply, especially those with local organizing experience. Unfortunately, summer interns will not be paid.

How To Apply

To apply, submit a resume and cover letter to <interns@unitedforpeace.org>, with the subject line "Summer Internship Application from E-Mail."

Greens: Congress Must Investigate Torture Of Detainees, Pentagon's Missing \$1 Trillion

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Green Party leaders called on Congress to begin immediate and far-reaching investigations of major abuses by the Pentagon:

Evidence of torture and abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and abuse at facilities in the U.S., especially at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, New York.

Recent reports that the Pentagon is unable to account for more than a trillion dollars in financial transactions and missing equipment; \$8.8 billion in Iraqi oil sales unaccounted for in a 2005 audit, according to the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.

Despite its apologies, the NEWSWEEK accounts of desecration of the Quran by U.S. military personnel at detention centers have been corroborated in reports from the International Committee of the Red Cross, legal depositions, and in numerous other periodicals, including The Financial Times.

"Be sure to include why you are interested specifically in UFPJ, and briefly describe any relevant experience," said the spokesperson. "We encourage applicants to peruse the campaigns section of our web site <<http://www.unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=2495>> before applying."

Candidates should apply as soon as possible, as the organization is already considering candidates. The dates of the position are flexible.

INFO

www.unitedforpeace.org
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Bush Image Breaks Nine Inch Nails, MTV Deal

LOS ANGELES — Nine Inch Nails, a rock band fronted by Trent Reznor, canceled its appearance on the MTV Movie Awards after the network known for it a show depicting a host playing embarrassing pranks on his parents questioned the band's intentions to perform in front of an image of President Bush.

"Apparently the image of our President is as offensive to MTV as it is to me," said Reznor in a statement on the band's website.

The band was slated to perform the first single from its latest album "With Teeth." The album, selling over 270,000 copies its first week, debuted at the top of the charts upon release this month.

The single has also earned rave re-

views. The *Los Angeles Times* called "The Hand That Feeds," "a warning against blind acceptance of authority, including that of a president leading his nation to war."

Reznor described the backdrop image of George W. Bush as "unmolested, straightforward."

MTV, owned by Viacom Inc., the corporate parent of broadcast network CBS, failed to name a replacement for the show.

"While we respect Nine Inch Nails' point of view, we were uncomfortable with their performance being built around a partisan political statement. When we discussed our discomfort with the band, their choice was to unfortunately pull out of the Movie Awards," said MTV in a statement.

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Gov. Rick Perry Signs Open Government Law, Other Legislation

AUSTIN – Gov. Rick Perry has signed Senate Bill 286, which requires public officials – whether elected or appointed – to receive training on the requirements of the open meetings and public information laws.

“Senate Bill 286 is a good law that underscores the importance of open government,” Perry said. “By requiring public officials at all levels of government to undergo training on the requirements of open meetings and public information laws, we are taking another step toward restoring public confidence that government is operating under the bright light of scrutiny.”

The law, authored by Sen. Jeff Wentworth of San Antonio and sponsored by Rep. Todd Baxter of Austin, will take effect Jan. 1, 2006.

Other legislation that the governor has signed includes:

- HB 503 Relating to tuition and fee exemptions for certain military personnel and certain children of those personnel. Author: Guillen/et al., Sponsor: Fraser
- HB 532 Relating to certain investments by title insurance companies. Author: Howard, Sponsor: Janek
- HB 564 Relating to the creation of an additional county court at law in Williamson County. Author: Gattis, Sponsor: Ogden
- HB 1025 Relating to the powers and duties of the Texas Optometry Board and to contact lens prescriptions and the dispensing of contact lenses. Author: Solomons, Sponsor: Shapleigh
- HCR 36 Giving legislative authorization to a Vietnam War monument for the Capitol grounds, subject to state law and rules of the State Preservation Board. Author: Smith, Wayne/et al., Sponsor: Hinojosa
- HCR 59 Opposing the State Modernization and Regulatory Transparency (SMART) Act and any similar federal legislation that would interfere with the ability of state governments to regulate the business of insurance. Author: Eiland/et al., Sponsor: Averitt
- HCR 102 In memory of G. W. Worth, Jr., of San Antonio. Author: Menendez, Sponsor: Wentworth
- HCR 145 Honoring Sally Ann Reynolds, former director of the Legislative Reference Library for her remarkable career in state government. Author: Kuempel, Sponsor: Armbrister
- HCR 156 Commemorating Holocaust Remembrance Day on May 9, 2005. Author: Nixon/et al., Sponsor: Shapiro
- HCR 161 Congratulating the Paris Junior College men’s basketball team for winning the 2005 National Junior College Athletic Association championship. Author: Homer, Sponsor: Eltife
- HCR 162 Honoring Bill Foy, head basketball coach at Paris Junior College, on his selection as the Junior College Coach of the Year by the National Association of Basketball Coaches. Author: Homer, Sponsor: Eltife
- HCR 165 Recognizing May 4, 2005, as Paris/Lamar County Day at the State Capitol. Author: Homer, Sponsor: Eltife

- HCR 170 Commending Randolph Robert Reed of Pearland for his completion of the BP MS150 Bike Ride. Author: Davis, John, Sponsor: Jackson, Mike

- SB 99 Relating to the extension of credit to a victim of and to insurance coverage for identity theft. Author: Ellis/et al., Sponsor: Giddings

- SB 220 Relating to the maintenance of records by a notary public. Author: Carona, Sponsor: Grusendorf

- SB 272 Relating to the creation of an oyster license moratorium program. Author: Williams/et al., Sponsor: Seaman

- SB 350 Relating to the establishment and use of a columbarium by a church in certain municipalities. Author: Lindsay, Sponsor: Woolley

- SB 454 Relating to commercial shrimp boat licenses and to the creation of a gulf shrimp license moratorium program. Author: Armbrister, Sponsor: Seaman

- SB 489 Relating to the license requirements of marine dealers, distributors, and manufacturers. Author: Estes, Sponsor: Geren

- SB 552 Relating to the creation of magistrates in Nolan County. Author: Duncan, Sponsor: Hartnett

- SB 599 Relating to the eligibility of a criminal defendant for release from jail after a delay in prosecution. Author: Staples, Sponsor: Gattis/et al.

- SB 728 Relating to the liability of certain entities that enter agreements with a metropolitan rapid transit authority. Author: Wentworth, Sponsor: Baxter

- SB 879 Relating to the regulation of firefighters and fire departments by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection. Author: Gallegos/et al., Sponsor: Menendez

- SB 1000 Relating to the regulation of the practice of nursing. Author: Madla, Sponsor: McReynolds

- SB 1199 Relating to the deposit of municipal sales and use taxes into a tax increment fund. Author: Ellis, Sponsor: Coleman

- SB 1211 Relating to providing information about respiratory syncytial virus under certain continuing education programs. Author: Deuell, Sponsor: Dukes

- SB 1224 Relating to a landowner’s liability for injuries incurred during certain recreational activities. Author: Duncan, Sponsor: Rose

- SB 1253 Relating to measures to support efforts of municipalities and counties to recruit or retain special events. Author: Brimer/et al., Sponsor: Goodman

- SB 1309 Relating to member restrictions for commissioners of the Texas Workforce Commission. Author: Ellis, Sponsor: Miller

- SB 1428 Relating to the establishment of a statewide maintenance program for boll weevil and pink bollworm eradication. Author: Duncan/et al., Sponsor: Swinford

- SB 1436 Relating to audits of emergency services districts. Author: Madla, Sponsor: Hamric

- SB 1464 Relating to funds to be used for nuclear decommissioning purposes by electric utilities. Author: Van de Putte, Sponsor: Puente

- SB 1593 Relating to uniform law on documents of title. Author: Carona, Sponsor: Bailey
- SB 1621 Relating to the tax rate for emergency services districts located in certain popu-

lous counties. Author: Lindsay, Sponsor: Hamric
• SCR 25 Recognizing April 5, 2005, as Texas

Medal of Arts Awards Day. Author: Shapiro, Sponsor: Hilderbran

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CORRECTIONS, CLARIFICATIONS

Scientists Not In DVD

CLIFTON — In the May 4, 2005, issue of THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST, an error was made in the article “New DVD On Ground Zero Contamination, ‘Confronting The Evidence,’ Being Distributed.”

It has been brought to the ICONOCLAST’s attention that scientists Dr. Cate Jenkins, Dr. Marjorie Clarke, Paul Bartlett do not appear in the DVD, ‘Confronting The Evidence.’

This correction was verified on Thursday, May 26.

THE ICONOCLAST apologizes for any confusion or harm this error may have caused.

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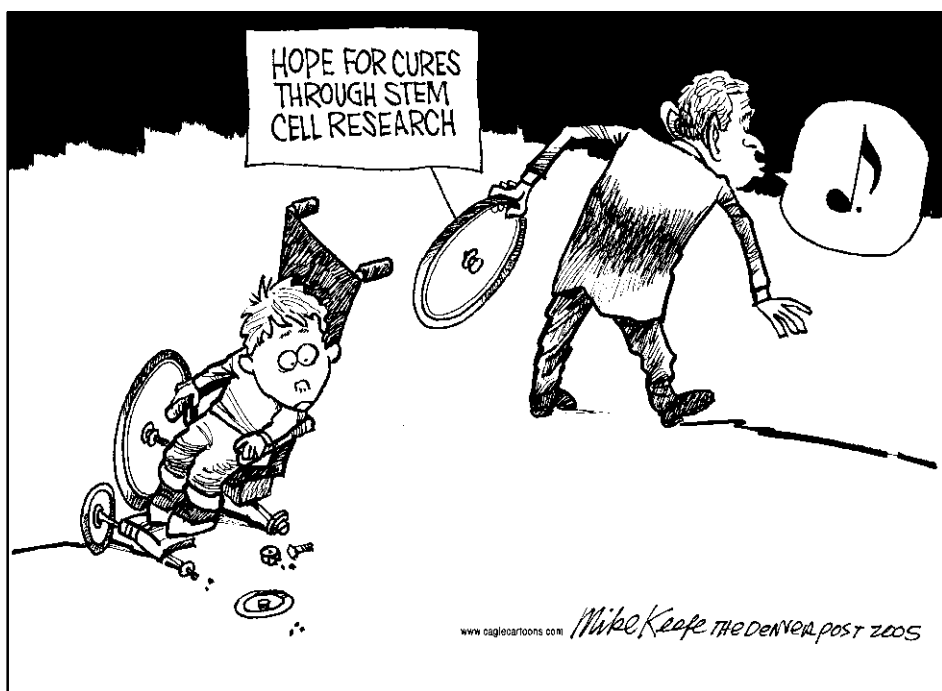
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Lege Proves Bush's SS Lunacy

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "If you don't have nothin' nice to say, run for th' legislature."

The single positive out of the Texas Legislature this year is a reaffirmation of the absolute lunacy of Neighbor Bush's Social Security plot.

Texas' Teacher Retirement System is designed to aid virtually everyone but teachers. Consider some facts:

- TRS is a substitute for Social Security for teachers. Texas does not pay SSI for teachers. We're too cheap, and educating our children is too expensive. We got ourselves a president through ignorance. What's your wussie little state got?.

And now, thanks to a recent Fascist Republican federal law, those who worked at another profession and paid Social Security for years are denied benefits. Serves 'em right for thinking that teaching children was more important than making money.

- Around 300,000 or so teachers (It should be closer to 350,000, but we're running out of teachers. Can't think why.) are covered by TRS, but they will earn less upon retirement than about 210,000 state employees, because secretaries and others who serve under our legislators have their retirement calculated at a higher percentage of their salaries than teachers. The average state employee's salary is around \$4,000 more than the teacher average.

- Among those who benefit from TRS is the Texas Legislature. They just voted themselves a hefty raise in TRS retirement, even though they don't put squat into it because their salaries are too low. They sneaked in a provision that ties their retirement funds to those of district judges. Now, even though they will only pay a couple of thousand dollars into it, legislators vested in the system will retire at a higher rate than any classroom teacher.

- Then there's the stock market. Most of TRS funding is cozied up with the legislature's stock broker buddies, who incidentally pay virtually no state taxes.

"Gosh! How did *that* happen. Hey, Martha! Did you know Texas stock brokers don't pay no taxes! Quit doin' your nails an' take a memo: Talk to the bro-

Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



kers' lobbyist about that on our trip to Cancun."

Anything ring your Social Security bell yet?

Back when the market was riding high in the Clinton (no pun intended. . . Okay, yeah, I couldn't resist.) years, our brilliant legislature cut the state's contribution to TRS funding a little more than a percentage point.

Then the Fascist Republicans took over and screw worms got into our stock.

TRS lost more than 13 percentage points, \$20 billion in two years.

The bottom line: Texas now has about \$11 billion less than we need to cover TRS's retirees.

Feeling good about stock market Social Security yet?

So the Lege swung into action to correct the problem!

They raised their own retirements.

Then they cut teacher pensions.

The bottom line is simple: The Stock Market gives you better odds than Vegas, but it's no less a gamble.

And it's no less rigged on the side of the house.

AIG tilted the wheel, and they didn't even have to.

The market is manipulated by money. The ability of the government to jerk the market up or down at will is already frightening.

If the release of a some federal quarterly economic statistics can nudge the market into your children's future, imagine what a few bureaucrats with a multi-billion dollar Social Security slush fund can do to the investor . . . and for their friends.

So if you think that tying your drooling, tube-connected years to some government-financed croupier with a cell phone for a brain and a computer projection for a conscience, we'll save your wheelchair a parking space under the bridge.

Editorial

Opinion - Columns - Letters

OP/ED

— Editorial —

EU Constitution: Trouble For Democracy?

European voters are deciding whether their nations should remain independent or become part of a centralized government headed by the European Union with national sovereignty transformed into statehood.

In some of the 25 member countries, this decision is being made at the parliamentary level; in others, by referendum.

In mid-December 2001 in Laeken, Belgium, the European Council convened to draft three proposals: to bring citizens closer to European design and institutions, to organize politics within an enlarged union, and to develop the Union as a stabilizing factor and model for the New World Order.

The idea was to draft a simple, transparent constitution and dissolve the countries into states, with the condition that each of the 25 member countries must agree to ratify the new constitution.

So far, eight parliaments, Germany, Austria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, voted to ratify the constitution. Spain was the first to decide by referendum, approving the measure on Feb. 20.

The issue was put before French voters on Sunday. The Dutch will vote on June 1. Other European countries will consider the constitution in the coming months, with the British vote expected in 2006.

Countries acquiescing to less independence with ratification of the cumbersome 448-article constitutional draft are likely embarking on an unprecedented political nightmare.

THE ICONOCLAST encourages our neighbors across the ocean to reject this potentially disastrous proposition.

A tyrannical elected leader could easily devour Europe through a coalition of nations formed to dominate the continent.

Attempts to force ratification through the politics of fear and short-term promises, duping citizens into letting go of their democracies without fully understanding the long-term consequences, are, to say the least, worrisome.

Likewise troubling is the act of dissolving traditional governments to create a New World Order. It's one thing to have your currency centralized.

It's quite another to surrender your constitution.

— W. Leon Smith



Early Airship Built According To Biblical Blueprint

An East Texas minister applied for a patent on May 31, 1901, for his scripture-

inspired flying machine. When not tending his flock in

Pittsburg, Rev. Burrell Cannon tinkered away the hours in his cluttered workshop. Consumed by the centuries-old challenge of heavier-than-air flight, the amateur inventor created a craft to conquer the clouds.

The unlikely source of his scientific brainstorm was the Old Testament. "When the living creatures moved, the wheels moved beside them," read a puzzling passage from Ezekiel that caught his eye. "When the living creatures left the ground, the wheels too left the ground."

The Baptist minister believed with all his heart and soul that the prophet's vision of the "chariot of Yahweh" was an actual close encounter with a manned machine capable of controlled flight. He devoted decades to deciphering the inscrutable description in order to copy the heavenly airplane.

By the turn of the century, Cannon had turned his biblical blueprint into an impressive scale model. Although the patent office rejected his application, the singleminded minister plunged ahead with his ambitious plan to build a full-size version of the Ezekiel Airship.

The pious promoter persuaded 11 local businessmen to invest \$20,000 in the strange project. While the stockholders undoubtedly considered two other Cannon creations — a windmill and a ship propeller — better risks, it was his bizarre airship the man of the cloth was determined to get off the ground.

As the Ezekiel slowly took shape at a Pittsburg foundry in the spring of 1902, the curious came by for an innocent peek at the contraption. Mistaking the harmless spectators for spies sent by the Wright brothers and other rivals, the paranoid preacher declared the place off-limits.

In its final form, the Ezekiel looked more like a primitive helicopter than an awkward prototype of the modern airplane. A small kerosene engine powered fan-like blades inside four huge metal wheels. After a vertical take-off, the pilot supposedly steered the 21-by-26-foot ship by changing the angle of the blades.

The construction of the Ezekiel is a well documented fact. However, claims that the man-made albatross ever flew have yet to be confirmed.

Nevertheless, numerous East Texans insist their ancestors witnessed the maiden flight of the Ezekiel Airship in late 1902 or early 1903. If this timetable is correct, Cannon beat the Wrights, who did not pull off their famous flying feat at Kitty Hawk until December 1903, by at least nine months.

First-hand accounts agree that a ma-

This Week In Texas History

By Bartee Haile



chinist named Stamps instead of the middle-aged creator was at the controls for the long-awaited test. Whether Cannon was even present is open to question since some stories have Stamps taking a secret spin without the inventor's knowledge or permission.

At a tree-limb altitude of 10 feet, the eager aviator reportedly flew the Ezekiel 20 to 55 yards before suddenly losing his nerve. Panic-stricken Stamp cut the engine and landed safely in a soft field.

Several months later, Rev. Cannon loaded his precious pride-and-job onto a railroad flatcar for a trip to St. Louis. He intended to put the controversial craft on public display in the hope of attracting new investors.

But the Ezekiel did not get out of the Lone Star State in one piece. A freak storm on the outskirts of Texarkana ripped the airship from its moorings and pulverized the preacher's lifework.

Despite this demoralizing disaster, the resilient reverend returned to the drawing board. Shunned by badly burned backers, he had to rely on his own meager resources to fund the development of another airship.

There are reports, again unverified, that Cannon savored a second spectacular success in 1913. But soon after all his plans were lost in a 1922 fire, the unlucky inventor died in obscurity.

Half a century later, Pittsburg residents began lobbying for recognition of Rev. Cannon's alleged achievements. Their campaign convinced the Texas Historical Commission to erect a marker in 1976 at the purported site of the one and only flight of the Ezekiel Airship. Then in June 1989, the Texas legislature officially certified the Ezekiel as "the state's first successful self-powered aircraft."

Nice sentiments, to be sure, but generous gestures don't make it so. Rev. Burrell Cannon cannot complete a three-point landing in the history books on just a wing and a prayer. More hard evidence of his airborne exploits is definitely needed before he can take his place alongside Wilbur and Orville.

Bartee Haile welcomes your comments, questions and suggestions at haile@pdq.net or 1912 Meadow Creek Dr., Pearland, TX 77581.

Laughing...At Ourselves

Sometimes we just have to laugh at ourselves. . . which we actually do quite often, on a regular basis, in fact. It keeps us from taking ourselves too seriously. We firmly believe that a healthy sense of humor is good medicine for most of life's ills. And if it doesn't actually cure things, well, what could it hurt?

For a couple of weeks this spring, we were hard at work on fairly large jobs (and are still not nearly finished, of course. We never are. This place, when all is said and done, is a "real job," a business. It just doesn't come with a regular paycheck or any benefits (unless you count things like sunrises, sunsets, hummingbirds, etc., which we certainly do).

If we don't have fences that will keep the cattle in, we can't have a decent-sized herd (and I can't be chasing cows and calves off the roads day and night either). The larger the herd, the more calves we might sell each year. At least that's the way it's supposed to work, in the best of all possible worlds. After all, the cattle biz is what hopefully pays the bills these days. So fences are very important. And these were in really bad shape.

We built one completely new fence along the river last spring, put up some new, smaller sections where needed, repaired several stretches (some over half a mile), and have much more to do. Two fields haven't had fences since that big flood of the Bosque River almost 15 years ago. Those will have to be done within the next three years (by our four farm hands; my right one, my left one, Zack's right one, and his left one. That's our crew). At least this is the plan. We also have concurrent plans involving the rebuilding of barns, the painting of the other farmhouse, the spraying of mesquite. The list goes on. We have already hung many of the gates we needed, have cleared some amount of land, planted grasses, etc.

The bad news is, like most farmers and ranchers, our "to-do" lists are endless. The good news is that we will NEVER be bored. No one around here ever starts the day by asking, "Gee, I wonder what in the world I could do today?"

About a month or so ago, we were out working on a fence from 8 a.m. until noon. That was a pretty short day around here, but it was rough work, and, for once, we actually both admitted we were tired. We decided to be intelligent about it and quit before one or both of us ended up with muscle cramps later in the day. After that, we did "smaller jobs" (which never turn out to be all that small. When Zack says, "We'll just do something easy in the afternoon," I know I'm in trouble). But on this particular day, we really did knock off work early and take it pretty easy for a change. We even took two breaks—just to relax. That's almost unheard of around here . . . It was even warm enough to get some sun on the back deck. What a huge luxury. We rarely take time to rest until we sort of drop. I started to wonder if Zack was coming down with something.

So there we were, sitting around, for a change, like normal people on a lazy Saturday afternoon. I knew it couldn't last. . . and it didn't. We had this crazy idea to go throw a rope over an overhanging branch of a big tree—at the

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.

creek down in the pecan bottom. Zack later blamed this brilliant plan on me, but as I remember, we arrived at it simultaneously. If I suggested it first, I certainly didn't have to twist his arm.

The idea was that instead of building a bridge (which I still think would be just too cool), we could swing over the creek on our rope when the water was high, which it had been all winter. And I wouldn't get any more shoes stuck in the mud when I forgot my waterproof boots. We figured my kids would get a kick out of it, too, when they came to visit. Never mind that they are 20-something, college grads now. Everyone played Tarzan at one time or another. And my little Tarzans used to swing out of a pretty high tree house when they were small.

Just as Zack started to throw the rope, I pessimistically warned, "You can't do it. It's way too high." But of course, he did, just to prove me wrong. He put the rope up over that limb on the first throw, an astonishing feat, and tied a knot. Without a moment's hesitation or intelligent forethought of any kind, and taking full advantage of his inner child (which was rapidly bubbling to the surface like some alien life form), he tried it out, right then and there. With a leap off the tailgate and an even greater leap of faith, he flew through the air. This took only seconds to happen of course, but I saw it all in slow motion, knowing the outcome wouldn't be good, and absolutely powerless to help. He landed smack in the mud, sort of swung sideways into it and hit from shoulder to foot.

We had a good laugh after we determined that nothing important had been broken. I did NOT take my turn as originally planned. (I was teased for this later, but dares never had any effect on me, even as a child. I like to think I was too sensible. Probably I was just a big chicken). We made fun of ourselves for our hopelessly poor planning and total lack of engineering expertise. For good measure, Zack actually swung on the rope again, with a slight variation. He thought the correction might produce a better end result, but unfortunately, it did not. Boy, did it not. I sure wish I had brought a camera.

Now we have a new problem. How will we retrieve that rope? I suppose SOMEONE will be doing some climbing soon. Or perhaps we will leave it there indefinitely, a testament to the child in us all, and a reminder that, like everyone else, we made some pretty foolish mistakes in judgment from time to time. Now, when I see that rope, it reminds me to laugh at myself. (Of course I'm really laughing at Zack. But don't tell him).

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It's The 21st Century, Mr. Bush

While I worked for my local newspaper, a free seven-day-a-week subscription was virtually the only perk. Not that there's any point to actually reading that conservative rag, mind you.

The paper's most revealing characteristic is the news that it omits.

During the 1990s, everything that impacted negatively on the Clinton's or the Democrats made page one headlines. These days it's our Democratic Governor Rod Blagojevich, whom the editors trounce mercilessly in his attempts to clear up 25 years of GOP theft and mismanagement in Illinois.

Conversely, whenever anything surfaces that looks bad for George Bush or other Republicans the story either winds up buried on page eight or is completely ignored. The names Bill Frist and Tom DeLay pretty much have no recognition value around these parts.

The steep precipice of ignorance about the world outside this county by the local folks gives me spinal shivers.

Excuse me, though, I digress. This past January, after it came to pass that my right-wing masters considered me expendable, we found no reason to pay for a subscription.

Well, this past Saturday morning there was a most unusual occurrence: for the first time since our split, the local paper carrier left a copy at our door.

I felt obliged to make a cursory scan of the front page. There was no improvement; the usual abridged versions of stories I'd already seen covered in depth by other papers and television news, along with human-interest pieces that should be in latter sections. So, on to the one and only feature I could always count on for a chuckle — *Letters to the Editor*.

Generally, comments from the area readership consist of ill-informed, self-centered, whiny attacks on Democrats; Liberals; Chicagoans; Jews; demon rum; Canadians; homosexuals; bisexuals; Bill and Hillary (locals can't get over them); Hollywood filmmakers; aliens; anyone who is capable of reasoned, cohesive thought; or any conceptualized idea with a positive, progressive view. Some letters even hint ambition by taking on a various combination of the aforementioned categories.

Sprinkled in on any given day might be enough evangelical rhetoric to make an entire camp meeting jump up and dance while shouting "Glory! Hallelujah!" for an extended period.

There was a letter in Saturday's issue that was, for once, unique. I'll call the writer Fred. The fact that this particular issue just happened to show up on our front porch combined with the publication of Fred's letter seemed to me an omen.

Fred was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease early in 2000. His letter was a public plea to Republican Congressional Representative Timothy V. Johnson to vote for HR 810.

The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005, or HR 810, is the bipartisan bill sponsored by Congresspersons Michael Castle, a Republican from Delaware, and Colorado Democrat Diana DeGette.

Boiled down, it would require the Sec-



Out Of The Blue

By
Jerry
Tenuto

retary of Health and Human Services to conduct and support research utilizing human embryonic stem cells. Research cells would be limited to those: intended for in vitro fertilization but no longer needed; in any other event discarded; donated freely with written informed consent and no inducements.

This is the bill passed by a fairly decent margin in the House on May 24, with some 50 Republicans, many profilers, voting in its favor.

This is the bill the Senate Democrats are urging Majority Leader Bill Frist to put on the docket. However, amid threats from conservative and evangelical groups that they will not support him in his bid for the presidency should it pass, and because of its bi-partisan support and populist strength, Frist is making it as difficult as possible for HR 810 to even see light of day on the Senate floor.

This is the bill that the confused man who occupies the Oval Office, George W. Bush, has promised the neo-cons he will veto when passed — despite the wishes of a substantial majority American people.

Fred's letter appeared in our local newspaper the very day after it was announced a South Korean team had broken new ground on stem cell research and cloning, improving the success rate of fertilization from 0.4% (one in 248) to 5.9% (one in 17).

The science isn't perfect, and it's certainly not ready for procedural inclusion at your local community hospital.

But why not fund testing? Why do we fear experimentation? This is the 21st Century we live in, not the Dark Ages. We're not talking about Theodor of York and bloodletting. Is this or is this not an age of enlightenment? How can we close our minds, and hearts, to the wonders of scientific discovery when they could help countless millions live fuller, richer lives?

Throughout history it has been the religious zealots who have stifled the advances of scientific discovery. In the 16th Century the Vatican denounced the findings of Nicolaus Copernicus that the Earth revolved around the Sun, rather than the accepted Biblical interpretation to the opposite. The following century, Galileo was sentenced for heresy by the Vatican for expounding upon Copernicus' beliefs.

Many of firm religious belief found fault with such radical concepts as surgery, inoculation, amputation. It wasn't all that long ago when organ transplants were considered playing God — or Frankenstein.

The very same people who just a few years ago railed against in vitro fertilization and "test tube babies" as Deistic or Satanistic now embrace the embryonic blastocyst as a thinking, feeling, reasoning human being with a

soul, despite the fact that its entire environment has been a Petri dish in a freezer.

No matter what your religious belief, no matter how you verbalize it, the blastocyst is not a human being.

As the debate raged in Congress over HR 810, Dubya took the opportunity to put on a show in our White House featuring parents and "embryo" babies provided by donors through the Christian-based Snowflake Foundation. Instead of using the time for a "feel good" session (which he's wholly incapable of) as a wise leader would, Bush delivered a speech to a handpicked audience that applauded every sentence as if prompted. I'm going to go out on a limb here and assume that the participants were all evangelical Christians. To date, of some 400,000 excess frozen embryos, there have been a whopping 81 given up by donor parents.

According to our confused president, anyone who has all the children they want or can handle should offer their remaining embryo(s) to barren couples. And the Snowflake Foundation will make sure that the right Christian couple will get your offspring. That's perfectly fine for some folks, such as the handful who have participated to date.

Okay, let's postulate that two of these Christian-bred children, from the same donor, attend the same small Christian college in Nowhere, Tennessee, fall in love, get married and procreate — repeatedly. There's no way of knowing, is there? And what Dubya suggests means that there's 400,000 possibilities for that scenario occur! There aren't that many exclusive Christian colleges to insure it won't happen.

In the overall big picture, however, when the leader of our nation makes such a suggestion regarding what is essentially baby-brokering it becomes eerily reminiscent of the Nazi plan to have all Aryan women impregnated by perfect SS soldiers.

The Jews are strongly supporting passage of HR 810. Why does it make the hardcore Christians so afraid?

Whenever science finds a new avenue to solve an enigma, as man is expected to do in his evolution, Christian leaders get freaked. They loathe any alteration in the status quo because it lessens the fear and mystery necessary to retain their esoteric control.

According to the Nuns who ruled my grammar school, and probably most other Christian teachings, God breathes life into the embryo at the point of conception *in the womb*. I remember all kinds of discourse that Petri dish embryos conceived in laboratories were not human beings blessed by the Almighty. Now, the Southern Baptist Convention wants to have it both ways and call these lab embryos that will never be grown into anything even remotely close to babies human beings.

Scientists who are already engaged in stem cell research, or wish to be, have repeatedly stated that the "clones" are not for re-population. These will be strictly lab embryos for cell regeneration.

Yet, the opponents have all missed the fundamentals of where the stem cells will come from, and exactly what

will be done with them. From the Right To Lifers to the Catholic Church to the evangelicals, they're all expecting some kind of Frankenstein to create his own breed of monster.

How ludicrous can they get? Let millions suffer endlessly because somebody *might* abuse the knowledge? By the time man reaches that level of knowledge, we'll probably all be way past caring.

Unfortunately, George Bush is just as confused. But that's what happens when you allow your own personal religious choice to obscure any possibility for clear and reasoned thinking.

On page eight of the very section in which Fred's letter appeared, (what did I tell you?), was a short article on Bush's muddled views concerning his guarantee to veto HR 810 should it pass. I guess his pipeline to the Lord is more cogent than all the members of Congress.

After all, Georgie did show us all he possessed superior scientific acumen than the rest of America and the World when he decided to renege on the U.S. agreement of the Kyoto accord. (Scientific acumen my foot. The pullout was part of the payback to big business for being installed as presidential front man in 2000.)

It doesn't take a Rhodes scholar to realize that Junior Georgie is confused in the extreme. He is morally against "the use of federal moneys that end up destroying life" and adamant to veto HR 810, where there is no proof of life but the humanitarian hope of freedom from pain and suffering. Yet, he doesn't bat an eye to waste in excess of 300 BILLION taxpayer dollars raining death on and maiming innocent people in the Mideast in his personal revival of the Crusades.

Of course, the Bush regime operates on a higher moral standard than that of the rest of humanity. Yeah, right! I suppose forcing Bushocracy at gunpoint on whatever countries he feels deserve it is more moral.

Getting back to Fred's letter, he was completely out of luck with his plea to Rep. Johnson. The three Congressman from the Central Illinois region are Republicans, and loyal members all. There isn't an original thought between them, individually or collectively. No matter what the issue, no matter what the constituency wishes, Ray LaHood, Jerry Weller and Johnson vote exactly as Speaker Dennis Hastert and Majority Leader Tom DeLay dictate.

I was fortunate enough to catch DeLay's speech ranting against HR 810 just prior to the vote. As if his race down the bogus moral rhetoric highway wasn't ludicrous enough in and of itself, he then made a right turn into the insane lane. Good Ol' Tom started going off about black market body parts, women selling their eggs and innocent young girls being made slaves for their fertile eggs. In the immortal word of Mr. H. Simpson, "DOH!" I almost wish I lived in Sugarland so I could vote against him.

It floors me that Laura Bush's own father died of Alzheimer's, yet she doesn't have enough heart to get her husband off of his theocratic ideology

Continued On Next Page

100,000 Signatures Needed on Downing Street Letter

BY CONGRESSMAN JOHN CONYERS
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

I have written to you in this space on a number of occasions about my profound concern about the implications of the "Downing Street Memo," which actually consists of the minutes of a July 2002 meeting between British Prime Minister Tony Blair and his top advisers. During this meeting, Blair and his advisers reveal details about conversations with their American counterparts. These details cast substantial doubt on the honesty of contemporaneous claims made by the Administration to Congress and to the American people about the Iraq war.



John Conyers

First, the memo appears to directly contradict the Administration's assertions to Congress and the American people that it would exhaust all options before going to war. According to the minutes, in July 2002, the Administration had already decided to go to war against Iraq.

Second, a debate has raged in the United States over the last year and one half about whether the obviously flawed intelligence that falsely stated that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction was a mere "failure" or the result of intentional manipulation to reach foreor-

ained conclusions supporting the case for war. The memo appears to close the case on that issue stating that in the United States the intelligence and facts were being "fixed" around the decision to go to war.

These are not routine questions within a partisan give and take. Under the United States Constitution (Article I, Section 8), the Congress has the sole power to declare war. If the Executive Branch deceives the Congress in this duty, it represents an attack of our democracy of the most serious nature. These Constitutional questions are not going away and must be answered forthrightly and completely by this Administration.

I and 88 of my colleagues (that number is growing - more on that soon) asked the Administration to come clean about these troubling allegations. Our inquiries have been met with silence.

The press has also been negligent in giving this matter the attention it deserves.

I am committed to seeing this through until we get the answers we deserve. But I need your help.

The conventional wisdom, which unfortunately governs Washington's political discourse, hold that the American people have long ago made peace with the mistakes or deceptions which led us

into war. Help me prove them all wrong. I want to show the White House, the Press and my congressional colleagues that nothing could be further from the truth.

That is why today I am giving you the opportunity to sign on to a letter asking the same questions of the President that now nearly 100 Members of Congress have asked. If I get at least 100,000 signatures on this, I will personally deliver the letter to the White House.

If you want to sign on to this letter, go

to my website:
<www.johnconyers.com>.

I also want you to know that I am exploring many, many avenues to get to the truth about this matter.

Thank you in advance for your help and assistance.

United States Representative John Conyers, Jr., a Detroit Democrat, was re-elected in November 2002 to his 19th term in the U. S. House of Representatives, winning 93 percent of the vote in Michigan's 14th Congressional District.

MAILBAG

ICONOCLAST

LETTERS
TO THE
EDITOR

To The Editor:

Letter to Bill Ford, Jr.,

My son, Casey, was killed in action in Iraq on 04 April 2004. He was an excellent human being and I am sure he would have contributed so much to our society if he wasn't sent to a needless war to make some evil people in the world richer. Casey was also very interested in the environment and in ecology—and very concerned about climate change. Well, he doesn't have to worry about anything, anymore, but I am writing this letter to you for him, the rest of our world's children, and future generations because as the manufacturer of the world's worst fleet when it comes to fuel efficiency, it's time for you to take immediate action to help break our oil addiction.

Mr. Ford, there are few things in this world that irritate me more than seeing a "Support our Troops" yellow ribbon magnet on the back of one of your huge SUV gas guzzlers. I believe one of the reasons that our greedy mis-leaders invaded Iraq was for control of the oil fields. What do your huge, gas-guzzling, polluting vehicles need to be able to run?: oil. I think it is very hypocritical for people to slap yellow "Support our Troops" magnets on these same monster cars. We have had hundreds of our children killed to gain control of the oil fields; guarding the oil fields and pipelines; and guarding the convoys of oil tankers. Our nation's insatiable thirst for oil is also ruining an innocent country and killing tens of thousands of innocent Iraqis.

Mr. Ford, invasions and occupations to steal another nations' resources are immoral. People, including my son, die to line the pockets of the already wealthy elite. Do you have children? If you do, do you have a child fighting in Iraq? Do you have a child guarding an oil field so his or her inheritance can be greater? My son died so you and yours can make more money.

Mr. Ford, I believe that you and your company have a huge stake in keeping this war going and in keeping the oil flowing. Where will this corrupt administration and it's policies of preemptive invasions for greed take us next? To the oil fields of Iran? To what lengths will companies like yours go to increase your bottom line? How many of other people's children are you willing to sacrifice to make your bank account grow?

Mr. Ford, are you willing to have the blood of more fine young Americans on your hands? Are you willing to continue destroying the ecology of our planet?

It is simple Mr. Ford: we need to end the occupation now and bring our children home. You and your company need to take the lead in designing and manufacturing more fuel-efficient cars—and fast. Your company needs to begin today to help reduce our nations' dependence on foreign oil, which is bad for our children: they get killed in wars over such reliance on another country's resources. Your company also needs to take immediate action to reduce your fleet's greenhouse gas emissions to help prevent climate change. It is too late for you to do this for my son, but do it in Casey's memory. Do it for your children and for the sake of the world's children.

You and your family may be fabulously wealthy beyond my imagination. However, you are all connected to this planet and to humanity. You, or your descendants, will not be spared the coming wrath of Mother Nature. We are all in this together, I think it's about time you and your company and your family realized this fact. Start acting like you are part of humanity: not above it.

I would hope that at your Annual Shareholder's Meeting in Delaware, on May 12th, that you will not only discuss my concerns—but work to take immediate action to increase the fuel efficiency of Ford's fleet. They are not only my concerns. Almost 1600 men and women are dead for greed and millions in Iraq are still in harm's way. Your company's actions should, from now on, be life affirming, not life-taking.

In sorrow for my son's senseless murder,

Sincerely,
Cindy Sheehan

Cindy Sheehan is the founder of Gold Star Families for Peace: <www.gsfp.org>, and she has joined hundreds of mothers who've written to Bill Ford, Jr. urging him to take immediate action to help break our oil addiction via <www.listentoyourmother.org>. This letter was recently given to all of the Ford Motor Company shareholders attending its annual meeting in Delaware.

More Letters On Page 15

Out Of The Blue...By Jerry Tenuto...

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and consider the bigger picture. It's a far worse sin to invoke the name of Jesus or a contorted Biblical belief to assume something is what it isn't (life) for one's own self-serving political ends, while ignoring the possibility of humanitarian relief for the very people you've sworn to serve.

The fact that both George and Laura are agreed that man is not ready for stem cell research tells me that the Bushes care not one whit for anyone outside their white-tie base.

I can't help it, but this particular issue really hits close to home. My Mother was a WWII Navy veteran. She was a beautiful, talented, intelligent woman. It's difficult to pinpoint exactly when the onset was, but during the 1970s Mom was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease.

Once the tremors began, life was never the same for any of us. Telling the whole story would require a book or more. Mom suffered through it for more than 20 years. She wasted away to practically nothing, and spent most of her final 10 years in bed.

The only treatment was to mollify her tremors, ever more severe with each passing month, by continual medicinal ingestion. Periodically she would become addicted to Levadopa and Sinemet, then go into the V.A. hospital for a painful "drug holiday" (rehab, a drying out period that could take weeks) for which they really weren't equipped.

Over the years the toll on my Father was a series of strokes.

By the time Mom died at Christmas, 1993, she was in a nursing home, could

not sit up by herself, couldn't feed herself, and probably weighed around 75 pounds. Her teeth were gone because she could not brush, and the last time I saw her, around Thanksgiving that year, she couldn't stop shaking. I doubt she even knew my family and I were there.

Mom was only 70, but to look at her a stranger might have guessed 90.

Although a devout Catholic, sometime around 1970 Mom became a born-again Christian. She prayed constantly, and looked to Jesus for some sort of cure or relief. One of her heroes was Pope John Paul II, but I don't think she knew he, too, suffered from Parkinson's.

Although after my Army experiences, traveling the world, college, one bad marriage, and a second marriage I didn't share her religious views, I can say this with surety: my born-again Christian Mother would be disgusted with these Republicans and their pandering to the evangelical neo-con right-wingers. It would rip the heart right out of her the way Bush and DeLay and Frist use Jesus as an excuse to further their own ends, and she would be appalled by whatever religious group would block access to any avenue of humanitarian assistance for people who are ill and debilitated, especially those who would do so in the name of Christ.

Mr. Bush, for my Mother and all the people like her whose suffering is over, stop being so damned confused and sign HR 810 into law so those babies whom you were showing off at the White House will never have to feel their pain. If you read your New Testament, I think you'll find that's what Jesus would want.

Summer Officially Starts Once You've Mowed Your Hibachi

The official start of the summer season is almost here. I know this because I received a Sears catalogue depicting what appears to be an all-American family taking time off from its busy modeling schedule to cook hamburgers on a brand new stainless steel grill large enough to accommodate an entire side of bull elk. As you would expect, children were in the yard squirting each other with water toys and running

barefoot over a perfectly manicured lawn which, judging from the size of the family dog, must be self-cleaning. Mom was nearby, well oiled and laying on a lawn chair in her bathing suit, still recovering from her recent *Victoria's Secret* lingerie shoot in the Bahamas.

Around the Hickson household, summer starts out a little differently. I was reminded of this yesterday as I stood in our back yard,



By
**Ned
Hickson**
Siuslaw News

with an orange rope tied to my belt. This can last up to several hours or, like yesterday, less than 15 minutes, depending on how long it takes me to run over the hibachi. Sure, I can laugh about it *now*, but I wasn't laughing when I was blinded by a spark so intense it flash-burned the hair off my legs. The good news is that neighbors unfortunate enough to be facing a window — any window — at that particular instant are expected to regain their sight within a few days.

However, this still leaves me with a partially mowed yard and what is now a two-piece hibachi set. On one hand, having separate grilling surfaces is nice, but only if the total net volume of what you're cooking is equal to, or less than, one chicken drummette. As an example, I tried preparing hamburgers for our family. This process took just under four hours, the last 15 minutes of which was spent waiting in line for our order at Burgerville. That experience has led us to consider buying a new grill. Something I can cook multiple items on, which would therefore make it large enough to avoid running over with the lawn mower. This is particularly important to me if we go with the propane model.

Then again, it could really speed up the lawn mowing process.

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

4-Year-Olds With A Bad Resume?

According to a recent Yale University study, preschoolers are being expelled at a surprisingly high rate these days. What kind of offenses are they guilty of? Excessive drooling? Poor balance? Mispronouncing their "R's?"

Actually, the most frequent grounds for expulsion include kicking, biting, and hair pulling. While I agree that preschoolers should not be allowed to do these things at school, I think that it's possible for them to be taught not to. In fact, I'm positive of it. Otherwise, most of the adults that you and I hang out with would still spend a lot of their time kicking, biting, and pulling hair. And unless you're either a professional wrestler or a local politician, that's unlikely.

Obviously, parents should teach their kids how to behave. But isn't teaching preschoolers how to behave with each other one of the important functions of preschool? They don't have to learn how to read or do multiplication before they start kindergarten. But it would be nice if they learned how to respect their teachers and fellow students. And I doubt that a three-year-old will "learn his lesson" by getting booted out of school.

And think of the kid's parents. In some communities, getting into the preschool of choice is just slightly harder than getting into Harvard. Parents do research on the schools. They kiss up to those who run them. Sometimes, they make generous donations to ensure that little Mikey has a good spot in the sandbox. When their kid is accepted, they believe that he or she is on the right track — the right track to the right elementary school, and eventually the right university, and the right profession. The parents celebrate the kid's acceptance at the right country club. Can you imagine how these parents react when they're told their kid can't come back to preschool because he kicked some kid who was hogging the Play-Doh?

Some of these parents are going to think it's all over for their kid because he got ejected from "Tiny Tots" or the "Early Education and Cultural Center for Socialization and Finger Painting."

I hope these parents will be wise enough to avoid telling their children, "They kicked you out because you're a bad kid." Instead, they probably say something like, "It just wasn't the right school for you. We found you a better one ... way on the other side of



By
**Lloyd
Garver**

town." But kids are smart, so they'll know something's wrong.

Education experts don't feel that kids have suddenly discovered misbehaving. They say there is just not enough money being spent on training teachers, psychologists, and social workers. This is a shame, of course, since recent research suggests how important preschool can be. I hope more and more places find the money so kids can learn how to behave in schools instead of being kicked out of them. I also hope this trend comes to an end soon, so kids won't be branded for life by the experience.

Back when I was in elementary school, I was, well, asked not to continue in my public school for a while. And I was told that my dismissal would be written down on something that was supposed to frighten every child: my "Permanent Record." I never believed in the specter of the Permanent Record, but in today's information age, it might not be so far from the truth. I'm sure there is some website you could go to that could help you learn how I offended Mrs. Dunbar in the fifth grade. (If you do find out, please let me know).

So, I worry that these kids aren't just going to switch to another school and everyone will forget about their little misadventure. Nothing can be kept secret today. So, even though you may agree with getting rid of that kid who made your daughter cry today, what about forty years from now? You don't really want some Senator to stand up and say, "I'm sorry, but I cannot support the nomination of Amanda Thompson for Supreme Court justice. Let's face it. Once a hair puller, always a hair puller."

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

waist-deep in weeds, swatting at a mosquito with a rusty spatula and trying to remember the last time I saw our hibachi. Each year, I promise my wife I won't begin the summer by embarrassing our entire family. And each year, a search and rescue team finds me whimpering somewhere in our back yard, surrounded by weeds, laying in a fetal position next to our lawn mower. My wife has a hard time understanding this, especially since, in most cases, I'm found less than six feet from the house. I tell her not EVERYONE is born with her keen sense of direction, and that all of this could be avoided if I just had a riding mower with Onstar. I generally lose this argument because, as my wife points out, I could find my way out of the yard by following my own clipping path IF I didn't insist on starting out with a crop circle every time.

That's when I exert my authority as Man of the House and tell her, in no uncertain terms, that I agree with her unequivocally — at which point I'm sent back out to mow the lawn

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor:

“Wake up, America!” John Kerry said. Wake up to what this administration is doing with your money and to your economic security, to your health, to your environment, to your natural resources, your wetlands, national parks and wildernesses, and to your civil liberties.

Stop blindly assuming that your government is doing what’s best for you or believing it just because they say so. Consider their countless contradictory statements. Be informed, and choose your sources with care.

According to the NEW YORK TIMES (03/13/05) “...the Bush Administration spent \$254 million in its first term on public relations contracts, nearly double what the Clinton administration spent.” Moreover, the Bush White House produces prepackaged TV broadcasts, picked up by local stations and slipped into regular programs as part of an administration effort to gain support for their policies. Called “good news” segments, they’re looked upon by the White House as “powerful strategic tools” to manipulate public opinion and are often ommissive of critical information. Over all, the media give minimal coverage to news unfavorable to Bush administration actions and inaction with little or no followup and the story peters out, often replaced by some new crisis manufactured by the White House as a distractive fear tactic to control the public.

While some journalists are paid to push White House programs, others are jailed for telling the truth or for protecting their sources, with ringers put in their stead.

THE NEW YORK TIMES (03/13/05) reported that “...at least 20 federal agencies, including the Defense Department and the Census Bureau, have made and distributed hundreds of television news segments in the past four years...broadcast on local stations across the country without any acknowledgment of the government’s role in their production...columnists wrote in support of administration policies without disclosing they had accepted payments from the government”; all this to put forth, the Times says, “a quiet drumbeat of broadcasts describing a vigilant and compassionate administration.”

This is part and parcel of the Bush administration’s abuse of power—their determination to muzzle and mute the media, Congress and academia, as in their current effort to eliminate the 150-year-old tradition of filibustering to silence the democrats, the minority party, and their regular practice of only accepting questions reviewed in advance from carefully screened, preselected audiences and press.

John Daniszewski of the LOS ANGELES TIMES (05/12/05) reported a story from the British press, reiterating some of the intelligence that has been circulating here for many months, but not seriously dealt with by the media and therefore not taken seriously by the majority of Americans. Based on official British documents, it clearly demonstrates that President Bush and Prime Minister Blair agreed on an invasion of Iraq by

July 2002, eight months before the attack, and “shaped intelligence to that aim,” eliminating diplomacy as an alternative.

Among the documents is a memo of the minutes of a July 23 2002 meeting of the Prime Minister with his intelligence and military heads, a briefing paper for the meeting and a Foreign Office legal opinion written in advance of a Texas summit in April 02 between the two leaders. Both men deny that such a decision was made by mid -2002.

The disclosure from Britain has precipitated action from 88 Democrats and one Independent, expressing “shock” that the information might actually be true. In a letter to the President, released on May 6, they state “If the disclosure is accurate, it raises troubling new questions regarding the legal justifications for the war as well as the integrity of our own administration.” The letter, requesting an explanation, was answered on May 16 by Scott McClellan, White House spokesman, who stated that the President “reached out to people across the world, went to the United Nations to resolve this in a diplomatic manner.”

It’s entirely possible that there is no satisfactory explanation; although our heads of state have scant knowledge or understanding of history and geography, perhaps their war was waged solely to control and dominate the Middle East; that the seemingly senseless conflict, lacking both a plan for the aftermath and an exit strategy, was all part of a nefarious scheme to create turmoil, to keep the region in a continuous state of war, thereby benefiting the unholy alliance of government and oil interests by making certain that US access to mineral-rich South West Asia is unhampered by other powers.

This, along with other puzzlements, may remain hidden, the truth withheld indefinitely from media scrutiny and public edification.

The First Amendment, once the steward and protector of our freedom of speech, of the press and “the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances” is being relentlessly reduced to oblivion, a near-forgotten dinosaur.

Elizabeth Gerteiny

To The Editor:

Senator Robert Duncan (R Lubbock) have you no shame? You led in the charge to bring judges salaries up to the national average, which also increased legislative pensions \$6,000 per year. At the same time you also sponsored a bill that limits teacher pensions.

I agree with the administrators of the state. A better method of restoring the TRS to solvency would be to increase the state contribution to the former level. This previous reduction by the state legislature is the major cause of the current problem.

To quote the Senator, “This is not ‘spin.’ It is a simple, verifiable reality.”
Travis Spears, Plains, TX

To The Editor:

Child Protective Services (CPS) and Adult Protective Services (APS) are vi-

tal programs to the welfare and protection of those who cannot protect themselves.

Lives are at stake; immediate action is needed. Vital provisions of SB 6 will protect Texas’ most vulnerable residents: children, the disabled and the incapacitated elderly. The Senate version of the bill does a much better job of ensuring that incapacitated adults who are victims of mistreatment have guardians to protect and advocate for them.

For the past 20 years, I’ve directed a volunteer guardian program and witnessed lives transformed from illness, filth and poverty to health, safety and security by appointment of a guardian. Our agency and others like us across Texas cannot continue to meet the expanding needs for guardianships without assistance from the state.

Colleen Colton, M.G., Ft. Worth
To The Editor:

I am provoked by the recent compromise on minority entitlement to filibuster. Allowing a Senate vote on several radically biased judicial candidates was the cost of the compromise. But what’s really been accomplished? One side’s still saying, “We have the right and will filibuster if necessary,” the other side childishly responding, “If you do, we’ll change the rules.” The truly sad thing is we’ll be exactly at this impasse as soon as Bush nominates yet another unacceptable candidate. The fingers are off the triggers but the guns are still on the table.

What’s been gained? Congressional business can continue, for a while, unfettered by the threatened work slowdown. But many people have grave doubts about the value of this Senate’s work product anyway, so I’m not convinced unfettered continuance is all that desirable.

What’s been lost? Three extremely controversial judges are now ‘out of the gate’ and headed to an up-or-down vote in the Senate. We pray that every Senator sets aside the quaint notion that ‘the president deserves deference for his nominees’, and instead fully examines the appropriateness to life-time office of each and every candidate before casting a carefully considered, non-partisan vote.

What’s at stake? The righteous fringe of the right wing wants to gain control of the judiciary, portraying their ambitions as “judges shouldn’t make law from the bench.” But this president’s judicial nominees are every bit as activist as any progressive judge singled out by that right fringe, and the three conservatives now slated for Senate vote are officially on record as rolling back some of the most critical social, health, contractual and consumer protections of the past seventy-five years.

Can this be resolved? Yes; but it’s absolutely critical that President Bush begin consulting with Senators from both parties, working with the conflicting opinions, to nominate candidates truly worthy of bi-partisan support – whether for judgeships, cabinet positions or as U.S. representatives abroad. I hold no great hope for this to happen, however, since this president consistently has proven to be the major source of division rather than the ‘uniter’ he promised to be.

Tim Slack, Newburgh In.
To The Editor:

Let’s outsource the legislature. What a frightening reality to pay legislators decent salaries for all they don’t do for the people. No matter what the

salary, taxpayers will NEVER be able to compete with special interests in paying-off elected officials. Meanwhile, elected officials already get excellent health benefits and medical care and a VERY substantial compensation for “the rest of their lives” retirement after serving 12 years in the legislature. And they prefer to up their own pensions while decreasing the pensions of school teachers. What a world!

Personally, I think we should outsource our legislators. Perhaps if our elected officials were from India or Pakistan we’d get a few more bones thrown to us taxpayers and we’d also cut the costs of buying legislators by special interests due to the lower income of Rupees sought after by the “new legislators.” While it may be difficult to fully understand the outsourced officials because English is a second language, it’s not like we fully comprehend the current bunch of “brigands” at the Capitol. American families remain at the mercy of elected officials, and that won’t change sometime soon — if ever.

No matter how much we pay our current legislators, the people seem always to come in last place. It’s become a contagion in the Presidency, House and Senate, with no cure in sight. We need to get rid of all the over-stuffed baggage in the “Ledge” and start all over again. We also need new laws that prohibit special interests from paying out all those dollars that make elected officials so greedy. It’s like we’ve created our own political version of the *California Gold Rush*.

Also, we need to get some more middle class folks to run for office, but today it costs far too much for anyone with moderate income to consider running for the legislature. You must have some wealth as a prerequisite or you’ll never get on the ballot. Furthermore, in order to get into office you’d have to sell yourself to the highest special interest bidder, and then we’d just be in the same place we already are.

Outsourcing the legislature may be our only option.

Photo ID Bill in State Senate
Congratulations for this stupid bill????

My god! You people haven’t a clue! Oh yes, congratulations also for wasting taxpayer money on dozens of equally stupid and insignificant bills. Now if only you could all do something positive for the people you are supposed to serve.

Thanks for ten years of hurting our children’s education. Thanks for causing the highest rate of home foreclosures EVER in Texas. Thanks for permitting higher educational institutions to overcharge us on our children’s college education tuition. Thanks for letting the insurance industry double the cost of homeowners insurance overnight due to lax legislation and their campaign contributions. Thanks for enabling the health industry to continue to overcharge Texans for the costs of health insurance and prescriptions. Thanks for deceiving Texans into believing that toll roads are necessary to build and maintain roadways throughout the state, even though we all know better. Not only do you all continue to tax Texans unmercifully currently, but you’ll continue to “stick it” to our children’s children for generations to come.

Yes, by all means, congratulations and thanks for all you do to ensure that Texans are unable to maintain a quality life.

You should all be ashamed of what you have done here in this state!

Peter Stern, Driftwood, Texas



LONDON: A Private View

By KAPIL KOMIREDDI
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

The ubiquitous complaint one nowadays hears is about the social and civic decline of London. It is strange, and paradoxical, because London's economy is unshakably strong, and on the rise. And historically, the more the wealth, the more harmonious societal relations are. (Compare Monaco to Mumbai.) But London, while dominating Europe (and the rest of the world) in economics, is, one is given the impression, lagging behind in civics. So, how real is the problem?

At night, people, especially the female folk, dread to walk the streets alone. No place, no street, no station can be merited with safety. Hooded and unruly youth are omnipresent, waiting to intimidate, rob and even rape the vulnerable. You'll find them in every district of London. But, if that is the case, Londoners must ask themselves, "How many times have I been a victim of violent crime?" "How many of my friends or acquaintances have been victims of violent crime?" The perception has got the better of us. We see in the news, read in the papers and hear on the radio the horrible instances of violence, reported in glib terms, and assume that it's only a matter of time before we too are greeted by that much-

feared mugger, burglar, psychotic killer, or ruthless rapist. Police awareness adverts have done little to ameliorate the situation. Rather than extirpate the fear which grips us, their advertisements only serve to exacerbate it. "Who is raping you tonight?" is hardly a healthy way of stressing the importance of hiring only licensed cabs. One newspaper compared it to horror films.

'A t night, people, especially the female folk, dread to walk the streets alone. No place, no street, no station can be merited with safety. Hooded and unruly youth are omnipresent, waiting to intimidate, rob and even rape the vulnerable. You'll find them in every district of London.'

— Kapil Komireddi

To deny the existence of violent crime would be foolish. But to exaggerate its size and enormity, which the media and government do quite successfully, is idiotic and irresponsible. What the government must emphasise instead is the need to fight our fear of becoming victims of violent crime. The chances of Londoners reading this commentary becoming victims of violent crime today, tomorrow — or ever — though very much within the realms of possibility, are highly unlikely. I am a victim of violent crime — a horrifying mugging by two youngsters who threatened to stab me. For what? £30 in cash and a worthless mobile phone — but I do believe that violent crime is sporadic; the fear

of it, however, remains stupendous. And that is the bigger problem.

But, in the eyes of many, there is something even more worrying. London's so-called civic decline - personified by burgeoning rubbish bags, littered streets, inconsiderate co-passengers, rambunctious drunkards and lumpen youth - needs immediate attention. Those that contribute much to

London's economy choose, unfortunately, to live outside of it. Hampshire and Hertfordshire hold more appeal than Hampstead or (forgive me) Hackney. Inexpensive housing is not the only reason. (Try buying a house in Hampshire.) The other day, a non-Londoner friend of mine charted out copiously his reasons for ditching the capital. He was brutal. When he finished, not only did I find myself sympathising with his "leave London" campaign but contemplating, fugaciously, of a life outside of London.

To me, living outside this violent, congested, variegated, overpopulated and ultra-multicultural menagerie, is inconceivable. And I am certain that majority of the readers share my view. A pint (in my case, several) of lager at the pub, a pizza or a takeaway at the local Chinese or Indian, the odious and snail-paced tubes, deplorable night buses,

mulcting cabs, smoky bars, delectable sylphs (of every preferable nationality), the British Library, the National Film Theatre, the Islington liberals, the impolite and impudent people who somehow become voluble fellows after one pint and macabre monsters after five, all make London totally indispensable. What supervened my mugging is a poignant reminder of the indefatigable spirit of this city: a New Zealander came to my rescue. She picked me up and took me to her flat, gave me a chilled beer, calmed me down and called the police. Today, we are the best of friends.

The perception that London is somehow facing ruination is quite dangerous. The problem is not that London is bad; the problem is that our expectations are utopian. Someone from a less fortunate country arriving in London will find the city absolutely agreeable. We must learn to be moderately pernickety. While setting high standards in itself isn't a bad practice, not striving to achieve those is egregiously hypocritical. If we want a better city, then we, its denizens, permanent or transient, must strive to improve it. And nothing, especially London, is beyond the realms of improvement. And if you're tired of London, then, I'm afraid, you're tired of life.

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