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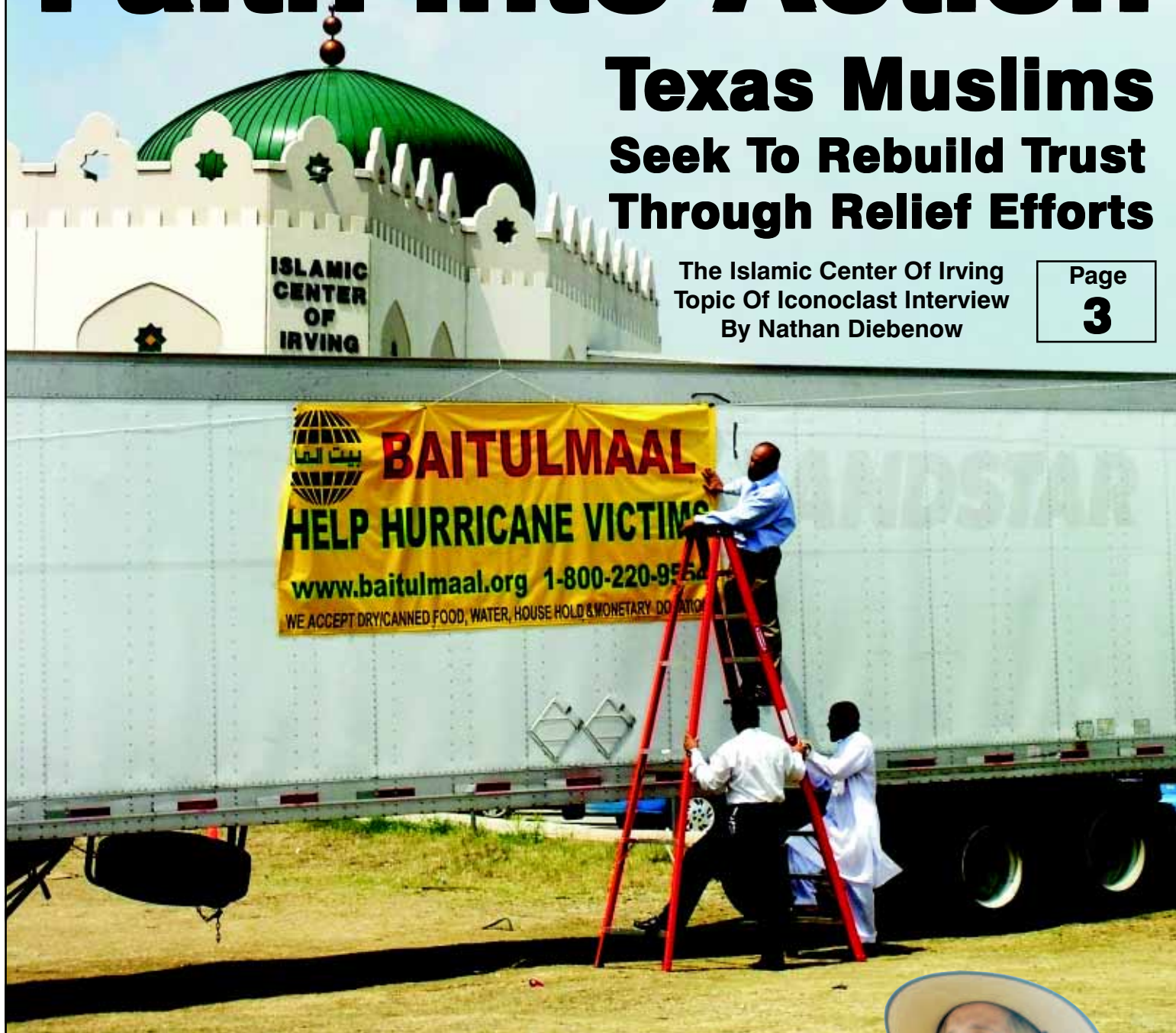
# The Lone Star ICONOCLAST

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ASSIGNED TO HELP — Shoaibk Khalid, president of the Islamic Center of Irving (top of ladder), Ali Khan, ICI office personnel (bottom, left), and Syed M. Qadri, ICI worshiper (bottom, right), help place a sign to guide people who wish to donate materials for hurricane relief at the Islamic Center of Irving last Friday.

— Photo By Nathan Diebenow

## CINDY SHEEHAN BIDS FAREWELL TO CRAWFORD



“I never thought when I started here that I would be sad to leave, but I am. We outstayed President Bush.”

— Cindy Sheehan

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# Texas Answers Call To House Hurricane Victims

CRAWFORD — Texas has taken in more than a quarter million victims since the deadly Hurricane Katrina swept its waters through the Gulf Coast last Monday. More survivors are coming, but room is running out, said Gov. Rick Perry Saturday.

"Texas is committed to doing everything it can to help our neighbors from Louisiana, but we want to make certain that we can provide them with the medical care, food, shelter, safety, education and other services they need to start getting their lives back together," Perry said in a statement. "Local officials are beginning to notify us that they are quickly approaching capacity in the number of evacuees they believe they can assist."

Survivors of the storm were continuing to be bused in to Texas over the weekend.

The Astrodome in Houston is housing about 18,500 survivors. Houston, Dallas, San Antonio and other smaller cities have taken in more than 120,000 refugees, according to the governor's office. Hotels and motels have another 100,000 people, and more are presumably located in churches and private residences.

The death toll from Hurricane Katrina's wake numbers in the thousands, said Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt said Sunday. When asked if the total dead was in the thousands, Leavitt told CNN's "Late Edition," "I think it's evident it's in the thousands."

"It's clear to me that this has been sickeningly difficult and profoundly tragic circumstance," Leavitt said.

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff didn't mince words on "Fox News Sunday" when he said that more gruesome scenes from the hurri-

cane ravaged landscape of the Gulf Coast are coming for which the country must be prepared.

"We are going to uncover people who died, maybe hiding in houses, got caught by the flood. ... It is going to be about as ugly of a scene as I think you can imagine," said Chertoff.

New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin said that the suicides have also risen, and on NBC News on Sunday called the situation there "a tragedy, a disgrace."

All last week the media coverage has depicted the anarchy in the streets of the cities and towns affected by the storm. Images have shown poor, black people primarily in scenes of death, desperation pleading for help on tops of buildings and camped under the Superdome, and looting stores for the food, water, and merchandise.

The scene has not been described without mentioning violence — shootings, rape, and other forms of physical harm — which has slowed efforts in the poorest neighborhoods. Such media depictions and the slow relief efforts have re-fueled debate on racial injustice in the South.

The poor in New Orleans, one of the poorest, blackest large cities in the United States, for instance had a difficult time evacuating the city because one-third of blacks there and more than half of the people in poor neighborhoods do not own cars. But, more than 90 percent of white adults own a car.

These depictions of poor, blacks have cause criticisms to fly, such as from Rapper Kanye West who went off script during a hurricane benefit show aired live last Friday on the East Coast on

NBC, MSNBC, CNBC and Pax.

"I hate the way they portray us in the media. If you see a black family, it says they're looting. See a white family, it says they're looking for food," West said, before stating that governmental agencies were deliberately delaying aid and that President "George Bush doesn't care about black people."

NBC, a unit of General Electric Co., later issued a statement distancing the company from West's remarks.

President Bush did admit that government relief efforts were "not acceptable," and toured New Orleans, La., Mississippi, and Alabama by helicopter and by foot. Bush pointed out that while the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 and its aftermath was as serious as Hurricane Katrina, "New Orleans is more devastated than New York was."

The Army Corps of Engineers reportedly estimated that it may take as much as three to six months to drain the billions of gallons of water in New Orleans. The survivors there have been wading around in the water mixed with oil, chemicals, feces, and other hazardous substances.

As the evacuation process of New Orleans was nearing completion last weekend, Bush called for more than 7,000 active duty forces to the region. National Guard troops totaling 10,000 are off to the Gulf Coast. About 40,000 total Guards are in the Gulf Coast region.

Bush on Friday shrugged off critics that claimed that the lack of response from the U.S. government was due to the heavy troop deployment in Iraq.

"We've got plenty of resources to do

both," Bush said. "It's going to require the attention of this country for a long period of time. This is one of the worst natural disasters we have faced, with national consequences. And therefore, there will be a national response," he said.

Americans around the country have felt the impact of Hurricane Katrina in their pocket books as the storm took down oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico and refineries and pipelines along the coast. In the process, President Bush okayed the use of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and waved some environmental regulations on gasoline to make more fuel available for domestic use and foreign importation.



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## Two Ohio Election Workers Indicted For Improper Conduct in Recount

CLEVELAND — Two Cuyahoga County elections officials were indicted last week on charges of not handling ballots correctly during the recount of the 2004 presidential election.

Kathleen Dreamer, manager of the board's ballot department, and assistant manager Rosie Grier, were each charged with six counts of failing to follow Ohio laws relating to how ballots are selected and reviewed during a recount.

Some of the charges carry a maximum of 18 months in prison.

Erie County Prosecutor Kevin J. Baxter conducted the investigation.

Toledo lawyer Richard Kerger, who witnessed the recount on behalf of two third-party candidates, charged that election officials failed to randomly select precincts that were supposed to be counted by hand and compared against ballots tabulated by a machine.



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# Faith Into Action

## Texas Muslims Seek To Rebuild Trust Through Relief Efforts

BY NATHAN DIEBENOW  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

IRVING — Imagine sitting in church. It's a pleasant, sunny morning. The birds are chirping outside. Junior is happily sleeping, and the pastor is giving his sermon.

The pastor says that according to religious scripture and tradition, the congregation must lend aid to those in need. Today's tithes are going to those affected by a hurricane swept through New Orleans earlier in the week.

The pastor explains that 80 percent of the city is underwater. Tens of thousands of homes are flooded or gone. Over a million people evacuated the area. The death toll is rising. It could be worse, though, since you last saw coverage on television.

You notice a few new faces sitting near you. They are refugees displaced by the hurricane living with relatives. The pastor urges everyone there to donate money, food, clothing, supplies, and/or labor for the victims. A member has already volunteered to meet with city officials to assess the situation at one of the shelters.

Then, you hear a computer sound. A beeping. There it is again! You look around. Oh, it's just yet another reporter taking pictures of you and everyone with this digital camera. Nothing new.

Then, all of a sudden in the same sermon, the pastor says the religion followed by this church and its congregation does not condone terrorism.

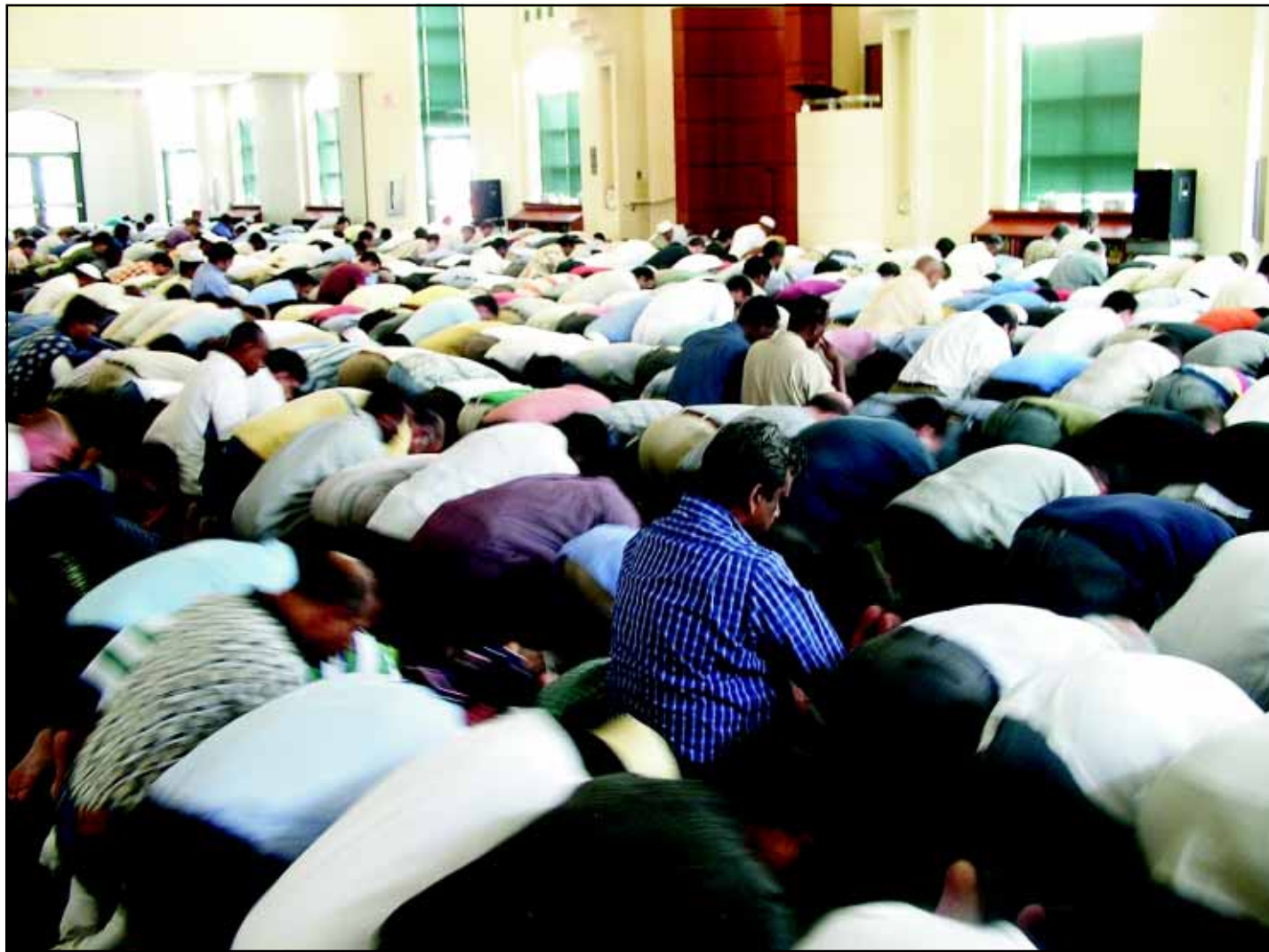
You may think this comment is weird, but it's nothing new for an American Muslim.

### Smile For The Camera

Friday was "Hurricane Relief Day" at mosques around the country. At the Islamic Center of Irving, an 18-wheeler truck was set up in the parking lot to collect donations for hurricane victims. The same group that led a tsunami relief effort in Sri Lanka — Baitulmal — is helping this effort by gathering and distributing millions of dollars in aid. The Islamic Center of Irving is doing what it can for the victims, said Shoaib Khalid, Islamic Center president.

The practice of serving the less fortunate is an Islamic tradition that dates back 1,400 years, insists Dr. Jason Black, 33, outreach director at the Islamic Center of Irving.

"It's just part of our religion to help neighbors in need no matter what their faith is," said Dr. Black, a self-described Army brat who converted to Islam 12



years ago. "For me as an American, it makes me sad that people are scared of Muslims."

The new Irving mosque topped with a green dome is located between a fire station and State Hwy. 183 close to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. It opened last year to accommodate a segment of the estimated 150,000 Muslims that live in the DFW area that once packed inside a local mall like sardines. Between 1,700 and 2,000 worshipers came from all over the Metroplex to ICI for last Friday's services, guessed Khalid.

Dr. Black explained that the outreach effort of ICI has increased since Sept. 12, 2001, when a gunshot was fired through the window of the Center. Nobody was hurt, "thankfully," he said.

"We're just becoming more conscious now as a community, that outreach is something that we should have been doing 20 years ago because people just don't know the differences between Muslims and other faiths," said Dr. Black. "They think its eastern, and they have no idea that we believe in Jesus, Abraham, and Moses. They don't feel that connection at all, so we're trying to let them know who we are and what we're all about. It's going well. So far, so good."

Members and worshipers at the Islamic Center have played a more dominant role in Irving in the past year since the building opened. In addition to helping to defeat a measure to allow beer and wine sales in the area, the Center

sponsored meet-the-candidates nights last spring and made it a point to hold open houses with neighbors and community leaders. Members even paid their respects to the Holy Family of Nazareth Catholic Church down the road after Pope John Paul II passed away.

### Another Opportunity

Helping the victims of Hurricane Katrina is the latest opportunity for Muslims in America to show compassion for their neighbors and to fight the stereotypes that haunt their community.

In late July, an independent body of Islamic scholars called the Fiqh Council of North America issued a fatwa or Islamic religious ruling that denounced terrorism. The fatwa came in the wake of the July 7 subway bombings in London that have only recently been found to be inspired by Al-Qaeda.

Nihad Awad, the Council on American-Islamic Relations Executive Director, issued a statement on behalf of his Muslim civil rights group in support of the fatwa, saying: "United, we can confront the terrorists and frustrate their goal of sparking an apocalyptic war between faiths and civilizations ... The presence here today of American Muslim leaders indicates the willingness of our community to strengthen national security and to work with policy-makers to gain victory over this international menace to humanity."

At the same time, CAIR released a 30-second public service announcement



Iyas Maleh,  
CAIR Dallas Chapter President

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“Not in the Name of Islam” in English, Arabic, and Urdu for its campaign aimed to separate the faith of Islam from the violent acts of a few Muslims.

Over 120 Muslim organizations in America endorsed the anti-terrorism fatwa, but Muslims in the United States are not bound to follow it for a number of reasons. Since there is no Islamic legal system of courts here, fatwas in general is advisory in nature. Muslims are also allowed to seek guidance from other Islamic religious scholars

Because Islam has no centralized governing body or singular interpreter of religious law like Catholicism has with a pope, Muslims seeking religious legal guidance rely on these religious scholars. These independent scholars are encouraged to offer their opinions and issue fatwas on a range of modern subjects not found or explained in Islam’s holy scriptures, the Qur’an, which is the revealed word of God that was transmitted to Mohammad by the arch-angel Gabriel over a period of 23 years; and the Sahih Muslim and the Sahih Bukhari, which are the authentic sayings and practices of the prophet Mohammad.

Fatwas can be overruled, so to speak, by other fatwas that hold different legal opinions on the same subject; however, this usually happens when more Muslims support the fatwa that is more authoritative. In the end, a Muslim is to decide for himself.

As Dr. Samir AbedRabbo, 49, a Palestinian-American and international law consultant, explained, “If that fatwa is issued, and that fatwa is received well with other jurists or other legal scholars, that fatwa gains momentum and becomes a part of Islamic jurisprudence.

“As an analogy, let’s say that a federal court judge in the United States issued a ruling,” he continued. “If that ruling gains recognition and is applied in various jurisdictions in the United States, sooner or later it might find itself in the working of American jurisprudence because if it came out of a federal court in Texas, somebody might use it in a federal court setting in California or Michigan and therefore that ruling becomes acceptable. The same thing with fatwa.”

Iyas Maleh, CAIR Dallas Chapter President, said that the decentralized Islamic legal system has its pluses and minuses.

“The goodness I see in it is that you don’t have a single individual as an authority over everybody, between you and God. I can read the Qur’an. I don’t



Dr. Samir AbedRabbo

have to listen to you say this is how you follow God. I have the freedom to follow God in the way I feel comfortable,” he said. “The con is, I guess, that if people don’t have the education, don’t have the background, the knowledge, and are interpreting without understanding, that’s the danger. Some people might not seek other opinions. They say, ‘I know better and I’m going to do whatever I want.’ That’s not right. That’s not being a good Muslim.”

**To Fatwa, Or Not To Fatwa**

Despite the anti-terrorism fatwa’s intentions, critics have come forward from inside the Muslim community and outside.

Dr. Black said that the anti-terrorism fatwa was necessary to reiterate Islam’s foundations in peace and non-violence to the public at large and to undereducated Muslims.

“The fatwa wasn’t like we’re waiting to find out what the real answer was. Muslims have known for 1,400 years that these acts of violence are just not appropriate. They are not Islamic behaviors, but I think it did help non-Muslims and maybe a small percentage of Muslims who are not aware of how they should be,” said Dr. Black.

“I think its important for the American society at large to hear it from a religious authority in the U.S.,” said Maleh, CAIR Dallas Chapter President.

Other Muslims have said that this fatwa is unnecessary because one only has to read Islam’s holy scriptures to understand the true intentions of the religion.

“I personally think that there is no need for a fatwa because the Qur’an

is very clear on the subject. The Qur’an says that killing an individual, a person, any human, non-Muslim, or Muslim for no reason is as if you were killing humanity as a whole,” said Dr. AbedRabbo.

Dr. AbedRabbo said that he believes this fatwa was issued out of political expediency. He questions why Muslims in the United States with no connection to those who committed crimes in London and New York City, for instance, must continue to be “on the defensive” every time a person acting in the name of Islam acts out.

“I did not commit the acts of Sept. 11. I did not commit the acts in London in July of this year. Why do we have to be on the defensive? But that’s the issue that many Muslims in the United States find themselves asking:

**Continued On Next Page**

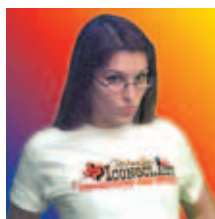
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• **FAITH INTO ACTION ...** Continued From Page 4

why do we have to explain ourselves?" asked Dr. AbedRaboo. "My religion is very clear when it comes to violence."

Other Muslim scholars say the fatwa does not go far enough in denouncing individual terrorists or organizations that sponsor terrorists by name. CAIR Dallas Chapter President Maleh said that to do so would be unrealistic.

"I guess if you start mentioning names, the list will never end. I mean there are groups I'm sure we've probably never heard of and there are groups that will get established in the future, so instead of making that fatwa time-limited and make it obsolete in a few years where you have to go back and update it with the new groups that came out," he said. "Making it board is making it stronger in my opinion."

Dr. Inayat Lalani, 66, an Indian-American physician, said that he thinks the anti-terrorism fatwa, in essence, apologizes for crimes the Muslim community as a whole did not commit.

"Hell, no, I'm not guilty. I'm not going to apologize. The fatwa isn't necessary because it's not our burden," he said. "If somebody who happens to be Muslim and commits some nefarious activity, does that mean that every time I have to come out and say, 'I'm sorry. I'm a Muslim, and I condemn that and I don't endorse this?' No, I go about my business like nothing happened any more than a Christian, a Jew, or a Hindu would say no more than that."

**Who Would Jesus Assassinate?**  
Christians in the United States are also known for going about their business after one of their so-called members lands headlines for remarks purporting violence. Though, some Christians don't.

Take Pat Robertson, the founder of the right-wing Christian Coalition, who called for the stealthy removal of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, a critic of the Bush administration, on an August broadcast of this religious program "The 700 Club."

"We have the ability to take him out, and I think the time has come that we exercise that ability," Robertson said. "We don't need another \$200 billion war to get rid of one, you know, strong-armed dictator. It's a whole lot easier to have some of the covert operatives do the job and then get it over with."

Though the leaders of mainline Christian denominations, like Pope Benedict XVI, for example, have yet to speak out against Robertson's statements, a few individuals and organizations have.

The Rhode Island State Council of Churches, which includes about 300 churches from 24 Protestant and Orthodox denominations, released a statement condemning Robertson's statement.

"It violates the Judeo-Christian ethic enshrined in the commandment 'not to murder' and violates the law of this nation that prohibits political assassination of foreign leaders," said the statement.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, a civil rights leader and founder of Rain-



Dr. Inayat Lalani

bow/PUSH, also condemned the remarks "immoral" and "illegal," and later met with the Venezuelan leader and spoke at the Venezuelan National Assembly on a three-day visit to the South American country.

The Rev. Jerry Maynard II, pastor of operations of Cathedral of Praise Church in north Nashville and deputy chairman of the Tennessee Democratic Party, told the the TENNESSEAN that he was "appalled" and "outraged" by Robertson's comments.

"Can you imagine if a Muslim leader from the Middle East called for the assassination of President Bush? What kind of outrage this country would have?" asked Rev. Maynard.

Jim Wallis, founder of SOJOURNERS magazine, who characterized Pat Robertson as a "theocrat," "an embarrassment to the church," and "a danger to American politics" in his recent column, asked "Christian leaders of all stripes to call on Robertson not just to apologize, but to retire."

The U.S. State Department has distanced itself from Robertson, saying that he made his "inappropriate" comments as a "private citizen." The religious broadcaster later apologized for his statement, though hours earlier he said the media had misinterpreted him. "Take him out," Robertson said, could mean kidnapping, not killing. Political assassination of foreign leaders has been against U.S. policy since 1976.

President Chavez and his staff have criticized the Bush administration for setting a double standard by allowing Robertson to level "terroristic threats" against the leader of another country while the U.S. fights its own war on terror. Chavez has frequently accused the U.S. government of planning to remove him from office, like it tried, he claims, in a 2002 coup attempt. U.S. officials have denied these accusations, though they still say Chavez is an

**U.S. Poverty Rate Jumps 12.7 Percent**

WASHINGTON — The Census Bureau, according to figures released last week, has found that 1.1 million more Americans have fallen into poverty since 2003, though the rate jumped by 12.7 percent of the population since last year.

The number of U.S. citizens living in poverty is now 37 million, of which close to a third are children.

The Bush Administration said that it was not surprised by the newest findings because the statistics follow 20-year trends with peaks in poverty accompanying declines the next year. Democrats said that the rising poverty rate was yet another sign of Bush's inept socio-economic policy.

The Clinton administration saw the last decline in overall poverty in 2000, but about four million more people fell into poverty before he left office. A steady increase in poverty has occurred since. This latest increase happened among the creation of 2.2 million jobs last year, yet after a small increase in jobs in 2003 and job losses the two previous years.

Asians, as an ethnic group, saw a three-percent decline in poverty while whites experienced an .4 percent increase. Blacks and Hispanics felt no noticeable change. Midwesterners' income fell by 2.8 percent. The South remains the poorest region.

These statistics are based on about

100,000 households nationwide surveyed by the Census Bureau over three months starting in February.

**U.S. Still Tops Global Arms Trade; India Buys More**

WASHINGTON — Despite a drop from 43.1 percent share in 2003 in military contracts, the United States still sells the most arms to developing states world-wide according to a study released last week to Congress. The deals were worth \$6.9 billion in 2004, which is 31.6 percent of global contracts.

Russia remained second in deals with \$5.9 billion, a \$1.6 billion increase from in 2003. Since 2003, Russia, however, dropped its share of arms sales by one percent to 27.1 percent in 2004.

On the buyers' side, India took the most last year ordering \$5.7 billion and in doing so, became the developing world's leading purchaser over No. 2 Saudi Arabia, with \$2.9 billion, and China, with \$2.2 billion, as reviewed by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service.

The study's author Richard Grimmett said that the study shows the changes in global arms-trade since the Cold War ended.

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# Crawford Peace House Sends Donations For Hurricane Katrina Relief In Louisiana

CRAWFORD — Volunteers with the Crawford Peace House and those involved with the Camp Casey action initiated here by Cindy Sheehan in August are collecting and distributing water and other needed items to the victims of Hurricane Katrina along the Gulf Coast. Most of these donations are

## Venezuela Offers U.S. Poor Discount On Heating Oil

CARACAS, Venezuela — The Venezuelan government offered last week to sell about 66,000 barrels per day of heating oil to U.S. communities that are poor at a discount by dealing directly with customers.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, a survivor of a coup in 2002 and a recount election last year, said that fuel from Venezuela's U.S. Citgo refinery would account for 10 percent of the 660,000 bpd refined there. Plans are being made to figure out sales through Citgo's distribution network.

Though Venezuela, the world's No. 5 oil exporter, provides the United States with about 15 percent of its energy consumption, Washington and Caracas haven't seen eye to eye since Chavez promised social reforms there after his 1998 election.

To the disavowal of U.S. officials that still say he is a threat to his nation's security, Chavez has repeatedly accused the U.S. of supporting assassination attempts against him.

those left from the breakdown of the camps in Crawford last week. Some funds donated for Camp Casey needs and not used are also being redirected to the relief work.

Hundreds of cases of leftover bottled water were taken from the Peace House to collection points in nearby Waco on Thursday and Friday for distribution by humanitarian agencies.

In addition to the donations coming directly from the Peace House in Crawford, supporters from around the country who came to Crawford to stand with Cindy are now organizing collection points in their own communities and offering space in their homes for the displaced residents of the evacuated areas. These actions are being coordinated through various Web sites and listservs, including Camp Casey Alumni <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/campcaseyalumni>>.

The humanitarian aid began flowing out of Crawford on Wednesday, when the departing Veterans for Peace (chapter 116 of Mendocino County) bus dubbed "The White Rose" took cases of water and other items eastward and eventually set up "Camp Casey — Covington" in Covington, La., north of New Orleans. They are now operating out of Covington's Pine View Middle School on 28th Street, where VFP members are coordinating collection and distribution, as well as medical support from medics on hand. Many of the grassroots collections through Camp Casey Alumni listserv are focusing on getting supplies to the Covington group.

Camp Casey donations and support

include:

- A Crawford Peace House delivery of water, canned food, tarps, blankets and chairs will leaving Austin Saturday afternoon for Camp Casey Covington.
  - A truckload of water arrived from Camp Casey in Covington last night with the Red Cross.
  - Camp Casey's computer tech guru is on his way with additional satellite communications support.
  - A volunteer from Austin left Monday with a truck load of donated water and supplies from Café Mundi.
  - A man from Ft. Hood has pickup loaded with supplies and is on his way now.
  - The North Arkansas VFP is sending a truck of supplies to Covington, as well.
  - Norman, Okla. activists have collected over \$5,000 and will leave Sunday with water, diesel fuel, and other supplies.
- The most recent list of need from Camp Casey -Covington, according to Kay Lucas at the Peace House:
- Diesel fuel.
  - Baby Supplies, Wipes, diapers, lotions, not MREs.
  - Water, water, water, and ice maker, purification tablets.

- A big generator. Rent one and put in to a rented trailer.
- Solar powered lights!
- Hard candy like lollipops for the kids.

### Updates/Contacts:

Crawford Peace House:  
<[www.crawfordpeacehouse.org](http://www.crawfordpeacehouse.org)>.  
The White Rose:  
<[www.vfproadtrips.org](http://www.vfproadtrips.org)>.  
Bring Them Home Now:  
<[www.bringthemhomenowtour.org](http://www.bringthemhomenowtour.org)>.

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**Beginning Monday, Sept. 12, we will temporarily close for repairs.**



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# New Book Tells How Bush Lied About Protecting Social Security

By W. LEON SMITH  
PUBLISHER, LONE STAR ICONOCLAST

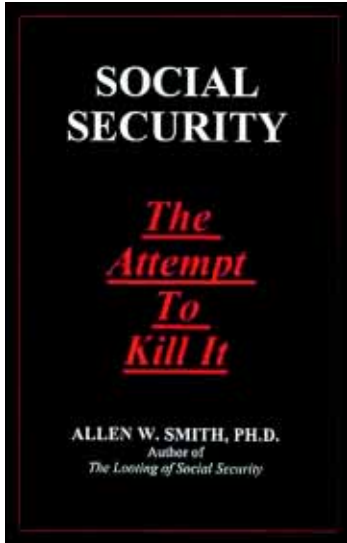
CRAWFORD — In February, THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST published an interview with author Allen W. Smith, Ph.D., who had written a book entitled "The Looting of Social Security."

Since that time, he has written a follow-up book, "Social Security — The Attempt To Kill It," which could easily be considered the best book on the subject yet.

This book explains how the Social Security system works in layman's terms and delves into ways that members of the government have whittled away at the trust fund that was intended to take care of baby boomers throughout their years of need.

Allen Smith earned his Ph.D. in economics from Indiana University and spent 30 years teaching economics to university students. He has appeared on national television and has been interviewed on more than 150 talk shows.

The author has given THE ICONOCLAST consent to publish excerpts from the book. Here are selections from chapter four, that explains how President Bush promised to protect Social Security when he was a candidate in 2000, but gave away the funds to the rich once he was in office



**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**The 2000 Campaign and the New Covenant**  
*"Social Security is the single most successful program in government history... For years, politicians have dipped into the trust fund to pay for more spending. And I will stop it."*

—George W. Bush, Speech in Rancho Cucamonga, California on May 15, 2000.

Al Gore made the raiding of the Social Security Trust Fund a major campaign issue in the 2000 election campaign. He promised that if he were elected President, all surplus Social Security revenue would be put in a lockbox for Social Security and Social Security alone. He

pledged that Social Security surplus revenue would be used to pay Social Security benefits, and not a dollar of it would be spent on other government programs.

Not to be outdone, Republican candidate, George W. Bush, also pledged to end the raiding of the Social Security Trust Fund.

In a Florida speech on October 26, 2000, Bush said, "I'm going to set aside \$2.4 trillion of Social Security surplus. That's \$2.4 trillion more in payroll taxes than we owe the seniors, which means there is a really interesting opportunity to make sure we not only fulfill the promises to the seniors but we have a social security system that is hopeful for younger workers."

There could have been no doubt about George W. Bush's stand on the Social Security Trust Fund during the 2000 presidential campaign. He repeatedly promised that if he were elected President, he would end the practice of raiding the trust fund, and that Social Security revenue would only be spent on Social Security benefits. If anyone had any doubt about Bush's position, all they had to do was login to the Bush-Cheney 2000 website. There, in black and white, under the list of Position Proposals, was the emphatic state-

ment, "The Social Security surplus must be locked away only for Social Security."

Despite the past raiding of the Social Security Trust Fund, those who voted for either Bush or Gore knew they were voting for a candidate who had entered into a new covenant with the American people promising to protect the trust fund from any future raiding. In short, the American people had every right to believe that the days of spending Social Security money on other government programs were over, no matter which candidate won the election.

Given the extremely close nature of the 2000 election, I think it is a safe bet to assume that neither candidate could have been elected if the public had known in advance that the promise would not be kept. I further believe that the American people had a right to demand that whoever was elected would honor their pledge to protect the Social Security surplus.

Bush did not change his tune when he first became President. He continued to insist that Social Security revenue would be used for Social Security and Social Security alone. In his radio address to the nation on February 3, 2001, Bush said, "My plan will keep all

**Continued On Page 9**



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## Chief Justice Rehnquist Dead At 80

WASHINGTON — Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist died Saturday evening at the age of 80.

The justice, who had been battling thyroid cancer, had been undergoing chemotherapy and radiation as part of his treatment.

His health, according to Kathy Arberg, a Supreme Court spokesman, had declined the past couple of days.

Rehnquist had continued to work since his diagnosis last October, although he had missed oral arguments in several cases.

President Bush, who said he would move quickly to choose a “highly qualified” candidate as Rehnquist’s replacement on the Supreme Court, noted that “America will honor his memory.”

Rehnquist said in July in a written statement, “I want to put to rest the speculation and unfounded rumors of my imminent retirement. I am not about to announce my retirement. I will continue to perform my duties as chief justice as long as my health permits.”

President Nixon appointed Rehnquist to the Supreme Court in 1972, and in 1986, President Reagan chose Rehnquist as chief justice to replace Warren Burger.

U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and former Texas Supreme Court justice, made the following statement Saturday regarding the death of Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist:

“Our nation has suffered a great loss. William Rehnquist dedicated his career and the full measure of his intellect in the service of our country. He was truly the judicial giant of our time. I am grateful to the Chief Justice for his many years of diligent service. I extend my sympathy to his children and the entire Rehnquist family; my prayers are with them.

“For the past three decades, William Rehnquist did not simply serve on the bench. He truly loved and revered the Court, as only a devoted scholar and student of that great institution could - his dedication was unrivaled. He leaves a powerful presence in the law, one that will echo through future generations.”

William Hubbs Rehnquist was born Oct. 1, 1924, in Milwaukee, Wis. He entered the U.S. Army Air Force and served in World War II from 1943 to 1946. Following the war he attended Stanford University and received both a bachelor’s and master’s degrees in government. He later received his law degree from Stanford, graduating first in his class. Rehnquist worked as law clerk for Justice Robert H. Jackson during the 1951-1952 term, was in private practice in Phoenix, Arizona from 1953 to 1969, was legal advisor for Barry Goldwater’s 1964 presidential campaign, and served as Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Legal Counsel from 1969 to 1971. President Richard Nixon nominated Rehnquist to the Supreme Court, and he was confirmed by a 68-26 vote on Dec. 10, 1971, taking his seat on Jan. 7, 1972.



OFF THEY GO! — Peace signs and good-byes accompanied the bus and RVs as they departed Crawford after 26 days.

— Iconoclast Photo By Gene Ellis

# Cindy Sheehan Says Farewell To Crawford

CRAWFORD — After the events of Saturday, Aug. 27, with thousands of people coming to Crawford either in support of or against Cindy Sheehan, the remainder of the days became ones of deciding future plans, clean-up and dismantling of the two Camp Caseys, and tearful good-byes.

Sheehan had come to Crawford on Saturday, Aug. 6, to seek a personal visit with President Bush, to ask questions regarding the war in Iraq. What ensued were days of controversy and challenges, with demonstrations reminiscent of the 1960s and 1970s when a war raged in Vietnam.

As the waning hours of the vigil approached on Wednesday, Aug. 31, and news of Hurricane Katrina was on everybody’s lips, buses were packed for the remaining Sheehan supporters and relief materials for the New Orleans hurricane area were being prepared.

Sheehan held a press conference and told supporters that she was very grateful for all their help during the days at Crawford.

She said, “I never thought when I started here that I would be sad to leave, but I am. We outstayed President Bush.”

Sheehan reiterated that the movement would not end until the soldiers came home, that on Sept. 24, in Washington, D.C. “we must tell the President that we have had enough and hold him accountable for the death and destruction he has caused.”

Sheehan planned to depart on the same veterans’ bus on which she arrived, but was scheduled to leave the tour at some point and rejoin the buses a few days after that.

Sheehan mentioned that she found it difficult to believe that President Bush said the day before, “that we should protect the oil fields from terrorists.” She asked, “How many of you are willing to sacrifice one of your children to be able to pay over \$3 a gallon for gas?”

“It was for oil, after all,” she added, “and that’s not a good enough reason.”

“We need to spend our money on renewable energy sources so no one else has to die. There was no noble cause,” she said.

Sheehan urged people to consult her website: <bringthemhomenow.org> and to pressure their elected officials to end the war.

The buses departed Camp Casey I at approximately 11 a.m. and headed to the Peace House. A light luncheon was served while people said their goodbyes. Four RVs were prepared with banners and slogans. Some supporters sang and danced and cheers accompanied the departing vans and the veterans’ bus as they left on their three-week tour.



CINDY SHEEHAN hosted her final press conference at Camp Casey on Wednesday morning.

— Iconoclast Photo By Gene Ellis



## • BOOK TELLS HOW PRESIDENT LIED WHEN HE SAID HE'D PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY

... Continued From Page 7

*Social Security money in the Social Security system where it belongs.*"

In his State of the Union Address on February 27, 2001, Bush was even more emphatic about his determination to keep his Social Security pledge. He said, "To make sure the retirement savings of America's seniors are not diverted in any other program, my budget protects all \$2.6 trillion of the Social Security surplus for Social Security, and for Social Security alone."

Four days later, on March 3, 2001, Bush sought to eliminate any remaining doubt that might still exist about his sincere commitment to keep his hands out of the Social Security cookie jar with the following statement.

"We're going to keep the promise of Social Security and keep the government from raiding the Social Security surplus."

The previous raiding of the trust fund by Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton is despicable. However, at that time, the issue had never been subjected to a public debate where the American people could speak out on it. That all changed as a result of the 2000 campaign and election. Every American voter who cast a vote for either Bush or Gore had a right to expect that the era of raiding the Social Security trust fund was over. They had entered into a new covenant with the future President of the United States in which it was mutually agreed that all future surplus Social Security revenue would be untouchable for any purpose other than the payment of Social Security benefits.

That covenant between President Bush and the American people is still in force. The President did not renegotiate the deal with the American people. He didn't even admit that he had reneged on the agreement during the 2004 campaign. I tried to alert the public throughout Bush's first term that he was spending the Social Security surplus, in violation of his promise to the American people, and in violation of federal law, but nobody would believe me.

In Bush's first State of the Union address, delivered on February 27, 2001, he laid the foundation for his plan to enact massive tax cuts that would benefit primarily the wealthiest 5 percent of Americans. He also skillfully pulled the wool over the eyes of the public through a series of deceptive statements designed to convince Congress that the coffers of the United States government were overflowing with billions of surplus dollars for as far as the eye could see. "Deceptive statements" is putting it mildly. To put it more bluntly, he lied to the American people about the financial status of the federal budget.

The following are excerpts from the speech.

"Our new governing vision says government should be active, but limited; engaged, but not overbearing. And my budget is based on that philosophy. It is reasonable, and it is responsible....My plan pays down an unprecedented amount of our national debt. And then, when money is still left over, my plan returns it to the people who earned it in the first place.

...To make sure the retirement savings of America's seniors are not di-



Allen W. Smith

verted in any other program, my budget protects all \$2.6 trillion of the Social Security surplus for Social Security, and for Social Security alone.

...My budget has funded a responsible increase in our ongoing operations. It has funded our nation's important priorities; it has protected Social Security and Medicare. And our surpluses are big enough that there is still money left over.

Many of you have talked about the need to pay down our national debt. I listened and I agree. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to act now, and I hope you will join me to pay down \$2 trillion in debt during the next 10 years...That is more debt, repaid more quickly than has ever been repaid by any nation at any time in history.

We should also prepare for the unexpected, for the uncertainties of the future. We should approach our nation's budget as any prudent family would, with a contingency fund for emergencies or additional spending needs. For example, after a strategic review, we may need to increase defense spending. We may need to increase spending for our farmers or additional money to reform Medicare. And so, my budget sets aside almost a trillion dollars over 10 years for additional needs. That is one trillion additional reasons you can feel comfortable supporting this budget.

We have increased our budget at a responsible 4 percent. We have funded our priorities. We paid down all the available debt. We have prepared for contingencies. And we still have money left over.

...Now we come to a fork in the road; we have two choices. ... We could spend the money on more and bigger government. That's the road our nation has traveled in recent years.

...If you continue on that road, you will spend the surplus and have to dip into Social Security to pay other bills. Unrestrained government spending is a dangerous road to deficits, so we must take a different path. The other choice is to let the American people spend their own money to meet their own needs.

I hope you will join me in standing

firmly on the side of the people. You see, the growing surplus exists because taxes are too high and government is charging more that it needs. The people of America have been overcharged and, on their behalf, I am here asking for a refund."

Perhaps never before in history had the American people been played for such fools by their president. Most people know very little about such things as economics and the federal budget, so they must trust someone to tell them the truth. Surely they could trust a new president who was asking for their support to be straightforward with them. If he said the government had trillions of dollars of surplus money, it must be true, regardless of how implausible it seemed. And he wasn't the only top official to say so. Both President Clinton and Vice President Gore had spoken of large surpluses.

But, of course, there was the disturbing fact that many economists were saying that there was no surplus. On September 27, 2000, just exactly five months prior to the President's address, I appeared on CNN TODAY with Lou Waters to discuss my newly published book, *The Alleged Budget Surplus, Social Security, and Voodoo Economics*. Its basic theme was that there was no true surplus. I argued that the government had been lying to the American people for several years about the real status of the federal budget and the Social Security Trust Fund. I pointed out that there was not a single dollar of reserves in the Social Security Trust Fund because the government had been borrowing from the fund for several years and using the money to

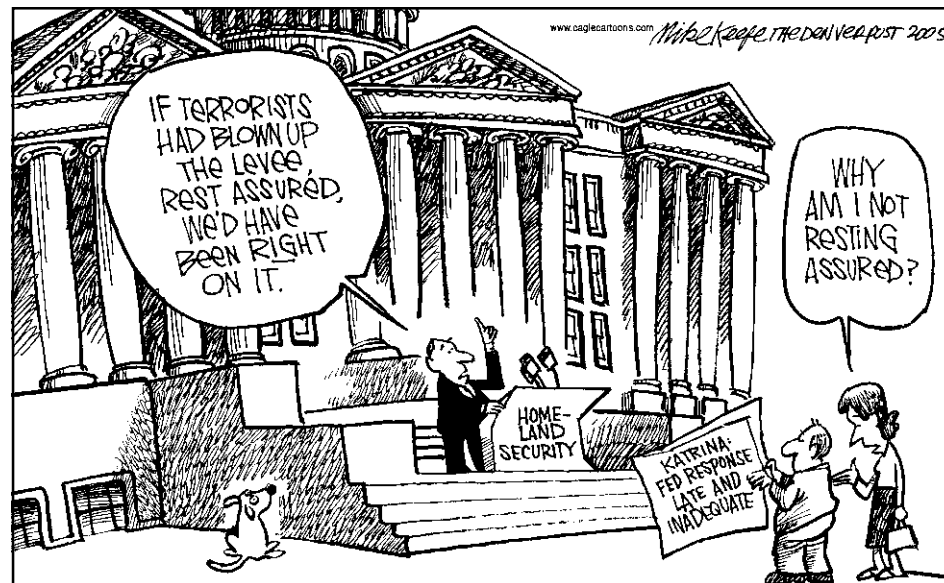
fund other programs.

Excerpts follow from the transcript of my interview with Lou Waters on CNN...

... I was only one of many economists trying to alert the public to the "budget-surplus myth," months before President George W. Bush was even elected. Once Bush's election was certain, many economists tried to warn the public that his massive proposed tax cut would be disastrous for both the budget and the economy. But nobody wanted to listen to professional economists when their President was insisting that there was surplus money, and promising to give some of it back to them.

At the time of Bush's State of the Union address, the United States Government owed approximately \$5 trillion dollars more than it had owed just 20 years earlier when President Reagan had taken office. This represented \$5 trillion of unpaid bills. Bush's own father had contributed greatly to this massive red-ink spending. During George H.W. Bush's four years as president, the on-budget deficit (excluding Social Security funds) averaged more than \$286 billion per year. And when he left office, the national debt that had been only \$1 trillion at the beginning of the Reagan-Bush administration had soared above the \$4 trillion mark!

"Social Security — The Attempt To Kill It" is published by Ironwood Publications. The book contains 144 pages in both paperback and hardback and is available for \$12 for the paperback edition and \$20 for the hardcover edition. The book may be ordered online at <www.iconoclast-texas.com>. It is also available from Amazon Books.



## Crawford Cross Country Runner Ashley Holder Places First At Temple

TEMPLE—The Crawford Cross Country teams compete in Temple on Saturday, Aug. 27, at the Sammons Gold Course. Varsity girls took home sixth place, competing with 14 other teams, and a total number of runners at 130. Ashley Holder of the girls Junior Varsity placed first, competing against 167 other runners.

Individually, the girls varsity Shanna Lippe placed 15th, with a time of 12:51; Karlie Dieterich placed 26th, with a time of 13:26; Tara McMullen placed 31st, with a time of 13:34; Kristen Chapman placed 42, with a time of 13:50; Hope Talbert placed 44th, with a time of 13:54; Cristal Rodriguez placed 51st, with a time of 14:05; Amanda Mendoza placed 57th, with

a time of 14:12; Brianna Muciel placed 89th, with a time of 15:00.

Boys varsity competed with four runners against more than 134. Individually, boys varsity Reid Doty placed 48th, with a time of 17:36; Rocco Hugent placed 114th, with a time of 19:15; Chase Harrell placed 116th, with a time of 19:22; Travis Duke placed 130th, with a time of 21:36.

Also competing were the girls Junior Varsity. Running against 164, the four girls Ashley Holder placed 1st, with a time of 14:09; Rachean Bryant placed 20th, with a time of 14:53; Brittany Urbanovsky placed 70th, with a time of 16:24; Courtney Talbert placed 76th, with a time of 16:34.

# CASA Is Planning Its 2nd Casos For CASA Fund-raiser

By **DEBORAH MATHEWS**  
STAFF WRITER

**CLIFTON**—Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) has come to Bosque County, per the invitation of County Judge James Morgan. CASA is now available to children of the Bosque County and is beginning its fund-raising efforts with the program Casos For CASA.

One of the largest fund-raising events

for the organization is the Casos for CASA. This event raises money to purchase materials that are needed to build inventive playhouses that are later auctioned. Monies raised helps to provide training and supervision of volunteers to advocate for children who are in the custody of Child Protective Services.

Formed in 1989, Texas CASA is growing faster than any other state CASA association in the country. According to

statistics, one million children each year in the U.S. are confirmed to be the victims of child abuse—94 children will be reported to be abused or neglected in the next hour—three children die every 24 hours as a result of abuse or neglect. Over 500,000 children are in foster care nationally. Texas had 74,199 child abuse victim in 2002—35 in Erath County, 20 in Hamilton County, and 35 in Bosque County.

CASA's involvement with these children provides a caring adult to speak for a child. Its goal is to assist in establishing permanency for each child that has been removed from his or her home within one year of removal, and to serve as a constant

person present in the child's life through the difficult time.

CASA is currently seeking both money and volunteers. Representatives of the group can provide a presentation to any interested organization or individual wishing to contribute. Additionally, CASA provides public and governmental awareness about community issues concerning abused and neglected children.

This year's Casos for CASA program is slated for December of 2005. Those interested in participating in any aspect of the program or becoming an advocate should contact CASA for the Cross Timbers Area, Inc., P.O. Box 1181, Stephenville, TX, 76401, 254-965-6610.

## Navy Secretary Pulls Plug On Career

Returning to work on Sept. 4, 1837, Samuel Rhoads Fisher, secretary of the Texas Navy, was stunned to discover that President Sam Houston had changed the locks on him.

When the Independence appeared off the port of Velasco in the spring of 1837, the whole town went down to the docks. No one wanted to miss the triumphant return of William H. Wharton, who single-handedly had talked the United States into recognizing the new nation of Texas.

Among the host of dignitaries on hand to greet the diplomat was naval secretary Fisher. But instead of embracing his old friend, he watched helplessly as Wharton and the Lone Star sailors were taken prisoner by the Mexican navy.

Although every eyewitness was appalled by the high-seas seizure of the Independence, Fisher was absolutely mortified. He felt personally responsible for the abduction of the prominent passenger and the courageous crew and felt his sole chance of redemption was to strike back at the kidnappers.

Fisher hurried to Galveston to consult the captain of the Invincible, one of two warships left in Texas' steadily shrinking fleet. H.L. Thompson agreed that the Mexicans must be made to pay for their piracy and immediately began preparations for a retaliatory cruise.

Fisher and Thompson also saw eye to eye on the need for strict secrecy. If Sam Houston got wind of their plan, both could kiss their careers good-bye. But should they succeed in loosening the enemy's iron grip on the Gulf, even the president would have to hail them as heroes.

At the last minute, landlubber Fisher decided to go along. It may have been a middle-aged craving for adventure, but more likely he wanted to be out of the country when Houston blew his stack.

The Invincible and the Brutus silently sailed on the night of June. 11, 1837. Encountering no enemy craft at the mouth of the Mississippi, the Texans turned south toward the Yucatan peninsula.

After an uneventful month on patrol, the first prize was finally taken on July 24. Fisher went ashore three days later to stretch his legs and unexpectedly filled his entire quota of excitement.

The shore party was surprised 100 yards inland by a company of Mexican cavalry. The Texans sprinted for the beach in a futile footrace with the mounted pursuers.

Fisher suddenly stopped dead in his tracks, pointed his pistol at the lead rider and knocked him from the saddle with a perfect shot. His marksmanship took all the fight out of the Mexicans, who were content to watch the foreigners row their dinghy to the waiting

## This Week In Texas History

By **Bartee Haile**



mother ship.

The Texans added four more vessels to their capture list before steering a course for their home port in late August. The trick would be to run the blockade outside the entrance to Galveston harbor.

Intercepted within sight of their destination by a whole Mexican squadron, the Invincible and the Brutus battled heavy seas in a gutty effort to break through the barrier. But in the end both ran aground and were pounded into kindling by the merciless surf.

For somebody who had lost Texas' last two warships on an unsanctioned escapade, Fisher was incredibly optimistic. Although resigned to an indefinite stay in Houston's doghouse, he was genuinely shocked to learn that the president had begun impeachment proceedings.

Friends advised Fisher to clean out his desk and quietly fade into the woodwork. Other than permanent exile from government service, there was nothing to gain from butting heads with General Sam.

Nevertheless, Fisher demanded his day in court. Since the case would be tried before the Republic senate, which included many presidential opponents, he was confident of acquittal.

After a long and emotional trial, the senators ruled in favor of the defendant. Even though his rash actions had proved costly to the naval defenses of the beleaguered country, questionable conduct alone did not constitute grounds for removal from office. No politician in his right mind wanted to set that kind of precedent.

Fisher thought the verdict meant his automatic reinstatement, but several sympathetic senators enlightened him. They explained that he could not possibly hope to hold onto a cabinet post against the wishes of the president.

Taking face-saving satisfaction in the fact that his name had been cleared, Samuel Rhoads Fisher bowed to the inevitable. He submitted his resignation on Dec. 5, 1837, and that same day Sam Houston named a new secretary of the vanishing Texas Navy.

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

## Women For Christ Conference 2005 Set Sept. 30 - Oct. 1

**WACO**—Women for Christ will hold its conference beginning Friday, Sept. 30, at 6 p.m. and continuing Saturday, Oct. 1. The conference for the past two years has averaged attendance of 500-600 women attending with 96 churches being represented from Waco and the surrounding areas. The event will be held at the Waco Convention Center and is free and open to all denominations.

"Our desire is for women to grow deeper into God's word and draw them nearer to Him through prayer and worship," said executive director JoAnn Woodruff. The featured speaker is author and writer Barbara Arbo. Woodruff said, "Her testimony of God's goodness and tender mercy blesses all who hear it." Also featured is the internationally known singing group, Abide, to lead the

praise and worship.

Abide members Marianne Adams and Jennifer McReynolds, former members



**FEATURED SPEAKER**  
at the Women for Christ  
Conference is author and  
writer, **Barbara Arbo.**

of the group, Sierra, "Have been lead back to singing from being 'stay at home' moms. As they have entered a new season of their lives, the one thing that they want people to know is that worshipping their Savior and Lord is their top priority," said Woodruff. "Our goal is that the Lord be glorified and honored through the speakers and musicians on the program."

Organizations that will also be participating with booths or in other capacities are Family Abuse Center; Advocacy Center; Project Rachel; Prayer & Revival Ministries; KBDE 89.9 radio; Christian Women Job Corp; Kaley Caperton-World Vision; Magdalene Project; Care-Net Pregnancy Center; and Vertical Entertainment.

The event will have a strong emphasis on prayer and "The move of God for this time, you will leave enlightened, encouraged and ready to be a 'doer of the Word,'" said Woodruff.

## Seniors Invited To Join A Practical Guide To Wellness

**BEVERLY HILLS**—The Area Agency on Aging will be conducting a demonstration of Texercise at the Beverly Resource center on Monday, Sept. 1, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The demonstration will give examples of the new exercises to caregivers and seniors that they can use at home.

Everyone is invited to join, including seniors for nursing homes, assisted living, and independent living centers. Bill Hillis will be demonstrating the exercises. Blood pressure checks will be available during the event.

"Please join us for instruction regarding the Texercise program," said event officials. "We want you to be able to take the wellness program to your senior center or assisting living center, nursing home, or workplace. Come and see the demonstration. Help us age Texas well."

**INFO:**  
866-772-9600

## Senior Source Health, Information Fair Sept. 23

**WACO**—The Heart of Texas Retired and Senior Volunteer Program and McLennan Community College will hold its eleventh annual Senior Source Health and Information Fair on Friday, Sept. 23, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Richland Mall.

Many free health services and information will be available for senior adults, caregivers, and the general public.

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program is a funded program on the statewide and nationwide level by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Texas Department on Aging and is sponsored by McLennan Community College.

For questions about the event or for exhibitor information, call 254-299-8766.

# Battleground Iraq: George Bush vs. Cindy Sheehan And The Rest Of The World

By KAPIL KOMIREDDI  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Knowingly or unknowingly, President Bush has put America in a great predicament. This evening I was talking to an Iraqi expatriate about the ongoing situation in his country. "If the Americans leave," he said, "the violent chaos will erupt into a civil war," for the Iraqi forces aren't fully capable of handling any large scale crises yet, and it is the American forces who are keeping the situation under control. But "if the American forces remain, there will be continued violence." In a sentence, he summed up President Bush's greatest dilemma. If America exits now, it will be accused by those same critics who oppose its ongoing presence in Iraq of exiting "prematurely" and "irresponsibly." If America stays put... well, you know what's happening. What could be the possible solution to this terrible conundrum?

There is mounting pressure at home, and across the world, on America to quit Iraq. But quitting *now* would be the worst thing to do. I hope the Bush administration is strong enough to resist the growing pressure. But the most obvious question to follow that assertion would be, "How long will America have to stay in Iraq?" If President Bush *knowingly* brought things to this state, then it is, despite all ills, comforting news; because if he *knew* things would turn out so bad and yet he went in, he clearly *knows* things will improve, and that all the ongoing carnage is a small price for the big reward, that those who criticise him now will eventually recognise his clairvoyance and sing his praises. The world will indeed be transformed. Alas, that doesn't seem to be the case.

Forget the home-made statistics and incomprehensible jargon churned out by Mr. Bush's disciples and look around you: The world has become less safe and, consequently, more dangerous since Mr. Bush's Iraqi emprise. When one looks back at the way in which the war was initiated, it becomes apparent that it was neither a consequence of 9/11 nor part of the war on terror, but an act whose origins can be traced back to 2000, or maybe even earlier. 9/11 just made possible the requisite backing of the American public. That secured, Mr. Bush rushed to instruct his speechwriters to "make the best case for going after Iraq," in December, 2001, when what he should have been doing is instructing his generals to find bin Laden and uproot the Taliban. The war in Iraq is a case of personal vendetta being played out on international scale, with innocent people on both sides getting killed. The moment Mr. Bush was declared President, Saddam's days were numbered — which is good news. Bad news is, alongside Saddam, 1,800 American soldiers and *countless* Iraqis too had their days numbered. As Mr. President plays golf and goes cycling with celebrities, people must die.

A report released by The Lancet last year put Iraqi civilian deaths at 100,000. The number was contested and the researchers sharply criticised by prowar hawks. Even to neutral parties, 100,000 would seem like exaggeration. But reality is different. Last month alone, 1,100 corpses arrived at the Baghdad mortuary. Three months after the invasion of

Iraq, in July, 2003, 700 bodies were taken there; a year later, in 2004, that figure rose to 800. "If extrapolated across the country," veteran journalist Robert Fisk reported from Iraq, "Baghdad's 1,100 dead of last month must bring Iraq's minimum monthly casualty toll in July alone to 3,000 - perhaps 4,000. Over a year, this must reach a minimum of 36,000, a figure which puts the supposedly controversial statistic of 100,000 dead since the invasion into a much more realistic perspective." Ironically, this morally bankrupt Bush administration operates on the platform of *moral-ity*. One wonders what the reference book for the administration's moral codes is. Last time I looked at the Bible, it still said "Thou Shalt Not Kill." Maybe it's time for Mr. Bush to revise it and publish the Newer Testament.

Only today, 1,000 Iraqis got killed — that's more than half the fatalities suffered by America since the start of the invasion. Body bags of Americans are being flown out of Iraq at a terrible pace. The mother of one such slain serviceman has decided enough is enough. Cindy Sheehan, in her protest, has become the symbol of the antiwar movement. I don't agree with the antiwar movement's radical demand to withdraw from Iraq overnight — that would be the most foolish thing to do — but by denying Ms. Sheehan an audience, the President has committed another one of his characteristic blunders. He has, once again unknowingly, lionized her. From Crawford to Kerala, newspapers are carrying her story. Even Martin Sheen came all the way to Crawford to boost the morale of Ms. Sheehan. (Mr. Sheen was once an alcoholic, but it gave up for a simpleton life. He even donated his \$200,000 salary from Richard Attenborough's film "Gandhi" to chari-

ties. "How can you make money off Gandhi?" he asked. In Calcutta, he used to play with kids from Mother Teresa's ashrams. When the Bible is distributed by missionaries across the world, Martin Sheen, not President Bush, is used as an example of the book's alchemic potency.) All this is vaporising support for Mr. Bush when he most needs it.

Ms. Sheehan must now prepare herself for extreme criticism from the Right. Conservative commentators are already attacking her character. She has been labelled a "liar" and accused of being a "C-list celebrity trolling for a book deal or a reality show." It is typical of the Right to attack the person in protest rather than debate the issue at heart. Cindy Sheehan, who lost her son for her country, is being accused of chasing celebrity dreams. A mother who should be deified for her sacrifices is being vilified for standing up to ask questions. It is hard to imagine that those who are prepared to malign even the mother of a dead serviceman for disagreeing with them can be serious about spreading *democracy* in foreign lands.

Ms. Sheehan's protests, in substance, are strikingly reminiscent of John Kerry's. Disillusioned by the war in Vietnam, especially by the suffering of the Vietnamese people, Kerry set up a bivouac outside the Nixon White House. When Nixon tried to use the law to get Kerry out of his sight, the young protester hit back: "This is a government that cares more about the legality of where men sleep than the legality of where we drop bombs and why men die!" Although much denied in conservative circles, it was Kerry who, knowingly or unknowingly, *initiated* the political death of Richard Nixon. The moment Kerry stepped in Washington,

Nixon's days were numbered. It remains to be seen if nature will let Ms. Sheehan re-enact that aspect of Kerry's antiwar campaign.

The antiwar movement is right because it is against the war. But the solution doesn't, as they suggest, lie in withdrawal. The only solution for America — not Iraq, for its problems will go on long after Americans have left — is a multilateral force, under the watchful eye of the U.N. This will reduce the burden on American lives and treasure, while maintaining reasonable stability in Iraq. A reduction in American numbers may help weaken the appeal of the insurgency, which is based on anti-American sentiment. All this is not without constraints. For starters, why would any nation want to clear up, at its own peril, the mess created by America, now that Americans feel like going home? Forget that constraint for a moment. Why should the U.N. take responsibility for running a war it opposed from the beginning and even condemned as "illegal"? Why should nations which voiced their opposition to the war and emphasised its illegality heed the UN's request to partake in it? Why would anyone wish to support a nation whose envoy to the U.N., John Bolton, openly bullies its members and makes at least 750 amendments to its global strategy in just three weeks of assuming office, without caring how they might affect other members? America desperately needs the support of other U.N. members, and the way Mr. Bush tries to secure it is by sending a self-proclaimed hater of the U.N. as his country's ambassador to it. If this isn't imprudent, I fail to understand what is.

Economic rewards in return for support can only go so far. In most countries, Anti-American (meaning, Anti-Bush) sentiment yields votes (Gerhard Schroder is virtually running a campaign centred on this issue), so taking a pro-American stand, even when there is a financial incentive to it, is a political liability — and this world doesn't have too many politicians who are prepared to sacrifice domestic clout for international peace. Throughout the cold war, America had more allies than the Soviet Union.

Today, some of those allies are mourning the fall of Soviet Union. In that bipolar world peace was sustained by the looming threat of war. Little known truth is that, encouraged by America's troubles, China and Russia are, for the first time, holding joint military exercises. Rather than salvage America's image and engage in winning allies, Mr. Bush is making macho statements against Iran.

Tehran, which is a growing threat to Israel's security, knows that as long as America is engaged in Iraq, Iran's nuclear programme can carry on safely. And to extricate itself from Iraq, America needs genuine allies. The solution to that may be simpler than we think: President Bush must try to be humble and listen to others.

· Kapil Komireddi is a freelance writer who has contributed to various publications; he is presently working on a compendious biography of Sen. John Kerry, to be published in 2007, and can be contacted at: [kapskom@gmail.com](mailto:kapskom@gmail.com)

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# Al Qaeda Claims Credit For Gulf Coast Hurricane Disaster

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "You don't have to stop the bank robbery, but you ort'n to shoot at the posse, neither."

Some thoughts while watching Diane Sawyer perform journalistic fellatio on Neighbor Bush last week.

I haven't seen so many soft pitches since the All-Star home run competition.

I was surprised that Miz Laura didn't bust into the parlor and grab the former Nixon coffee girl by the hair of the head and whip her with a soap paddle.

Except that Miz Laura don't make soap.

But it looks like the rest of us soon might have to.

Perhaps Hurricane Katrina's most insidious effect was sucking the gasoline out of every filling station tank nationwide, then suddenly blowing back fuel that costs 30 cents more per gallon.

So now Big Oil can soak a profit in gasoline they haven't even refined yet.

National disasters are now to be met with the new Republican patriotic ideals:

Gouge and hoard.

And we shake our heads over washed-out refugees looting flooded WalMarts.

Of course Neighbor Bush said he would be on the lookout for gasoline price gougers.

He has some vacancies on his Council of Economic Advisors.

Ah, but the economic news is not all bad.

U.S. Census figures this year showed household incomes fell again this year, meaning that those of us who work for a

## Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



living are earning around 10 percent less than we did when George Bush was elected War Hero. (A title he couldn't earn as a deserter in Alabama, but achieves nightly on the TeeVee "news.")

So why isn't that bad news. For wage slave owners and undocumented hod-carriers, it's Beulah Land.

Mustn't forget the oil companies! And the Middle Eastern despots our soldiers are dying to protect.

When did ethnic cleansing become "federalism?"

When Neighbor Bush's pet Kurds and Shiites run the laundry.

So you see, this is a thriving economy. People are making money hand over fist.

Tax handout over iron fist. It's just that there's no profit in giving food and shelter to starving refugees.

Now, pack a little more desperation into the Astrodome, and we can sell tickets again!

You can watch a better fight than the Oilers ever put up.

And this time people will pay more for a bleacher seat than the front row.

You know, I remember sitting in a Shreveport disaster preparedness meeting two decades ago listening to speaker after speaker describe exactly this current scenario, should a category four hurricane ever hit New Orleans. And I have heard it several times since.

Once on TeeVee, even. You know what that means.

Even first graders in Braindead Falls, Idaho, knew there was a problem.

And a hurricane that the rest of us knew was coming for a week took this administration by surprise?

Then it's a little hard to send in the National Guard when half of them are a little busy staying alive in somebody else's country.

Sort of like bin Laden's attack on the United States - the one that took Bush's boys by surprise three weeks after they read a report entitled, "Bin Laden Planning To Attack U.S."

Or like figuring a war in Iraq or Afghanistan would be a musical pastry stroll, over in six months.

**EVERY WAR IN HISTORY WAS GONNA BE OVER IN SIX MONTHS!**

Nobody would fight a war if he believed it was going to last his children's lifetime.

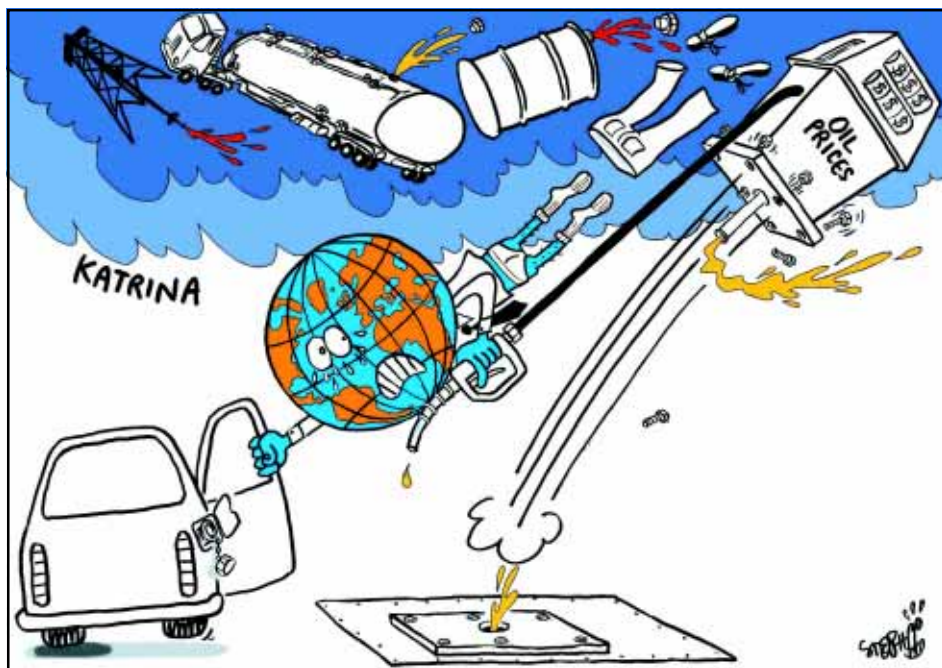
Especially a war over weapons of mass hysteria.

So, Neighbor Bush has been a victim of poor planning on economics, terrorism, war and weather.

And we voted for this guy . . . why?

All we need is a Bush bird flu plan, considering that the same census report noted that the number of Americans without health insurance also increased again, and all four horsemen will have run us down at another unmanned crosswalk.

Assuming that's not them riding up the Mississippi.



# Editorial

Opinion - Columns - Letters

— Editorial —

## Courage To Change

Hurricane Katrina crashed the U.S. Gulf Coast and unleashed more than death and destruction. She unlocked the spirit of charity from hearts of Americans and their global neighbors.

Everyday people have opened their homes to thousands of victims from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Celebrities, sports club owners, and TV networks have donated their time and money to raise awareness and funds for relief efforts.

Dozens of countries have offered a variety of humanitarian gifts as well.

For this show of support, we Americans should all be grateful and humbled, like we were after the terrorist attacks in New York City on Sept. 11, 2001.

But, as the battered gulf region rebuilds, will this intra-national and international goodwill be harnessed to fix the racial and economic inequalities largely ignored here by Americans?

The Red Cross has reportedly collected \$353 million in donations for relief from this long-gone hurricane, but the silent storms of poverty and racism have yet to die down here. The Census Bureau found recently that 37 million Americans are living in poverty and 45.8 million people have no insurance.

The numbers don't lie, but thanks to the media, the eyes of these storms now uncovered by Katrina are clearly being seen on the streets of New Orleans, where the majority of its citizens are African Americans living among the poorest in the nation. Though their lives depended on it, they were trapped there. Some didn't even have cars to escape. Is that fair?

This reality should be most troubling for Christians who say that this country was founded on Judeo-Christian values, because a government that lets its own people suffer floods, hunger, homelessness, rape, and riots has lost its moral compass.

Since the United States formed, its leaders prided themselves on principles of social and economic improvement. Let this pride take root and grow through actions that transform our social system for the common good again.

The character of our nation is at stake. Do we have the courage to change our economy to be fair for everyone?

— By Nathan Diebenow



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### Support Our Troops — Bring Them Home Now!

## Billboard Goes Up After Stenographer Clubbed By Policeman

SAN FRANCISCO — A billboard funded by a stenographer who was clubbed by a policeman is the first leg of a nationwide campaign to “Support Our Troops. Bring Them Home Now.” Working with PeaceRoots Alliance

and Media Tools for Change, the national campaign has also been launched online at <www.askwhy.org>. Linda Vaccarezza, a federal court stenographer whose arm was badly broken by a San Francisco police officer

aggressively swinging his riot club at peaceful antiwar protestors on the first full day of the war, paid for the billboard campaign from settlement money she received from the City of San Francisco as a result of the incident.

living bumper stickers and banners of support to inhabitants of Camp Casey, where Cindy Sheehan held her 26-day vigil seeking to speak with President Bush.

Smith is a labor activist and a former emergency room nurse.

Ironically, the billboard went up the same day that the Police Commission voted not to censure the office for excessive force. The incident had been caught on videotape.

An article in the SONOMA VALLEY SUN, written by Tim Omarzu, notes that the policeman “smashed her forearm with a nightstick, breaking it so badly that doctors had to use a metal plate and seven screws to fix it.”

Mike Smith, a member of the antiwar team, visited Crawford last week, de-



MEMBERS OF PEACEROOTS ALLIANCE stand in front of a billboard on Broadway in San Francisco that urges the government to “Support Our Troops. Bring Them Home Now!”

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# Labor Day 2005: No Human Rights in the Workplace

By JAMES C. HARRINGTON  
DIRECTOR, TEXAS CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT

Besides seeing Labor Day an end-of-the-summer holiday for picnics and the last trip to the lake, we should use Labor Day to reflect on our predicament as American workers. It is not a pretty sight. In fact, it is downright bleak.

The minimum wage, last raised in 1997, leaves a full-time worker with two children below the poverty level. The gap between executive and worker compensation continues to widen dramatically. While many are reaping rewards in the U.S. economy, many others are left behind, hungry, poor, often struggling with rent, and without decent health insurance. Low-income and middle class families can be one lost job, one major illness, one unanticipated financial setback away from serious economic trouble.

Few families can afford a parent staying home to raise children. Families find it more and more difficult to reconcile the demands of work, the duties of fam-

ily life, and the obligations of community life. Work has taken on survival status, and dominates our lives. Work is an end in itself, not a means to a better society.

Once a leader in promoting basic human rights, the United States today is playing second fiddle, at best. As other countries have strengthened workers' rights and dignity, we have regressed. Instead of focusing of the role of work to support families and promote self-sufficiency, this country has turned those worthy goals upside down and measures work only in turns of producing national wealth, to the benefit of the privileged and detriment of those who produce the wealth.

As other countries have moved to improve job security, create a living wage, and guarantee health insurance and dignified retirement programs, the United States has gone in the opposite direction. Employer-provided health care today covers half the workers it covered twenty years ago, and now

employees have to pay hefty deductibles. Even Social Security is under attack.

There is less job security. "Employment-at-will" is an arbitrary sword that corporate bosses wield to keep wages low. Employees' free speech and privacy rights have been stripped away, and workers who argue otherwise are punished or fired.

The relentless siege against labor unions for the last three decades is nothing less than a well-financed campaign to deny employees due process rights, keep wages unconscionably low, and transfer unbridled power and wealth to the upper echelons of the capitalist pyramid. Unions have a role in negotiating equitable contracts; they also play an indispensable part in social life, especially in industrial societies.

On Labor Day, the day created to honor American workers' contributions to the country, we should consider whether the following should be basic

human rights, or merely privileges granted at the whim of the monied class: the right to work; the free choice of employment; just wages and conditions of work; the right to form and join trade unions for protection; the right to rest and leisure, reasonable working hours and periodic holidays with pay; a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of individuals and families, including medical care; and, security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, or old age.

Rather than bemoan our predicament, however, we should follow the advice of Mother Jones, the labor leader at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and "grandmother of all agitators," as she was once denounced in the U.S. Senate: "Don't mourn. Organize!"

*The Texas Civil Rights Project, a non-profit foundation, promotes civil rights and economic and racial justice throughout Texas.*

## Taxpayers Can Keep Close Eye On County Spending

By SAM SEALE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

For the great majority of Texas counties, the months of August and September are the time when budgets are considered and tax rates are established. This means your local commissioners and county judge must work long hours going over budget requests from county departments and then set priorities on what should be funded this year versus what projects should be delayed or simply denied. At the same time those difficult spending decisions are under



Sam Seale

consideration, the county is officially informed of the total appraised value that is on local tax rolls. Somehow, they've got to cut, cut and cut on the spending side until they get a budget that is responsible to meet the most important needs of the county government. As a former county judge and someone who has worked with thousands of county officials over the years, I can assure you that the hardest vote a commissioners court takes is over whether to increase taxes by even a penny.

Just the same, there is no doubt that many local homeowners have seen regular increases in their annual tax statement from time to time. As I and others in county government have explained repeatedly, a large portion of spending increases are a direct result of state and federal mandates that tell local government what it must do but provide insufficient—or zero—funding to accomplish these new responsibilities. The other primary driver of higher budgets is when citizens demand greater service levels—more roads, safer communities or shorter lines at the counter. Add to that the costs of inflation, which have gone through the roof this year for such necessities as fuel and asphalt.

Over the last two years, some in state government have proposed caps that further limit the amount a property's appraised value can increase annually or that restrict the amount of revenue that can be spent each year. Close examination of these proposals reveal that inevitably, county services would be cut back drastically and before long, the only services left would be the barebones minimum—running a jail, overcrowded courts and long lines to file or obtain public documents such as deeds or birth certificates. Fortunately, the majority of lawmakers rejected

these ideas and instead enacted new provisions that make sure local citizens have greater knowledge about their local governments' actions.

Senate Bill 18 by Sens. Tommy Williams and Kyle Janek greatly strengthens the truth-in-taxation laws for Texas counties and cities. Consider its major features:

- "De facto tax increases" by appraisal creep will be stopped. Now, the Tax Code requires the individual officeholder making the motion to state publicly, "I move that property taxes be increased by the adoption of a tax rate of (specific tax rate)." Trust me, no elected official likes to say out loud, "let's raise taxes."

- All increases in the effective tax rate, even those less than 3 percent, will be completely open to public scrutiny (the legally defined "effective tax rate" is a rate that raises about the same total revenue as last year on properties taxed in both years). Under prior law, publication in local newspapers was not required until an effective tax rate increase exceeded 2.99 percent. Now, published notices that are at least one quarter of a tabloid newspaper page must be published if the effective tax rate is increased *at all*.

- For the public record, any increase

in the effective maintenance and operations tax rate must clearly state in the printed order or resolution that the new rate is indeed an increase. More importantly, that public document must state the increased dollar amount that will apply to a \$100,000 home.

- Senate Bill 18 mandates that two public hearings, advertised in local newspapers in advance, must be held at least three days apart.

- All taxing units that host Internet sites (216 of Texas' 254 counties) must post the details of upcoming hearings at which taxes are increased by even a penny.

- All taxpayer will be mailed much more information about their taxes and the actions of their local governing bodies. The county tax assessor-collector must send to each real property owner an annual statement with the tax bill that includes the following information for each of the past five years: the appraised value and taxable value of the property; the total tax rate for the unit; the amount of taxes imposed on the property by the unit and the percent of increase or decrease in the amount of taxes on the property compared to the preceding tax year. Further, the same data must be broken out to reveal the percentage of increase or decrease compared to five years ago.

- Finally, it will be significantly easier for taxpayers to petition to roll back a tax increase of 8 percent or higher. Under prior law, 10 percent of local registered voters could sign petitions to force a rollback election. That has been reduced to 7 percent in cities and counties with more than \$5 million in tax levies. In Harris County, for example, that means 55,000 fewer signatures would be required.

Because of these major changes in Texas' truth in taxation statutes, local taxpayers will be better informed. Governing bodies will be pressed to work harder and smarter at cutting budgets and avoiding tax increases. As de-

scribed by supporters during passage of Senate Bill 18 on the floor of the House of Representatives, Texas now has "the toughest truth-in-taxation law in the nation."

*Sam Seale is executive director of the Texas Association of Counties and a former Jackson County judge.*

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## Save Our Country With Truth, Not Symbolism

By DANIEL J. SMIECHOWSKI  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

How is it possible to validate our Government's illegal, immoral, and illogical preemptive strike against a proven non-threatening sovereign state?

What appears to be so threatening to the crocodile tear crowd is their sense of national morality.

The pro war crowd undoubtedly suffers many sleepless nights over far away governments and how they comport themselves within international law.

Never mind our own brutal oppression and that of a host of dictatorships throughout the world.

Psychologically, what makes the pro war crowds argument wholly plausible is a mandate from the fatherland. If our great patriot and esteemed leader George W. Bush had ordered an illegal occupation of Disneyland, there would surely exist his most ardent supporters.

Why Iraq? There is always Yemen, Syria, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, Cuba, Venezuela or if we really believe in our sense of justice, we can take on the Chinese Dragon.

So Saddam Hussein was a bad man.

The Shah of Iran before the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and former Chilean leader Augusto Pinochet, to name a few brutally oppressive leaders, were no altar boys yet were coddled by our government like a mother caressing her baby. Why do the pro-war folks have no moral consistency?

Enough of the tyrants you say.

Where is the mushroom cloud, weapons of mass destruction, roses and kisses, centrifuges and most importantly what happened to the coalition?

The last I heard, Poland, Spain and several other countries are giving George W. Bush the jersey bounce.



Smiechowski

What about the terrorists, well, our government's illegal preemptive strike against an otherwise contained dictator provoked and drew them into Iraq, not vice-versa. The cure is worse than the disease.

What about freedom you ask? How is it possible to impose freedom to an unwanting and recalcitrant culture and society?

Do we really believe our own propaganda? Are we honestly making America safer for future generations?

You must be kidding.

Waving the flag and chanting patriotic songs is akin to throwing gasoline on a fire.

If the pro-war folks truly loved their country, they would strive to save her with truth, not symbolism.

The World and America have actually become more dangerous by the actions of an illogical nationalism including the belief that America is beyond reproach.

The Great Voltaire had once said, "The only certainty in death is the continuance of fools."

I believe it.

*Daniel J. Smiechowski is a columnist for the Hillcrest News in San Diego, Calif. He is a former public school teacher with a diverse academic background in Sociology, Politics, French, Linguistics and Education. He has traveled abroad 18 times including study at the University of Paris, France, "La Sorbonne." Smiechowski writes primarily on social philosophy and psychology and resides in San Diego.*

<SmiechowskiD@aol.com>

## Men Of This Caliber Hard To Find

By JEFF CARMACK  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Here's a story about getting dope across the border — one dope at a time.

Last week, David Smith, of Half Way, Missouri, had himself shot from a cannon, across the border between Mexico and the United States, and into a net.

Note to Smith: Missouri is known as the "Show-Me State," not the "Show Me How Deranged You Are State."

Smith climbed into the cannon in Mexico Saturday afternoon, flashed his U.S. passport, and then was blasted across the border, where he landed in a net in San Diego.

If anyone ever deserved to be caught in a net, it's this guy.

The feat was the brainchild of Venezuelan artist Javier Tellez. Proving that fact is indeed stranger than fiction, Tellez organized the stunt with psychiatric patients at the Baja California Mental Health Center in Mexicali, Mexico.

Makes sense. If you want a smart idea, you work with smart people. If you want a crazy idea ...

"David Smith is a metaphor for flying over human borders, flying over

the law, flying over everything that is established," Tellez said.

Forget the metaphor talk. Anyone who willingly has himself shot from a cannon in a stunt dreamed up by mental patients is not a metaphor. He's a lunatic.

Tellez said the project was about "dissolving borders" between the United States and Mexico and between mental health patients and the rest of the world.

It's also about dissolving borders between who's playing with a full deck and who's not.

Smith's son, David Jr., said they had U.S. Border Patrol approval for the stunt. "I had to have some kind of official OK high enough up to make sure he doesn't land in the U.S. and go to a federal penitentiary." Had it been me, I would have been more worried about my dad going to a federal loony bin.

Tellez, 36, and the elder Smith worked closely on the backdrop, music, costumes and advertising for the project, which Tellez dubbed "One Flew Over the Void."

Too bad "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" was already taken.

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## Ride 'Em, Caribou!®

By L. B. PARR  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

A few weeks ago, my somewhat Republican husband (I swear, I didn't know this when I married him) and I were having a discussion of sorts about President Bush's goal to allow oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

The tone of the discussion started heading south at about the same time that I said something like it was obvious that he was never going to understand that Bush's plan was just a bunch of caribou manure so why was I even bothering trying to enlighten him so let's change the subject. OK?

Later, when we weren't snarling at each other, I showed him a letter I received from our very Republican Senator, Kay Bailey Hutchison, in a response to a letter I had written her about ANWR. She replied that the United States is dependent on other nations for over 60% of oil because we don't have a "sound energy policy that will enhance conservation and research and development, while providing a more diversified energy supply for our country." Her reply sounded very official and senator-like with all those multi-syllable words, it just didn't say anything. My husband was most impressed.

The response from our other very, very ultra-Republican Senator, John Cornyn, waxed eloquently that drilling for oil in the Arctic was going to be the cure-all for our nation's ills. He believes we can "develop a system that allows responsible oil exploration while maintaining ANWR's pristine nature. Such development will promote economic growth, remove the threat to our domestic security and protect our environment."

Senator Cornyn further claims, "only 2,200 surface acres of ANWR's 20 million acres would be utilized for development" and that "reliance on foreign oil allows other nations to dictate the price of energy in our country and threaten our national security." Well, my husband was positively beaming after he read Cornyn's letter. "See," he said to me, "I told you old George sure does know his stuff. Who would have ever thought that we could remove the threat to our national security, protect the environment, and promote economic growth just by drilling for oil in a tiny part of the Arctic. I'm amazed."

Well, it would be amazing if it were true but the two senators from Texas and Mr. Bush didn't quite tell us the whole story. They forgot to bring up some relevant facts and kind-of lied about one of the facts they didn't forget. Typical Bush-ism. So, I set my dear, sweet husband down and went down the list of miracles Senator Cornyn promised if we let Mr. Bush have his way in ANWR:

1. Drilling for oil in the Arctic will not have a major impact on the amount of oil we import from other countries. The accepted estimate of recoverable crude oil located in ANWR's Coastal Plain is 7 1/2 to 10 billion barrels, not the 10 to 16 billion touted by the G.O.P. By the time ANWR is up and running at peak production, about 22 years from now, the Department of Energy anticipates the U.S. will still have to import 66% of its

oil, only 4 percent less than if we leave those caribou alone.

2. The price of energy in our country has risen for a variety of reasons, each with their own cause and affect. Concerns about the unrest in the Middle East and it being a reliable future source of oil (hmm, wonder which nation heavily contributed to that unrest?) and a lack of new, modern oil refineries in North America and world-wide are two contributors to the higher prices. Last, but not least, the eternal driving force in any industry, supply and demand.

3. This fact is where the Bush administration took the giant leap from a little misinformation to an out-and-out lie. Both senators from Texas, the President of the United States and the Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton, have repeatedly claimed that only 2,000 to 2,200 surface acres would be impacted by drilling for oil in the Coastal Plain.

Well, yes, but only if you count where the pipeline support posts actually touch the ground. For some weird reason, access roads don't count. According to Jim Waltman of the Wilderness Society, what also doesn't count as part of the 2,200 acres utilized are airstrips, housing, pumping stations, power plants, power lines sewage treatment and waste disposal facilities! You know, the things that really screw up pristine environments.

4. This is a question for Senator Cornin. How is drilling for oil in the Arctic going to "remove the threat to our domestic security?" The only possible answer I can come up with is that all the terrorists, when they find out we are stupid enough to drill for oil in one of the harshest climates on earth, will be laughing too hard to bomb us.

5. While I'm at it, would someone please explain to Mr. Cornyn what is generally meant when someone says we are going to protect the environment? Protecting the environment means not allowing oil companies to go into a protected wildlife refuge and pollute, scar, disfigure and disrupt a precious eco-culture.

Protecting the environment would be raising fuel-efficiency on all cars and trucks and upgrading the standards for replacement tires to match those of tires on new cars. These two steps alone would conserve more oil than we could ever hope to get out of ANWR.

As everyone knows, if you want to find out someone's true motivation, you follow the money. In 2004, Valero Energy, Koch Industries, Exxon Mobil, El Paso Corporation, Chevron-Texaco, Conoco Phillips and Anadarko Petroleum, all oil and gas industries, gave an average of 83.8 percent of their donations to the Republican Party.

Next time you fill up your car with gas that costs over \$2 per gallon, consider this: Exxon Mobil, the world's largest publicly traded oil company, posted a 44 percent gain in profits for first quarter 2005, with Shell and Conoco Phillips not far behind.

If the price of gas keeps going up, we just might have to rustle up some of them-there caribou and throw a saddle on them so we can afford to go to work.

# Hard To Hear The Boom In Boomer



Modern Times  
By  
Lloyd  
Garver

Publishers are coming to the rescue of baby boomers who are having trouble reading the small print of mass market paperbacks. Simon & Schuster's Jack Romanos says, "We've been losing the foundation of our customer base because their eyesight is getting worse, and the books are getting harder and harder to read." So, they are printing new paperbacks in a bigger size with larger type and more space between lines. These aren't to be confused with the "large print" version of books. These new books will still fit on the same shelf at the airport store, so boomers will be able to buy them without feeling that there is a sign on their foreheads that reads, "Getting Old."

I hope that phone book publishers figure out how to do the same thing without making the Yellow Pages weigh three hundred pounds. It's also time for watchmakers to make those numbers legible. I'm not sure if I really want restaurant checks to be more readable, but that doesn't seem like it would be too difficult of a task.

Eyesight is only one thing that changes as people get older. It would be

nice if there were special showings of movies for people who are starting to be "hearing challenged." If the volume were turned up a bit, then other people in the theater wouldn't be constantly subjected to hearing things like, "What did she say?"

They could build special movie theaters for Boomers and Beyond. They would be long and narrow so that all the seats are on the aisle. That way, nobody would be disturbed when you have to go to the bathroom. The audio portion of the movie should be piped into the restroom, so that when you return to your seat, you don't have to shout, "So, what did I miss?"

Many boomers readily admit that

their memories are not as good now as they once were. There are already devices to help you find your keys and glasses. You attach a little receiver to the object which will beep when you push the transmitter. All you have to do is follow the beep, and you've got your keys and glasses. My big problem with this is, how would I remember where I put the transmitter? I need a device that could hear me when I say, "Where are my stupid keys?" and then answer me with, "They're right on the table where you left them, stupid." Techies, get to work on that one.

The most annoying and embarrassing memory failure is not remembering the names of people we should remember. We run into someone whose face is very familiar, but we don't have a clue what name goes with that face. One solution would be for everyone over 40 to wear a nametag. This has many drawbacks, not the least of which is that you'd have to remember to put your name tag on before you leave the house.

Forget nametags and technology. If someone who was born at least 40 years ago runs into another person of the

same generation, they have an obligation to let each other know what their names are before panic sets in. If the salutation of "Hi" is followed by nothing or by something lame like, "How are you?" rather than a name, the other person should supply his or her name immediately. There's nothing wrong with the second person saying, "Hi, Bill. I'm Jane. I used to live down the hall from you, but I know you remember that." Then when Bill says, "Of course, I knew that," let him get away with it. We've got to stick together on this thing.

Since baby boomers are such huge consumers, I feel society owes it to them to try to figure out more and more ways for them to feel comfortable. I had a few other ideas, but, well, I just can't remember what they were.

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](mailto:lloydgarver@yahoo.com)

## New Orleans — Presidential Platitudes And Premeditated Ignorance

BY VIVIAN GREENTREE  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Catastrophic. Natural Disaster. Devastating. These are some of the adjectives that are being used to describe Katrina, the hurricane that descended onto the Louisiana coast with all the fury only mother nature can harness.

Horrific. Tardy. Appalling. These are now some of the adjectives that are being used to describe both the preventative and relief efforts in conjunction with what is being billed as the worst natural disaster of this lifetime.

In a tragedy of such magnitude, the first response must always be to help the living. Immediate relief and attention are still needed for the survivors. However, given the tremendous loss of life, we must analyze the situation to glean from it whatever learning lessons we can. We must do this to ensure we will be better prepared next time.

The wetlands that line the Louisiana border to the Gulf have always provided some degree of protection from water surges. In the early 1990's a federal task force began restoring lost wetlands surrounding New Orleans because every two miles of wetland between Crescent City and the Gulf reduces a water surge by half a foot. However, the Bush administration favored a policy of turning over the wetlands to developers, making it impossible for either the Army Corps of Engineers or the Environmental Protection Agency to protect them unless they were somehow related to interstate commerce. One question to be put to both the developers and the President could be, "Do you think perhaps more could have been done to maintain the wetlands and preserve their defensive nature?"

Fast forward to 2001 when FEMA warned that a hurricane striking New

Orleans was one of the three most likely disasters in the U.S. Still, the Bush administration cut New Orleans flood control funding by 44 percent to help pay for the Iraq war. New Orleans' local paper, the *Times-Picayune* has reported since the hurricane, "No one can say they didn't see it coming... Now in the wake of one of the worst storms ever, serious questions are being asked about the lack of preparation."

Even last year when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed to study how New Orleans could be protected from a hurricane such as Katrina the administration ordered the research not be undertaken, again citing budgetary restraints. I assume, to focus on tax cuts and private sector growth.

And one has to question the success of our homeland security initiative when there are still, five days after the hurricane, over 1,000 people that need to be rescued from the tops of buildings. There are still people dying in the streets and decomposing there because there is no one to bury them. The news channels are on 24-hour loops of footage showing looting and dazed survivors begging for help.

Texas Governor Perry has opened our borders to help, but why didn't Louisiana Governor Mary Landrieu declare a state of national emergency and mobilize their National Guard? What took so long? When interviewed by Anderson Cooper, she thanked the President for offering platitudes of compassion while her citizens, the ones that survived, are living in waste and starving. What good is it being a world superpower if we cannot help our own people in their most dire time of need? Where is the leadership? The Energy Department has received over 5,000 complaints of gas price-gouging since Monday. I haven't

heard anything about that from any of officials - federal or local.

The President was quoted this morning as saying, "I don't think anybody anticipated the breach of the levees. They did appreciate a serious storm but these levees got breached and as a result much of New Orleans is flooded and now we're having to deal with it and will." That doesn't sound like leadership to me, especially since his own FEMA issued that exact same warning.

## Iraq and American Democracy: Opposing Forces

BY PETER STERN  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

American taxpaying voters have the right to know what the real plan is in Iraq. Aside from the noble, yet questionable, attempt to provide Democracy in the Middle East, and also sweeping aside the obvious need to control the oil fields — what are the Bush administration's short-term and long-term plans?

Certainly if the leader of a great nation wants the support of its people in fighting and paying for war and reconstruction, isn't the obvious method to declare the intent, to submit a realistic budget, thereby providing rationale behind the slogans and efforts? Bush shakes his head and laughs, "I'm NOT going to give a timeline. It just isn't possible."

If the real intent is to eliminate the "radical terrorists" inside the Iraq perimeter, why doesn't the U.S. declare martial law so it can scour the cities and countryside to "search & destroy" remaining "the enemy" without more American soldiers dying from daily attacks and us in response killing more innocent civilians?

Great leaders emerge during times of great crisis. I have yet to see such a leader surface from the aftereffects of Katrina. No political leaders to be sure. But there has to be someone, somewhere, who can give hope and help to those who lives have been shattered by Katrina.

Vivian Greentree graduated with degrees in Political Science and Public Relations from the University of Georgia. She is currently pursuing her Masters and is a freelance writer.



Vivian Greentree



Peter Stern

The Crawford vigil initiated and endured by Cindy Sheehan and her followers, at the least, provides the opportunity for Americans and con of the war to purge their opinions, emotions, and possible resolutions. Prior to this emergence, there predominantly was a lethargic, passive, dismissive and pseudo-patriotic front held onto by too many Americans.

"Respect your President." "Honor the soldiers." "Don't show cowardice to the enemy [terrorists]; it helps them."

Enough of the outcries, slogans and propaganda. Enough of the anger directed at each other. Enough of the lies and "confusion" spread by America's management. No more vague promises, no blind faith in a positive outcome. The time has come for the truth and a realistic gameplan. If the President and his followers believe him to be a real leader, he owes it to all Americans to prove it, especially to those fighting and those who have died over there for some veiled causes.

It's really not that difficult. Simply, "Mr. President, what's the gameplan?"



## Flaming Pop-Tarts, Pets Wearing Boxer Shorts Means It's Back-To-School Time

Now that school is back in session, we have settled into our normal routine here at the Hickson household. This routine is based on a strict time schedule that my wife and I have developed over the years to ensure that, each morning at precisely 7 a.m., all hell breaks loose. This includes—but isn't limited to—at least one person (or family pet) running through the house in boxer shorts, and my wife locking the bathroom door for some "quiet time" while heating a Pop-Tart with her hair dryer.

Though we know this pandemonium could be avoided by just getting up a little earlier, the fact is, I am the only morning person in our family.

As anyone in this situation already knows, this is sort of like being the only lamb at a coyote picnic.

In order to stay alive, you must keep moving while, at the same time, drawing as little attention to yourself as possible. What makes this especially difficult is that, from time to time, I find it necessary to actually speak. Usually,



By  
**Ned  
Hickson**  
Siuslaw News

I'm just trying to determine our progress by way of a simple question like: *Why is the dog wearing cowboy boots?*

That's when all eyes suddenly turn to me. And these are not happy eyes. No.

These are the eyes of pod people. They are hungry. They are confused. And they know I am not one of them.

Fortunately, this is about the time the core temperature of my wife's strawberry Pop-Tart reaches its flash point, causing it to burst into flames and, consequently, be dropped into the comode. The dog, familiar with this

routine, then races across the living room in his cowboy boots and runs headfirst into the bathroom door, which my wife—also familiar with this routine—has locked again.

Given that I have nothing to compare it to, I have no idea whether our morning routine is considered "normal" by most standards. However, judging from the cereal commercials I've seen on television, I'd have to say no. That's because getting my son to eat a "well-balanced breakfast" isn't nearly as important to me as making sure he leaves the house without his pants on backwards. This often means deciding between making a nutritious breakfast of juice, toast, cereal and an egg, or tackling him when he least expects it so I can verify that his pants are in position and completely functional.

After looking through some self-help books and trying to pick up some tips, I came to the conclusion that, for the most part, these people are single. I know this because of suggestions like:

Set aside some quiet time each morn-

ing for you and your children to talk about your goals for the day. This will help your whole family begin each morning with a clear direction!

Better yet, why not provide each reader with clear directions to your home so they can set aside time to come over and whack you with this book?

The only author who seemed to have a handle on things AND be an actual (living) parent was a retired lawyer who lived in a small town in West Virginia with her husband of 24 years, four children—and a full-time English nanny.

Of course, there was nothing in the book suggesting what to do in case you couldn't afford a nanny, nor was there any indication that one would be appointed for me.

What this means is that we'll stick with the routine we already have.

At least until the dog stops wearing cowboy boots.

(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](http://www.nedhickson.net))

## Want To Lose Weight? Be A Reporter In The Field

If you want to lose weight, just take a job as a reporter for a couple of weeks outside in August in Texas. When I agreed to help cover the recent events in Crawford, little did I realize it would be the best diet I ever tried.

For once, my timing was perfect. I had already decided to give up everything I really enjoy eating (chocolate candy, ice cream, cake, etc.) when the call came. (The idea that I must limit intake of my favorite foods for the rest of my life is a little upsetting. This temporary job took my mind off it). I had weaned myself off sweets for about a week before I wore my first press pass.

There has been no time to eat, little time to sleep. I get invested in the thing, want to know what will happen next, want to know what I missed when I finally went back to the office or went home to sleep.

There have been 10 and 12-hour days, something I discovered is not so unusual around the newspaper office. The weekly issues we take so for granted are the byproduct of yet another sleepless night by the editor.

So for the last couple of weeks, there have been people to meet, networking to do, calls to take and make, interviews to take, interviews to give, stories to write. I discovered something every seasoned reporter probably learned early on: If one tapes an interview, it must eventually be transcribed—or die a slow and painful death trapped on the tape, lost there forever, never again to see the light of day.

Zack has this saying around the ranch, "Never handle something twice if you can handle it once." This saves time. Taping an interview and then having to listen painstakingly to it and type what one hears is like handling something twice. So I have learned to leave the tape recorder in my pocket whenever possible. Except for those times when I speak with someone like Joan Baez or Cindy Sheehan, I prefer to take notes. Or when I think something might be sensitive or if I might need proof I

### Rustic Ramblings

By Gene Ellis



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

didn't misquote, I will use the recorder.

I have trouble juggling my reading glasses, recorder, camera, clipboard, and pen. I gave up on carrying a purse after the first day. Now I go out looking like Captain Kangaroo. In my pockets are a small tape recorder, its microphone, extra tapes, extra batteries, business cards, and extra pens. My camera hangs from one shoulder or my neck. Keys hang from one belt loop, my cell phone from another. A bandana is looped through with the keys, and I jingle when I walk. (How do men do without purses? I have never understood this).

I have gone through two legal pads. There are dozens of phone numbers jotted down for people I never knew before last week. Now we are on first-name basis. I know the coordinators on both sides; try to report fairly on each. There just happens to be more news these days on one of those sides. (The tide may turn on that one). And that's what a newspaper does, reports the news, especially when it's occurring in one's own backyard.

Whether a reporter does or does not agree with one side or the other matters not. He or she is required to report the news as objectively as possible. Lately I have been wondering if we are seeing the beginning of something like the Viet Nam War protests of the 60s and 70s. I lived through that era, and remember it. I suppose it is still too early to tell. Is the tide of public opinion changing across the country? Or is this

protest just a flash in the pan? Will it affect the war one way or another?

Well, I certainly don't know yet! What I can tell you from my time in Crawford, is that no matter what "side" I am reporting on, I find it heartbreaking to speak to a parent who has lost a child. Whether they are for or against the war or for or against the President matters not to me, at that moment. My personal views are unimportant. I weep with them all. (That's why the bandana).

It's difficult to be around even one person who has lost a child. The grief of that tragedy is so overwhelming. I don't know how any of them have the strength to get up each morning and go on. Some do not, for a very long time. And to be surrounded by so very many who have lost a loved one. . . . It is absolutely heart wrenching to me. I hope they can find some solace, some support from each other. They have all been through the same awful tragedy.

And to watch this grief televised disgusts me. We at this office have tried to be very respectful of space and privacy.

We try to have integrity, and take no "cheap shots." If I hear something that isn't supposed to be known, I keep my mouth shut. Sometimes there are safety issues involved.

We don't try to stuff a camera in the face of a grieving woman either. (Zoom lenses have made this unnecessary). Others in the media are not so sensitive. It's just like you see in the movies. They all run with their cameras and boom microphones and push and shove each other to record the most intimate, poignant moments. I know it's their job. And I suppose people in the limelight have to expect this. But it can't be easy to deal with.

So start with a week or two of very long days, add lots of activity, walking, and action, stir in plenty of emotion, add a good measure of Texas heat in August, some old folk songs sung by a legend (with whom you can sit and chat over breakfast), and if you consume enough of it, you are sure to forget all about eating and lose weight. Guaranteed. . Five pounds so far.

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# The Wrath Of Katrina

Yesterday morning, Aug. 31, 2005, the relative morning calm was shattered when my son, Pete, announced that the ceiling in our family room was leaking.

My immediate response was the obligatory, "Oh, shit!"

There it was, an eight-inch circle of brown on the white ceiling, with a hole in its center where water was dripping onto our sofabed.

"Somonabitch!"

(Thank modern technology for Scotchguard!)

The drip was directly beneath the kitchen faucet. The stain had not been visible on the ceiling as late as midnight Tuesday; still, there's no telling how long the leak had existed.

I went through my usual grumbling and moaning for a few minutes, carping about why this kind of crap always happens to *our* house. Then I called the plumber.

After that I took a moment to look at the television.

And it dawned upon me that our little drip was merely one of life's little inconveniences, something that everyone who owns a home should just come to expect.

Aggravating — yes. We had to move several tables and the sofabed; Pete cleared everything out from under the kitchen sink; the kitchen would be in minor disarray for a while; we had to suspend use of the sink and dishwasher. There would be unexpected expenses of paying the plumber and eventually a carpenter to fix the ceiling (my home repair skills have their limits).

But our house was standing solid, dry and safe in the bright Summer sunshine. Pete and I could get in the car, go to the supermarket unimpeded, and buy whatever we needed. We could come home and watch the beginning of the Cubs game against the Dodgers while eating our lunch in comfort.

I could go about my business; he could get to his classes.

The plumbers' arrival was but a minor interruption in my day, and the visit cost a mere \$89.

None of this was a drip in the Gulf of Mexico compared to the utter devastation, the totality of the desperation that was on my television.

And I realized, in the overall scheme of things, just how fortunate some of us are.

These images coming into my living room have been extremely difficult to look at.

It's like watching a tale of Armageddon, or a George A. Romero "Living Dead" movie with a big budget come to life.

Looking at the homes and businesses, schools and churches that have been turned into TinkerToys and piles of rubble in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia is hard enough. Thanks to instant communication systems, over the years we have become somewhat inured to scenes of tragedy and destruction, natural or man-made. From tornadoes to tsunamis to hurricanes, from war damage to terrorist bombings to masses dying of starvation, the images have all become a blur.

But never have I seen, or ever expected to see, what has become of the beautiful city of New Orleans.

The engineer who designed and con-



Out Of The Blue

By  
Jerry  
Tenuto

structed the sign at the HARD ROCK CAFÉ in Biloxi, Miss., should receive some sort of award.

In shot after shot, from numerous angles high and low, there it stood on my television screen — tall and brightly colored, proudly distinct in its guitar-shaped corporate symbol image.

Its very sight in disquieting juxtaposition surrounded by the merciless ravages wreaked by Katrina, already the 11th hurricane in a season with still two months or so left.

All around downtown Biloxi were the remnants of buildings and the contents therein reduced to useless, unrecognizable shards of broken glass, splinters of wood, and bits of twisted metal. Several cars seemed to have been tossed about like children's blocks. The streets were passable by foot only.

The HARD ROCK's casino boat, newly constructed and scheduled to open Aug. 31st, lay nearby, blown onto land next to what remained of its partner hotel and shredded into an unrecognizable hulk. Yet, the camera could never miss that giant guitar, almost as though this city known for its college getaway raucousness was defiantly flipping off Mother Nature.

Unfortunately, that wasn't even half of the story. It was but a small percentage of Katrina's wrath.

*"When the levee breaks I'll have no place to stay"*

—WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones/John Bonham/Memphis Minnie).

As we all know, after smacking a glancing blow upon Florida, Katrina veered west and tore a swath between Biloxi and New Orleans, completely taking out a number of towns, some inland, along the way. She continued to spread her virulence north and inland.

I've been to Mississippi several times although never to Biloxi, yet the utter horror of Katrina's aftermath there still filled me with awe. Too many helicopter shots covered entire communities that were wiped out.

I have, however, been to Louisiana and New Orleans. The images coming into my living room from that glorious city and the surrounding region hit me squarely with an emotional blackjack.

Since the weekend I've monitored CNN and the WEATHER CHANNEL to keep abreast of the situation. Early on, it appeared as though the Big Easy had, in large part, been spared. The brunt of Katrina had veered east of the city as she made her way inland.

I thought with fondness about all those grand old buildings of the French Quarter that have stood so long. It seemed as though perhaps they had survived. The loss of such unique buildings would be an irreplaceable blow to American history.

One time I stayed at a hotel on

Carondelet Street, which is what Bourbon Street becomes after crossing Canal Street into the newer downtown. The views of the northern and western parts of New Orleans were magnificent, including the Superdome. I have photographs from above dome level of its white outer roof.

It was a bit frightening to see most of that covering blown away.

Fortunately, there were no injuries among the many thousands who took refuge in the dome, even after huge pieces of the roof blew away.

A report I caught late Monday afternoon showed the Hyatt Hotel, within which I have wandered, with numerous windows blown out; other hotels and tall structures had various degrees of blown out window damage. It takes on a whole new meaning when you see severe damage to a building you've either been inside of or walked past.

The feeling was seriously eerie to view ground level along Canal and Rampart Streets, places where I have strolled and enjoyed myself.

Sure, considerable debris was strewn about these downtown areas. Yet, reports indicated that the worst seemed to be over. There was no vehicular traffic, but a few individuals were scurrying about. According to the CNN reporter, a few hours earlier these streets had had about 12 inches of water in them; by then the water had subsided. Rain continued to come down fairly steadily, but all seemed reasonably calm.

A few hours later I turned back to CNN. Now, I knew that Katrina had already passed New Orleans. So there was no way I was prepared for these new images — entire neighborhoods and subdivisions, with homes as tall as my own, submerged up to the roofs! Water deeper than cars as far as the camera lens could see, and the further the helicopter flew so stretched the water.

Those who had considered themselves fortunate after being spared by the force of the mighty winds soon found they were up to their attics and roofs in water.

The first words I heard at this point were, "The mayor of New Orleans estimates that 80 percent of the city is under water."

The levee had been breached, and in what seemed like mere minutes the city was deluged.

Countless numbers of people could not be rescued in daylight from their submerged homes because of downed power lines and broken gas pipes all around. Many could be heard shouting for help.

Once it got dark they were stuck at least until daybreak — or longer. Hopefully, the water would not rise any higher.

The news didn't get any better. From all parts of New Orleans were reports that the water was rising. Even the downtown streets had by then risen to some seven inches of water.

The official estimate of Katrina's combined dead at that point was 70, but there were reports of bodies floating everywhere she had hit.

As I write this, New Orleans is completely without fresh water, electricity, or any other utilities; nor is there any food, either. What's worse is there is no way to get around because of the danger of gas leaks, floating debris, and bodies.

Bodies floating in the water; bodies in buildings; bodies washed up on dry spots.

Countless bodies of dead human beings and pets, in short order to become pestilence of the most vile kind. With no way to clean them up, because the few rescue personnel and facilities must focus on getting the living to safety.

I usually don't get too emotionally vested in natural disasters. They happen, and there's not much you can do about them. When I was a small lad growing up outside of Chicago the occasional tornado-like storm came and went. They never really bothered me.

That was until a big one hit the town of Oak Lawn, where some very good friends of our family lived. I was probably 15; I know I was well aware of what a tornado could do. Fortunately our friends were fine, and a few days later my parents and I were taken on a personal tour of the major touchdown neighborhood. This was my first close-up view of a disaster area — homes and strip centers blown apart, a high school half destroyed, buses tossed around like balls and jacks, the sites where people died — and it has remained with me ever since.

As an adult I have driven through tornadoes in Oklahoma and Illinois, and dusters in Arizona. I have slept through earthquakes in Germany and Southern Illinois. In fact, I was even close enough to see, hear, and feel Germany's first tornado in recorded history (as far as I know).

It is way beyond me to get over the vastness of the death and destruction that has occurred in New Orleans this week.

It is a city that I fell in love with the very first time I saw it. Hell, I probably loved New Orleans before ever going there.

Think of all the fabulous stuff that has been exported from that melting pot of French-Native American-African American-Italian-Irish-German cultures: Food that is incomparable, the creation and enjoyment being in themselves ways of life; music without equal, from Louis Armstrong to Irma Thomas, Professor Longhair to Buckwheat Zydeco, Aaron Neville to Jimmy Buffett.

The rich history of the important mouth of the Mississippi River, from 1814 when Andrew Jackson teamed with pirate Jean Lafitte to stop the British, to its present role as an oil supply route. Consider, too, all the stunning architecture and rich culture culled from combining peoples of such diverse backgrounds that have added so much to America and the world.

The city has long been a favorite of writers, as it provided a backdrop of limitless possibilities, with Creole and Catholicism mixed in with Voodoo worshippers. Countless motion pictures and television shows have been filmed in and around New Orleans — it was always a cinematographer's buffet.

Hopefully, some of that charm will survive.

However, beyond the bombardment from Mother Nature, the pain I feel for New Orleans is deepening by the hour.

On the plus side, an estimated 80 percent of the population was savvy enough to get out while they could. That left roughly 100,000 people in the city (267,000 of the 1.34 million in the metropolitan area) subjected to the extreme flood conditions.

Continued On Next Page

## • TENUTO: THE WRATH OF KATRINA

... Continued From Previous Page

The authorities could not order these people to leave, and certainly there was no way to carry them out. But, why did they stay?

It's an absolute certainty that some of these poor people had no personal means of transportation, but didn't they have friends or family or neighbors? Folks are supposed to help each other out in times of strife – that's what makes human beings better than animals.

I find it hard to believe that none of these quarter-million people had cars or trucks, even beaters, at least good enough to get down the road. The likelihood, and I'm only taking an educated guess here, is that they either did not pay attention to the warnings, or did not listen to the news at all.

If hell is about to come down on your head, and you know it's coming, any reasonable person is going to find some way to get good and gone.

Unless you think it's more important to protect your CD collection.

Now, these tens of thousands of people have created a situation that shouldn't have been created in the first place.

What was the point of looting when the entire city is sitting under 12 feet of water? Anything that you steal is going to be ruined by the waste- and disease-filled water.

Why attack the rescuers when they come by with boats to try to save your sorry ass? The rescue parties were forced to leave, so not only did the people who acted like animals not get rescued, neither did anyone else.

What kind of a moron takes a shot at a rescue helicopter?

How stupid or desperate do you have to be to walk through floodwaters filled with dead bodies, feces, rotted food-stuffs, and all sorts of vermin?

I do agree that the situation in New Orleans is horrid beyond imagination. But I also know that if it were suggested I leave the vicinity, I'd find some way – any way – out.

I saw something on the BBC News last night that no American news outlet would dare air: They showed footage of a New Orleans police officer drawing down his shotgun on looters and making them drop their armloads of stolen clothes. That was followed by another cop chasing looters out of a store. Soon afterwards, I heard reports that the police had given up on going after looters because it had become too dangerous — they were outnumbered.

On today's BBC News were thousands upon thousands of people congregating outside the Superdome with nowhere to go, ranging in age from infants to octogenarians or older. There were thousands more in the French Quarter. The ones that were inter-

viewed all asked the same question: "Where's George Bush?"

Now that the catastrophe is upon us, we have Bush #43 once again taking his own, sweet time getting off his dead rump to deal with it. Katrina made land on Monday. There was no word of relief from the White House until Wednesday. As of 6:00 Thursday afternoon (ET), the Federal Government had yet to make any kind of major inroad. Bush #43 tried to claim the plan to bus people from the Superdome to the Astrodome – but that was done outside his sphere of influence.

The victims of the wrath of Katrina, especially the people of New Orleans, are being further victimized by typical RoveBush regime lackadaisical indecision.

By the way, where in the hell is Turd Blossom?

\$300 billion (and counting) to install a right-wing Islamic theocracy – all Iraqis are created equal, but some Iraqis are created more equal than others (that's paraphrasing George Orwell, George W.) – but where in the hell is the help for Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia? Oh, yeah, the Guard and Reserves are depleted because of the War Based On Fables.

George, you worthless nincompoop, there's anarchy in the streets of New Orleans and Biloxi. Mob rule has taken over. People are starving and drinking fetid water! They have no changes of clothes or toilet facilities.

You wanted to play being president, then do what you're supposed to.

THEY'RE AMERICANS! HELP THEM!

Oh, how silly of me. The vast majority of these people are African American, and most likely neither Republican supporters nor Bush #43's White Tie "base." Therefore, they don't rate immediate attention.

We all knew that he was in way over his head with the Iraq fiasco. This has shed new light on Bush #43's limitations, putting his incapability to lead into an entirely new strata. Frankly, I don't think he could lead a Boy Scout to a marshmallow roast, even if they were using the Eternal Flame.

Why haven't any of our friends and allies around the planet offered assistance? Golly, Mr. War President, if you hadn't spent so much time and energy making all the other world leaders so pissed off at the U.S.A. maybe they'd lend a helping hand. Y'think?

I shudder to think of the economic disaster that is about to befall us.

You know what, George. Why don't you go back on vacation and let Bill Clinton take over on this one? At least he understands human suffering, and has genuine concern for the poor — all of them.

## Camp Casey, Texas: The Village Is The Answer

By SUSAN VAN HAITSMAN  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Every village has its cemetery, its collection of spirit inhabitants who invoke memories of village history and remind the living that death and remembrance of the dead are essential to the natural order of things in human society. But cemeteries usually are found on the edges of town, away from the goings-on of daily life.

The memorials of carefully arranged and named crosses, stars of David and crescents comprising "Arlington South" in Camps Casey I and II were not relegated to the edges, but instead formed the heart of the community that emerged near Crawford, Texas, this month. Memorial crosses hugged the three original tents of Camp Casey I and lined the road leading to the camp.

The field of crosses at Camp Casey II adjoined the large community tent and was the first thing visitors encountered at the site. In a reversal of the natural order of things, the dead represented by the memorials were society's youngest adults. The doctrine of pre-emptive war forces members of a society to do the unthinkable: to sacrifice the lives of their young to protect their own.

After her address at Camp Casey II on Saturday, Cindy Sheehan stepped into the cheering audience to greet supporters. As she shook my partner's hand, she studied the image on his T-shirt: a line of people with arms linked and the message, "Guns don't protect people ... people do." She said, thoughtfully, "I like your shirt."

One of the many gifts Cindy Sheehan and her energetic supporters gave the country this August was a living, breathing example of what an alternative to war looks like. It's an alternative led by women with a message focused on children. Behind the stage of Camp Casey II, the handmade cloth banner spanning exactly the width of the tent stated in bold, pink letters: MOTHERS SAY NO TO WAR. On Saturday, a long banner held by about 25 persons in front of the crosses read in bold, blue letters: SUPPORT OUR TROOPS, BRING THEM HOME ALIVE. Many smaller signs displayed around the camp contained similar messages: "Hands off God's children." "Greed is not a lesson for our children." "War leaves all children behind."

The village that grew at Camp Casey contained life's essential elements: food, water, shelter, clothing (mostly T-shirts), health care, education, communications systems, spiritual direction, visual art, music and dance. It was all there,

### GUEST COLUMN

brought into being by hundreds of people pooling talents honed in their own communities around the country. People came with children and pets, often staying longer than intended. "It felt so much like family, I couldn't bear to leave," said a friend who spent the night in her car with her daughter so they could stay an extra day.

The remarkable kitchen at Camp Casey II served thousands of delicious meals. Marveling at the lunch served one weekday, a Codepink volunteer said, "I eat better here than I do at home!" Bottled water was delivered by the caseload. A medical tent was staffed with volunteer professionals. Trained counselors were available. A special tent served as a chapel. Under the large tent on Saturday, every table contained a vase of fresh flowers.

The village embraced all ages and abilities. Chartered busloads arriving at the camp from Houston, Austin, Dallas, and San Antonio on Saturday were greeted and cheered. When help was needed for camp tasks, people jumped up, ready to be of service. At one point, overflow volunteers who answered the call for an ice brigade formed a line behind the ice handlers and applauded.

Visitors listened to speakers, read materials and engaged in discussion. Nonviolence training was held. Members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) spoke frankly. Said one young veteran from the stage as he surveyed Saturday's crowd, "This is the single largest patriotic gathering I've seen in my life."

President Bush missed an excellent opportunity to observe the ways freedom, democracy and compassion are spread by example. Noble causes require noble means. The Camp Casey community was characterized by good organization, flexibility, hospitality, creativity and abiding care.

At dusk on Saturday, taps were played in the field of crosses at Camp Casey II. Earlier, Joan Baez had sung "The Ballad of Joe Hill," concluding with the line, "I never died, said he." The large canvas portrait of Casey Sheehan waded in the wind.

From a field of crosses grew a lively village that became its own answer to war. Guns didn't protect people ... people did.

*Susan Van Haitsma is active with Nonmilitary Options for Youth and is an associate member of Veterans for Peace in Austin, Texas.*

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# MAILBAG ICONOCLAST

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Iconoclast,

There has been a lot on the news about how the businesses have profited by the increase in tourism in Crawford. There is one business that did not want to increase its customers during the month long influx of tourist. The 911 calls to Crawford EMS tripled in August and the small band of volunteers are ready for it to be over. With a normal monthly average of 3 to 4 calls, we are up to 12 for the month of August. Saturday was the busiest with 4 calls in a 24 hour period. The use of cell phones delayed the response time for some calls because out of town callers did not know where they were.

One heart related caller could only say he was "at a protest site." After a 15-mile trip to Camp Casey I & II, he was later found in town. Another caller "near the railroad tracks" was not easily found, and the massive amount of cars choked all the roadways.

A big THANK YOU to McGregor EMS and ETMC of Waco for providing mutual aid during the hottest part of the day on Saturday. There were also many volunteer EMTs and Paramedics from all over Texas who worked at the different protest sites. These people did what they could to take care of the people in their areas, which kept down the need for 911 calls. Their willingness to help means a lot to the volunteers of Crawford EMS.

Most city people do not understand the network of volunteers that serve rural areas for medical and fire protection. I am very proud of the people of Crawford who give of their time to step into other people's emergencies.

Looking back at these last two weeks, I think we have survived our biggest challenge. Most tourist will go home and never think about how they have impacted the lives of the local residents of Crawford and surrounding communities. According to the news, lots of money has been contributed in the name of freedom of speech to support both sides. How about those of us who were caught in the middle? Where is the donated money to help us take care of the sea of people who showed up? Could we share the wealth? The address of Crawford EMS is P.O. Box 341, Crawford, TX 76638. We are a 501 3 (c) non-profit organization, and any donations are greatly appreciated.

Marilyn Judy  
President, Crawford EMS

To The Editor:

Once again, I wish to thank you for your coverage of Cindy Sheehan, and for publishing one of my letters (that was fun)

You did such a great job, it was almost like being right there.

Now that I know you exist, I look forward to checking in often..

Thanks for your courage and dedication.

Respectfully yours,  
Patricia Kortt, Eugene, OR

To The Editor:

President Bush addressed the nation this afternoon 9/1, flanked by President Clinton and his father. The President sounded as if he were having a hard time talking between shallow breaths. His words this afternoon were just a bit more thoughtful than the words he spoke during an interview this morning. I imagine, just as it was 9/11, he needed time to assimilate the events of Hurricane Katrina! This morning his words repre-

sented his policies.

There are no words to describe the horror of devastation left by Hurricane Katrina. Yet President Bush had words! Not in some private conversation where he would not have the world listening! He looked into CNN cameras and told the world that looting and Insurance Fraud is his greatest concern!

There was no mention of the hardship and grief of thousands of people, not just for their material property, but for the loss of life! No mention of the terrible struggle trying to enlist the National Guard to the rescue of thousands upon thousands of Americans. And by the way, the National Guard by origin, belongs on our shores for the American People.

Sending the National Guard to fight any war as our main military fighting forces has left Americans to the devastation visited upon our own Country! If Bush wanted a war he got one without preparation of our Armed Services! Again the compassionate reason driven preparation for war was absent in the negligence of proper armor to protect the National Guard Forces in Iraq! And the consequence is an America at the mercy of disaster!

As life is of such little concern to this President, Americans are at the mercy of a mercenary president.

Sissy Riffn, Waco

To The Editor:

Duh~I don't get it. President Bush told us five days into the New Orleans Hurricane Katrina and ongoing massively burst levy disaster that they had just then came up with a plan. Still nothing much is being done. Our TV's should be glutted by now of scenes of Military Mash Hospitals and refugee relief and shelter villages. But these do not exist.

Where is FEMA and where is a Commander in Chief making some truly dynamic and decisive directives. Apparently since this is not in his brother's state the priority is low.

Apparently also is that the devastation of the International Port of New Orleans is a Homeland Security Issue that makes 9-11 pall by comparison. And the Presidency is quite obviously weak and impotent, and indecisive and helpless.

Port of New Orleans is by far the single most important petroleum and commodities ingress for the United States. If this is not easily perceived as a Homeland Security issue by the Bush group; then I think that the Saudi Wahabi Extremists are laughing and praising Allah that Prince Bandar-Bush Bin Sultan's flunky, George W., is America's worst enemy and is doing the terrorists work for them against the U.S. homeland without their even having to lift a finger. God help us.

Also apparently that this truly Nation Threatening disaster does not lend itself to grandstanding and glorious bull horn speeches.

And our squandered military resources in Iraq can do absolutely nothing for a real national emergency.

That a call for an International Relief effort to come to U.S. aid for New Orleans while the U.S. squanders literally Billions to fatten Halliburton-Brown & Roots coffers in Iraq is tragically preposterous and embarrassingly disgraceful for America.

Perhaps FEMA should call Halliburton-Brown & Root to resolve what neither the

President, nor any National Guard, nor FEMA, nor the now ludicrously depleted U.S. Military establishment of all services including the Army Corps of Engineers can accomplish.

However huge cudos go to the strapped but tenacious and courageous the available and over taxed Coast Guard's ongoing rescue and relief efforts; but little thanks to G.W. Bush & co.

Bush's War in Iraq could not exist but for fraudulent information. Without the fraudulent intell that Dick Cheney and George Bush encouraged Felon-Chalabi's phoney informant 'curve-ball' to give to congress, John Kerry and the other legislators would never have authorized Bush to war which many including John Kerry were forced to renege upon the 2nd time because of conscience and common sense. And the Bush spin machine fraudulently covers their frauds and lack of good conscience and due diligence by attacking good men of good conscience and good understanding as being flip-floppers.

Who do we blame? Where does the buck stop?

All of our war dead, and maimed and mutilated; who do we blame? Where does the buck stop?

The President's & Cheney's patently fraudulent claim that Iraq caused 9-11 and attacked the U.S., which this very day Rumsfeld openly acknowledged before Cheney's office forced him to recant. Cheney continues to spout that fraudulent idiotic nonsense like a member of the 'flat earth society.' Who do we blame? Where does the buck stop now?

Cheney personally arranged for the CIA to aid and abet those Iraqi ex-patriate felons to create a fraudulent intell-informant called 'Curve-Ball' to instigate the U.S. attack on Iraq even before 9-11. This was a monstrous and bloody fraud perpetrated upon the American Government and the American people and the people of the world. Yet Martha Stewart did time in the penitentiary for a fairly minor and comparatively harmless obfuscation to the government. Who is to blame? Where does the buck stop now?

Colin Powell was duped into lying outright to the world community at the UN by the Bush administration through a CIA chief that later openly acknowledged the suspect nature and source of the information, and Americans wonder why the world community has absolutely no faith in the world's hyper-power other than to lie to them, mock them, and to bully them. Who is at fault here? Where does the buck stop?

Rumsfeld acknowledged by implication that the directives that led to the Abu Ghraib debacle were his responsibility but came down from the top. Yet nobody has paid, nobody is replaced. Who is to blame? Where does the buck stop now?

Jack Scott

To The Editor:

I'm a high school drop out, living in a small modest home.

We live on a small income. I feel fortunate, but guilty being able to eat three times a day.

The community here is very economically depressed.

The industry has moved south, or to Mexico, or out-sourced to India & China.

A large part of this community eats once a day.

I feel embarrassed to see Americans with such extravagant spending at the Oscar awards. Such class distinction and gormoness disguised as Democracy. Taking more from the poor, giving to the Rich. Robin Hood where are you?

Of course it is young people from communities like ours that die fighting for foreign agent causes.

We need real change, not just at the Presidency. BUT the control strings in

congress.

Get rid of lobbies.Reform. Maybe some Accountability.

It is OK to DREAM, isn't it ?

UNITE.

We of this community would die for the "Victims of Katrina." We will give what we can. We will fight for their rights against imperialism. We will not fight for oil, nor for occupation of another's land & resources.

We are still Americans, will we ever be America again?

Ronald Waldron

To The Editor:

Just a quick THANK YOU Texas for showing the world your sincere compassion in opening up your state to help those in need relating to the recent tragic disaster which has devastated so many. Your swift, efficient and well organized efforts allowed tens of thousands to be welcomed unconditionally into your state. Perhaps our federal government and president could learn a thing or two from your well organized and swift response! America thanks you!

Respectfully,

James Lucas Foutz, Greenville, Ohio  
To The Editor:

**Inept leadership:**

**you pay for what you are**

The Bush administration may have had some good ideas, but it has been wholly inept in most of its actions. Any time a government myopically does more for the wealthy and corporate sectors than it does for the majority of its own people, there are going to be problems — big problems.

Bad leadership is a contagion because once you have it, virtually there's no immunity and it preys on everyone — *even the wealthy and the corporate sector.*

It is a fact that you cannot operate and pay for wars by cutting taxes and killing-off your soldiers. You cannot prevent or resolve pending disasters by cutting funds to federal programs like FEMA. You also cannot ignore global warming, a major reason for increasing the number and power of hurricanes.

During the past five years the Bush administration has made many leadership blunders. It's priorities are NOT America's priorities — they are special interest protocol. This brand of leadership, this disease, has filtered-down to state and local governments throughout the US. American voters cast their ballots for this leadership, twice, not really cognizant of what it is. Now we know it is chaos and it is wrong.

The "Christian" Bush administration will have to pay for its sins in the next life. The rest of us are paying for it now.

Peter Stern, Driftwood, Texas

To The Editor:

I was at a Dave Mathews Band concert, and the singer passed on a heartfelt "Thank you" to the Texans (and Texas) for so quickly and graciously taking in the hurricane victims. He said "Thank God for Texas." And it's true. Texans have opened their hearts and homes to the evacuees, and I'm proud for that. That is true human spirit that I grown to have great faith in - and not just from Texans.

On the other side of the coin — the antithesis of great human spirit — are not just the opportunistic looters taking non-essentials like electronics and shoes, but the man who calls himself our president.

A visit from George W. Bush — 5 days after the fact or the day after — means nothing to those helpless people unless he's bringing along water to quench their dying bodies! Dehydration is killing people after they already won their fight to survive the initial wave of this disaster. Bush's presence means nothing if he can't make their lives better. Unfortunately, he thinks placing himself in the "discomfort" zone

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# MAILBAG ICONOCLAST LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Continued From Previous Page

for a brief moment is a good photo-op to accentuate his own "deep empathy" and he thinks it eases their pains and alleviates their fears. THAT is the kind of arrogance that is just a slap in those poor souls' faces ... and a death sentence for some.

I also believe the plight of the 30-40 percent of New Orleans residents, for example, who have been living in poverty will go a long way to show the true ugly underbelly of the America that Bush and his cronies have long neglected and tried to sweep under the rug. Looting behavior is unconscionable, but what system created that mentality?

God bless our fellow citizens of the earth who are suffering in such unimaginable conditions and circumstances — that is hurricane victims, innocent war victims and more. I hope that the positive human spirit will continue to embrace you and give you hope and help ... despite the turmoil that political fronting creates.

*Lois M. Rodriguez, Austin*

To the Editor:

We must demand that the nomination to the Supreme Court of John Roberts is delayed and no other nominee is put forward until the events surrounding hurricane Katrina and Chief Justice Rehnquist's death are sorted out. While death and destruction rule, our legislators seek to push forward both John Roberts' nomination and the elimination of the estate tax for people that have more than three and a half million dollars. We must look into our hearts and decide on our priority - politics or principles - policies or people?

There is no better example than the travesty occurring on the Gulf Coast now to demonstrate why it is so vitally important that we seize this opportunity to preserve our fundamental ways of life in America. Allowing Mr. Roberts an easy lane through confirmation will entrench the kind of corporate-centric culture into the Supreme Court that will stamp approval on the kinds of laws and rulings that facilitated the collapse of the infrastructure, the response, and the culture in Louisiana and Mississippi. There is a direct correlation between the current culture and the disaster there. Confirming Mr. Roberts offers the President's advisors with their agenda the certitude they need to change the composition of the court and soon our country for the next generation. This will cause irreparable harm to our way of life.

Thousands of hard-working Americans that have insured the delivery of goods and materiel essential to this country perished due to bad planning, decrepit civil engineering, and a vacuum of response to the Gulf Coast. The administration only worsens the plight of the children and the elderly as it jockeys for spin and positive press, rewarding cronies and offering platitudes instead of upholding responsibilities. Now there are some in the Senate chamber, unconcerned about the citizenry, who seek to push Mr. Roberts' nomination through quickly and quietly and then will seek an even more ideological appointment for Justice Rehnquist's position. Argue as we might about Mr. Robert's positions on social issues and past rulings one thing is very clear - he has calculated for a long period of time to

arrive at the proceedings with little evidence of his basic choices that leave the general populace and true American values shortchanged. A second nominee in this vein will distort the rulings issued by the court for years to come and risk tearing the very fabric out of the country that it was built on - the ability of the individual to succeed.

*Perry Jefferies*

First Sergeant, United States Army  
(retired)

To The Editor:

To George Bush  
Also to Dick Cheney Condileeza Rice Michael Brown

With an additional ending message to George Radanovich Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer

I am a 42-year-old well to do White Female from the Central Valley in California

Regarding the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans I have never seen such blatant racial discrimination and total incompetence in my life. You can not even keep your people safe from YOU and your lackies, much less a terrorist attack! You and your lackies say not to make it political well you made it political the moment none of you showed up!

You are a complete incompetent coward and fake. You are not in control. Your incompetent and unqualified staff is not in control. You say we have the resources, the resources for what? To pay Halliburton to misappropriate billions of dollars worth of aid funds like they did with Iraq funds.

There are people with no water or food that have been sitting and dying on a bridge in the sun, sitting and dying in a football stadium and sitting and dying and being raped in a Convention Center not to mention the other untold victims FOR 5 DAYS while waiting for you to come back from vacation, your Department of Homeland Security and your Federal Emergency Management Asshole to figure out what they are doing.

Do not tell me it is because the job is to wide spread, no one could have prepared for this and you did not know the levees would break. If you would learn how to read you would have known this would happen from the various reports testifying to it. Further there is no excuse for not being on the situation the moment you knew a Category 5 hurricane was going to hit the gulf.

You are the self described Commander-in-Chief remember?

I would bet my life that would not happen to white people. If my mother or baby died because you were on vacation and your version of FEMA was unprepared for an event that everyone knew was going to happen I would sue you for murder and for everything you have, and I would win!

You are a bold faced liar! You are a bold faced racist! You were a failure in business, you had to "fix" 2 elections to get where you are and you are a disgusting failure again now. However I do not think the Bin Laden family will bail you out of this one.

You were off vacationing, playing

golf and promoting your self serving agenda, and your Secretary of State was out at the theatre and shopping for shoes in New York, while your citizens were dying. People bought your line of bullshit to bomb innocent people in Iraq and put our soldiers in harms way for oil. But, this situation you and your handlers could not tightly orchestrate. You could not screen the situation to make you look good and it was only until American citizens screaming for help and the Mayor of New Orleans sent out a Desperate SOS on news broadcasts world-wide did all of you get your asses back to work.

And where the hell is Cheney?

You just authorized the dying of Americans on American soil, because none of you were on the job until 8 days after the whole world (except for George Bush) knew a category 5 Hurricane was going to slam into the USA.

I am grateful this happened, because

now finally the American people will see you for the incompetent cowards that you and your unqualified appointees are!

To George Radanovich, Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer;

As one of your constituents, I DEMAND all of you to exercise all of your powers to get this administration investigated for not only the repeatedly documented lies to get into Iraq, but also, and much more importantly, for the complete dereliction of duty by every top level official in this administration, regarding the Katrina Hurricane aftermath disaster and consequent environmental catastrophe.

If this is what to expect in the case of an earthquake or other disaster in California, all of you should be very concerned.

With Absolute Sincerity,  
*Cheryl Locke, La Grange, Ca.*

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# ICONOCLAST

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please be aware a new charity has been set up to investigate, report and help Children Of Iraq. With extensive marketing this site will become a definitive and powerful resource.

If you have any information for our site, (particularly regarding effects of depleted uranium, children injured or killed in US raids, (malnutrition or abuse) I would be extremely grateful. All material used will be credited. If you would like to contact me via web-mail please use <cafejava@yahoo.co.uk>. We also use PGP for secure e-mails.

Please support this charity by visiting the web-site <<http://www.coia.org.uk>>.

A petition including site logs (no of visitors etc) will be delivered to Downing Street after a period of time together with a letter asking for withdrawal of British troops from Iraq.

Please tell everyone you know to visit the site on a weekly basis. This will provide revenue from advertisements placed by supporting partners. This income will be used in it's entirety to buy early learning equipment which will be shipped to Iraq using Virgin Airways.

Thank-you,

Mark Golding, Trustee  
Children of Iraq Association

Dear Editor,

If it is true that an executive order was issued limiting the dissemination of information to only eight members of Congress and if this order was carried out as directed, then doesn't it follow that whatever so-called "intelligence" was provided to the various intelligence committees was bogus? Would it not explain why the Congress was told about yellow-cake transactions that didn't happen and non-existent weapons of mass destruction?

If so, then isn't it time to ask the original "gang of eight" (Hastert, Gebhardt, Daschle, Lott, Graham, Shelby, Goss and Pelosi) what they did in response to this directive? Did they question the assertion that it was consistent with long-standing practice to embargo information from the rest of Congress? And, since most of the players have changed (only Hastert and Pelosi remain in the loop), wouldn't it be useful to ask whether Reid, Frist, Roberts, Rockefeller, Hoekstra and Harman are even aware of their rarified position?

Sincerely,

Monica Smith, Durham, NH

To The Editor:

To paraphrase Deputy Chief of Staff in Charge of Policy, Karl Rove:

I will not take the blame

For the outrageous claim

I leaked that woman's name.

What was it—Valerie Plame?

Those journalists told me

The woman is a spy.

I never said her name,

I'm much too smart a guy.

Ms. Plame, if that's her name,

Is Mr. Wilson's wife.

He said George told a lie

And that makes her fair game.

The Deputy Chief of Staff insists he learned of Plame's identity as a CIA agent from the media, but reporters have no access to classified information, so who told them? Administration responses to all questions range typically from evasions to contradictions to non sequiturs.

Mr. Rove has been indispensable to Mr.

Bush during the Texas and Washington years (but where has he been in the dog days of August while Mrs. Cindy Sheehan has been camped outside the Crawford ranch waiting to speak to Mr. Bush in person about exactly why he started the war in Iraq and about bringing our soldiers home? Her son, Casey, was ambushed and killed in Sadr City. If Mr. Rove has advised him, either the advice was bad or hasn't been followed. Some people might tell him, just face her, George. Be kind. Be presidential. Be a man!) note: Mrs. Sheehan plans to return to Crawford as soon as her mother's health allows.

Decisions on policy reached by the President are only his after being formulated by Mr. Rove, who is acutely aware of what the President, the military and the corporate are after and he knows that a slogan or a single phrase, oft repeated, can lead public thinking in the same direction; but because of the Plame affair, more of his unsavory past is being scrutinized, as the scandal in the early 70s when he was executive director of the College Republican National Committee, a paid official post, holding how-to weekend seminars and workshops on political espionage and dirty tricks. George H. W. Bush, Chair of the Republican National Committee, announced a GOP investigating committee would "get to the bottom" of charges against Rove, but the committee, upon reviewing the case, dismissed it. When affidavits, and transcripts and tapes of the seminars made their way to the media, Bush vowed to reopen the case, but again, Rove escaped punishment and after a few months, turned up as Bush's RNC Special Assistant. His meteoric rise since then has led, perhaps inevitably, to his current predicament.

This combustible combination of politics and national security must come to a head, whether explosively or less sensationally, before the Grand Jury disbands in October. Mr. Rove may or may not be found guilty of a crime by Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, even though national security has been patently jeopardized by the disclosure. Either way, as former President Clinton's Chief of Staff, John Podesta, says, Rove's credibility "is in shreds"; but as long as Karl Rove is his troubleshooter he'll attempt to protect the President, the simple formula being to redirect attention from his blunders to something or someone else, swiftly (but what of the patient Mrs. Sheehan and the inhospitable Mr. Bush? Could the maligning of Mrs. Sheehan we're hearing be coming from Mr. Rove?) and with vindictive and dizzying force. In Roveland, truth doesn't count and consequences to the victims be damned.

Elizabeth Gerteiny, Westport, Ct.  
To The Editor:

It is hard to imagine a more liberal newspaper in the state of Texas, perhaps the AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN.

It is certainly within your right to bash President Bush to your heart's content and glom on to Cindy Sheehan and promote her blather all you want.

It strikes me that if you were a serious newspaper you would seek out interviews with some who support the president and not just accept as gospel those who revile him and what he stands for.

Your "unanswered questions" are the same old tired rhetoric from the left that has made our eyes glaze over and our

brains leak out of our ears for the past five years.

Do you seriously think that if President Bush had met with Ms. Sheehan yet again that it would have made any difference? She has an agenda to promote and that would only have played into her self promotion. I can only imagine the photo ops that would have afforded her.

You might include in your praise of her and her opposition to the president how her story has changed since her first meeting him. Also might be worth your while to interview other families who have a very different take on their meetings with President Bush.

Enjoy your remaining moments in the sun, 2009 will come and nobody will care what your newspaper promotes.

Sylvia Simpson, Trophy Club, Texas  
Hello, Mr. Fisher,

I enjoyed your column entitled, "We're The Iconoclast, Not Just Another Pretty Face." You are correct in your assessment, I think, even though I have been grateful for your newspaper's bias. Despite the shameless cheerleading, which I loved, it was slightly more objective that blog reports. I think my favourite piece was the interview with John Doe and friend. I would have enjoyed an interview with a proponent of the other side who could produce a credible argument, had you been able to find such a person.

I think you folks have witnessed history being made, and have risen to the challenge of telling the world what you have seen. Cindy Sheehan has managed to become a flashpoint for addressing the war in Iraq, runaway capitalism, lying governments and complicit media, the revival of democratic responsibility, the impact of the Internet as a democratic communications medium and on and on. It is difficult to avoid becoming mesmerized.

But you have, Mr. Fisher, and I don't detect a single hint of sexism, which I've felt has been an undercurrent in many of the "it's all too much" opinion pieces.

Congratulations for putting the issue of journalistic restraint on the table. I forgive the ICONOCLAST for being swept away, and from here, I cannot see how your voice in the wilderness will be heard in the short term [and part of me hopes it will not; it is all too wonderful not to celebrate.] But you have planted a seed, and as time goes by, I think it will be seen as part of the call for authentic discussion among polarized Americans.

I ramble. Well done. Your paper has brought hope to many and continues to do so. I want to acknowledge having received your message because it was so well stated. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rose Anne Leonard, Ottawa, Canada  
Dear Editor,

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Marines in the war theaters have NO days off EXCEPT 2 weeks per year. They work 24/7. The President that sent them there has 5 weeks in Texas, Idaho, Utah & Iowa. During 20% of his Presidency, Mr G.W. Bush, has been on vacation.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Marines have no one to protect them except each other. The President that sent them has the Secret Service, DC Police, FBI, CIA & all the US military.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines have 2 meals a day that are prepared someplace else & delivered and eaten cold. The president has ANYTHING he wishes day or night prepared by Whitehouse chefs.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Marines sleep on sand, in the heat & sun, in dry fox holes or in the mud. The President goes to bed at 9 p.m. on the mattress of his choice, and awakened only if deemed necessary by high ranking officials.....the

military night patrols are just returning to base after looking for insurgents all night.

The President has ALL MANNER of person at his beck and call, including MOST world leaders. If the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Marines call wrong, including nature, they get shot at.

The Soldiers, Sailors Airmen & Marines get baby wipes or "Combat Bath" IF they are lucky, the President gets a shower or tub bath, as warm, cool, gel soap, bubbles or not.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Marines travel by Humvee or Abrams tank, helicopter foot or donkey you KNOW what they get IED's and shot down or crash in sand storms, shot or ambushed. The President, travels by limousine, gets streets cleared, police on motorcycles, snipers on roof tops, caravans of SUV'S, helicopter and Air Force One.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Marines may have a change of clothes from time to time, are begging for socks and underwear. I do not know what is in the Presidents wardrobe, but, it looks clean.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, & Marines might get to play baseball, basketball or football for relaxation. Some might have a bicycle. I KNOW the President has a bicycle in DC & Texas.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Marines and President ALL go to Walter Reed, some military to Brook Army Hospital, San Antonio. The President for a clean bill of health. The Soldiers Sailors, Airmen and Marines for mental illnesses, head wounds, repeated surgeries, blindness, horrific burns, new arms and legs.

Some of our military have four feet and protect our military and their handlers. They are very brave canine members of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Marines. There is an assortment of canine companions at the Whitehouse and Prairie Chaple Ranch.

After 4 years in the Presidency, Mr.G.W.Bush, still has Mrs. Laura Bush, BUT, 50% of military marriages are dissolving under the weight of repeated war postings.

Mrs Barbara Bush, KNOWS where ALL her sons are. The Military Moms have NO IDEA where their daughters or sons are... or even if they are alive. I am sure ALL these mothers pray.

Alexis Barlows, Kansas City, Mo.

To Mr. Don Fisher,

I read your editorial on your feelings about how you covered the Cindy Sheehan story and was saddened that it made you feel the way it did.

Because I live over 2,000 miles from Crawford, Texas, I really wanted to know what was happening. As the national and my local news only chose to give me an occasional "sound bite" or small mention in the paper I relied on the Iconoclast for real news without the smear that was happening in other news outlets.

When I went to your paper that was what I found. I saw a story written by reporters that were covering ALL of the story from what seems like both sides. I would like to thank you and all your reporters for giving me that information. I realize that things did become a media circus, but your reporting allowed me the ability to sort things out.

I hope you will reconsider your feelings as those of us who can not get the story correctly from any other source really appreciate your effort. Once again Thank You.

C. A. Brown, a former texan

To The Editor:

Just wondering.

Re. Were any of your reporters invited to the President's fried catfish feed for the press?

Continued On Next Page

# MAILBAG ICONOCLAST LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Continued From Previous Page

The reports I read said something about how they were only inviting "local" media since the notice was so short. I was curious as to whether they invited anyone from the **ICONOCLAST**. After all, you can't get much more local than that.

I've been a fan of your paper since you came out in favor of John Kerry last fall. Very much appreciate your Cindy Watch.

Keep up the good work,  
Kevin Riddle, Houston

*(Editor's Note: In answer to your question: no invitation)*

To The Editor:

In my conversations with people, it is believed, that President Bush lied about his reasons for going to war with Iraq. Indeed, even the polls say Americans believe it. We believe he lied to congress and the U.N. The Downing Street Memos are just 1 in a number of reasons to suspect that he did. In fact, he used fear to convince us of the importance of this war. These, my dear sir, are impeachable offenses committed by a man who took an oath to protect and defend our constitution from all enemies foreign and domestic. The evidence will support that he did in fact violate our constitution.

In his rush to war, he failed to weigh the pros and cons. He fired people who suggested this war would not be a "cake walk" and would require more troops than he was willing to commit. He failed to plan an exit strategy. There are too many incidences for me to list here. Indeed, his incompetence is astounding.

It was Theodore Roosevelt, twenty-sixth President of the United States and a Republican, who famously said in 1918, "To announce that there must be no criticism of the president, or that we are to stand by the president, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public." Sir, I am a patriot and believe like you we must at all costs protect our precious constitution regardless of personal or political sacrifice. It is time for congress to stop this shameless "party unity at all costs" type of mentality and do what is right for this country. I call for congress to start impeachment proceedings immediately.

Respectfully,  
Cynthia Guest

To The Editor:

### Humane Uncertainty

In our present efforts to define a "culture of life," some call, to paraphrase the poet, to save all that would be killed, while others say don't hate anything except disease. All sides on the issues of the beginning and ending of life seem certain not just of the rightness of their positions, but also the righteousness. This must stop.

In its place, we must cultivate a society that thinks about these issues, and realizes that thinking brings uncertainty. But if there is a willingness to be attentive—listen seriously—to all sides, wisdom can result.

These are the thoughts of political philosopher Glenn Tinder, who believes that maintaining "a stance not of absolute assurance but of inquiring openness" is the proper procedure for political debate on moral issues.

This "humane uncertainty" respects the right of any citizen to ask questions about public policy and more importantly,

recognizes that "we are all, in our lack of definite, demonstrable answers, equal."

Tinder recognizes that uncertainty alone does not necessarily bring wisdom. It just as easily can bring "enervating doubt" and "nihilistic rage."

To function as an operating process for public debate, humane uncertainty depends on two principles. The first is a belief that truth is good wherever it takes us. The second is that truth must be sought through public dialog in which no one is excluded.

The society adopting these rules, "would provide room for strong convictions, but its defining characteristic would be a widespread willingness to give and receive assistance on the road to truth."

Let us make sure that any culture we embrace as Americans begins with humane uncertainty.

Richard Ingham, Oklahoma City Friends,

Did only I notice that the 'machine' cranking out the supposed 'genuine' Iraqi Constitution are still Chalabi and his operatives who are yet wanted by the law in Jordan for Felony Fraud? I don't think so.

Did only I notice that those are the very same political propagandists that fed a pack of lies to the American Congress on the behest of the Bush and Cheney and Saudi Royals? I doubt that also.

Did only I notice that this very same Chalabist faction is also on public record as providing intelligence on the U.S. in Iraq to the Shiite Mullahs in Iran? Not likely, these creeps betray and manipulate everybody it seems without prejudice.

Did only I notice that the Kurds in the north of Iraq are only lamely giving only lip service to the constitutional process so that they will be able to justifiably separate and form their own state of Kurdistan once the inevitable civil war blows up in full force which the fractious psuedoconstitution will doubtless cause? Fat chance that I alone could notice this.

Did only I notice that the Iraqi constitutional travesty that in thinly veiled fashion makes the future Iraq into a defacto Sharriah theocratic state under the majority Shiites under Muqtada Al Sadr? Who with half a brain could miss it?

Did only I notice that the much hiped regime change in Iraq merely leveled the playing field for the extant factions to sort it out via civil strife which will procede in earnest the moment Americans leave in toto whether it be this month, this year, or a hundred years from now? What could be more obvious?

And did only I notice that more American dead in Iraq will not alter this fact that the sum total of the change that Bush & Co. affected in Iraq has been already accomplished and that no Chalabist promoted constitution or otherwise that has American finger prints on it will ever be acceptable to Arab Iraqi's should we attempt to cram it down the Iraqis collective throats till Hell should freeze over? Only the brain dead or those grief stricken soldier's parents steeped in denial would attempt to refute this obvious truth.

Did only I notice that George Bush claims with his knee jerk supporters that Americans are in some strained logic way dying for America in Iraq; when in fact

they are dying for the treacherous Chalabist mafia like opportunists and also to inflate Halliburton Brown & Root's bottom line and thusly cover Bush's political backside? Never has such a transparent set of obvious facts been more unethically obscured by any American Administration.

Did only I notice that the political support of a Professional Military Establishment was prohibited in Germany In World War Two in favor of a Conscripted Citizen Soldiery to prevent the conflict of interest of Elit Professional Militarists becoming the tools of political opportunism which happened in the middle of the 20th century Germany and which the Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld Administration is promoting now? I sincerely hope that I'm not only person to see this dangerous sociopolical disease cropping up once again but now in America. We expect it from the old fascist banana republics of such as Pinoche and Batista but America until Bush has managed to stand on the higher moral ground.

And is this why the professional military and their dependents continue to back Bush because they have a vested interest in maintaining ongoing hot conflicts which is tantamount to inflating the need for their service and subsequent professional security and economic security? The pattern is growing more obvious as we continue to watch the news.

Is a reinstated activation of the selective service draft process necessary, as onerous as it would seem, to change the atmosphere and pro war professional stance of the military and its leadership in such a way as to prevent them from being the active political tool of any President's Administration or future Presidential Candidate as it has been the case with the current Presidential regime? Unfortunately it seems so as the current situation is nigh on to tantamount with Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon and is truly a sell out of America's highest ideals of government of the people, and by the people, and for the people.

Respectfully,  
Jack O'Sullivan

To The Editor:

Bush plays golf while the Gulf Coast drowns!

Jim Coyle, Endwell, NY

To The Editor:

Once again, America faces a tragedy alone, without leadership.

President Bush, where are you now that our fellow Americans are dying along the gulf coast? I have been following the news all day and there has been no word from you. I understand you are still on vacation, but we need you now.

We looked to you for leadership during the 9/11 tragedy, to which you now so often refer. But, you were in a classroom listening to a children's story and couldn't figure out what to do.

We looked to you for leadership when you said you were a uniter, not a divider. Yet, America has never been so divided.

We looked to you for leadership last year, during the Tsunami tragedy. But again, you waited until the world told you what to do.

We looked to you for leadership with the realization that there never were "WMDs" in Iraq. But, you changed the reasons for our pre-emptive war again and again.

We need you to send in the military to help rescue people right now. The coast guard and ongoing rescue efforts are being overwhelmed. But, our military is overextended in Iraq.

We need you to address the American people and acknowledge the devastation on the gulf coast and to pledge federal support.

The ubiquitous phrase by Warren

Bennis, Ph.D. in his book, *On Becoming a Leader*, screams to us now: "Leaders are people who do the right thing."

President Bush. Please, do the right thing.

Abby Shenbaum, Las Cruces, NM  
To The Editor:

Where in the World Is the National Guard?

Have you read some of the harrowing stories coming out of New Orleans? Have you heard about the folks who had to climb up into their attics to escape the floodwaters of Katrina? They are trapped. They're in their attics as I write these words 3 days later.

Where in the World Is the National Guard?

Why aren't there 20,000 troops arriving to go from rooftop to rooftop letting these people out of their deathtraps? Where are the military boats? Where is the battlefield communications? Where are the Mash tents? Where are the reserve's doctors and nurses?

I can hear the apologists now. You got to give'em time. Time? How much time? They should have been mobilized on Monday. They should have arrived on Tuesday morning. They should have started saving people yesterday evening.

Now is not the time to be a day late and a dollar short!

I'll ask again. Where are they?

Angie Pratt

Dear Editor,

The hurricane and flood damage will cost hundreds of billions to repair, an amount similar to that which has been wasted by Bush in Iraq. Someone needs to tell him to bring his troops home now, and spend our resources rebuilding our devastated cities.

Most Americans are willing to sacrifice to help fellow Americans who have lost so much, provided that everyone pays their fair share, including the very rich. Bush needs to tell his backers that the free ride is over, and rescind the tax breaks which the rest of us are having to cover.

Can someone please gently explain to our President that global warming correlates with increasingly catastrophic weather, and closing his eyes real tight will not make it go away.

Yours truly,

Bruce Jaffe, Piedmont, Calif.

To The Editor:

Living in Santa Barbara California, where we to had the Western White House under Ronald Reagan, I understand the stress on law enforcement when the President comes to town.

As a former news photographer and member of advisory boards to both our local sheriff and the California Highway Patrol, I have an understanding from that perspective as well.

Further I am retired from the U. S. Navy, (Korea, Viet Nam) and totally support Cindy Sheehan in her First Amendment right of Petitioning of Grievance My son an Army Reservist, is currently on his third activation in under six years.

I give all that information so that you might understand where I am coming from.

Both the Sheriff and the Police under normal circumstance of a Presidential vista would be over taxed. With the addition of Camp Casey I & II and the counter protesters over stressed is not a strong enough description of the last month I am sure.

I would like to convey through your paper that the police and sheriff departments deserve the gratitude of us all for a job WELL DONE.

Bob Handy HMC USN Ret  
Chair Veterans United For Truth  
Chair Veterans Caucus Calif.  
Democratic Party, Santa Barbara, CA

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Michael Evans does the fire walk.

# Martial Arts Instructor Walks The Talk In Ultimate Test

CHINA SPRING — With 25 Taiko drummers pounding out a thunderous chorus and more than 4,000 spectators cheering him on, local martial arts teacher Michael Evans ran out on the floor of California's Santa Clara University stadium recently for the final performance of his 12-month Ultimate Black Belt Test (UBBT). Evans was one of 27 people from around the world completing the first UBBT, a revolutionary new advanced black belt testing program where participants were tested every day for more than a year. The program was designed by martial arts master teacher Tom Callos of Sacramento, Calif.

"To be a master instructor of the martial arts," says Callos, a 45-year-old sixth-degree black belt, "you have to walk the talk of personal excellence and achievement. The UBBT required each of the black belts in the program to undergo a year-long series of trials and tasks that required an extraordinary effort and focus."

Among the many tasks Evans, owner of Premier Martial Arts (formally Health Kicks) in Waco and Clifton, had to do to pass his test were 52,000 push-ups, 52,000 crunches, 1000 rounds of sparring, train in Brazilian Ju Jitsu, Muay Thai Kickboxing, Western Boxing, and 1,000 repetitions of a kata. He also had to spend a day without speaking, organize an environmental clean-up project, fix three wrongs he had done in his life, and perform 1,000 acts of kindness.

"When I applied to be in this program, Mr. Callos asked me what, for me, would be the ultimate test," remembers Evans. "I had to think about what that meant for me, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. I sent him a list of my goals and he sent me back the curriculum I would have to follow to participate. I was stunned, but I had committed myself so I went to work. I feel like I have lived five years in the last 12 months. I'm in the best shape of my adult life, I became more involved with my friends, family, and community, and I now have an entirely new understanding of what it is to practice and live as a master teacher."



Michael Evans

Callos asserts that the goal of his program is not to make better black belts or martial arts teachers, but to inspire people to be better human beings. To see the weekly on-line journals of Michael Evans and the other UBBT participants and for more information on the program log on at <www.ultimateblackbelttest.com>.

Did Evans pass his black belt test? "I don't know if passing was the most important part of this adventure," says Evans. "When my teammates and I began performing that final leg of the test, we all looked at each other and realized we had passed through some new doorway of understanding. This year I became a better man and a better teacher. For me, that is the ultimate victory."

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10th!

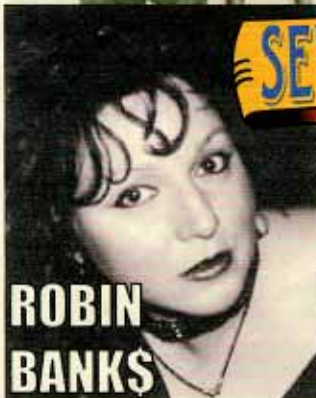
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