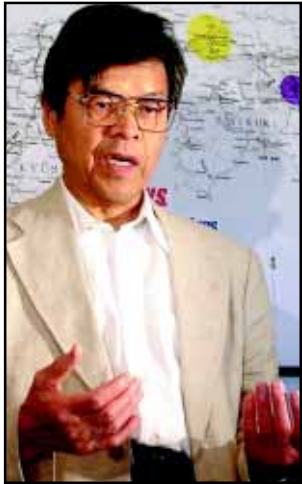


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The Lone Star 
ICONOCLAST

President Bush Ditches Mother Of Slain Soldier

'I didn't come all this way from California to stand here in a ditch.'

— Cindy Sheehan,
Co-founder of Gold Star Families for Peace

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ORDERED TO STOP is Cindy Sheehan (center, with hand over mouth), mother of U.S. soldier who was slain in Iraq, miles from President Bush's Prairie Chapel Ranch last Saturday. Sheehan came to Crawford to ask the president face-to-face for what "noble cause" her son died in Iraq.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

Hiroshima Bomb Survivors Say No To Nuclear Weapons, War

By NATHAN DIEBENOW
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

CRAWFORD — Two survivors of the nuclear bomb that hit Hiroshima during World War II said at the Crawford Peace House last Saturday that nuclear weapons should be banned from use forever.

“Nuclear weapons are not legitimate weapons of war. They are evil, immoral, inhuman instruments of the devil. The mere possession of nuclear weapons is a crime against humanity, a crime against nature,” said Dr. Satoru Konishi, a nuclear weapon victim or “hibakusha,” from Japan. “They must

be exorcised from our world now, before it is too late.”

Paul Ritthaler, who was a U.S. Marine interned in a prison camp 75 miles from Hiroshima’s ground zero, made similar remarks with Dr. Konishi on the 60th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing.

Ritthaler, through his wife, Betty, said that his own body has suffered from the ill effects from the radioactive fallout from the Hiroshima blast. Only within the last few years has the U.S. Veterans Administration admitted that the radiation from the Hiroshima blast was the cause of his illnesses, which account for a number of heart attacks and strokes,

Betty Ritthaler said.

“Our government is the worst country in the world at getting into wars. Our foreign policy stinks and we need to quit getting into wars,” said Ritthaler in a statement. Ritthaler retired from the Marine Corps after more than 24 years in service.

Dr. Konishi, 75, a professor emeritus of German literature at Tokyo Metropolitan University, was the keynote speaker the Veterans for Peace Convention in Dallas earlier in the week, and also spoke at the Teaching Peace in Texas Convention in Arlington before travelling to Austin for events on Saturday and Sunday.

“I’ve survived hell on earth — Hiroshima in August 1945 — and know first-hand that nuclear weapons drive people into extreme crisis: they make it impossible for humans to act humanly. They inflict physical and mental wounds so deep that they can never go away once they are inflicted,” said Dr. Konishi, Assistant Secretary General of Nihon Hidankyo, the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers’ Organizations. “I join scores of peace-loving Americans in calling for a world without nuclear weapons, war, violence, threat, and fear.”

For years, Dr. Konishi said, the Japa-

nese government has denied the effects of radiation on the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and therefore has withheld funds for their treatment. He recounted his first memory of hearing the voice of a victim of the Hiroshima bombing, a man begging for water whose face was deformed, “like a flabby lump of white tofu.”

“Due to my shock, my memories of that day are incoherent fragments, but I still hear that man begging for water,” said Dr. Konishi of the first day that the United States dropped nuclear bombs on Japan; the second occurred three days later on Nagasaki. “I wonder if he forgave the 16-year-old-boy who failed to respond to his dying request.”

Other members of Nihon Hidankyo brought their messages of anti-war, anti-nuclear weapons to Los Alamos National Laboratory at Los Alamos, N.M. and Oak Ridge National Laboratory at Oak Ridge, Tenn.

United for Peace and Justice along with the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition also honored the 40th anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act in Atlanta, Ga. on Saturday. The march and rally was intended to call on Congress to re-authorize key provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that will expire in 2007.



HIROSHIMA BOMB SURVIVORS Dr. Satoru Konishi (from left) and Paul Ritthaler held a press conference Saturday at the Crawford Peace House on the 60th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing. They both agreed that nuclear weapons should be outlawed from use and that the war in Iraq is unnecessary. Ritthaler was accompanied by his wife, Betty (not pictured).

—Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

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President Bush Ditches Mother Of Slain Soldier

By NATHAN DIEBENOW
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

CRAWFORD — The mother of a U.S. soldier slain in Iraq was denied a face-to-face meeting with President Bush here Saturday after she walked through a ditch-like path in the August heat to the President's Prairie Chapel Ranch.

"I didn't come all this way from California to stand here in a ditch," said Cindy Sheehan, 48, co-founder of Gold Star Families for Peace, attempting to continue her trek to the ranch.

Even though two of the President's aides later agreed to deliver her message to him, Sheehan said that she would remain in Crawford for the whole month, if need be, until she is granted a private audience with the commander-in-chief to ask him for what "noble cause" did her son die overseas.

"If he doesn't come out to talk to me in Crawford, I'll follow him to D.C., and I'll camp out on his lawn," she said, to a round of applause from her supporters. "I'll go to prison. I don't want to live in a country where people are treated this way."

Sheehan's actions, she said, were sparked by President Bush's comments like those made last Wednesday in Grapevine to about 1,800 members of the American Legislative Exchange Council: "Our men and women who've lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan and in this war on terror have died in a noble cause and a selfless cause."

"We all know by now that that's not true, and I want to ask George Bush, 'Why did my son die? What was the noble cause that he died for?'" said Sheehan. "I don't want [President Bush] to use my son's name or my family name to justify any more killing or to exploit my son's name, my son's sacrifice, or my son's honor to justify more killing. As a mother, why would I want one more mother to go through what I'm going through, Iraqi or American?"

"And I want to tell him that the only way to honor my son's sacrifice is to bring the troops home now."

Her son, Casey Sheehan, 24, of Vacaville, Calif., died in Baghdad, Iraq, on April 4, 2004, when his unit was attacked with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

Bush's comments Wednesday coincided with the deaths of 12 Marine reservists from Ohio who were killed in perhaps the deadliest roadside bombing of U.S. troops in Iraq. So far, the lives of about 1,821 Americans in uniform have been taken since the 2003 invasion.

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'If
he doesn't come out to talk to me in Crawford, I'll follow him to D.C., and I'll camp out on his lawn.'
— Cindy Sheehan



Follow Cindy Sheehan's vigil in Crawford on www.iconoclast-texas.com.

CINDY SHEEHAN, mother of U.S. soldier who was slain in Iraq, called for President Bush on Saturday, Aug. 6, to return all troops in Iraq to the United States immediately. Although Sheehan did speak with two of the President's aides, she still vowed to remain in Crawford to meet with the President.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



CHANT LEADER — Persian Gulf War Veteran Dennis Kyne (center, in camouflage jacket) led Cindy Sheehan's supporters in a chant miles from President Bush's Prairie Chapel Ranch last Saturday. Kyne, a former battlefield medic, is author of *Support The Truth*, a book about his experiences in military service and the effects of depleted uranium weapons and PB Tablets (www.denniskyne.com).

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



MILES FROM THE BUSH RANCH, the supporters of Cindy Sheehan stopped their trek to the Bush Ranch because the McLennan County Sherriff's Department said the group had disobeyed orders by walking on the roadway, not the road's shoulder. Supporters included members of Veterans for Peace, Gold Star Families for Peace, Iraq Veterans Against War, Vietnam Veterans Against War, CodePink Austin, and the Crawford Peace House. — Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

• BUSH DITCHES MOTHER OF SLAIN SOLDIER ... Continued From Page 3

Pollsters indicate that Bush's approval ratings are declining in relation to the rise in U.S. casualties in Iraq.

Sheehan, joining anti-war activists at the Crawford Peace House, arrived with a busload of veterans from the Veterans for Peace convention which was held in Irving, near Dallas, since Thursday. The total group of activists there numbered over 50 and included members of Veteran's for Peace (VFP), Military Families Speak Out (MFSO), Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), CodePink, and the Crawford Peace House.

Vietnam veteran Jim Waters, not affiliated with any activist group, said that he drove overnight from Lubbock alone in support of Sheehan and the Gold Star Families for Peace because he is "very concerned" about the war in Iraq and wants to ask President Bush, "Why aren't his daughters there?"

"One of the principles of leadership is you don't ask people to do what you yourself don't have the courage to do, and [President Bush] is asking people to fight to their deaths when he himself and most of the architects of this war never served," said Waters, a retired Navy commander and former hospital administrator. "[President Bush] served, but he jumped over 10,000 people to get into the National Guard Champagne Unit, so he could avoid duty in Vietnam. I had to go to Vietnam, and now he's sending them to their deaths — over 1,800 so far.

"I'm sick and tired of what's happening to our country," he continued. "To me it's almost like the White House operation is a mob operation. These guys are scary, and they're dangerous, in my opinion."

The demonstrators gathered around one side of Sheehan as she spoke with the news media. A World War II veteran, Archie Goodwin from Naples, Fla., carrying a sign, stated away from the group that he is for peace, but "Bush isn't." His sign read, "Somebody lied."

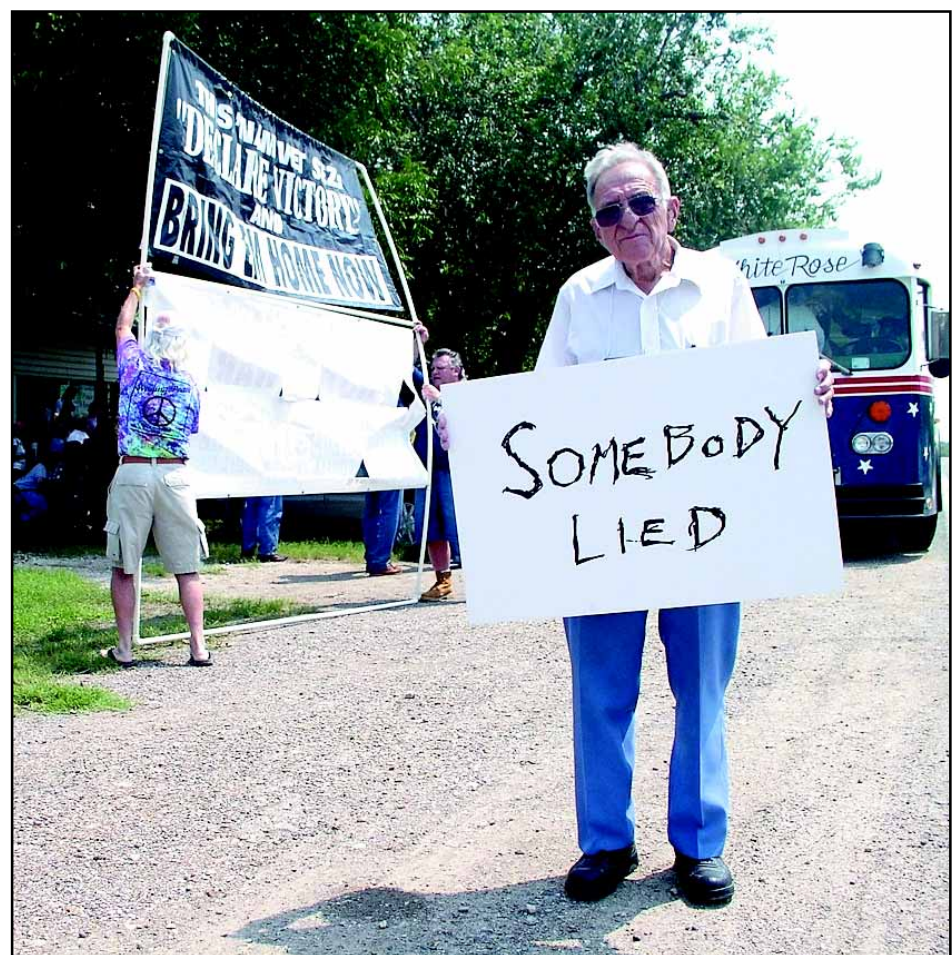
Sheehan was accompanied on Saturday by her sister, Dede Miller, and Amy Ranham, another mother of a slain U.S. soldier. Among her fellow supporters present were Ann Wright, a former U.S. diplomat who resigned her post in March 2003 in protest of the invasion of Iraq; Camilo Mejia, a reservist in the Florida National Guard who became a consciousness objector upon returning from service in Iraq; and Persian Gulf War Veteran Dennis Kyne, a former battlefield medic who is outspoken on the effects of depleted uranium weapons.

Captain Kenneth Vanek of the McLennan County Sherriff's Department agreed to lead the caravan of anti-war demonstrators to the Bush Ranch. "As long as y'all work with us, we'll work with y'all," he said.

The situation, however, turned less friendly as the afternoon progressed.

At a checkpoint, the demonstrators, on orders from the peace officers, ex

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SOMEBODY LIED — World War II Veteran Archie Goodwin of Naples, Florida, holds up a sign at the Crawford Peace House while Cindy Sheehan, co-founder of Gold Star Families for Peace, meets with reporters last Saturday. — Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



MAKING SHADE with a banner are a few supporters of Cindy Sheehan miles from President Bush's Prairie Chapel Ranch last Saturday.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

• BUSH DITCHES MOTHER OF SLAIN SOLDIER ... Continued From Page 4

ited their vehicles about eight miles from the ranch and were told to walk in the direction of the ranch on the shoulder of the road, not the roadway itself, so as to not impede the traffic. The conditions of the shoulder made it increas-

ingly difficult for the demonstrators to walk. Five-to-10-foot wide, the shoulder was sloped inward ditch-like to two-to-three feet in some places and lined with dry, uncut grass and damp dirt.

The deputies finally ordered the dem-

onstrators to halt miles from the ranch because the group had not agreed to its side of the "bargain" by walking on the roadway. "The media is allowed on the road, so why aren't we?" asked one of the demonstrators, to which an officer of the Sheriff's Department replied, "Because they were following you."

Sheehan, making one last attempt to push forward, said, "In the name of 1,828 soldiers that should be alive, I'm going to see the president. He killed my son."

Holding signs that said, "No more blood for oil," "Support our troops, bring them home now," "Iraq is Arabic for Viet Nam," and "Frodo failed. Bush has the ring," the demonstrators then chanted, "W. killed her son. W. killed her son."

This first attempt to meet the President ended up futile. Members of the group, including Sheehan, exchanged a few heated words with the Sheriff's deputies, Secret Service agents, and Texas Department of Public Safety troopers who kept their composure through the afternoon. There were no arrests made during the demonstration.

Other political slogans and chants were heard, including one from Hadi Jawad of the Crawford Peace House who urged the news media keep reporting on the Downing Street memos. These documents are a series of classified, British reports made during a planning session between British and American officials over Iraq months before its invasion. The British officials note in the memos that the United States was "fixing" evidence around the administration's policy to justify the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

Sheehan, after the mainstream media had left to file their reports, said, "This

is the beginning of the end of the occupation of Iraq." A wild round of applause followed.

White House spokesman Trent Duffy said in response to Sheehan's actions that President Bush also wants the troops to return home safely but their mission must be completed in their honor. Two aides to the President, national security adviser Steve Hadley and deputy White House chief of staff Joe Hagin, later met with Sheehan to say that the president cares, but she, though appreciative, said in a message through THE ICONOCLAST to the President, "George Bush, if you really care about me, why aren't you meeting with me?"

Sheehan, an opponent of the war in Iraq since its inception, took part in a meeting with other military families and Bush in June 2004 at Fort Lewis, near Seattle, Wash. This occurred two months after her son was killed in Iraq. In an interview with CNN's Wolf Blitzer on Sunday, she said that during her first meeting with President Bush, she felt that the President seemed more jovial than sorrowful and expressed no interest in knowing the name of her son or seeing pictures of him.

Sheehan intends to continue to attempt to gain an audience with President Bush. "I'm filled with hope now, too, that we might be able to turn things around," she said, noting that additional support is on its way from throughout the country as she continues her efforts, which will include a candlelight vigil. Caravans from Louisiana and San Diego are on the way, to name a couple, she said.

Before her first attempt to speak to
Continued On Next Page



FOR WHAT NOBLE CAUSE DID MY SON DIE? was the question Cindy Sheehan (center) wanted to ask President Bush last Saturday as she walked carrying pictures of her late son to his Prairie Chapel Ranch with over 50 supporters from various anti-war groups.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



SHOULDER WOES — Cindy Sheehan, her sister Dede Miller, and Amy Ranham, another mother of a slain U.S. soldier walk at the head of the group on the shoulder of the road toward President Bush's Ranch. Sheehan and her supporters were later stopped from completing their trek because they had broken their promise of not walking on the road.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



SOLIDARITY WITH HIROSHIMA VICTIMS — Before her first attempt to speak to President Bush in Crawford, Cindy Sheehan (left) met with two victims of the nuclear bombing, Dr. Satoru Konishi (right) and ex-Marine Paul Ritthaler (not pictured), and Ritthaler's wife, Betty (not pictured), holding a press conference at the Peace House on the 60th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



MAKING A SUPPLY RUN — Dick Underhill, Veterans for Peace -Austin, chairman, (left, standing) asks if any of the supporters of Cindy Sheehan need any supplies before he heads back to Austin. Behind the trucks is the tent in which Sheehan slept the night after being denied an audience with President Bush at his Prairie Chapel Ranch. She plans to spend the rest of August camped there until Bush speaks with her one-on-one.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

• BUSH DITCHES MOTHER OF SLAIN SOLDIER

... Continued From Page 5

President Bush in Crawford, Sheehan met with two victims of the Hiroshima nuclear bombing, Dr. Satoru Konishi and ex-Marine Paul Ritthaler, and Ritthaler's wife, Betty. A press conference was held at the Peace House on the 60th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing.

During the day Sunday, Sheehan received numerous votes of thanks, well-wishes, and support from around the globe, said Diane Wilson, founding member of CodePink, a national anti-war group. While Sheehan was doing interviews Sunday afternoon, small groups of supporters were arriving at her campsite, dropping off supplies and enjoying the cloudy weather on Prairie Chapel Road.

Wilson announced Sunday that she is starting a hunger strike in Crawford aimed at getting President Bush to talk with Cindy Sheehan, mother of a U.S. soldier slain in Iraq. According to CodePink's website Sunday evening, three others have joined the strike: Jodie Evans, Cindy Sheehan's sister DeeDee, and Sarah Rath. Wilson said she believes that more volunteers will follow suit around the country in the coming days.

Friends of Peace and Justice of Waco are in the process of mobilizing support for Sheehan's perhaps month-long vigil. More information can be obtained at the

Continued On Next Page

• BUSH DITCHES MOTHER OF SLAIN SOLDIER

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Crawford Peace House website or by calling (254) 486-0099 after Monday.

www.crawfordpeacehouse.org/

INFO

Gold Star Families for Peace

www.gsfp.org

Military Families Speak Out

www.mfso.org

Veterans for Peace

www.veteransforpeace.org

CodePink

www.codepink4peace.org

Vietnam Veterans Against War

www.vvaw.org

Iraq Veterans Against the War

www.ivaw.net

House Leader Ready To Call It Quits On School Finance

AUSTIN — Some Texas lawmakers were in shock, while others were dumbfounded when Texas House Speaker Tom Craddick said last Thursday that he deems the regular legislative session and two special sessions a failure, as far as school finance goes.

The House and Senate have been at odds for months on how to resolve funding public education in Texas.

In a written statement, Craddick said, "We are wasting time and money, and it is unproductive to prolong this process."

With time yet remaining in the second \$1.2 million special session called by Gov. Rick Perry, some lawmakers expressed dismay that the body originating

the laws — the House — will derail efforts by the Senate to arrive at a compromise.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Steve Odgden said he plans to continue to pursue a school finance plan, dismissing Craddick's letter.

Craddick suggested that the Texas Education Agency provide a list of reforms that can be carried out without changing legislative statutes and wait to determine what the Supreme Court decrees as a fair method of funding education in the state.

In the meantime, methods are being discussed to pay for millions of textbooks that are sitting in publishers' warehouses, awaiting delivery, that have been ordered but not funded.



HUNGER STRIKE FOR CINDY — Diane Wilson, founding member of CodePink, a national anti-war group, is leading a hunger strike aimed at getting President Bush to talk with Cindy Sheehan, mother of a U.S. soldier slain in Iraq. As of Sunday evening, Aug. 7, three others have joined Wilson: Jodie Evans, Cindy Sheehan's sister DeeDee, and Sarah Rath. For more information, visit CodePink's website (www.codepink4peace.org).

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



CINDY SHEEHAN SLEPT HERE in this tent during the night after being denied an audience with President Bush to discuss the end of the war in Iraq. President Bush's vacation ranch lies on the road toward the upper right hand corner of the picture.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

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Colombia President Uribe Visits Bush Ranch



PRESIDENT BUSH walks with Colombian President Alvaro Uribe following a joint press conference at his ranch near Crawford.

— Photo Courtesy Rod Aydelotte/Waco Tribune Herald, Pool

CRAWFORD — Narcotics and crime were discussed by President Bush and visiting Colombian President Alvaro Uribe at the Bush ranch near Crawford last week, as the Colombian leader made a stop-over during his two-day visit to the United States.

Following private talks, the two leaders said they had agreed to elevate their battle to fight illegal drugs.

Colombia has received more than \$3 billion from the United States since 2000 to go toward the defeat of drug smugglers and left-wing rebels.

In a joint news conference, Bush said, "Our two nations are working together to fight drug trafficking and terrorism, and to promote security, democracy, and the rule of law throughout the Americas."

Under Plan Colombia, forces receive training and equipment to uncover

smugglers and destroy coca crops, which has reduced violent crime to its lowest level in 16 years, noted Bush.

President Uribe acknowledged that the support of the U.S. has helped significantly and is appreciated.

Uribe said that Colombia's great enemy of democracy is terrorism. "And our great partner in defeating terrorism has been the government and the people of the United States. Allow me to say here to the rest of the world that U.S. cooperation has been exemplary. It has gone beyond rhetoric, and it has, in fact, been cooperation that has been put in practice. And all democratic countries need to know that, that cooperation should be realistic and put into practice."

Some concern has been raised by Congress, however, regarding alleged human rights abuses by the Colombian military.



FIRST LADY Laura Bush sits down with Lina Moreno Uribe under a shade tree while their husbands, President Bush and Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, conduct a joint press conference at Bush ranch near Crawford on Aug. 4.

— Photo Courtesy Rod Aydelotte/Waco Tribune Herald, Pool

DATELINE: **Crawford** Hometown of the President of the United States

Freeman Announces Candidacy For Judge, County Court At Law #1

WACO — Mike Freeman, McLennan County Senior Felony Assistant District Attorney, earlier this week announced his candidacy for County Court at Law #1.

Freeman, a Republican, has been with the Criminal Division of the District Attorney's office for the past 13 years.

Freeman says that during these years, he has tried over 40 homicide jury trials, and over 100 successful felony jury trials, including the high-profile trials of Kenneth Allen McDuff, Timothy Dale Flowers, Rowenna Ledbetter, and Terrence Kelley. He has appeared on "48 Hours," "A&E," and "The Discovery Channel" regarding his participation in these trials, he says.

"In my job as Assistant District Attorney, I have had a passion for protecting the rights of McLennan County citizens. Now I would like to transfer that passion to the County Court at Law bench," says Freeman.

Before moving to McLennan County, Freeman served as County Attorney (District Attorney in Texas) in McCook, Red Willow County, Neb. for 15 years. During that time, he was popular speaker and teacher for law enforcement agencies, civic organizations, colleges, and universities. He also served as president of the McCook Chamber of Commerce and president of the McCook Rotary Club.

He lists as his accomplishments estab-

lishing the first area juvenile work project program while serving as County Attorney and working with the Nebraska legislature and the Attorney General's office to solve statewide crime problems.

Freeman was also in private law practice for several years in Nebraska, representing clients at all levels of the judicial system, including the State Supreme Court, he notes.

Freeman, who is currently a member of the State Bar of Texas, the Texas District and County Attorney's Association, and the McLennan County Bar Association, served in the U.S. Navy from 1969-73 in the Legal Office stationed in Guam. While in the Navy he received the American

Spirit Honor Award.

Born and raised in West Texas, he and wife Karon have three children and four grandchildren. They are members of Robinson Church of Christ.

Freeman serves as referee for area high school football games and works on-field with the Baylor football staff.

He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from Abilene Christian College and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Tulsa.

Noting his three decades of public service, Freeman said, "We must alter the growth of crime and progression of anti-social behavior into violent crime against our citizens. I need your continued support in making our county a safer place to live."



Mike Freeman

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Bush Goes Around Senate To Appoint U.N. Ambassador

UNITED NATIONS — President Bush, in order to bypass a blocked vote in the Senate by both parties for six months, invoked his Presidential powers to appoint the contrivertal John Bolton last week as the United States' new ambassador to the United Nations.

Within the hours of his appointment, the 56-year-old former arms control expert and blistering critic of the U.N. was

booed as he entered U.N. headquarters. He was also put in this place by U.S. Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

"I look forward to working with him as I do with the other 190 ambassadors," quipped Annan, during a press conference.

Just how effective will the new ambassador be without the Senate's backing as he must now negotiate on issues like Security Council reform,

world poverty, and anti-terrorism?

Veteran U.N. reporter Ian Williams had this to say on Democracy Now!: "The question is just how much negotiation you can do with John Bolton, because John Bolton is to diplomacy what Jack the Ripper was to surgery."

Bolton is known for his harsh comments against the U.N., like this one made in a 1994 speech: "The secretariat building in New York has 38 stories. If you lost 10 stories today it wouldn't make a bit of difference."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice hinted the week prior that Bolton's appointment should be hurried to prepare for a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in September.

After Bolton failed twice to win the Senate confirmation, President Bush used his Constitutional powers to appoint Bolton, which in this case was the

first time a United States president has filled the U.N. post during a Congressional recess. Bolton's time as ambassador is limited to 17 months, tied to the Senate's next election cycle.

As a result of the recess appointment, the former undersecretary of state for arms control and former senior vice president of the American Enterprise Institute will not have to directly answer for inaccurately telling Congress he had not been interviewed as a part of an investigation with the CIA related to Iraq's attempts to buy nuclear materials from Niger and about the leak of a CIA operative's identity.

Bolton said that he didn't remember being interviewed by the inspector general when filling out a Senate questionnaire in connection with his nomination. The State Department said the form will be amended.

Chinese Oil Company Blames Political Climate For Bid Withdrawal

NEW YORK — After deciding against raising its offer, a Chinese oil company withdrew its \$18.5 billion bid for an American-based energy provider because the U.S. political climate created "a level of uncertainty that presents an unacceptable risk to our ability to secure this transaction."

In a statement Tuesday, China's CNOOC Ltd. said "the unprecedented political opposition that followed the announcement of our proposed transaction was regrettable and unjustified. This is especially the case in light of CNOOC's

purely commercial objectives and the extensive commitments that CNOOC was prepared to make to address any legitimate concerns U.S. officials may have had regarding our acquisition."

CORRECTIONS/ CLARIFICATIONS

Diplomat's Title Misidentified

CRAWFORD — In the July 27, 2005, print edition of THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST, an error was made in the story "Former Ambassador Urges U.S. Officials To Leak More Memos."

The position Ann Wright had prior to her resignation from foreign service in March 2001 was that of deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, which means that she was a U.S. foreign service officer, or diplomat, not "ambassador."

This was verified on Thursday, Aug. 3.

The ICONOCLAST apologises for any confusion or harm from these misstatements

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Swinging And Thwacking Are For 'Wawsts'

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "There ain't no loud getaways."

Neighbor Bush has poked a wasp nest.

Of course all Southrens are acutely aware that the word is properly pronounced "wawst nest."

Those residents of passionless climes may have wasps, but you people only get stung.

WE have WAWSTS!

Yaller jackets and red wawsts.

Flying fire.

Territorial pestilence, like getting hit with a hot sledge hammer, the only cure for which was a fresh tobacco chew poultice and a sweet gum shade. Allied with hundred-some-odd degree sun, that tiny toxic dose could drop you like a fattening hog under a post maul.

Most people had sense enough to leave them alone.

Oh, the odd nest would run you out of a hay barn loft, but even the big, hat-sized nests that bulged from among the rafters like a grayish-white, pock-marked corpse could be readily dealt with.

Luther Hulen, my legendary grandfather, had a deft methodology that ever escaped me.

He would take a tow sack (gunny sack, burlap sack, croker sack to all you EYL types -English as a Yankee Language), enshroud both hands and slowly approach the nest.

With a none-to-swift, but quite deliberate movement, he would simply envelop the nest with the sack and pluck it from its tiny, eighth-inch pedestal that anchored it to the branch or rafter, finally it in the sack and binding it up.

Usually he'd take it down to the pool and drown the contents.

But then occasionally he'd find a greenhorn and hand him the sack.

"Here, hold this," the old man would say, then walk away leaving you with a sack full of angry insects.

To us rawboned, slack-jawed, callow youths, however, this was too simple a solution.

We sought braver, or at least more demonstrative resolution.

We went wawst huntin'!

First, you needed a fishing pole, preferably one already broken. Breaking some senior male clansman's fishing pole while fighting wawsts was sure to get you a whipping with a wet well rope.

And this adventure was going to be painful enough as it stood.

Some brave comrade among us was commissioned into the Forlorn Hope, charged with the opening attack, to take said pole and gouge the nest until it fell.

This brave soul was almost guaranteed to get stung at least once.

Wawsts may not be that smart, but they aren't that stupid, either.

At least two suicidal sorties would come off the nest and swoop straight down that pole at blinding speed until they encountered the body of this long-armed tormentor, then attack its eyes.

That's when the rest of us sprang into action.

Badminton racquets worked best.

Almost every kid gets a badminton set at some birthday or Christmas. They're cheap. They have to be set up outside. And they keep you out of your parents' hair for a while because they take at

Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



least an hour to tear up.

For those of us who were either too poor or particularly inventive in our destruction of playthings, there was the wawst paddle.

With the aid of a produce crate plank and a pocket knife, we developed our weapons of wawst destruction. We drilled a series of holes into a six-inch section at one end, then whittled the rest down to a narrow handle. The end result looked something like a fly swatter as might have been crafted by some

pre-hominid ancestor.

But it worked.

When the nest hit the ground, we would begin swinging paddle and racquet frantically at the swarm of defenders, knocking them from the air with a satisfying THWAK each time we connected.

And a sickening THWUP when we hit one of our fellows in the back of the head.

It was a dual right of passage.

We proved not only our courage and hand-eye coordination, but we learned to chew tobacco treating all the stings we suffered before clearing the air of the tormenting foe.

Of course we never killed them all.

At least half would eventually discover their nest gone and fly away to form, and defend, new colonies.

Neighbor Bush has chosen to fight his wawsts with a grand and fanciful display of swinging and thwacking.

He could have snatched the nest up quietly and carefully in submerged burlap, but he would have merely been able to call himself a deft president, rather than a WARTIME President, somehow forgetting that James Madison, who got our capitol burned, was also a wartime president.

But Bush, like us boys, saw himself as a warrior, when all we needed was an exterminator.

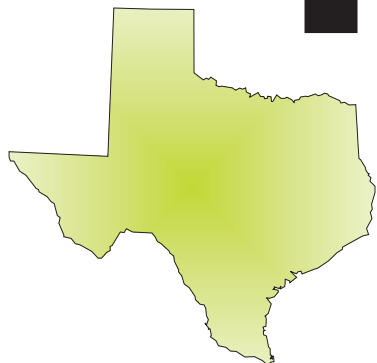
And he now stands, frantically swinging his wild badminton racquet, among the minute phantom furies that will just as surely fly away to nest elsewhere.

Of course there was another solution to the wawst nest problem, but it was a bit more serious.

A coffee can of gasoline doused on the nest dropped every single insect like a sudden hailstorm.

Ever tell you about the time I burned down the blacksmith shop?

**CINDY
SHEEHAN
IS A
HERO**



— TX Mother

— Editorial —

Speak To Cindy, Mr. President

Cindy Sheehan deserves a few minutes to speak with President Bush.

Not only is she the mother of a soldier killed in Iraq, she is an icon representing millions of Americans who have serious questions regarding the war.

Part of being a "War President" is listening to constituents at home, even to those who might not agree with policy — especially when these numbers are growing.

It is one thing to cock an ear to foreign heads of state and one's myopic inner circle. But a truly responsible President would expand his input to the working classes, would cross the political aisle occasionally, and would be eager to pay special attention to families who will suffer lifetimes of grief as a result of political decisions.

Granted, President Bush is on an extended vacation.

But life goes on.

As do casualties of war.

Cindy Sheehan has traveled far in her quest for the truth.

The world is watching.

Its citizens will draw their own conclusions.

— Written By W. Leon Smith



Editorial

OP/ED

Opinion - Columns - Letters

— Editorial —

Do Texas Teachers Care Enough To Make Bold, United Statement?

Sept. 12, 2005 — 'I'm Sick Of The Texas Legislature Day'

If there was any doubt of the state's Republican leadership plan to cripple Texas public education, this legislative session proved their malevolent intent.

The unconstitutional school finance system that courts will shut down in October without legislative repairs was sidelined in the regular session in favor of window dressing wrangling over such irrelevant issues as cheerleader pulchritude and a voucher system that Texans have repeatedly said they don't want because it will steal desperately needed school tax dollars for wealthy private schools.

Yet House Speaker Tom Craddick wasted valuable time allowing debate on a cheerleader bill he knew had no chance of passing the Senate. Then he let fanatical San Antonio Rightist James Leininger use the speaker's office to bully and intimidate decent Republicans into voting for vouchers. Texans should be proud of sensible Republicans who have more courage than their extremist leadership has voracity.

But now two special sessions have frittered away an additional \$2 million-plus trying to figure out how to raise our taxes without us finding out about it. Appraisal districts have been frantically hiking property valuations to nullify the Legislature's plans to lower the cap on the maximum cap.

Meanwhile, many Texas school districts will have to borrow money to open classes next week. They are currently unable to finalize a budget as required by state law and many have had to forego hiring needed teachers, not knowing how much money they will have since almost every financial expert has said that the legislature's bills won't provide enough money to run our schools.

If the Republican leaders were serious about improving education, they would have restored the 7.5 percent state contribution to the Teacher Retirement System. They cut the state funding to only 6 percent of the educators' salaries and took away teachers' health insurance two years ago when Texas faced a recessionary financial crisis that could have been averted had not George Bush's lush budgets gutted state reserves.

The result was an 8 percent shortfall in the TRS fund.

Now that Texas is recovering economically, the Austin political bosses have broken their promise to restore those cuts.

Rather than return the funding, the Legislature cut teacher benefits.

Additionally, the leadership threw draconian restrictions on teacher pensions, eliminating early retirement provisions and increasing the cost of retired teachers' health insurance.

The teacher raises have been whittled to a pittance, while Republican cynics threw up a smoke screen: Education Field Marshall Kent Grusendorf's silly and unworkable "merit" pay based on test scores. Grusendorf, who openly flaunts his dislike for teachers, designed the bill to punish teachers for working with students who perform poorly and reward those in rich districts that can afford smaller classes and better learning tools.

The Republican leaders will not be satisfied until they have reduced Texas public education to an impoverished labor pool of cheap workers, economically herded by a privileged, privately educated elite.

Finally, the education finance bill hinged, not on plans that would finance the best education for our children— ALL our children — but on which bill would save the most money for the wealthy, for stock brokers, lawyers, insurance companies and banks, none of whom pay even a hundredth of their fair share of taxes compared to working Texans and small businesses.

It is time for Texas educators to show some guts.

The anemic Texas Classroom Teachers Association and Texas State Teachers Association have repeatedly capitulated and retreated before the state education agency bureaucrats and the legislative mob, a Chamberlin-like back-peddling

that has cost teachers who depended on them for their living wage, their old-age security and even their self-respect.

Teachers, your career is threatened by a test that all educators know is nothing more than a political scam to make the legislature look like they are doing something for our children; you all know the damage TAKS testing is doing to your students. It is the angry topic of most teachers' lounge conversations.

You are paid less than a beer route salesman or the average secretary.

Your retirement fund is being systematically robbed.

The colleagues you have traditionally counted on to help you help our children are being chased out of the profession, and there is less hope each year of replacing them.

Today the teaching profession in Texas is 40,000 teachers short. Tomorrow will be worse.

And when will your time come, the day that you finally have to make the choice between making a decent living and your love of your job and your kids?

It is time for a job action.

Texas teachers should declare, "I'm Sick Of The Texas Legislature" Day on Sept. 12.

Call in sick.

Stay home.

No strike, no protest.

Just one day that Texas politicians will have to do without the teachers they abuse and take for granted.

Sept. 12 is a Monday, early in the year, and your students will not miss any work that you cannot easily make up. After all, the students miss far more learning time taking the TAKS test.

Let the public know that you are serious about your shoddy treatment at the hands of your state government. Simultaneously, let the public know how important you are, and what they will face without you. Talk to parents, friends, administrators about the serious problems that our politicians won't face. You may be surprised at how many will be on your side.

Teachers have been forced into a corner.

It is time to fight back.

ICONOCLAST LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor:

I am a widow of a retired Vietnam era US Navy Submarine Sailor. My son Sgt. David Simpson is in Iraq for a second time. This time, the army refused to allow my son to be discharged January 10 earlier his year. Instead he was sent back to Iraq a few days later for 18 months. In addition, he has been told that he will be given an additional 90 days when he returns to the states.

During this month of August, my son and other military personnel will not be able to take off for a 5-week vacation like Bush in Texas.

This week, 20 Marines from a Ohio Reserve unit were killed. Their parents won't able to take off five weeks from the grief they will experience. Bush saying they died for a good cause. If that is true, the why won't Bush work for the next five weeks to help resolve this mess he caused? Why doesn't some of Bush's and Cheney's younger relatives go over and give some of the military 5 weeks off from the war?

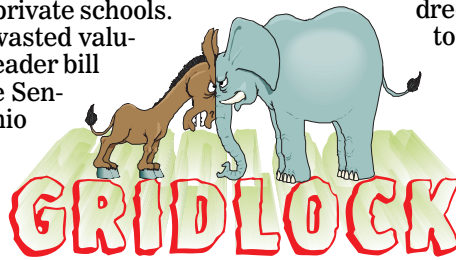
I'm just a mother praying for the conditions over there to improve for all concerned.

Dr. Barbara Allison-Simpson,
Detroit, MI

To The Editor:

Mr. Diebenow, I sit here crying as I write this. Mrs. Sheehan is absolutely entitled to call Bush to account for his

Continued On Next Page



MAILBAG

ICONOCLAST

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Continued From Previous Page

actions, as are all the bereaved families. I am monitoring your website for updates. Thank you for providing them.

Leslie Smith, Winchester, MA

To The Editor:

It's 7:47 a.m. here in Barrington, Rhode Island and my wife Ellen and our 11-year-old daughter are still sleeping after last's nights final performance the summer theatre musical my daughter was in.

And I just read the blog about Cindy Sheehan's walk to Bush's ranch. As soon as my daughter gets up I'll show it to her. I want her to learn about peaceful protest, and peace, and women like Cindy Sheehan, and how political movements can get started.

Good for you all! Tell all the walkers Rhode Island hears you. You warm our hearts. And thank you, Cindy. We care for you.

Tom Killin Dalglish, Barrington, RI
Mr. Smith,

Thank you so much for the excellent coverage by you and Mr. Diebenow of Cindy Sheehan's protest at the monkey farm. As I told Mr. Diebenow yesterday, this country needs more newspaper journalists like him and more newspapers like the ICONOCLAST. THE ICONOCLAST has just earned the title of "The Best Little Newspaper in the Country."

Most sincerely,

Nicholas Hancock, Asheboro, NC

To The Editor:

Is there any chance you could keep your updates on Cindy Sheehan and her group coming? Cin is my friend, and you posted the best pictures and the first story. I'm hoping you're just taking Sunday off and will get back to the story tomorrow.

Great job—and thanks.

Sincerely,
Tess Parry

Editor:

The most telling part of the confrontation between Texas Law enforcement and the Right wing in general is that the peaceful marchers toward the Crawford ranch vacation location of President Bush were restricted to the ditch area on the side of the county road on which they were marching. Cindy Sheehan's

purpose was to ask the president "Why did you kill my son? What did my son die for?" Last week you said my son died for a noble cause and I want to *know what that noble cause is?*" Sheehan's son was Casey, 24, killed in Sadr City, Iraq, on April 4, 2004. He was an Army specialist, a Humvee mechanic.

The five-mile march was halted by Capt. Kenneth Vanek of the McLennan County Sheriff's Office said the group was stopped because some marchers ignored instructions to walk in the ditch beside the road, not on the road. The peaceful marchers had walked only about a half-mile with four to five more miles to the Crawford Ranch entrance.

"If they won't cooperate, we won't," Vanek said.

The real question is "Are Compassionate conservatives really Americans with American Christian values?" The Texas Militia of Crawford should have escorted the peaceful marchers in to show the world what America is all about instead of the "they-we" rhetoric of the captain.

Bruce Lax, Copperopolis, CA

To The Editor:

My name is Phil Perry, I'm a Vietnam vet and I just read the report on Cindy Sheehan in Crawford. Thank you for reporting this important event. Please keep reporting. By the way, I was **VERY** insulted to hear she and her supporters were force to walk in a ditch!

Phil Perry

To The Editor:

The Gold Star Families for Peace need help. Cindy and her little group are alone in a ditch in Texas.

She and her little group went to Crawford on a brainstorm. She is serving us all by bringing attention to an issue of life and death. You understand because you have also done this. She doesn't know how dangerous the ditches of Texas can be. Think heat stroke, rattlesnakes, allergic reactions to fire ant bites, SS cars flashing by on the highway at night.

She can't back down but she needs some help.

You could rally some help. She needs a camera on her back and they should

have an ambulance parked out there.

Will you help?

Thanks for your coverage on Saturday. Please post to the web page for us.

The world is watching.

N.B.B.

Dear Editor,

THE WACO TRIBUNE-HERALD and Waco government are prostituting themselves to attract, not just a second-rate president, but one who has failed his country in a very big way. This indicates a complete disregard for those high and mighty morals both Baylor and Waco, and now the WACO TRIB, flaunt as a reason to grovel for the Bush Library.

In truth, morals have little to do with this hard swing to the right. Dollar signs seem to have much more influence on many locals than the simple truths of the Prince of Peace who told us how hard it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom, by his analogy of the camel and the eye of the needle.

It seems the Waco power brokers are turning a blind and selfish eye to the devastating debt this current government has placed on our children's future, in favor of short term local gains in prestige and profit. This may end as another huge embarrassment for the city. Another black spot on Waco's reputation by short sighted leaders in that perpetual quest for power fueled by greed.

Kay Lucas, Moody

To The Editor:

Dear Mr. President,

While you take this opportunity to rest on a 'working vacation' at the Crawford Ranch, it appears that there are still many unanswered questions and now is the time for TRUTH and JUSTICE for the American people (your employer).

You swore on the Bible before God and Country that you would uphold the United States Constitution. This is our 'contract' with you; our public servant. I guess I don't have to tell you that you're not the 'dictator' that you wished you would be, and you are in fact, answerable to the PEOPLE, the Congress, the Senate, and the Supreme Court of the United States of America.

We tried to give you sound advice, as did many others, and I recall stacks of letters and petitions that were hand delivered to the White House for your response. In fact, I believe there were over 560,000 delivered directly to the White House gates in one day alone. Now, I know that's too many to fit in your 'in-box' but, the questions are all identical so, that should make it much easier on you to reply to the American people.

I for one, would personally be willing to excuse a direct response to me, in lieu of you inviting in Cindy Sheehan and all those that accompany her currently holding vigil right outside your door there in Crawford, Texas. Cindy, and many others who have made the 'ultimate sacrifice' deserve to have answers and to know that their sons, daughters, husbands, and wives, have not died in vain.

Will you open the door and invite Cindy in and tell her why you killed her son? Why her son is dead and why you're still convinced that the troops should 'stay the course' in Iraq? How many more have to die? This is another defining moment for you in the eyes of the world, everyone is watching and waiting. Will you do the right thing?

I seem to remember you mentioning during the presidential campaign that

you sat and prayed with families of the fallen, have you now forgotten how to do that? Your actions now will speak louder than words ever will or could.

Sincerely,
Sandra

To The Editor:

Iraq: just one quick question:

Why doesn't the U.S. declare *martial law* in Iraq so it can scour the cities and countryside to "search & destroy" remaining "terrorists" without more of our soldiers dying from daily attacks and us in response killing more innocent civilians?

Peter Stern, Driftwood, TX

To The Editor:

Please cancel my subscription to the ICONOCLAST. What began as an excellent local newspaper has become a vendetta against our President and our country. My wife and I really did enjoy your paper when it was about Crawford, its schools and its people. It was well written with lots of neat photographs of local activities. We would even enjoy it now if it had some positive output, but 95 per cent of your paper is negative reporting. I realize that the minority opinion needs a voice, but you don't have to be as negative or vicious as you have become. Feel free to publish this in your letter to the editor column if you wish.

Don Corbitt

To The Editor:

Wasn't the American Red Cross a quasi-government disaster operation some years back with major offices located throughout the country? Now that that operation has basically disappeared has FEMA been able to provide a similar operation? One operation that FEMA does not do is seek blood and that has meant there has been a tremendous decrease of a volunteer blood supply for the country.

I've heard the operation of FEMA is large on PR and small in service as compared to the Red Cross, do you have any information on either? And what brought on FEMA and why was/is there an almost demise of the Red Cross? We are also desperately missing the Red Cross water safety program.

We have another, even fine a Christian organization that provided us with fun, health physical education and recreation before we had all the weight gain and avid soft living but we let it go, the YMCA had a process the provided for a good mix of spirit, mind and body. Swimming both for safety and competition in the country has suffered greatly because of the demise of the YMCA. The Red cross water safety has been badly damaged also because of the demise of the YMCA.

Wiping out the Red Cross and the YMCA was not good. You can see the distress because of the lack of coverage of disasters and the lack of physical fitness of our people.

Louis Freitag, Carbondale, IL

Dear Editor,

Governor Rod Blagojevich of Illinois signed a law meant to keep adult video games away from children.

This should take effect Jan. 1, 2006. It will bar stores from selling or renting extremely violent or sexual games to children.

Stores also will be required to label the games with content ratings and post signs explaining the arcane rating system.

The video game industry immediately

Continued On Next Page




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MAILBAG ICONOCLAST

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Continued From Previous Page

sued in federal court to block the law. They say it is a restriction on free speech.

The video game industry is arguing that the government cannot restrict the sale of non-obscene games, just as it cannot impose restrictions on books or music.

Douglas Lowenstein, president of the Entertainment Software Association stated, "It will limit First Amendment rights not only for Illinois residents, but for game developers and publishers, and for retailers who won't know what games can and cannot be sold or rented under this vague new statute."

The vague rating system that is in use was created by the video game industry. It is used voluntarily to avoid government regulation.

The fact is that the system has failed.

The argument that the games are not obscene is useless as many of these games depict scenes and actions that are obscene in any human community now on earth.

Some of these games are sexually explicit, lewd, incite or invite lustful feelings of violence, are repulsive, disgusting, extremely or deeply offensive according to contemporary community standards of morality or decency.

Now that is obscene, isn't it?

Sincerely,

Alfred Brock Canton MI

To The Editor:

As many of you may know, I took a two-week journey to Bosnia to spend time with the war orphans living in the Home For Children Without Parental Care, in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

If you have any interest in reading my description of what I found to be an extraordinary experience in my life and illustrative of our current struggles to find peace on earth you can go to <thefifthbranch.blogspot.com> It is the first and most recent post. If you have trouble logging on let me know and I will email you a copy of the essay.

Best to all, and keep the faith.

Anthony

To The Editor:

Thanks to Mr. Tenuto for pointing out that George W. Bush is an employee of the Federal Government. I haven't seen that brought up in the other papers.

As to how does an overachieving braniac conservative communicate with the aforementioned George W. Bush? I expect he knows how to say "Yessir" and mean it. That was certainly a skill that Pappy Bush appreciated.

Gus Tarin, Arlington, VA

Editor,

I see our president will be spending a lovely vacation month relaxing at the ranch in your town of

Crawford. We just happen to be a nation at war, I guess if you can't see the coffins come home on TeeVee, it isn't really happening. I know he doesn't read the papers. Our American brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers are dying in Iraq because of Bush & Co. lies and greed. How could any responsible world leader be "Gone Fishin'" for a month? Why isn't he working on a way to allow the Iraqis control of their own country? No, he's relaxing, riding around in circles on his bike for photo ops. Bush makes me ashamed to be an American.

Allegra Contreras, Monterey, CA
To The Editor:

What in the world is going on with this country? How is it that Karl Rove has not been fired yet? Bush promised on umpteenth recorded speeches and videos that he would fire the source of the leak. Luskin, the criminal defense attorney, who represents Rove admitted that Rove spoke to both Bob Novak and the Times reporter yet the White House has not taken any action. Luskin claims that Rove did not mention Joe Wilson's wife's actual name. Has Mr. Wilson multiple wives?

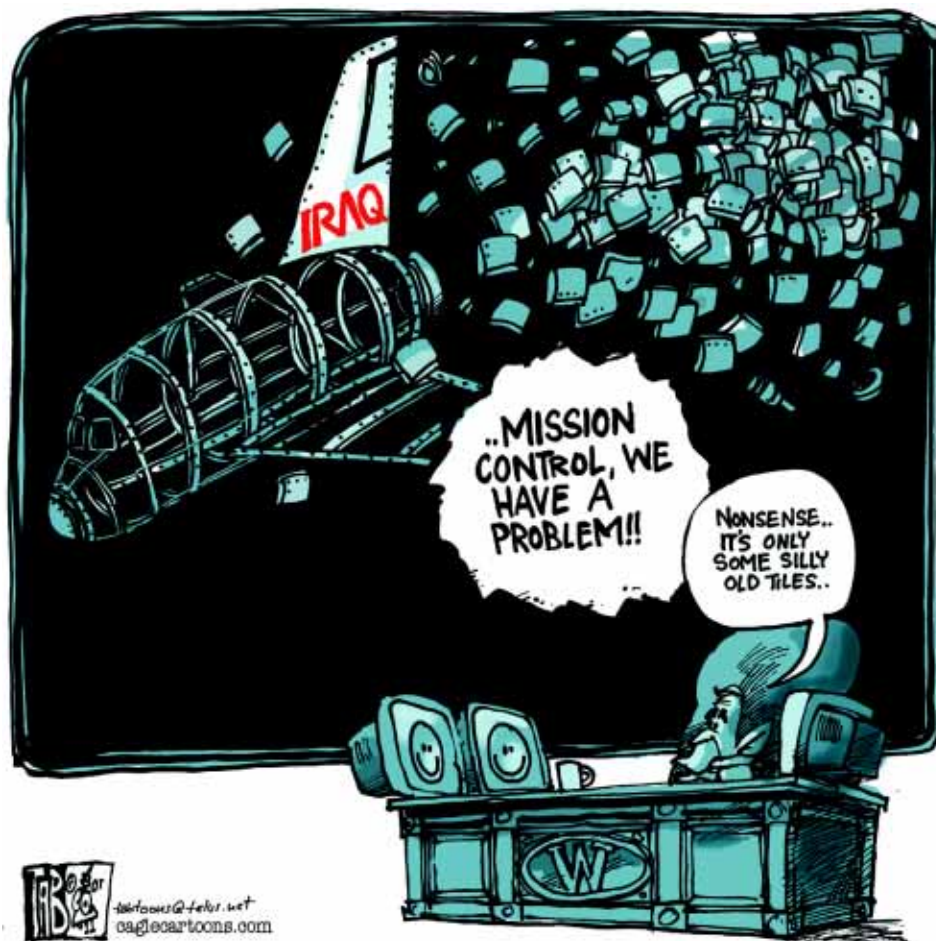
Nothing has been done about the Jeff Gannon a/k/a Jim Gucker scandal. Mr. Gannon went to the White House daily briefings for months on end before bloggers identified him as a "male escort." Being a prostitute is a criminal activity. Why are criminals being allowed direct access to the President of the United States?

Look at the economy, how much debt do we owe China and Japan? Look at the fake war in Iraq, how's that going? Seems like the situation gets worse and worse each day. If the neo-cons really loved this country, they'd demand that Bush get his act together and get this country out of harm's way. What's been done about NYC mass transit in wake of the London bombing? The budget has been cut, putting commuters in more danger than ever before.

The neo-cons have made it absolutely clear that the only thing they care about is being in power and if that destroys our economy/safety/livelihoods that doesn't matter as long as they have complete control. Neo-cons don't love America, they love power. And you know what Machiavelli said about absolute power . . .

Concetta Castro Murray, Atlantic Highlands, NJ

EDITOR'S NOTE — THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST posted updates regarding Cindy Sheehan's vigil in Crawford on Saturday, and received hundreds of emails in response. Just a few are printed here (in the event you sent one and don't see it in print). Thanks for the encouragement.



Pastors For Peace Cuba Caravan Returns, Seized Computers Still In U.S. Hands

HIDALGO — Pastors for Peace announced a victory last Monday when its 16th Friendship caravan crossed the International Bridge from Reynosa, Mexico, into Hidalgo, Texas, after returning from Cuba for their “reverse challenge” to the 60-plus year U.S. blockade against Cuba. There is still no word, however, about release of the computers seized from the caravan’s cargo.

Homeland Security officers spent nearly three hours interrogating caravan participants about the details of their trip, and two more hours searching every item of their personal luggage. In the end, nothing was seized from the caravanistas, and all of them are back home in the U.S.

“Given that the U.S. government was committed to completely stopping us this year, today really was a total victory for us,” said Rev. Lucius Walker, Jr., executive director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace. “It is clear that public outrage over the seizure of the computers last week, as well as the outrage over the items that were seized from us last year, forced the U.S. government to back down when we met them at the border today.”

One caravan stopped at the Crawford Peace House two weeks ago on its way to meet with the others which in total carried nearly 140 tons of aid for Cuba

across the U.S./Mexico border. But U.S. Customs agents, acting on orders of the U.S. Commerce Department, seized 43 boxes of aid containing toner cartridges, cables, keyboards, modems, and about a dozen second-hand computers.

Another 75 boxes of computer-related aid remain in Hidalgo, along with a small team of caravanistas organizing a national campaign to win the release of the seized aid for delivery to Cuba.

As a part of its “reverse challenge” of U.S. sanctions against Cuba, the caravan brought back these Cuban items: Bibles, given as a gift from the Cuban Council of Churches; copies of the Cuban constitution; copies of a book entitled *And You Will Be My Witnesses...* about evangelization and mission in the Cuban churches; and copies of a book about Operation Miracle: a project of the Cuban Ministry of Public Health through which Cuban doctors, working free of charge, have restored the sight of thousands of Venezuelans who had gone blind because of cataracts.

As a matter of moral principle, Pastors for Peace refuses to request or accept a license from the US government to travel to Cuba or to deliver humanitarian aid to that island nation. “Cuba is not our enemy, and Cuba is not a

threat. We refuse to be complicit with the aim of the Bush administration to force Cuba into adopting a so-called ‘free-market’ economy that would be dominated by U.S. interests,” said Rev. Walker.

Pastors for Peace is a project of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO), an ecumeni-

cal agency based in Harlem, NYC, which has been working for social and economic justice since 1967.

More information, including photos and audio clips, is available at the website of Pastors For Peace.

INFO

www.pastorsforpeace.org

House Bill Adds \$1.5 Billion For Veterans

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House recently passed, by a vote of 410-10, a bill giving military veterans’ medical facilities \$1.5-billion for the treatment of soldiers wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This appropriation was added under the 2006 Interior Department appropriations bill for federal lands and environmental programs. The U.S. Senate has favored the spending of the \$1.5 billion for this year but has yet to vote on the measure.

U.S. Representative Chet Edwards, one of the lawmakers, lauded the additional funding after a two year battle over veteran’s health care funding.

“This \$1.5 billion in new funding for veterans health care this year is a victory for America’s veterans,” said Edwards. “I have been saying for two years that it was morally wrong to cut veterans health care during a time of war. While this should have been funded well over a year ago, this funding will mean better care for veterans including returning Iraqi war veterans.”

The White House Budget Office recently admitted that its under-funding of veterans health care in 2005 caused delays in care, equipment purchases, and hiring workers.

The shortfall, however, came to light when Veterans Affairs Secretary James Nicholson told a House panel in June that his agency had underestimated the number of patients who are veterans from the two overseas wars. He said the patients would total about 103,000, not 23,553 as he previously noted.

“This additional funding is also good news for Central Texas veterans because our district should receive substantial increases in funding, which means fewer delays and better care. Also, this won’t guarantee the Waco VA will stay open, but the higher funding level takes some of the pressure off the VA to cut services and close hospitals,” said Edwards, a Democrat representing the district in which President Bush’s 1,600-acre vacation ranch lies.

Congress is making moves to appropriate additional funds to the VA for the 2006 budget, said Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas), head of the Senate subcommittee responsible for VA funding.

“We are going to do right by our veterans,” Hutchison said. “We appreciate that we have people with boots on the ground fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan today. They are fighting for our freedom, and we will never let them down.”

Peace Festival Organizing For Sept. 11 In Austin

AUSTIN — Austin Against War will be having an anti-war march and peace festival on Sunday, Sept. 11.

The marcher will gather at 12:30 p.m. at Gillis Park Oltorf and South First. The march will start at 1 p.m. and go down South First to City Hall. The festival will last until 5 p.m.

“At plaza we are inviting groups that work on peace and justice issues to have a booth. AAW will have a few speakers but mostly music,” said a spokesperson.

September 11 Families for a Peaceful

Tomorrows (www.peacefultomorrow.org) is co-sponsoring this 9-11 event.

Austin Against War meets on Mondays at 7 p.m. at 2107 San Antonio in the University Baptist Church basement, one block west of Guadalupe. AAW is a diverse and inclusive group of individuals united by our opposition to unwarranted military action, the occupation of sovereign nations, and assaults upon civil liberties and human rights worldwide.

For more information, contact Austin Against War.

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Texan Drops Second Atom Bomb On Japan

As the clouds over Nagasaki parted at a minute past noon on Aug. 9, 1945, the responsibility for bringing the Japanese to their knees and to their senses rested solely on the shoulders of a 27-year-old Texan.

The bloody 11-week battle for Okinawa, which ended in June 1945 with 49,000 Allied casualties, showed defeat had not diminished the fanatical determination of the Japanese to fight to the death. For "Operation Olympic," the invasion of the home islands scheduled for November, the Pentagon estimate of a million Americans killed and wounded was realistic if not conservative.

President Truman was in Potsdam, Germany, for a meeting with Churchill and Stalin, when U.S. scientists staged the first successful test of an atom bomb in the New Mexico desert on July 16. The Allies issued an ultimatum ten days later demanding the unconditional surrender of Japan. Receiving no response, Truman authorized an atomic attack.

Capt. Kermit K. Beahan of Houston had a front-row seat at Hiroshima on Aug. 6. From the window of an observer plane, he watched "Little Boy" incinerate the city and 92,000 inhabitants.

Beahan presumed the terrifying demonstration of the doomsday weapon had taken the starch out of the Japanese. The relief he felt at the prospect of immediate peace was mixed with disappointment at missing the opportunity to test the skills which had taken months to develop. But he doubted that he would be called upon to drop a second bomb.

The former refinery worker ranked high on the list of U.S. bombardiers. Beahan's biggest fans were the members of his B-29 crew, who boasted that he "could hit a nickel from six miles up." They nicknamed the blond Texan "The Great Artist."

Meanwhile, President Truman urged Tokyo not to ignore the horrendous lesson of Hiroshima. "If they do not now accept our terms, they may expect a rain of ruin from the air the like of which has never been seen on earth."

But the ruling clique in Japan stubbornly refused to heed the warning. The true scope of the devastation at Hiroshima was hidden not only from the people but also the parliament and most military leaders. To make the deception complete, the atomic device was vaguely described as "a special type bomb."

Enemy intransigence dictated a second dose of disaster. As "Fat Man" was being loaded, a member of the ground crew who spent his childhood in the Shantung province of China scribbled a personal message on the bomb. "To the people of Japan," he wrote with tears in his eyes, "from my friends in China."

The pilot made three passes over Kokura, the primary target, in a vain attempt to find an opening in the pea-soup overcast. Flying onto Nagasaki, he arrived with barely enough fuel for a single run.

In the second B-29 sent along on the mission, the radioman asked a NEW YORK TIMES reporter, "Think this atomic bomb will end the war?"

The journalist expressed a mutual hope just as someone shouted, "There she goes!" Plainly visible was "Fat Boy"

This Week In Texas History

By Bartee Haile



descending lazily toward its doomed destination.

In the lead aircraft, bombardier Beahan collapsed in a state of nervous exhaustion after performing his historic chore with detached efficiency.

The civilian newsman reported in a dispatch cleared weeks later for publication, "The bluish-green light illuminated the entire sky. A tremendous blast wave struck our ship and made it tremble from nose to tail. This was followed by four more blasts in rapid suc-

cession, each resounding like the boom of cannon fire hitting us from all directions."

On the ground, nearly 100,000 residents of Nagasaki perished in the explosion and subsequent firestorm. Twelve hours later, pilots could still see the raging inferno from a distance of 200 miles.

The next day the Japanese government requested a clarification that revealed its warped priorities. Did unconditional capitulation meant Emperor Hirohito had to give up his throne? Told that matter would be decided by his subjects, the Japanese formally surrendered four days later on Aug. 14.

In late September, Capt. Beahan was treated to a hero's homecoming at the Houston airport by family, friends and the local news media. His proud parents

were quoted as saying it was "wonderful he was chosen to drop the atomic bomb."

Did the celebrated Texan have any regrets? Only one, that he never got the chance to tour Nagasaki after doing his duty.

And did Harry Truman have trouble sleeping after ordering the annihilation of two Japanese cities?

"It was a question of saving hundreds of thousands of American lives," the plain-spoken ex-president said in a 1965 interview. "I could not worry about what history would say about my personal morality. I made the only decision I ever knew how to make. I did what I thought was right."

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

Before and After the A-bomb

By Susan Van Haitsma
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Just after dark on Aug. 8, 2004, I watched from the leafy banks of Barton Creek as a beautiful, ephemeral fleet of luminarias floated silently upstream from Lou Neff Point. Each handmade luminaria had been carefully launched by participants in the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Ceremony of Remembrance held in the Zilker Park Peace Grove. Although the night was still, there must have been a faint breeze out on the water that moved the glowing lanterns quietly, steadily against the current.

Across town, another image of peace appeared last year in relation to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. Installed as a permanent mosaic outside Brentwood Elementary School and created by local artist, Jean Graham in collaboration with Brentwood students and teachers, the artwork depicts a flock of beautifully diverse birds flying together around the words, "I will write peace on your wings, and you will fly all over the world."

This quotation from Sadako Sasaki, who died of radiation poisoning at age 12 as a result of the Hiroshima bombing, comes from the well-known story of Sadako's passion for life as she strove to fold the 1,000 origami cranes she believed would heal her. When she died, her friends completed the task, and a statue to Sadako's memory in Hiroshima Peace Park is strung with origami cranes that persons all over the world continue to send. Inscribed on the monument is a plea from the children of Japan, "This is our cry. This is our prayer. Peace in the world."

This month, feature articles in TIME, SMITHSONIAN and NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC magazines commemorate the 60th anniversary of the test of the A-bomb in Alamogordo, New Mexico, on July 16, 1945, its use three weeks later against the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Japan's surrender on Aug. 15, 1945. Every story credits the bomb with ending the war. Claims the TIME cover story, "An awful weapon had saved lives; a terrible instrument of war

Guest Commentary

had brought peace."

One of the SMITHSONIAN articles, entitled "It's Over!" is a compilation of readers' mostly enthusiastic accounts of where they were and how they responded when Japan surrendered. Only one response, sent by a Japanese-American, mentions effects of the atomic bombings on the people of Japan.

Another SMITHSONIAN article, adapted from the new book, *American Prometheus*, about atomic scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer, recounts the dramatic moments leading up to the test and use of the A-bomb. While recognizing the moral dilemma faced by Oppenheimer and his colleagues, emphasis is clearly on the "success" of what Oppenheimer benignly called "the gadget." Only briefly noted are the estimated 70,000 people killed instantly in Hiroshima. The article does not give a number for deaths in Nagasaki or for the tens of thousands more who died from radiation sickness.

Entitled, "Living With the Bomb," the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC story includes four dramatic photographs of nuclear weapons tests, one captioned with a description of the "terrible beauty" of the mushroom cloud. The article refrains from describing the effects of the bombs on human beings.

Only TIME magazine offers photographs and accounts of Japanese Hibakusha, survivors of the A-bomb.

Significantly, the TIME and SMITHSONIAN features discuss the critical shift in U.S. policy leading to justification of the atom bomb. Citing the massive incendiary bombing of Japanese cities during the spring of 1945 that killed an estimated 100,000 in Tokyo alone, TIME author and historian, David Kennedy concludes, "The U.S. had already crossed a terrifying moral threshold when it accepted the targeting of civilians as a legitimate instrument of warfare."

SMITHSONIAN agrees, "The

firebombings were no secret. Ordinary Americans read about them in their newspapers." Today, when ordinary Americans read about ordinary Iraqis killed by U.S. military forces, the underlying justifications that have propelled such policies for 60 years continue to give the message that the lives of Americans are worth more than the lives of others.

Americans decry terrorist bombings that target civilians. But we must also acknowledge how we intentionally target civilians through military force. On this 60th anniversary of the use of atomic weapons, will we continue to insist that bombs save lives? Or can we take an honest look at the human costs of every lethal weapon, affirm our most basic American principle that all lives have absolutely equal value, and conclude that no life can be traded for any other. Our cry and prayer, the words written on our wings and pushing us steadily upstream, must include this essential truth if we are ever to replace terrorism and militarism with lasting peace.

Susan Van Haitsma is active with Nonmilitary Options for Youth and Austin Conscientious Objectors to Military Taxation.

DARK WATER

In this psychological thriller, Jennifer Connelly stars as a recently separated mother with a new job and new apartment that is determined to put the past with her estranged husband behind her. But when the separation turns into a bitter custody battle, her new apartment seems to take on a life of its own. The ghost of a former resident adds further damage to this saga.

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Terror In A Texas Town

(with apologies to a 1958 movie of the same name)

On the surface, it appeared to be a thriving Texas town. Commerce seemed to be moving along, there was all the trappings of a community growing with the times (after all, it were 1886) — a bank; dry goods and general stores; feed and smith; a school; a church; a hotel and saloons; a fair amount of ranches and farms in the neighboring vicinity — even a duly-elected mayor and town council, such as they were.

However, in an era of scarce communication, there was a serious downside. All the good folks in and around the town was afraid to stand up to the ruthless villains who terrorized the countryside.

And there weren't nobody t'complain to.

Everyone knew that one sneer from the leader of the gang, Big Dick, meant you had but seconds left to live. Anyone whose property happened to include some sort of water run or fertile grazing land could expect a late night visit, sooner or later, from Big Dick's crew, led by Rummy Don.

This weren't gonna be no friendly visit, and the likelihood of finding talkative witnesses after the fact was plumb foolish.

And somehow there was always a bill of sale for the land and cattle that the folks who'd supposedly "skedaddled" had sold to the bank.

Folks couldn't go to Sheriff Scrubya Hemlock because he wasn't really elected by them — the position was bought for him. Like every other job he ever had. Scrubya just went around making statements that pissed folks off, such as, "You gotta go to the town's church because ah says so."

And saying how if the folks over t'Crawford don't get free elections he's gonna have Big Dick send Rummy Don's crew in to make sure there are free, democratic elections, with candidates hand-picked by Scrubya hisself.

If the town council disagreed with him, well he don't give a rat's ass. Scrubya done whatever he wanted to, anyway, and damn the result.

Take what he pulled one day when the council was off helpin' a barn raisin' with the rest of the townfolks, for instance

Scrubya wanted Nasty John, the town crackpot, to be the community agent in charge of dealing with the local Indians. He got the nickname "Nasty" not for poor hygiene, but because he was just downright mean and rotten to everyone he felt were beneath him on the food chain. As far as Indians go, Nasty John'd been heard to say they should be disbanded, that "if ten of their tepees was burned to the ground nobody would miss 'em at all."

Now, bein' as how he felt about them, everybody knowed that Nasty John would do nothing but cause trouble with those friendly Indians. The town council refused to give Nasty John the job, and the folks around the town didn't want him, either. Still, the vexatiously stubborn Sheriff Scrubya had to have his own way all the time, just like a little child, and this is what he wanted.

So, when nobody was around to do anything about it, Scrubya just up and said Nasty John is now the Indian agent, and that was that.

That's what I think the lawyers call

an "abuse of power."

Nobody dared to disagree, lest they get a sneer from Big Dick.

Saloons are supposed to be places where a man could go to talk his troubles out, even if they don't get solved. Barkeeps has long been sources cheap therapy, and saloon gals, well, practicin' the eldest profession they always provided some kind of inner relaxation along with physical relief.

But it wouldn't've done no good to go opening your mouth at Leezie's Benzine Palace. Leezie Wheat was a shrewd operator — she'd give you that smile to make you feel special, tell you what you wanted to hear, then stick the knife in to the hilt as soon as your back was turned.

To look at her you'd never guess it, looking all prim and proper. And she was educated, too, at some of the finest and fanciest schools around. But she was in cahoots with Sheriff Scrubya, Big Dick, and all those other galoots every step of the way.

Kinda funny how this little woman come to be so high on the hog with all these varmint.

Here's another funny thing — neither Sheriff Scrubya, nor Big Dick, nor Rummy Don ever went out and done any of the dirty work themselves. They always managed to dig up plenty of willing vermin to do whatever rotten job they wanted done. These were the lowest forms mankind had come up with, with the shame of it being they enjoyed their dastardly work.

So, the biggest snakes in the grass was hiding safely under their rocks whenever anything against the laws of society and civilized humanity happened in the territory.

In short, if Sheriff Scrubya decided he needed your water, then you was burned out. And probably kilt. If the Sheriff decided your grazing land was agreeably located, you was run off. Or most likely kilt.

If you needed water or grazing land, it was gonna cost you a whole bunch of cattle, or money, or, if you was married, worse.

The stagecoach getting' held up was as regular as the chime as the clock in the bank. Of course, nobody was ever caught or tried. And any strangers who rode in and didn't vamoose the next morn was either run out or gunned down on Main Street.

Whatever Sheriff Scrubya and his henchmen wanted, they took.

There weren't no use in goin' to the territorial judge for help, either, 'cause he was on the payroll and hip deep in the shenanigans.

Seems to me there was some papers back in Washington, D.C. about all men bein' free and equal and such. But in this here Texas territory there weren't nobody around that had no human being rights at all, even tho' this be the United States of America.

None of the surrounding towns and territories wanted to have any truck with Sheriff Scrubya and his lot. Hell, they was all downright frightened of his personal army, and the viciousness of their raids. On a couple of occasions they burned entire towns down to the ground — just to prove they were as



Out Of The Blue

By
**Jerry
Tenuto**

mean as could be.

For all who had heard of Sheriff Scrubya Hemlock knew he was the most powerful man in Texas.

What most folks didn't know was that the Sheriff was not really the top man. Not by a longshot.

Sheriff Scrubya took his orders from the most foul, evil, slimy bushwhacker who ever roamed the Old West. This sombitch made Nero seem like a kindly sort. The rotter who controlled the territory was Colorado Karl, a backshooter feared by every man of honor who ever dared to stand in his way — and was thusly destroyed.

The folks around the territory didn't know, of course, that kindly banker Carl Wander was in fact Colorado Karl. He had been covering his tracks, and misdeeds, for more'n 30 years. But behind his round glasses, saggy chin without a neck, and somewhat mocking smile, was a vile person, lower than the scarabs that crawled the desert sands, who would steal everything you had, from your home to your

money your freedom to your life, while laughing like a spoiled little brat.

Sheriff Scrubya, and the others, never made a move without Colorado's okay. He called all the shots.

Colorado Karl didn't give a damn whom he had to destroy to take total control of his world, and he and his band of evildoers had absolutely no care or concern for the welfare or rights of anyone else.

Sure, we've all seen this old Western movie. John Wayne rides into town, much to the chagrin of the good folks. But, within a very short time he exposes the villains, killing the worst and arresting the rest, because in reality he's an undercover U.S. Marshall. Sometimes Duke gets the girl, sometimes he gets the horse.

The entire world knows that George W. Bush has seen far too many of these movies, probably while he was wasted. *It's painfully obviously that Bush #43 thinks he is that Old West Sheriff.* Only, with the weapons and terror he and Herr Karl Rove and the rest of the West Wing Evildoers have, they've run our Nation into the ground, and misshapen the World around us.

We do not live in a 1936 Western movie. John Wayne cannot ride in and save the day. We exist on the real 21st Century Planet Earth.

The RoveBush Regime is the true Empire of Evil, and it must be stopped before it's too late!

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Pulling Down The Reading Glasses

During the early part of what I jokingly call my “Zombie Childrearing Years” (those during which I slept very little at night and auto-piloted through my days), my life was filled with pacifiers.

Although my stubborn son would never take a pacifier, his little sister (who followed him into the world after 22 months) was never without one. She was an insistent little thing from the beginning who wanted what she wanted when she wanted it, which was most often immediately. I quickly understood that my life could be somewhat more peaceful if I complied quickly with her noisy demands. I also learned that it was much easier to raise a baby who would calm herself with a pacifier. Immediately upon discovering this wonderful revelation, I determined never to be caught without that magic “all-day sucker.” I stocked a large inventory of “Nuks” (which weren’t supposed to contribute to any type of dental malformations) and spread them liberally through my life. There are very few pictures of my daughter’s first year without the accompanying pacifier. We barely knew what her mouth looked like until about the time she started to walk, got busy with other things, and went cold turkey.

There was a pacifier tied to the stroller, another attached to the car seat, one in the crib, one in the playpen, one on the bouncy seat, one on the walker, one on the swing. There was at least one pacifier in every room, one in my purse, and one in the diaper bag. It became sort of a joke, but after losing that first one temporarily, I realized it was worth the expense to have plenty in reserve.

Well, I’m certainly not raising babies any longer, but life has indeed come full circle. Now I am the one who needs an “aid” to make my life better. And heaven help me if I misplace it. I don’t need a pacifier. I need reading glasses.

My father didn’t need reading glasses until his 60s, but he was exceptional. I was hoping I would be so lucky, but no, not even close. A few years ago, I broke down and bought a pair. I have heard it said that as soon as we begin to rely on these wonderful little magnifiers, our focusing muscles relax even more and make us doubly dependent. It’s a vicious circle. Or perhaps only just normal aging. Whatever the process, I am grateful for the help.

What a modern miracle these glasses are. I didn’t realize at first that, if both eyes require the same amount of magnification, one could get away cheap and purchase glasses at a grocery or hardware or drug store — wherever they are sold. With baby boomers becoming such a large market, it seems you can buy “readers” almost anywhere.

After a year or so of relying upon reading glasses, I found that I couldn’t be without them. Interpreting small print was simply impossible on my own. First it was only the phone book that caused me to squint and move the page farther and farther away. Then it was ingredients in the supermarket. Then all other small print. (What did cave men do without reading glasses? No wonder they died so young!)

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.

And omigosh, what about putting on eye make-up or grooming one’s eyebrows! How does one see without the glasses? But how to put on make-up with glasses in the way? (The solution is, of course, the lighted, magnified make-up mirror, yet another wonderful invention).

I must have a pair of readers with me at all times. And if one does some simple, comparison-shopping, one can find this product at a reasonable price,

which is how I am able to afford so many. (I’ve always been of the persuasion that if one is good, two are better. . . and I have gone way beyond that with this glasses thing.

Some people worry about catastrophes and stock up on canned goods and bottled water. I want to know I have enough reading glasses to last a lifetime — if my source of supply should suddenly run out.

And where do you put the glasses to keep them handy? At first I tried those little neck chains from which the open glasses hang by their ear pieces. My life was simply too rough for those. I was always catching the chain on something to send the glasses flying.

Back when I had a more normal job (and wore more professional clothing than jeans and boots), I had a silver necklace made for my reading glasses. It had a big loop in front from which a pair of closed glasses hung. Pretty classy, I thought. And handy. That

worked well in an office situation, but not so great here on the ranch. And wouldn’t I look silly wearing jewelry on the job NOW? (What if I caught the chain or the hanging glasses in a piece of equipment? Not only was the necklace method impractical; it was also dangerous).

My best solution has been to perch the glasses atop my head. They are always in the same place when I reach for them, and they double as a headband, keeping the hair out of my eyes (but only until I lower the glasses to use them. Nothing is perfect). Of course, if I have forgotten to put the glasses on my head, I look pretty silly reaching up there and finding nothing. It’s become an automatic gesture whenever I must read small print or do close work; I reach up.

There have been plenty of times when I’ve walked into a store or restaurant with reading glasses perched firmly in their usual position on my head — and sunglasses still on my eyes. And I wonder why people look at me like I’m nuts.

The top of the head storage method has a few other problems, too. It won’t work in conjunction with a cap or hat. So THEN where do you put them? I have yet to solve this problem.

Sometimes the glasses do fall off. (When I throw back my head to swallow vitamins each morning, if I don’t remember to grab for them, I often send my spectacles flying backwards. Most often they survive, but occasionally there are casualties.

There is, of course, normal wear and tear as well. After months or years of use, the plastic may simply become brittle or break. Screws can loosen, and the glasses have been known to stretch to the point that they are only good for parts. (I have a whole box of parts). And one can only wear all-plastic frames if one hopes to keep one’s hair. Forget the metal ones. Ouchy! — Learned this the hard way trying to be more stylish. Forget it.

Then there’s the constant danger of running into hanging planters, tree branches, and sloping attic walls while storing glasses atop one’s head. I have destroyed several pairs of readers in this manner. (Not to mention that this usually causes pain in varying degrees). I never seemed to run into walls or hanging obstacles before I wore glasses on my head. Or at least I don’t remember doing so. (Perhaps if one runs into enough things with one’s head, it affects memory. This theory could explain a LOT).

Heaven forbid I forget my reading glasses or break a pair — without another waiting in the wings to be called into service, like an eager understudy. So, like the pacifiers of my Zombie Childrearing Years, I have at least one pair of readers in each truck, one in my purse, one in each room. There is a pair by my computer, one by each phone, one at the sewing machine. There are reading glasses everywhere. Kim alerts me when she fills the display with new glasses at Ace Hardware. I buy in bulk (there and anywhere else the prices are good), and squirrel away the extras like precious cargo until need arises.

Life has indeed come full circle.

Forget Meteors. Giant Rabbits World’s Greatest Threat

As a journalist, I’m trained to recognize even the most subtle signs of trouble.

A misspoken word.

A reluctant glance.

A horde of slobbering rabbits.

Thanks to my training and experience — and several highlighted newspaper clippings sent in by concerned readers — I have painstakingly pieced together what I, as a member of the conservative media, believe is undeniable evidence that rabbits are planning to take over the world. How? By radiating themselves and producing offspring roughly the size of Volkswagen Beetles. You’re probably thinking this could never happen.

At least not outside of New Jersey.

But at this very moment, according to a recent BBC report, rabbits living near a nuclear plant in Caithness, Scotland are under surveillance after EPA officials discovered what they described as “bunnies hopping in and out of solid waste pits.” In addition, investigators found rabbit feces that, for months, had been mistaken for “small piles of Trix cereal.”

According to the report, the UK Atomic Energy Authority has been told to use any means necessary to fix the problem and keep rabbits from burrowing into the waste pits. Some biologists, like Dr. Yam Higginsworth, warn it may already be too late.

“In my opinion, come spring, the surrounding woods will be littered with rabbit pellets the size of basketballs,” Higginsworth predicted. “From an ecological standpoint, this is not good.”

The parliament of neighboring England has demanded the Scots formally present a plan for dealing with the threat before the Queen’s scheduled annual holiday in the Scottish Highlands this October.

“Suffice it to say, the Queen of England will not vacation anywhere there is a chance — however remote — she will have to fight a giant rabbit,” warned a stone-faced Tony Blaire, who added: “However, I’m sad to say Charles and



By
Ned
Hickson
Siuslaw News

Carmilla’s tickets are non-refundable.”

In a statement issued from the White House, President Bush expressed his concern, as well as his willingness to discuss how best to deal with the problem, based on his past experience dealing with, “What he still believes were giant jack-o-lobes,” said White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan. When asked if there was any evidence to support the President’s claim, McClellan said there wasn’t, but that the CIA was in the process of obtaining a postcard from Texas depicting a man riding a jack-o-lope on the high plains.

In an awkward moment, one member of the press corps asked if a twenty-five-cent postcard was really enough evidence to justify the President’s claim, to which McClellan retorted, “Are you new here?”

Residents of Scotland see the world’s escalating concern over the threat of giant, frequently fornicating radioactive rabbits as unfounded. As one man outside of a pub in Edinburgh put it, “I’ve been seeing giant rabbits around here for years.”

On Monday, the first draft of Scotland’s plan is expected to be completed.

“We have every confidence that Scotland will devise a comprehensive, effective plan to deal with this situation,” said Blaire. “But even if they don’t, we’re still sending Charles and Camilla.”

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

The Hanging Tree

A Look Back At Central Texas History

In early November, 1987, this writer interviewed Earl McKinney, an 85-year-old retired farmer and rancher, who, shortly before his death, provided an historical account of what is known in Central Texas as “the hanging tree.”

The tree is located about 28 miles from Crawford, near the northeastern portion of Coryell County.

Here are excerpts from that interview:

TURNERSVILLE, Texas — It was back in the late 19th century and early part of the 20th century, when King Cotton brought people from the Deep South into Texas, that some areas of Central Texas became settled.

There were times back then when law and order were handled on the spot — especially when it came to dispensing with horse thieves.

Earl McKinney recalls some of the stories told him by his father and some of the events occurring in this portion of Central Texas.

McKinney, an 85-year-old retired farmer and rancher, says that his family moved from Mississippi to McGregor in the late 1800s, and later journeyed and settled in the Turnersville area. He was two years old at the time, and was reared there until he married.

An old tree, known by two nicknames: “the lone tree” and “the hanging tree,” was located near his home. In fact, when he went to the road to get the mail each day, he was greeted by the shade of that tree nearby.

McKinney says that the liveoak, which still stands, gets its “lone tree” label because for a long time it stood out by itself when viewed from a distance. It still does, just not as much so, be-

The Trenchwalker

By W. Leon Smith



cause other trees are now growing in its vicinity.

The stately oak was also called “the hanging tree” because of an incident which occurred there over a century ago.

“My father said it was Coryell County’s first courthouse,” said McKinney. “A trial was held right there for a man who was caught stealing horses. He was hanged right there on that tree.”

Although McKinney could not provide the exact year of the hanging, he said that the tree is well known in Coryell County and that the mob probably gathered and performed the lynching about 125-130 years ago.

“In my earliest days — back in the horse and buggy days — we would drive under the tree and my father would show me the rope hanging there,” he said.

McKinney said that it was a few years later when he and his parents moved to a farm across the road from the “hanging tree,” and one could still at that time see about two feet of rope hanging down from around the branch of the tree where the hanging had taken place.

“Years and years and years it stayed there, and finally one morning I went up to the mailbox — I was just a big old kid — and was waiting for the mail to



STILL STANDING — The liveoak known as both “the lone tree” and “the hanging tree” is located about two miles from Turnersville (or about 28 miles from Crawford). In this 1987 photo, Earl McKinney, standing on Highway 182, points to the tree that has been witness to decades of history. The barn (left, background) contains wood from a porch on which a man was murdered, according to McKinney.

come by. That night it had come a little rain and right smart wind. That rope had hung there so long till it finally wore in two on top, and rotted, and it was laying on the ground under that tree. Well, I picked it up, and I think so often how wonderful it would have been if I had the forethought and took that rope and put it in a shoebox and kept it till this very day, but you don’t have that kind of forethought, especially at a young age; but I’ve thought many a time that I wished I would have picked it up and kept it.”

McKinney said that as a youth he participated in cattle drives from Turnersville to nearby Clifton.

He said that this type of cattle drive took place mainly around 1915-1919.

“I don’t think we hauled them this way after 1920, because they began to haul cattle in trucks then.”

McKinney said his father farmed about 150 acres of land in the Turnersville area, but the son’s specialty was primarily with tending cattle.

“In 1904, my father came to Turnersville,” said McKinney. “I was born in 1902, so I was two years old when my father came here.”

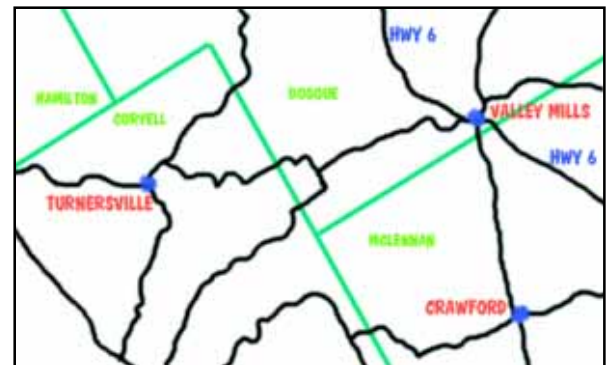
On being 85 years old, McKinney says that 85 is a lot of years.

“If I wanted to talk to someone in the old Turnersville community who I grew up with about something that happened back long years ago, there’s not one living that I could go to. My thoughts go back to these things, and I have a fairly good recollection. I think of a lot of things that many people wouldn’t, because we all see things a little differ-

ently.”

McKinney says that the “hanging tree” has had a couple of close calls over the years.

“Back in the late-to-middle 1920s during the droughts, an old boy hauled water and watered this tree. When they started to build this road through here, the contractor started to move the tree. When the old boy got through with him, the contractor decided he’d better leave

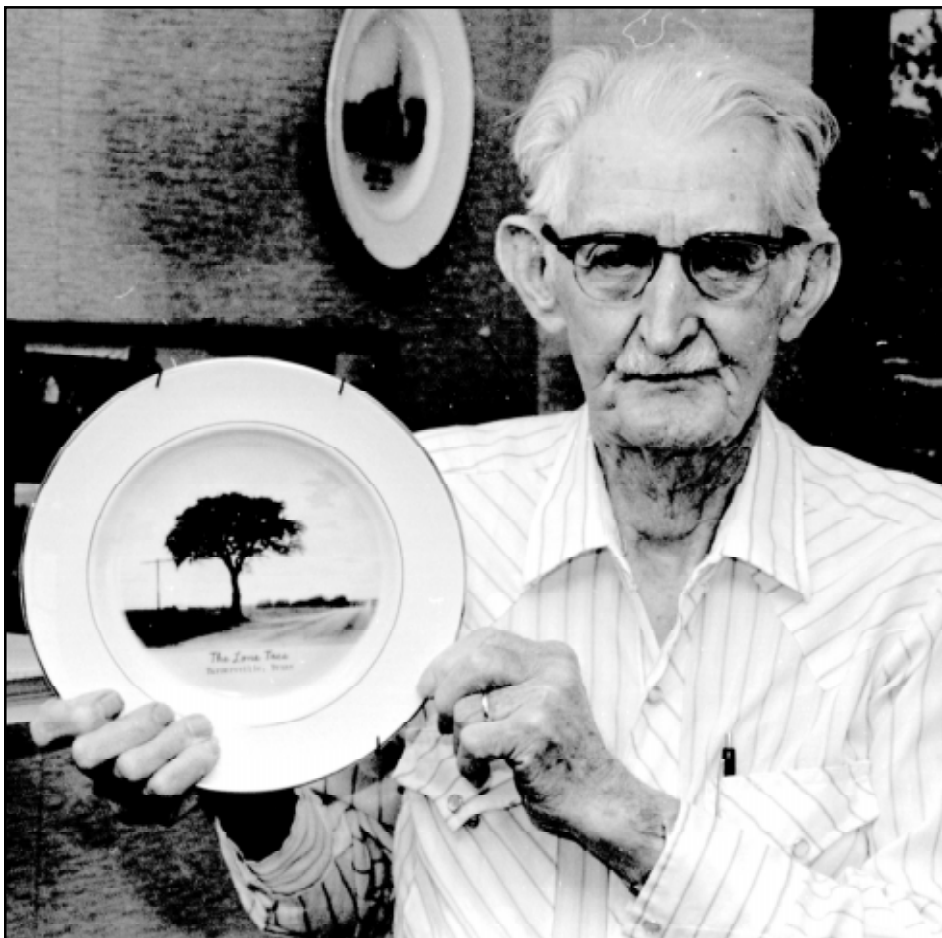


the tree alone.”

When standing under the “hanging tree” one can see a weathered barn in the distance. McKinney told an interesting story about the lumber used in the barn.

He said that there was an old house which sat just a little ways north of the current site of the barn. “This was during the early, early days — during the desperado days. A fellow lived there — he and his wife — and this man, a good old fellow, knew something on these desperados...and they knew he knew it. They set fire to that house one night, set it on the porch. And when the man came out to put the fire out, they killed him. The wife saw that something had to be done. She couldn’t let him lie there and be done. She couldn’t let him lie there and be done.”

Continued On Next Page



COMMEMORATIVE PLATE — Earl McKinney shows his copy of a commemorative plate which has illustrated on it a depiction of “the lone tree.” Note the old-style telephone pole to the left of the tree.

• THE HANGING TREE ... Continued From Previous Page

burn, so she put the fire out with a crock of milk. Well, it left that porch charred.

"When in my childhood days, we played around that old house and there that charred floor was. Well, Mr. Sharp tore the house down, and built that barn. We were just little kids, playing around there and he was building on a grainery. He told us, he said, 'Boys, come here. I'm going to put some history in this.' He had some of those charred planks and they're right in that barn today. He put them there."

Reminiscing, he said of area pastures, "I've seen it when it was broomweeds and prickly pears. People burned the pears and cattle ate them, then they put sheep on it and killed out the broomweed, and it's a good pasture now."

The retired rancher explained that there was somewhat of a dividing line between the cotton farmers to the south and the Norwegian immigrants to the north on Highway 182.

"They (the Norwegians) started in the valley mostly," he said. "I don't know of too many Norwegian people who were up on the mountain. They started in the valley here, all across through Old Norse, through there. As you go down the mountain (about halfway between Turnersville and Crossroads), you start seeing Norwegian settlements."

McKinney said that there was a difference between the lifestyles of those living in cotton country and the early Norwegians.

"The Norwegians were a whole lot more prosperous people than those back there on the black land, the cotton farmers," he said. "The Norwegians diversified. They all had a few sheep and a few cows, and when they came here they saw opportunities that a person who was raised here couldn't see. The Germans, too, saw opportunities that we raised here didn't see. They brought ideas with them from the old country, which was asset to them in Bosque County."

McKinney readily acknowledges that those less complicated days are "gone forever," but that the United States is currently entering a crucial time of change, what with the stock market fluctuations hammering away at society and religious shifts grabbing the attention of Americans.

"We're in a changing situation, with a changing government, a change in plans," he said. "It's going to have to go through a transition period, and, as I think of it, every phase of human life is in a phase of transformation. Religious systems are crumbling. In my thinking, some of it needed to crumble. Some of it wasn't of God, so He brought down some confusion which has contributed to its crumble."

Comparing current times to the Great Depression, McKinney said, "In a way it compares, but it lacks a whole lot of being the same. There was no Social Security back then, and there weren't as many people. They would have starved to death back then had it not been for the farming



DEATH BRANCH — The limb of "the hanging tree" from which the rope dangled is the "u"-shaped crook (middle of photo on the lower large branch). This is where the rope hung for years and years.

class of people. We had more food than ever in our lifetime."

"And," he continued, "at this time there are huge corporations, and Social Security, and different phases of life. It makes it almost a completely different situation, only poverty's going to hit again."

"I hope a depression doesn't set in, but I wouldn't be surprised if one did."

Returning to days of yesteryear,

McKinney says he thinks often of the tall, lonely tree next to the road — somewhat as a symbol, rekindling thoughts of his past, as it brings back vivid memories of carefree times as a youth and hardworking times as a young adult.

He says that when he occasionally travels back to the area where he grew up, it's easy to look about him at some of the things that have changed and at some which remain the same.

Daylight No-Savings Time

Talk about bad timing, psychologically. Much of the country has been suffering from a heat wave this summer. We've witnessed triple digit temperatures, melting parking lots, and record air conditioner use. So, what does Congress do to cool us off? They pass a bill that would add four additional weeks per year of extra sunshine. Couldn't they have passed this act during the dark and cold winter?

What they're doing as part of the new Energy Bill is extending Daylight Saving Time. Instead of starting it on the first Sunday in April and ending it on the last Sunday in October, from now on it will begin on the second Sunday in March and end on the first Sunday of November. Why? On the surface, it looks like a band-aid and a public relations move. Below the surface, same thing. Since so many experts say this won't really save any significant energy or money, proponents are talking about other reasons we should be excited about the Daylight Saving

change. One of the sponsors, Edward J. Markey (D-Mass), said, "The beauty of the bill is that it just makes everyone feel sunnier." I have the feeling that a lot of people this summer feel sunny enough without it.

I've always believed that we do Daylight Saving Time backwards. When do we wish we had more sunshine, in the summer or in the winter? When do we come home from work or school in the dark, in the summer or the winter? Winter is when we could use a little more sunshine, not summer. Why isn't anyone talking about sticking those weeks in the winter, when we have those cold, depressing sunsets at 4:30 in the afternoon?

One positive thing about the change is that Daylight Saving Time used to foolishly end right before Halloween, forcing kids to trick-or-treat in the dark. Now, it will happen after they get dressed up and ring neighbors' doorbells. I'm all for that. But this could have been accomplished just by moving the date a few days, not

by adding two weeks.

Speaking of children, guess who's against adding these weeks? The National PTA and other educational groups fear that the additional darkness in the mornings created by the extra-sunny afternoons will force kids to wait for buses or walk to school in the dark. These groups fear that kids and darkness are a bad combination.

The airline industry objected to the additional weeks, saying it would disrupt schedules and cost millions of dollars. I hope this won't cause the airlines to cut back on still more frills. What are they going to get rid of next? The rough Kleenex in the bathroom?

Since it's not certain at all that the extra daylight weeks will save much energy, and since so many people are against it, who is behind this movement? Is it the Short Sleeve Shirtmakers Union or the sunglasses lobby? Is it the powerful sunscreen cartel?

One view is that by throwing in the



Modern Times
By
Lloyd Garver

Daylight Saving Time clause and making folks smile at the idea of more sunshine, the lawmakers are distracting us from the more important aspects of the bill. This is the height of cynicism, like believing that President Bush announced his choice for the Supreme Court just to push all the Karl Rove investigation stories off the front page.

So, let's take a little look at it. The Energy Bill is 1,724 pages long, which seems like a huge waste of energy — how many lawmakers do you think read every page? It does not require automakers to improve the fuel efficiency of cars, so the gas-guzzler will remain the single biggest oil user. Senator Pete Domenici (R-N.M.), who championed the bill, acknowledged that it will not lower gas prices or affect oil imports in the short term, but feels we'll see the benefits in five or ten years. Ten years? And while it authorizes \$10 million to encourage people to ride bikes to work, it provides \$12 billion in tax breaks for energy companies. The good news is, with all the extra sunshine, maybe it will throw some light on the kinds of bills Congress passes.

Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier" to "Home Improvement." He has also read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the "Modern Times" column for CBSnews.com's Opinion page and can be reached at lloydgarver@yahoo.com

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Iconoclast To Be Posting Cindy Sheehan Updates On <www.iconoclast-texas.com>

CRAWFORD — THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST, by popular demand, has begun filing frequent updates on its website, <www.iconoclast-texas.com>, regarding the vigil taking place near Crawford. The banner leading to the updates is called "Cindy Watch."

Cindy Sheehan on Saturday made a journey to Crawford to discuss face-to-face with President George W. Bush the death of her son in Iraq last year.

THE ICONOCLAST was there when marchers made a trek toward the Bush ranch and the newspaper reported on its website a play-by-play of what happened.

Normally, THE ICONOCLAST updates its website weekly, to correspond with the weekly publication of its print edition.

"We felt that in this case it was warranted to provide more frequent updates," said publisher W. Leon Smith.

He noted that associate editor Nathan Diebenow was in the field on Saturday, but that Sunday was mainly spent preparing the print edition for publication to meet established deadlines and making adjustments on the website to better accommodate the update section.

"Please remember that we have a very small staff," said Smith, "but we are willing to do what we can to get the news of Ms. Sheehan's quest published online as early and as frequently as we can, as news happens."



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