

\$1.50 Per Copy

CRAWFORD, TEXAS

Vol. 7, No. 5

FEBRUARY 1, 2006

www.lonestaricon.com

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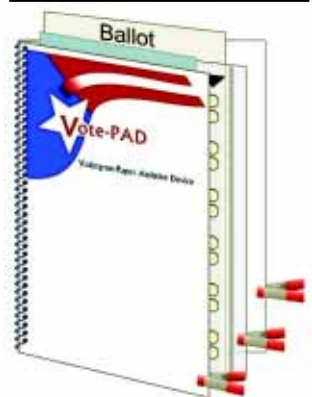
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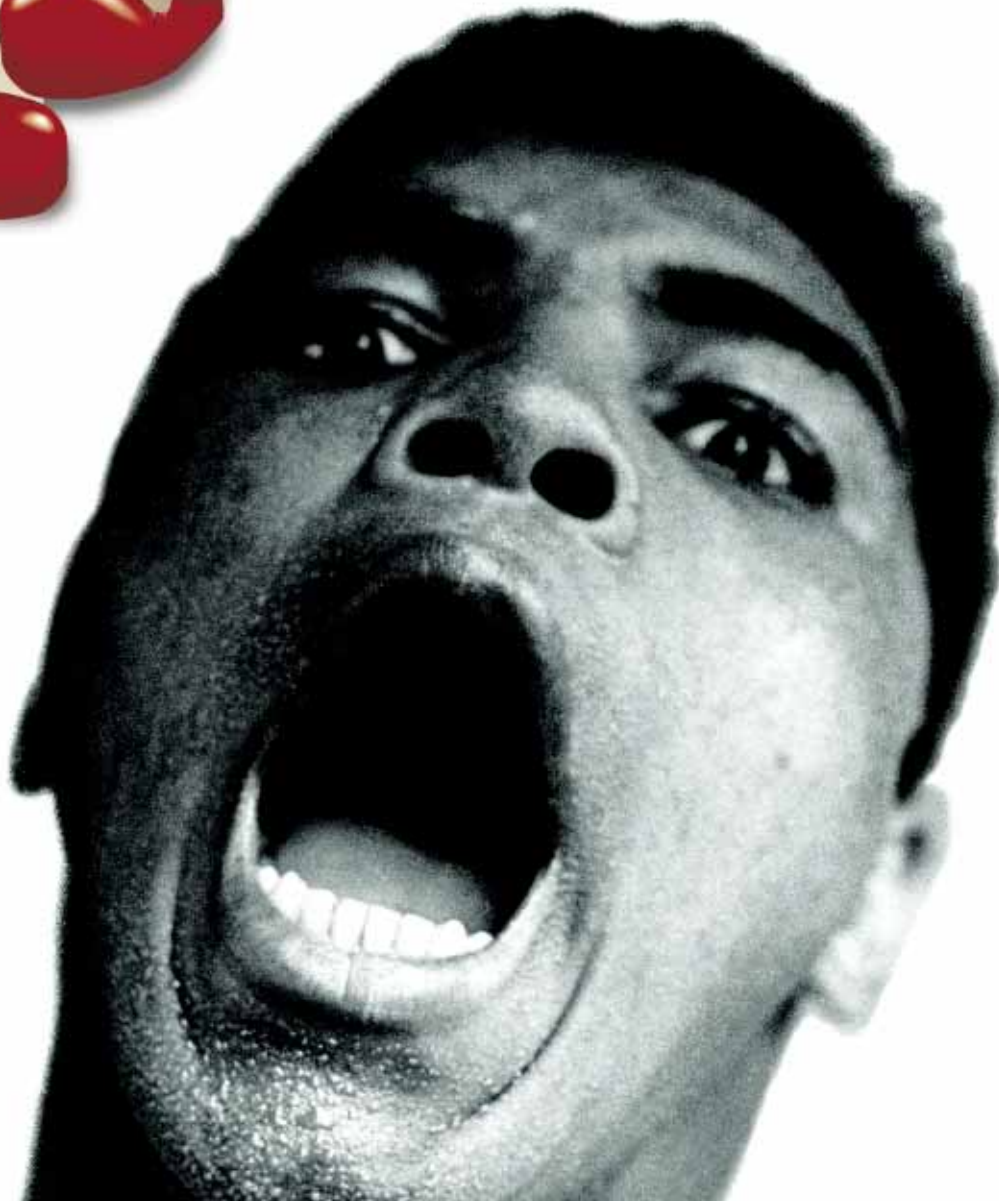
# The Lone Star ICONOCLAST

# Take The Radicals Boxing



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# Supreme Court To Review Texas Redistricting March 1

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court will review the Tom DeLay-imposed Texas congressional redistricting plan on March 1. A decision is expected by early July.

Four appellants — Jackson, Travis County, the American GI Forum of Texas, and the League of United Latin American Citizens — constitute the plaintiffs.

The Jackson appellant brief outlines an argument that the mid-decade redistricting plan in 2003 is unconstitutional because it was done purely for partisan political gain while a legal plan was already in place.

It also argues that the GOP gerrymander violates the Voting Rights Act by destroying a district that African Americans have shown to play an active electoral role as well as reconstituting a district for Hispanics that stretches 300 miles from South Texas to south Travis County.

The Travis County appellant brief argues that the replacement of the court-drawn districting plan of 2001 violates the “one-person, one-vote” principle since the state failed to create equal population districts. It also argues that the court should reimplement the 2001 plan.

## Miners' Deaths Prompt Safety Bill In West Virginia

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The deaths of 14 coal miners earlier this month prompted Gov. Joe Manchin to sign a mine-safety bill last week.

A 24-hour mine accident hotline will be installed to mobilize rescue teams once upon a call. A \$100,000 fine will be leveled if an accident is not reported within 15 minutes thereafter.

Lifesaving tools such as locator devices for miners and more underground oxygen supplies are also required under the new law.

The law is the result of two coal mine accidents that happened three weeks apart in West Virginia. A Jan. 2 mine explosion exposed carbon monoxide that led to the deaths of 12 other miners inside the International Coal Group's Sago coal mine. Two other miners died in a fire in the Massey Energy Co.'s Aracoma coal unit on Jan. 18.

As a result of the accidents, West Virginia's congressional delegation have pressured the Bush administration to enforce federal mining safety regulations.

The coal companies face stiff penalties at the end of February if they fail to comply with the state's new safety codes.

The GI Forum brief argues several points under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. Ultimately, it asserts that the goal of partisan redistricting does not

justify compromising Latino votes and the destruction of District 23.

The LULAC's brief argues that the use of old census data to change legal elec-

toral boundaries for partisan gain also violates the one-person, one-vote requirement and burdens Latino voters in districts growing rapidly.

## 200th Texas Soldier Dies In Iraq

SAN ANTONIO — The 200th soldier from Texas died in Iraq last Sunday. Staff Sergeant Brian McElroy of San Antonio passed away on Jan. 22, according to Iraq Coalition Casualty Count.

McElroy, 28, served in the U.S. Air Force in the 3rd Security Forces

Squadron. He died in hostile fire from an IED attack near Taji, Iraq, northwest of Baghdad.

As of last Thursday, 59 U.S. military casualties have been accounted for by the Department of Defense during the month of January 2006.

Since the combat operations began in

Iraq in March 2003, about 2,237 U.S. soldiers have lost their lives, and 16,420 soldiers have been wounded, according to the Defense Department.

For more information, visit the ICC website.

**INFO**  
icasualties.org/oif/default.aspx

## Army At Breaking Point: Pentagon Report

WASHINGTON — A 136-page unreleased Pentagon report acquired by the Associate Press says that the U.S. Army is racing against time to compensate for the Iraq and Afghan wars “or risk ‘breaking’ the force in the form of a catastrophic decline” in recruitment and enlistment.

Retired Army officer Andrew Krepinevich reported under contract with the Pentagon that the Army must reduce troops in Iraq this year or risk soldier burnout due to frequent deployments to Iraq.

Krepinevich said his evidence is the Army's recruitment slump of 2005 and the larger enlistment bonuses and incentives offered to officers. He, however, didn't diminish the effectiveness of the Army during wartime.

Though the Army Forces Command called the claim that the Army is broke “a very extreme characterization,” critics like Rep. John Murtha, a Pennsylvania Democrat and Vietnam veteran, and George Joulwan, a retired four-star Army general and former NATO commander, think otherwise.

“Whether they're broken or not, I think I would say if we don't change the way we're doing business, they're in danger of being fractured and broken, and I would agree with that,” Joulwan told CNN last month.

Krepinevich's report, however, suggested that troop levels could be reduced to below 100,000 by early 2007, not a full pull out from Iraq. The Pentagon says about 136,000 troops are currently deployed overseas.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and senior Army officials paint a different picture of the U.S. Army force.

In response to the Krepinevich's report last week, Rumsfeld denied that the Army was “broken.” In the recent past, he has said that the soldiers' fighting experience has increased the service's strength.

Krepinevich, the executive director of the nonprofit Center for Strategic

and Budgetary Assessments, ended by saying that no Army leaders know when an institutional crisis may be triggered.

Currently, there are a few major Army divisions on their second year-long tours in Iraq. Smaller units went three times already.

## Lung Cancer Hits Blacks More Than Other Races: Study

LOS ANGELES — The New England Journal of Medicine reported last week that black men are more likely to get lung cancer compared with men from other ethnic groups who smoked the same amount of cigarettes.

The joint University of Southern California and University of Hawaii study — the largest ever completed on the subject — did not account for the reasons in racial disparity, but the lead researcher suggested that genes might explain them.

The study found that American men with black, Hispanic, and Japanese backgrounds who don't smoke had higher risks of lung cancer than American white men. However, there were no noticeable differences among women in the same ethnic groups.

Lung cancer risk increased at the same rate among the ethnic groups for heavy smokers, those who consumed more than three packs a day, according to the study whose 180,000 participants — of which more than

half were minorities — filled out questionnaires.

After accounting for factors like diet and education, results showed that the risk of lung cancer for whites who smoked up to a pack a day was 43 percent to 55 percent lower than blacks who smoked the same amount. Hispanics and Japanese-Americans were 60 percent to 80 percent less likely than blacks to develop the disease.

While doctors have known about the racial disparities among lung cancer victims for a long time, the reasons for the differences remain hidden, though genetics and smoking habits are the leading theories.

Controversy surrounds studies into race's relationship to risks of disease because race was used as a factor in the experiment.

This field of study has increasingly fueled the manufacturing of drugs based on the genetics of individuals. For instance, in 2005, the Food and Drug Administration okayed a heart-failure drug specifically for blacks.



The Lone Star Iconoclast (USPS 022-833) is published weekly, on Wednesdays, by Smith Media, Inc., P.O. Box 420, Crawford, TX 76638 and 310 W. 5th St., P.O. Box 369, Clifton, TX 76634

Periodicals Postage is Paid at Clifton, TX 76634.

**SUBSCRIPTION PRICE:** McLennan & Bosque Counties, one year: \$40; Elsewhere, one year: \$45. Give old address when requesting change of address.

**POSTMASTER:** Please send address change to:  
The Lone Star Iconoclast, P.O. Box 353, Clifton, TX 76634.

**DEADLINES:** 5 p.m. Fridays.

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# Take The Radicals Boxing

## A Progressive Look At The Sports Industry

### Interview With Dave Zirin Sports Journalist

BY NATHAN DIEBENOW  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

CRAWFORD — It's been said before that the best way to get into a fist fight at the dinner table is to talk politics and religion.

Sports fans, however, show similar results over something as simple as whether the receiver's foot was in bounds when he caught the ball.

But what about politics and sports?

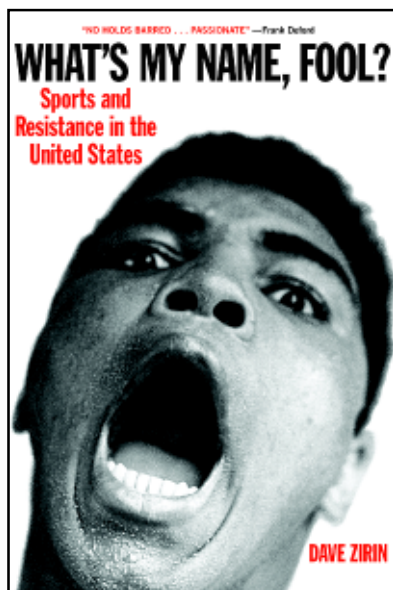
Well, taking a jab is sports writer Dave Zirin, a columnist for SLAM magazine and a regular contributor to the NATION magazine. His sports column Edge of Sports also appears on his website (edgeofsports.com).

In his book *What's My Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the Untied States* published last summer by Haymarket Books, Zirin, 31, catalogues "instances where people were able to use sports to give counter-views on the world."

The book covers such struggles as Jackie Robinson's rocky inclusion into Major League Baseball, Muhammad Ali's conversion to Islam and its effects, to the Iraqi Olympic soccer team's criticisms against President Bush for using the team as an advertisement for his 2004 reelection campaign.

Two weeks before Super Bowl XL in Detroit, the ICONOCLAST's Nathan Diebenow spoke with the Press Action's 2005 Sportswriter of the Year on the phone about the history of sports journalism and social action, the sports industry's relations with the U.S. military, and his predictions for 2006.

.....  
ICONOCLAST: I was watching a documentary on the late progressive Sen. Paul Wellstone of Minnesota, and I learned that he was a high school wrestler, yet progressives and radicals still tend to poo-poo sports for, I would say,



shallow, elitist reasons like "sports condone violence." Beyond violence, what can progressives learn from sports?

DAVE ZIRIN: Take a step back for a second. First and foremost, I argue in my book that sports is an art like any other. Some things I see athletes do are things that rival acts of art that you would see in any Philharmonic or any museum. So to poo-poo it because it can represent values that one finds objectionable is really to poo-poo art as a whole. All art is subject to debate and controversy in that respect.

But as far as progressives in and of themselves, I think that way too many times, progressives don't engage in arguments and political arguments that can step through sports precisely for the elitist reasons that you raised: "Sports is inherently evil. To even wade in those waters is to somehow send illegitimacy in this horrible enterprise." I think that's absolutely bunk. I think sports are beautiful.

I think there's some hideous messages that are hustled through sports, messages that are very rooted in ideas of war and conquest and sexism and the like, but in that case what I think we need to do is actually engage in those arguments



SPORTS WRITER DAVE ZIRIN, 31, catalogued "instances where people were able to use sports to give counter-views on the world" in his book *What's My Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the Untied States* published last summer by Haymarket Books. Zirin is a columnist for SLAM magazine and a regular contributor to the NATION magazine. His sports column Edge of Sports also appears on his website (edgeofsports.com).

and actually be a counter-voice and see sports as a political arena where there are people to be won, basically.

By progressives sort of shutting their mouths and folding their hands, what they are doing is handing over this incredibly vital and important cultural institution that 200 million people in this country engage with and they sort of let it go.

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, it's kind of like (Sen. John) Kerry not campaigning in the Midwest and in Texas before the 2004 presidential election.

ZIRIN: Well, yeah, and when (Kerry) goes out there, he calls Lambeau Field "Lambert Field" you know? It just reeks phoney to people. People get that this guy doesn't even begin to take it seriously.

It's just a damn shame, though, because I know when I'm watching sports, sometimes I'm absolutely sickened by what I see on my TV screen. It has nothing to do with the games themselves, particularly this practice in the NFL. I was watching the playoffs over the weekend, scratching my head for the need to fly military war planes over the stadium. What the hell does that have to do with a football game? And especially when you think about it, if you really want to crunch the numbers, it costs something like \$12,000 in gas just for one of those planes to take off and land? They use that much? I live in a city, Washington D.C., where the starting salary for a teacher is roughly \$12,000 times two. So it's just an obscenity to me in that regard.

And also, that's sort of the material argument but, ethically, it's like why does celebrating football mean celebrating war? Why should one have anything to do with the other?

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, I've noticed that. It's even getting to the point where as well as sponsoring a NASCAR car, the Army is sponsoring a high school football game where the students from the east coast play against students from the west

coast.

ZIRIN: Sure, I mean, it's even more than that. I went to a Major League Baseball game during Military Appreciation Night — the acronym being "MAN," which is bizarre — where they swore in a couple dozen members of the Marines at home plate. Bush and Condi Rice looked on from the owner's box. It was like a scene from *Gladiator* or something.

Just when I was trying to lift my jaw off the floor, the PA voice — you know that disembodied God voice in the stadium — announced that if any of us in the stands were interested in a career in the military, visit the appropriate kiosk in the grand concourse.

I think something particular that is happening in recent years is military recruitment numbers are down, specifically down in the African-American community, and it's gotten to the point where one general said to a congressional hearing that he feared that the National Guard was becoming a broken force and those are real fears. What the military has done is put tremendous amounts of pressure on people who signed up to the military to become recruiters and meet quotas. That's why you see some of these abuses over the last year where they had to pool all the recruiters out of the country for 24 hours to do a re-briefing with them to make sure they weren't breaking the law in terms of what they were promising to recruits.

Now, why am I mentioning going through all of this? I'm going through all of this because sports, I think, has been seen in the 21st century, particularly since the war on terror began. It's been sort of a key place to drum up military recruitment, to make concrete partnerships with sports, and I think this is where you get to the case where people who actually love sports but don't love war have an obligation to actually be a

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counter-voice in this and build movements that reclaim our sports.

ICONOCLAST: Your book, *What's My Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the United States*, is a call for athletes to speak their minds without fear. It's also a catalogue, if you will, of instances of resistance and dissent in U.S. sports. Would you put those acts under the category of non-violent resistance?

ZIRIN: I would describe them as acts of protest and of people using sort of the hyper-exalted platform to express ideas of political dissent. That's more how I would describe it. As far as the quality or tenor of those protests, whether they are militant, non-violent, threatening, aggressive, defensive, I think that relates to the individual struggles themselves.

I mean, for example, there's a difference between a basketball player writing "No War" on their shoes and just having it there on their shoes or a baseball player not coming out for the National Anthem. There's a difference between that and I think getting up on an Olympic platform and raising a black glove fist in the air for the world to see, I mean, in terms of risk, in terms of aggressiveness, in terms of the kind of message you're sending.

A part of it is judging not with too broad a brush, that there's one umbrella like sports resistance, but that it really depends on the individuals involved in their own politics and political concerns and on the debates that they're having with the people around them about how best to advance causes that they hold dear.

ICONOCLAST: Well, when and how did you first learn to view the sports world through a socio-political lens?

ZIRIN: For me it really started in high school. I was a very serious baseball and basketball player in New York City. I cared about sports more than absolutely anything else. My room was a shrine to the great New York City sports stars of that era, people like Lawrence Taylor, Patrick Ewing, and personal favorite Keith Hernandez of the Mets. I loved these guys. You know, I was all about sports.

And then the first Gulf War happened in 1991, and somebody who was on a basketball team who I also counted as a friend, he actually cut practice to go to an anti-war demonstration, which I found to be completely ridiculous. I remember deriding him for it publicly. At the demonstration itself, he was actually cracked across the kneecap by an overzealous police officer. His patella was cracked and he missed the rest of the season.

I remember visiting him in the hospital and talking to his family — his family was from Iran — speaking with them about why they were proud of their son for doing this. It honestly shook up my every perception I had of the world — senses of fairness, rights of dissent, whether of not we as individual citizens had a role to play in raising our voices around issues like war, racism, and oppression.

Not soon thereafter, I went to a basketball game. There was a college game in the city. I was trying to clear my head of all of this stuff. At the game itself, at halftime, they had the mascot beat up somebody in an exaggerated Arab suit with a big flowing sheik clothes and what-not, while they got everybody to chant "USA" on the jumbotron. I remember just being appalled by that, and at that point, I couldn't believe that the game that I loved — basketball — was being used to trumpet this stuff. It was like I was seeing sports for the first time, and I decided that I hate sports. I swore it off for a

couple of years, like cold turkey, like vegetarian plate of McRibs. Get that shit away from me!

Then that really shifted for me in the fall of 1996, when Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf, a basketball player for the Denver Nuggets made an anti-war stance by not coming out of the locker room during the National Anthem. He said he was doing it in protest of a U.S. presence in the Middle East, sanctions in Iraq which were killing hundreds of thousands of kids at that time, and he was destroyed for doing that. As I saw reports and I remember being so — I mean, my eyes were so wide open — like somebody was using the sports platform to actually say something about social change.

As I saw reports on it, references with very little context were made to people like Jackie Robinson, Muhammad Ali, Billie Jean King, and at that point, I wanted to catalogue that history, so young sports fans coming up wouldn't have to go through some of the confusion I did, going from thinking that sports is life, more important than politics, more important than food on my family's table, whether we had healthcare, more important than all that stuff, and going from that to somehow sports is this evil that must be expunged.

I thought that if I could do a book that would look respectfully at sports with the love of the game but also catalogue instances where people were able to use sports to give counter-views on the world. I thought that would be time well-spent as a writer.

ICONOCLAST: I want to hear about your journalistic mentors, specifically Lester "Red" Rodney. Who is Lester "Red" Rodney, and what was it like to interview him for your book?

ZIRIN: Oh, it was incredible. Lester Rodney, you know, he's now 95 years old. When I interviewed him he was 94. He was the sports editor of *THE DAILY WORKER*, a Communist Party newspaper, from the mid-30s to the mid-50s. He left the Communist Party when the extent of (former Soviet leader Joseph) Stalin's crimes were revealed by (Soviet prime minister Nikita) Khrushchev in 1956. That's when party membership dropped from 10,000 to 1,000 (in the United States).

But talking to Lester Rodney was incredible for two reasons. One was that at 94 years old he was absolutely sharp as a tack. To hear vivid stories about what it was like to cover the Joe Louis - Max Schmeling fight, to what it was like to see Jackie Robinson play when he was still in the Negro leagues, stories about what it was like in the press box at southern stadiums when Jackie Robinson and Roy Campanella and the great Don Newcombe took the field, I mean, to hear stories about people like Carl Furillo, the rifle-armed outfielder of the Dodgers overcome his own racial prejudices through the process of playing with Jackie Robinson, and to hear the stories told with the vividness that they had occurred just last week, is something that I'll just never forget. It's such a treasure and a treat to be able to talk to him.

The second reason why it was so great was that a lot of times you hear that people's politics moves to the right as they get older, and certainly, Lester Rodney holds no illusions or sympathies with Soviet Russia or the Eastern Block or anything like that. Those have long been washed away, but as far as his basic political sympathies and the right to struggle against racism, the right of people to be free from hunger and from want, the right of athletes to have not only

bodies but minds, what I'm trying to say is that he's not cynical at all about what he did and what he stood for.

He doesn't have that kind of age at all. You know, some people say, "If you're 20 and you're not on the left, you don't have a heart, and if you're 40 and you're not on the right, you don't have a brain." You know, I think a professor told me that once, and honestly, I think it's garbage.

Lester Rodney sort of belies all that stuff despite being through the ringer of McCarthyism, he and his wife lost their jobs, to the revelation of Stalin's crimes which just crushed people's spirits in this country who had always assumed that the stories coming out were lies and propaganda. And he has come out of all of that still with a basic faith in the human spirit. That was just a beautiful thing to be around.

ICONOCLAST: Do you have any other journalistic mentors?

ZIRIN: Oh, certainly. It's an interesting question. There's some mentors in this very narrow, very narrow field in which I've eked out for myself, sports and social justice, the ones who have treaded that ground before have been incredibly generous with their time in terms of talking to me and mentoring me.

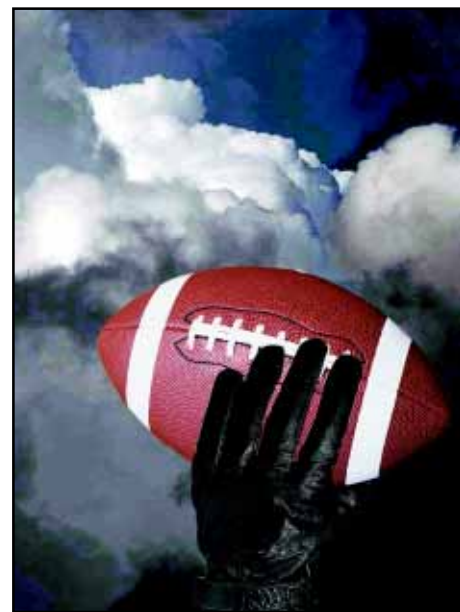
One is Dave Meggyesy who is not a classic journalist, he's a former NFL football player, but he's a writer in that he writes, and he wrote an incredible book called *Out of Their League* about why he quit the NFL in 1969 as a protest against the Vietnam War and against the dehumanizing way he thought the NFL operated at that time. Today he's the west coast director of the NFL player's association. He wrote the intro to my book, but far more than that, he's been a resource and a friend and has been incredibly generous with his time.

Another person is the great Robert Lipsyte who worked for the *NEW YORK TIMES* for decades. He was one of those young reporters who really bucked against the system in the '60s and wrote positive things about Muhammad Ali at a time when most of the older heads referred to him as Cassius Clay, who was perhaps the most hated athlete probably in the history of this country. I write about it a lot in my book, but there was this sort of narrow group of writers who identified with the spirit of resistance that Ali represented. Lipsyte was one of them. He wrote for the *New York Times* for decades. Today, he does work for ESPN. He's been an incredible resource through this whole process.

A last person whose writing I admire though I don't agree with everything he says is Scoop Jackson, who writes for ESPN.com. He's an aggressively political writer, sometimes he's aggressively bad, but the fact that he writes with a fearlessness, I deeply respect.

I think that modern sports writing today isn't very good because it's so zealously a-political that I feel like what that does is that you have these political things happen, like for example, the steroid hearings in Washington. This is political. All of it is political, from Mark McGuire's non-statements to Raphael Palmeiro's friendship with Bush to the grandstanding by Congress to the issue of public/private lives in terms of steroids and drug use to the question of the asterisk on records. I mean, wherever you fall on these questions is political.

By political I mean, that they have a much deeper content than how fast he can run to first base, and I think that so much of sports writing sort of beats the life out of these issues, and Scoop Jackson isn't someone who doesn't do that.



He boldly goes where others fear to go.

The person I never got meet or talk to because he tragically died way too young but who growing up was a tremendous influence on me was Ralph Wiley. He wrote for *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED* for decades. He died of a heart attack, I believe, at 46 last year.

ICONOCLAST: These are kind of like veterans in the sports and sports journalism industries, but do you have any positive relationships with mainstream sports publications? I know that your writings were published in progressive publications like *COUNTERPUNCH*, *ALTERNET*, and *INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW*.

ZIRIN: Well, I'm a columnist for *SLAM*, the basketball magazine. I mean, I have to say that's pretty darn mainstream. It's sold in airports and stuff, but it's kind of youth-oriented, hip-hop basketball magazine. It's that kind of magazine though, and I've got a monthly column with them called "Louder Than A Bomb," and they approached me about doing it because of the kind of edge I was writing. It's been really great working with them. They've been very tender with their editorial eraser.

ICONOCLAST: (laughs) Right.

ZIRIN: I sent a query letter this morning to the *WASHINGTON POST*, the *LA TIMES*, and the *CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR* about doing a review for that movie *Glory Road*, about the Texas Western basketball team.

ICONOCLAST: I thought that was going to come out a long time ago.

ZIRIN: It's been delayed several times. I write about the team itself in the book, so I'm anxious to see the movie.

I also do a regular TV gig on this thing called *The Score*. It's kind of like the Canadian version of ESPN.

ICONOCLAST: How's that been working out?

ZIRIN: It's fun. Every other week I do a 20 minute segment on this guy's show. So in Canada, I'm all about the mainstream.

ICONOCLAST: (laughs) The Canucks love you!

ZIRIN: You know, I've gotten some nice words from some folks who write for *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED*, Frank Deford, Lester Muntz, but as far as about getting the book reviewed there or getting it out in mainstream publications, that's been difficult, which makes me all the prouder that the book has sold well, that it went out of its first printing 10,000 copies in six weeks. It's really done it on word of mouth. I toured the country, trying to do it grassroots at small independent bookstores to a Borders in the suburbs of Sacramento where they set up chairs right by the metal detector, which was night

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marish, but whatever it takes to sell this thing, you know?

ICONOCLAST: Do you consider the late Hunter S. Thompson in your echelon of social justice-savvy sports journalism?

ZIRIN: Certainly. It's interesting you mention him, like he's someone who that's kind of like cart before the horse. Like I was writing and then a good buddy of mine from high school was reading my stuff and said, "You're sports writing is a lot like Hunter S. Thompson's in that it's irreverent and different." I was like, "Hunter S. Thompson?" All I knew about him was that he was the Duke character from *Doonesbury*. I mean, I was a real ignoramus with "Fear and Loathing" and all that stuff. I had a basic pop-cultural knowledge of who he was but this buddy of mine lent me a book with tons of his sports writing in it, and yeah, it was really interesting to read.

ICONOCLAST: From what I understand, Hunter S. was a big football fan, which leads me to Super Bowl XL coming up in Detroit Feb. 5. I hear that the Rolling Stones are playing halftime. Are you, like me, afraid that Mick Jagger is going to have a "wardrobe malfunction" on stage?

ZIRIN: (laughs) I'm afraid we might have a colostomy bag accident in front of a billion people.

ICONOCLAST: (laughs)

ZIRIN: I'll say one thing though that's very interesting about the Rolling Stones. Very interesting. It's that the Rolling Stones put out an anti-war song over the summer and the NFL as a body is so deeply conservative that I think that if this was last year or two years ago, they would have rescinded the Rolling Stones from playing.

But I also think they're not idiots. They know that to be against the war right now is something that should reside you to the Siberia of the sports world. God, I hope there's not a wardrobe malfunction.

ICONOCLAST: (laughs) Seriously though, I read a report that said the homeless in Detroit aren't going to be left in the cold during this Super Bowl. It appears that homeless shelters are opening up their facilities for two straight days before and then the day of the big game. Critics say that this is just a way for the City to hide the 13,000 homeless people from the tourists. Is this practice of "hide-and-go homeless" and oppression anything new to high-profile sports games here in the States and elsewhere?

ZIRIN: Not at all. I mean, the tone is really set by the Olympic games. They have a notorious practice for doing street-cleanings. At least the Detroit thing sounds marginally humane. It sounds a lot better than Atlanta in 1996. There was a huge scandal. The police found a pre-written arrest list, and they filled in the description "black" on all of them and went into black neighborhoods and did sweeps of people.

In the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, they re-instituted old anti-IWW laws from like 1913 to arrest young blacks and put them in jail. This was the first of the notorious gang sweeps under Darrel Gates. That's a very tried and true practice. Look for it again. I mean, in Pittsburgh during the Major League All-Star Game this year. I was just in Pittsburgh and already there are activists there who are very concerned with what Pittsburgh is going to do to clean up the city ahead of that game.

ICONOCLAST: That kind of leads us into Lynn Swan, former Pittsburgh Steeler who won of four Super Bowls and the Super Bowl X MVP. Swann announced recently that he was running for

Governor of Pennsylvania. The incumbent, Ed Rendell, is a Democrat, but why is Swann seeking the Republican nomination? Has he always been a Republican? What's his family's political history?

ZIRIN: That's a good question. I mean, I haven't even begun to look into this, to be honest with you. I can't speak on it with any great intelligence, but just to say that I know his angle was trying to reach African-American voters to vote Republican. One of his major slogans is "the Democrats have taken the black vote for granted." That's pretty much all I know at this point.

I heard him interviewed on ESPN about it, and honestly, he sounded like a politician. And it's also well-known that

both Republicans and Democrats are looking for what's known as "non-traditional candidates" to run. I mean, Kevin

Johnson, the former basketball player, has been courted by both parties. David Robinson by the Republicans. They love the idea of athletes, particularly African American athletes fronting for them.

Bush had his eye on Raphael Palmero actually, but—

ICONOCLAST: Oh, really, I didn't know that.

ZIRIN: Yeah, they've just been buddies for so long since the early '90s.

ICONOCLAST: I want to move on to talk about how football relates to the Iraq War for a minute. Specifically, the late Pat Tillman. What's the latest news on the investigation into his death?

ZIRIN: I'm sure your readers probably know the basics of this story. Pat Tillman was a Pentagon fantasy in terms of drumming up support for the war on terror. I mean, he was somebody — a very good-looking guy who turned down a million dollar NFL contact to join the Army Rangers alongside his brother. The Pentagon, they loved it, but one of the things that was really hard for them was that Pat Tillman wouldn't play their game.

They wanted him to do recruitment stuff. They wanted him to "join an Army of One and meet me, Pat Tillman," but then he actually just disappeared from the media for a year. He was very specific about wanting to be just a regular soldier or a regular guy and he died in Afghanistan. He was shot and was killed.

Then immediately he wasn't around then to object to the exploitation to his name and image, which is exactly what occurred. His funeral was nationally televised. It was used by George W. Bush as a part of his election plank. You know he spoke a few comments about it. He spoke to fans at the stadium in Arizona on the jumbotron. There was a huge to-do over it. He was even given a Silver Star which is a combat medal.

And then six weeks after the fact, it was revealed to his family that he died in an instance of friendly-fire. He was killed by people in his own battalion. His family since then has attempted to find answers, like "Why were we lied to for six weeks?" "Why was the funeral a lie?" Why was he awarded a Silver Star for goodness sake? That's not supposed to go to friendly-fire deaths." So they have been trying to raise these questions and get some satisfaction, and the government has stonewalled them.

In response, Mary Tillman who no one is going to confuse for Cindy Sheehan — this isn't a political family. This isn't a

family that is comfortable doing this kind of work— She along with Pat Tillman's partner have released a very different image of Pat Tillman. A very different image of who this guy was and the ideas that were going through his head. One thing about Pat Tillman is that he was someone who thought the war in Iraq was illegal. That was something he had said to friends on several occasions. He started to read the works of anti-war author Noam Chomsky. And he even had a meeting set up with Chomsky upon his return to the States.

Now these are issues that got neither hide nor hair in the mainstream press, and currently, you ask me what is happening currently. Mary Tillman is continuing to

press largely through John McCain to get answers through an investigation, like they have some questions. Pat

Tillman's journal that he had been keeping since he was a teenager disappeared. They want to know why his uniform was burned after he was shot and killed. They want answers to these questions, and they're not getting a lot of satisfaction.

ICONOCLAST: I think I heard about this in September of last year, so Mary Tillman is still pretty much getting stonewalled?

ZIRIN: It's in stasis. They're trying to go through basic channels.

ICONOCLAST: In your book you also mention Tommie Smith and John Carlos' black-gloved, Black Power salute during the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. I read on *Common Dreams* an article you wrote about their memorial at San Jose State University. In it I got the impression that, well, let me just ask you: Are Smith and Carlos planning to travel to Beijing for the 2008 summer games to make another social statement?

ZIRIN: Not to my knowledge. I'd love it if that did happen.

ICONOCLAST: To your knowledge is there anyone who is going to make any kind of protest there?

ZIRIN: Once again, not to my knowledge. It's something that I know myself and others who are interested in this have discussed, if for no other reason than Beijing certainly presents an opportunity to do that. I mean, you're talking about everything from sweatshop labor to the death penalty to the prison-industrial complex. I mean, if they lower the boom in Atlanta, what are they going to do Beijing? It's actually frightening about what they would do to make Beijing presentable for an international audience. So this is what we're facing.

ICONOCLAST: Come to think of it, is there a place where these radical athletes of past and present meet annually in person to discuss this stuff or is just like people over there do their thing and e-mail others over here?

ZIRIN: There's a good group called Athletes United For Peace that attempts to facilitate broader discussion, but outside of that, I mean, it is done in a pretty ad hoc way. I mean, in teams sports there's the constant fear of getting cut, of not being called a "team player," that you're just thinking of yourself or whatever. They never say that to players when they pursue endorsements, but they always seem to do it when they pursue political ideas. Interesting. Yeah, this is the terrain a lot of these players are navigating right now.

ICONOCLAST: After reading your piece on Iraq's Olympic soccer team, I wanted to purchase an Iraqi soccer jersey, but I had trouble finding one online: why do you think that is?

ZIRIN: I don't know. (laughs) Good question. I wonder.

ICONOCLAST: Well, tell me about the Iraqi Olympic soccer team right quick. What's their beef?

ZIRIN: Yeah, I wrote about it in the book. Their main beef was that Bush was using them in his campaign ads. They went on an amazing run in a tournament, much farther than anybody had thought, but a lot of the players, which was interestingly made of Sunni, Shiites, Kurds, they were terrifically united, though, but they said they didn't like to be used as sort of an election plank. Remember this was the election season. And they issued some quotes strongly to that effect, including some of the players saying that if they were at home, they'd be part of the resistance, which is not exactly what the Bush Administration wanted to hear.

ICONOCLAST: Is there a vision or plan of a democratically operated sports industry in which economic equality exists between players, managers, and owners?

ZIRIN: I think it's very good to have a vision of a kind of sports we'd like to see, sports where men and women have equal access to the game, sports where there's phys-ed in all the schools, considering it's one of the most popular programs on the chopping block in this country right now.

There also needs to be a breaking down of that line between spectator and participant, so we can be a healthier country where people get more time to exercise, and their sporting involvement doesn't just mean like jumping on the couch and watching TV.

We also need a sports industry where players have control over their lives basically. I mean, a lot of players I talk to speak about feeling like an extension of the equipment. There's just a great amount of alienation that builds up into a lot of anger. Things like this NBA dress code, like they exacerbate the anger because of the idea of grown men being treated like children. It drives them nuts.

Now, I think it's important to have that vision, and I think we're pretty far away from getting there, but I think it's fine to have those kinds of expectations.

ICONOCLAST: What else is going on for you in 2006?

ZIRIN: I've got three books on file here that I'm scheduled to do in '06. One is a follow up to *What's My Name Fool!: Sports and Resistance*. One is *People's History of Sports* with the New Press, and one is a book with a British publisher called *The Muhammad Ali Handbook*. They should keep me busy.

ICONOCLAST: What are your socio-political sports predictions for 2006?

ZIRIN: That's a good question. I think in '06, what you're going to see is actually more athletes speak out right now. I think the discussion about there being a gay male athlete coming out of the closet could be something that could be real in '06. And I think the idea of more athletes figuring out a way to work collaboratively with each other around a host of issues, particularly the issue of the war. That's something that could be very, very probable.

And I like the Mets. They've got a great mix of free agent talent and homegrown stuff. They remind me of the Yankees in the mid-90s. This is the year the Atlanta Braves surrenders their suffocating stranglehold in their division.

ICONOCLAST: (laughs)

ZIRIN: God, we're all waiting for it to end.

# HUD Shortchanges Texas On Hurricane Relief Funds

AUSTIN — Gov. Rick Perry, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, and Sen. John Cornyn today expressed deep disappointment that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has shortchanged Texas on reimbursement costs for responding to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"Thousands of Texas families and senior citizens whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged in Hurricane Rita will lack the funds to rebuild their homes as a result of this decision," Perry said. "We sought close to \$1 billion, HUD verbally committed to hundreds of millions of dollars, and instead they gave us little more than the change from their couch cushions. Critical repairs to schools, hospitals, universities, electric grids, ports, and water and sewer lines will go unfunded unless HUD revisits this."

## Going Green Could Create Jobs For Ford

SAN FRANCISCO — Environmentalists and finance experts criticized the nation's second-largest automaker last week for sacrificing its work force instead of manufacturing more fuel-efficient vehicles as consumer demand to bolster its dwindling auto sales in North America.

Ford Motor Company announced last Monday that 25,000 to 30,000 jobs will be cut while 14 plants will work idly by 2012 in order to make up for its \$1.6 billion loss last year.

"There is no 'way forward' for Ford, while the company is still moving backwards on fuel efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions," said Mike Hudemaat of human rights group Global Exchange.

Kiplinger's, Moody's, and Standard & Poor's have stated that Ford has ignored high consumer demand for hybrid vehicles while continuing to push gas-hog SUVs on the market.

"There is nothing forward-looking about the fact that the majority of Ford's fleet gets fewer miles per gallon than the original Ford Model-T," said Jennifer Krill, director of the Zero Emissions Campaign at the Rainforest Action Network.

Studies show that increased investment in green technology could increase jobs, help the environment, and strengthen the auto industry's bottom line.

In 2005, the Union of Concerned Scientists reported that about 161,000 more jobs would be created in the U.S. in 10 years if fuel economy increased to 40 mpg. Of those jobs, 40,800 would be in the automotive sector which is 10,000 more than Ford wants to slash this quarter.

In 2004, an Apollo Alliance study concluded that better federal renewable energy policies might produce about three times as many jobs as policies favorable to the fossil-fuel industry.

Still, Ford plans to idle these plants through 2008: Atlanta (Ga.) Assembly, St. Louis (Mo.) Assembly, Wixom (Mich.) Assembly, Batavia (Ohio) Transmission, and Windsor (Ontario) Casting. The fate of two more assembly plants will be found later this year.

"This is not an acceptable response by the federal government to a catastrophe of this magnitude," Dewhurst said. "The people of Southeast Texas expect and deserve more support from our federal government. I will continue to work with Gov. Perry and our congressional delegation to seek a funding solution that will help restore basic services such as housing, hospitals and utilities so that our citizens can get back to their normal lives."

"After all Texas has been through, this level of funding is completely inadequate. When Hurricane Katrina hit, Texans opened their homes and their hearts to their neighbors in need. The federal government welcomed our help and said we'd be reimbursed," Sen. Hutchison said.

"I was disappointed that HUD chose a methodology for allocating this funding that created such an immense disparity for Texas. But I am working with the governor, Senator Hutchison and the Texas congressional delegation to ensure fundamental fairness for Texas in this and future relief funding," Sen. Cornyn said.

HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson announced Wednesday that Texas would receive only \$74.5 million of the \$11.5 billion Congress has appropriated to HUD for aid to Gulf coast states. The amount represents less than 10 percent of the costs incurred by Texans and less than 1 percent of available funding.

"Congress quickly set aside \$11.5 billion to help the most impacted and distressed areas related to last year's hurricanes recover. For Texas to be slighted by HUD after suffering from our own hurricane - and taking in those who were devastated by another - flies in the face of congressional intent," Sen. Hutchison said.

To date, the state of Texas has documented more than \$1 billion in infrastructure damages that should be covered by HUD, including:

- \$250 million in critical repairs needed for schools, universities, ports, waterways, and water and sewer lines.
- More than \$350 million in damage to the state's electrical grid.
- \$240 million in preliminary damage

## Annual Grant Writing Workshop Slated Feb. 13

WACO — The Heart of Texas Council of Governments is hosting its annual Grant Writing Workshop for anyone interested in submitting a grant application to the Governor's Criminal Justice Division (CJD) in a number of areas, on Monday, Feb. 13, from 10 a.m. to noon, in the Heart of Texas Council of Governments, Room 320, 300 Franklin Avenue, Waco.

Additional information will be provided at the grant workshop. For those planning to submit a continuation or new application, a knowledgeable person (preferably the grant writer) must be present at this workshop. For more information, contact Sandy Delaney at (254) 756-7822 or <sandy.delaney@hot.cog.tx.us>.

reports for an estimated 14,000 single family homes, mobile homes and apartments. More than 35,000 single family homes, mobile homes and apartments were severely damaged or destroyed during Hurricane Rita.

HUD's announcement disregards the Congressional Conference Report on the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill, which directed that all Gulf Coast states have an equal opportunity

to tap the \$11.5 billion in aid Congress approved.

In addition to specific losses to Texas communities as a result of a direct hit from Hurricane Rita, numerous Texas communities incurred sizeable costs in their efforts to provide housing and social services for an estimated 400,000 Louisiana and Mississippi residents who sought refuge in Texas after Hurricane Katrina struck those states.

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# Governor Perry Appoints Hinton, Mendoza To Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

AUSTIN – Gov. Rick Perry announced the appointment of Joe Bob Hinton of Crawford and Elaine Mendoza of San Antonio to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for terms to expire Aug. 31, 2011. The board sets policies and coordinates efforts to improve Texas higher education.

Hinton is the retired president and CEO of Mobil Oil Corporation Europe in London. He spent more than 40 years with Mobil Oil Corporation, serving in such positions as vice president of U.S. Marketing and Refining in New York, and executive vice president for Montgomery Ward, Inc., a Chicago-based wholly owned subsidiary of Mobil Corporation.

He is currently a director of the Texas Ranger Museum and a member of the Baylor University Steering Committee for the George W. Bush Library project. He was also a director of the Brazos River Authority for six years and he served as chairman of the Brazos River Authority's 21-member board for four of those years.

For 11 years, Hinton served as chairman of the board for the Texas A&M University-Commerce Foundation. Hinton received a bachelor's degree and master's degree in education from Texas A&M University-Commerce, where he was recognized in 1988 as a distinguished alumnus.



Joe Bob Hinton

Mendoza is president and CEO of Conceptual MindWorks, Inc. She was the 2004 and 2005 chair of the board for the

San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Mendoza serves on the board of directors of CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health Care and on the Texas Research and Technology Foundation Board.

She is currently serving on a statewide

taskforce, Access to Healthcare in Texas. Mendoza received a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering from Texas A&M University.

These appointments are subject to senate confirmation.

## Insiders Say Republicans Will Try To Pass Federal Ban Of Gay Marriages In 2006

LOS ANGELES — A Republican effort to ban gay marriage nationwide will be returned to the Senate floor in 2006, according to Raw Story, which noted that the Marriage Protection Amendment was originally introduced by Marilyn Musgrave (R-Colo.) in 2003.

Raw Story reported that Sen. Wayne Allard (R-Colo.), a co-sponsor of the 2005 joint resolution, has confirmed that Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) will attempt to bring the controversial legislation to the floor this year for a full vote.

The proposal to amend the Constitution with a definition for what constitutes marriage became a central GOP platform issue after the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that the state could not “deny the protec-

tions, benefits and obligations conferred by civil marriage to two individuals of the same sex who wish to marry.”

Although the primary concerns of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) community are equal rights and protection under the law, including visitation, property and child custody rights, the GOP has framed the legislation as a religious argument rather than a legal issue in order to fire up their base and rally them to the voting booths, noted Raw Story.

The public sentiment on same-sex unions differs greatly from the view of conservative groups pushing to amend the constitution. A Pew Research poll conducted in August of last year found that 53 percent of Americans polled supported civil unions, which would confer upon same-sex couples the same rights enjoyed by married couples. Thirty-five percent favored gay marriage.

The Republican Party is likewise divided on the issue. The emphasis on gay marriage and the “moral values” banner were conspicuously absent from the GOP's 2006 agenda outlined by President Bush's Deputy Chief of Staff and Republican National Committee political advisor, Karl Rove, during his Jan. 20 speech at the winter meeting of the RNC.

In the Senate, John McCain (R-Ariz.) and John Sununu (R-N.H.) have also expressed an unwillingness to support a federal amendment prohibiting gay marriage.

# U.S. Military Deaths In Iraq Now At 2,238

WASHINGTON, D.C. — At least 2,238 soldiers have died in Iraq since the beginning of the war in March 2003, according to recent numbers released by the Pentagon.

The defense department's figures indicate that at least 1,754 died as a result

of hostile action.

Other allied countries have also sustained deaths in the war by their military personnel, including:

- England, 98
- Italy, 27
- Ukraine, 18

- Poland, 17
- Bulgaria, 13
- Spain, 11
- Slovakia, 3
- Denmark, 2
- El Salvador, 2
- Estonia, 2
- Netherlands, 2
- Thailand, 2
- Hungary, 1
- Kazakhstan, 1
- Latvia, 1

# The Injustice of Saddam's Trial

By ELAN JOURNO  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

The American-endorsed trial of Saddam Hussein is touted as an opportunity to render justice and lay the groundwork for an Iraqi transition from the arbitrary courts of a dictatorship to a proper legal system. But the trial will accomplish neither goal.

A trial that presumes Hussein's innocence can achieve nothing but a travesty of justice.

Saddam Hussein is not a private citizen, whose guilt requires proof in an objective court of law, but a dictator whose incontestable evil was manifest to any rational observer of his tyranny. The Bush administration, after all, determined that Hussein was so vicious that we had to go to war to topple his regime.

Once we defeat and capture a militant dictator like Hussein, he deserves to be definitively condemned as evil and then executed—immediately, or after any valuable information is extracted from him. Prior to his execution, there can be a legitimate reason to hold a public hearing—not to establish his guilt, but to fully expose his secretive dictatorship by publicly cataloguing its myriad vile deeds. Such a hearing would recognize that, unlike a private citizen, a dictator is responsible not merely for his own individual acts

## GUEST COMMENTARY

of violence but for all crimes committed by his regime, whether or not in any given case he himself pulled the trigger or gave a direct order to murder the victims.

But the trial now underway evades Hussein's incontrovertible culpability, absurdly presumes him innocent, and demands that his "command responsibility" be established for particular acts of murder. In the case that began Oct. 19, the prosecution is required to prove that Hussein specifically ordered his thugs to carry out the 1982 massacre of some 140 people. This is as perverse as presuming Hitler, Stalin, or Mao innocent in the millions murdered by their regimes—and then groping for evidence that they personally ordered the execution of a handful of dissidents in one small village.

It is outrageous that after more than two years into a war that has cost billions of dollars and thousands of American lives, we regard as legitimate the possibility that Hussein could be found culpable for only some minuscule number of murders or even not guilty. It is outrageous that he is given a defense team of 1,500 lawyers, that

he is granted the right to appeal a guilty verdict, and that he is allowed to address the court. In one more injustice against all his victims, domestic and foreign, Hussein has eagerly exploited this international stage—paid for with American money and blood—to challenge and scold his Iraqi victims, to rail against the United States, and to cheer on the insurgents murdering Americans.

And yet this trial, the epitome of injustice, is defended as paving the way for a truly just legal system. Proponents argue that, whatever one thinks of the specifics of the trial, it marks the transformation of Iraq's judiciary from courts subservient to a dictator's whims, to courts objectively determining guilt or innocence. But the trial does no such thing.

Observe that only Iraqis were deemed qualified to decide Hussein's culpability. With President Bush's encouragement and blessing, the Iraqi leadership was given full control of the proceedings—and deliberately excluded American judges. Though there are plenty of American judges with decades of experience under a proper legal system—and few, if any Iraqis with comparable experience—American participation was viewed as unacceptable. Why were only members of Hussein's ethnic tribe deemed fit to

judge him?

Because justice, on the premise of the trial, is determined by the tribe; the tribe alone is the ultimate arbiter of right and wrong, good and evil, innocence and guilt. On this view, a meticulously logical assessment of universally available facts has no bearing on justice. Whatever the tribal group feels is just—regardless of evidence or logic—is just. A trial conducted on this premise is a repudiation of justice as an objective principle.

The trial is not, in essence, a departure from the subjective courts of the former regime. Instead of Hussein capriciously prescribing a "just" verdict, that arbitrary power now belongs to the Iraqi tribe—or any sub-tribe (whether Sunni, Shiite, Kurd) that wrests control of the courts.

This trial is irredeemably corrupt. The United States—which gave Iraq millions of dollars and sent lawyers and forensic investigators to launch the proceedings—must immediately withdraw its moral sanction from this travesty of justice.

*Elan Jurno is a junior fellow at the Ayn Rand Institute (www.AynRand.org) in Irvine, Calif. The Institute promotes the ideas of Ayn Rand—author of Atlas Shrugged and The Fountainhead and originator of the philosophy of Objectivism.*

## Memoirs of a Geisha



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# Editorial

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— Editorial —

## When Will Continued Invasions On U.S. Soil Stop?

The United States has been invaded 231 times during the past 10 years by the Mexican Army, the latest last week.

Incredibly, the U.S. Commander in Chief and the governor of Texas continue to look the other way.

Rising demands from the public that the border be controlled go unheeded as the issue of national security gets lost in politics, on both sides of the border.

Last week, members of the Mexican Army came across the Texas border into Hudspeth County at Neely's Crossing, about 50 miles east of El Paso, and established a perimeter on U.S. soil for dope dealers.

The result was a standoff pitting the U.S. Border Patrol, Department of Public Safety, the Hudspeth County Sheriff's Department, and local police against drug runners who used, among other weapons, a Mexican military-issue Humvee equipped with a M4 carbine machine gun. It was all over after the delivery of drugs was made and the Mexican military retreated into Mexico, out of reach.

Although the Mexican government claims ignorance of involvement in the standoff, the conflict could be accurately described as an invasion by a foreign country, plain and simple.

Was it not an open admission of strategy against the United States when a Mexican governmental commission under President Vicente Fox recently decided to distribute maps showing landmarks in the Arizona desert that would entice more Mexicans across the border?

Attacks on border patrol agents have been escalating. Some 778 incidents were reported last year, up from 396 the year before.

Is this not cause for alarm?

The U.S. federal government is preparing for delicate mid-term elections.

State constitutional races are brewing in Texas between now and November. Campaigning for the July 2 presidential election in Mexico is heating up.

Candidates in both countries find themselves bloated on domestic rhetoric that perhaps sounds good to a cheering crowd, but is actually empty grandstanding to buy time.

The United States is also being invaded on the financial front. Mexico's fifth-largest bank, Banorte, based in Monterrey, announced last week that it is attempting to acquire 70 percent of Inter National Bank in Texas, a cross-border \$260 million cash deal.

According to officials, this change in ownership will make it easier for migrants living in the United States to send money home, plus the deal will allow cross-border mortgages for Mexicans wanting to buy a house in the U.S.

Reports suggest that other banks in the United States might also come under the control of Mexico, as part of the free trade agreement, which many Texans deem negatively as selling off U.S. institutions to foreigners.

Still, President Bush and Gov. Perry are willing to let it ride, for it falls into their weird plan for globalization, of which the infamous Trans-Texas Corridor also plays a role.

There are many possible answers to the problem of illegal immigration, all of which involve at least the establishment of policy, to be followed by actually doing something.

Unfortunately, there has been no viable first step.

We cannot afford another Katrina.

It is abundantly clear that the winds along the Rio Grande are picking up and a cyclone is stirring.

Where are our leaders?

Campaigning and basking in their ignorance that a problem even exists.

— W. Leon Smith



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# America Needs A Large Bone Saw



Out Of The Blue

By  
Jerry  
Tenuto

There are two definitions for “gangrene” in my trusty, well-worn Merriam-Webster Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (1963 edition), both of them nouns.

The first: local death of soft tissues due to loss of blood supply.

The second, and lesser known, is: a mortal evil.

The adjective tense of the word is “gangrenous.”

Medically, one of the symptoms of gangrene is a foul-smelling discharge, not unlike the stench that hovers over Washington, D.C., excreting from both the White House and the Hill, where Republican plantation overseers rule by dictate.

Another symptom is discoloration, as our nation’s colors turn from red, white and blue to black.

The patient suffering from gangrene may experience persistent or severe pain; a general ill feeling; septic shock – just as the United States has since December 2000.

Treatments include strong medicinal dosing, removal of dead tissue, and quite often amputation of infected limb(s).

Frighteningly, both definitions apply to the greedy Republican leadership who, along with their rubber-stamp “show me the money” lapdogs, have abused their power and subverted their constituents’ trust, thus dragging our Nation to the brink of disaster.

Considering how our deeply infected Executive and Legislative Branches have become gangrenous with this unprecedented Culture of Corruption, the only remedies are removal of the morally dead and complete amputation of those with no conscience.

Because, in reality, the shenanigans that have been going on under the guise of our Nation’s business; what these selfish bastards have been doing to, not for, the citizens of this Country; how the RoveBush Fascists have terrorized the World around us; this determination to raise the office of president to that of “Führerprinzip” (unitary or unilateral executive), thus allowing one person absolute decision-making power with no checks or balances, truly is a mortal evil.

On Friday, Jan. 20, Herr Ubermeister Karl Rove slithered out from under whatever rock it is he hides to address the Republican National Committee at its winter meeting. This is the usual type of forum for the likes of Herr Rove, George W. Bush, Dark Lord the Dick Cheney, et al – friendly faces, no dissenters.

The RNC actually addressed him as the *Honorable* Karl Rove! Honorable how? It’s not like he’s done anything honorable in his life – he couldn’t even finish college. Lincoln was honorable. Pope John Paul II. Will Rogers. Roy Rogers. Hell, any shady character Groucho ever played was more honorable than Karl Rove. He probably hasn’t been honorable since being in diapers!

This guy’s a professional liar and character assassin, and he’s made tens of millions doing that. Come to think of it, I can see how that’s what the RNC would consider as “honorable.”

In his address, Herr Rove laid out attack plans for the 2006 mid-term elections. Essentially, he’s leading Ken Mehlman and the moneyed troops down the same path as 2002 and 2004 – FEAR!

Who else but the privileged could afford to attend this RNC shindig?

The first part of Herr Rove’s address

was a tired retread of Rove’s June speech at the Conservative Party of New York State, beating the drum about the superiority of today’s GOP vis a vis all previous and existing political movements:

“broad and inclusive” – as long as you’re white, privileged and Christian;

“self-assured and optimistic” – convey a smarmy, jock/fratboy attitude with the assurance that you’re going to beat those pesky indictments;

“forward-leaning and dominant” – we’re leaning over your shoulder and watching your every move, Mr. and Ms. Average American.

Masking the fact that reasoned debate has been stifled by single-party control of the Executive and both Legislative Branches, he called it “the rise of a great cause.”

The GOP is still taking credit for the demise of the Soviet Union, when it was simply coincidence that the USSR happened to run out of money on Saint Ronnie’s watch. Then the America’s own A-#1 Fascist erroneously stated that “today we are winning the war against Islamic fascism.” Takes one to know one.

I don’t see where we’re winning squat. These fools don’t get it, you can’t beat a fanatical religious ideology.

Some more pearls of Herr Rove’s statements born in Fantasyland:

“Republicans rebuilt our national defenses” – then wasted them all in Iraq;

“cut taxes and spurred economic growth” – cut for the 1%ers, then three days later Ford Motor Company announced the losses of 30,000 American jobs (figure in GM’s earlier announcement, that’s 60,000 from just the two corporations);

“ended ‘stagflation’” – yep, pay is going down, prices are skyrocketing;

“limited government growth” – a) refer to national defenses, b) infrastructure improvement is at a standstill since 2001, c) this must have been meant as a joke with the national debt at a record, insurmountable high and growing each second;

“reformed welfare” – okay, so now only white folks get to eat and sleep under a roof;

“insisted on accountability and high standards in education” – crowded classrooms, overtaxed teachers, worn and outdated texts, but they have all children taking the same tests to make sure everyone’s in lockstep unison;

“took important steps to protect and strengthen marriage and the family” – DCFS;

“stood up for judicial activism and for constitutionalism” – records show that by and large far more Conservative judges are apt to make activist rulings (Samuel Alito among them) than Liberal judges, and stomping on the Constitution is not standing up for the Constitution.

Herr Rove goes on and on about how we’re a nation at war, and nobody but George W. “I don’t wanna go to VietNam, Daddy” Bush is the only person capable of leading the Nation to victory, with

Republicans the only party strong enough to protect American citizens.

He would have people believe something as idiotic as Democrats don’t understand the danger from these tyrants in the Middle East.

However, the Democrats do understand that. Just as we know all too well the danger festering right inside our own Government from the tyrants who illegally seized our property at 1600 Pennsylvania late in 2000.

We also comprehend that this faux president, nor any other president, has the right to spy on American citizens, or any other human being who happens to be within the borders of the 50 States or Nation’s territories.

That’s part of the same damned Constitution Herr Rove stated his version of the Republican Party stood up for.

However, because we Democrats do not wish to cede our liberties and freedoms to the likes of Rove, Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice, and the rest of their gang of rotters, nor sacrifice our sons and daughters to be wasted as cannon fodder in a perpetual war for oil and riches, which are already being divvied up among the same (not one of whom has a son or daughter they will offer up), Herr Ubermeister calls “...them (us) wrong – deeply and profoundly and consistently wrong.”

No matter what either Herr Rove, George W., the Dick Cheney, or that mealy-mouthed Attorney General Attorney General Alberto Gonzales says, according to former NSA employee Russell Tice the 1st Commandment of the Agency is operatives “are not allowed to go after Americans.” The duty of the NSA is to deal strictly with overseas communications.

How can there be any way to spin that?

(Mr. Tice, a career intelligence officer, was fired in May 2005 when he offered to tell Congress about the wiretap program. Despite the existence of the Intelligence Community Whistleblower Act, he still lost his job. Mr. Tice has yet to be called by any member or committee.)

Nothing like sitting down, discussing things and working together, eh, Herr Rove?

Rove blathered on about how the American economy has grown tremendously this past year, faster than any other industrialized nation. Why, we’re the envy of the world!

Thanks to the Republican leadership, we owe tons of money to the Chinese, among others. The four-and-a-half million jobs these rich schmucks brag about are mostly low-paying retail and service jobs to replace higher income factory and skilled positions.

Nobody’s talking about the Christmas season past because retail sales stunk. Ford and GM are forced into massive closings and lay-offs because nobody can afford the cars or gas.

Airbus outsold Boeing during 2005, and there seems to be no let up in sight.

What is this cockamamie garbage about “real, disposable personal income is up?” If that were the case, soft spending like movie revenues wouldn’t be down, and all homes would have three computers with HDTV in every room.

People can’t even save for their retirement!

The only industries showing large profits are those that are in bed with the RoveBush Fascists – oil, retail lending, and the war machine. These businesses

are raking it in by the boatload, all with Government assistance (including some very helpful decisions by the Supremes).

Americans are in debt to retail lenders to the tune of hundreds of billions, amounts that can’t even be calculated. This isn’t even including mortgages and vehicles.

If they’d ever land the jet somewhere unexpected and cruise the countryside, these incompetents might notice the factories and farms that are out of operation. Not that any of them would care.

The bottom line is, there isn’t one single person among the Republican leadership, and especially in the White House, who feels your, my, our pain.

The first time I remember hearing “Hail to the Chief” being played was during the funeral for slain President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, bushwhacked in Dallas, Texas, by people and interests who were not really Lee Harvey Oswald.

Or Harvey Oswald Lee. Or Oswald Lee Harvey.

Or whatever in hell the poor schlub’s name was.

(An astute reader once suggested I should use “bushwhacked,” not murdered or assassinated. I guess the word does make more sense. It’s pure Texas, and the first syllable seems to hold some clue to the truth.)

This morning, as George W. Bush approached the stage at Kansas State University for the first in a weeklong series of RNC planned lovefests, “Hail to the Chief” came across loud and clear.

The combination of that song and that man being in the same space at the same time makes the hairs at the back of my neck stand straight up. Despite several medications, my blood pressure rises; my skin crawls.

Were there ever a person who did not deserve to have “Hail to the Chief” played in his honor, it would have to be George W. Bush, the two time never-elected president of the United States.

As I write this, George W. Bush is blathering on in front of the typical, RNC-friendly audience at Kansas State. It is the first road speech in the Republican Party’s 2006 campaign to continue its stranglehold on the United States Government, and Herr Rove’s continued dismemberment of our Constitution.

The advertised message was allegedly the regime’s sorely bungled War on Terror.

So Georgie dropped the September 11 reference in the first 30 seconds.

And, as has been the practice of Herr Ubermeister’s Maschinen von Propaganda, the date was inserted repeatedly throughout this pep talk.

Iraq. Insurgency. They can’t beat us – militarily. We will win. Blah, blah, blah.

Georgie kept repeating the pre-2004 campaign mantra over and over... and over again.

How about “my Daddy fought the Japanese, now I talk peace with the Japanese leader.” Impressive. Of course, not one word as to how he stayed home and partied right through the unpleasantness in VietNam.

Then George W. Bush added the rose-colored glasses view that he and his worthless gang of greedy, self-serving handlers were laying the foundation for future American Presidents to be able to talk peace with all world leaders.

Because he was bringing the freedom and liberty that all people across the Planet so desperately desired.

Continued On Next Page

• **TENUTO ... Continued From Previous Page**

George W. Bushocracy.

How Right-wing does a state university have to be to host an event where a sitting president (phony or otherwise) appears in front of an audience of select college Republicans and thousands of military personnel in uniform?

I found the entire set-up, and setting as it was, to be frightening. Had this taken place at my alma mater, or most other colleges, there would have been a hue and cry that would have scared the bejesus out of even the soldiers in attendance.

Uniformed soldiers have no place on a state-sponsored campus, especially to attend what essentially was a political rally.

Then there are Dark Lord the Dick Cheney's speeches to the privileged. I love how he always includes the same four mantras: Democrats are reprehensible (whenever they call the regime on its fabrications); torture good; eavesdropping necessary; and his catchphrase, "I like ties in the Senate, because whenever I vote we win."

That means the 1%ers win.

Trouble is, whenever he votes, the vast majority of Americans lose.

Hint to foreign nationals: Just sign over rights to your nation's oil and other natural resources to Cheney now and save yourself the suffering.

I would like to share the following quote from Milton Mayer, *They Thought They Were Free, The Germans, 1938-45* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955) (as posted on [www.informationclearinghouse.info](http://www.informationclearinghouse.info))

"What no one seemed to notice was the ever widening gap between the government and the people. And it became always wider... the whole process of its coming into being, was above all diverting, it provided an excuse not to think... for people who did not want to think anyway gave us some dreadful, fundamental things to think about... and kept us so busy with continuous changes and 'crises' and so fascinated... by the machinations of the 'national enemies,' without and within, that we had no time to think about these dreadful things that were growing, little by little, all around us..."

"Each step was so small, so inconsequential, so well explained or, on occasion, 'regretted,' that unless one understood what the whole thing was in principle, what all these 'little measures'... must some day lead to, one no more saw it developing from day to day than a farmer in his field sees the corn growing... Each act is worse than the last, but only a little worse. You wait for the next and the next.

"You wait for one great shocking occasion, thinking that others, when such a

shock comes, will join you in resisting somehow. You don't want to act, or even talk, alone... you don't want to 'go out of your way to make trouble.' But the one great shocking occasion, when tens or hundreds or thousands will join with you, never comes.

"That's the difficulty. The forms are all there, all untouched, all reassuring, the houses, the shops, the jobs, the meal-times, the visits, the concerts, the cinema, the holidays. But the spirit, which you never noticed because you made the lifelong mistake of identifying it with the forms, is changed. Now you live in a world of hate and fear, and the people who hate and fear do not even know it themselves, when everyone is transformed, no one is transformed.

"You have accepted things you would not have accepted five years ago, a year ago, things your father... could never have imagined."

Duck and cover, World citizens, when King George XLIII unleashes his war toys on your sovereign nation so that you might live free - if he doesn't blow you to bits first.

Funny how Rove, Bush and Cheney completely ignored any of the extensive, pervasive corruption running rampant throughout their party. Can anybody say indictments? These guys sure can't.

It's almost as though they have insider information that no one, including Herr Rove, is going to take a fall. Must be that "self-assured and optimistic" thing he mentioned.

Why should impeachment proceedings against a president who really isn't a president hinge on just this illegal spying on Americans rap?

Even though he began doing it prior to 9/11.

Geez, there should be more than enough reasons since November of 2000 to make any number of strong cases against the puppet prez, and Cheney, as well.

And nobody less than you, Herr Ubermeister Rove. You're about as patriotic as sashimi on Thanksgiving.

America has three serious wounds that have been festering for 1,879 days. We have suffered from these vile, odious scourges for far too long.

We must amputate these gangrenous mortal evils before they bury us all.

*(Jerry Tenuto is an erstwhile Philosopher and sometime Educator. He holds a BS and MA in Communications from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Depending upon your taste in political stew, you can either blame or thank Jerry for his weekly "Out Of The Blue" feature in THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST.)*

# Stop the College Student Tax Scandal

On Jan. 31, Congress begins its 2006 session. While public attention is focused on the Jack Abramoff lobbying scandal, there is a little-noticed scandal brewing that will hurt millions of college students and their hard-working families. Hidden inside



## Washington Report

By Congressman Chet Edwards

an innocuous sounding "reconciliation" bill is an \$11.9 billion cut in student financial aid. The House leadership intends to bring this vote up quickly, so most college students and their families won't know until after it is too late that a huge tax has been put on the backs of present and future college students who must borrow money to attend college.

This \$11.9 billion cut in student loan programs over the next five years is the largest cut in our nation's history. It could not come at a worse time. Hard-working families are already facing fast rising costs for tuition, college textbooks, gasoline and home utility bills. Last year the United States had the largest international trade deficit in history—over \$700 billion—and we are competing with China, Japan, India and other countries for good-paying jobs. Thus, the Congressional leadership's plan will hurt both working families and our nation's future economic competitiveness. It flunks the test of fairness and vision.

Interest rates on the popular Stafford loans and on Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) will be permanently increased on July 1<sup>st</sup>, to 6.8 percent for federal Stafford Loans from rates as low as 4.7 percent. Also included is a jump from 7.9 percent to 8.5 percent for PLUS fixed interest rates.

Unless we can stop this short-sighted bill from being passed into law, these changes will amount to an expensive new "student tax" that will place a tremendous burden on countless college students in our district and across the country. The student tax could force some students to take on a second or third job, and for others it might mean dropping out of college. For high-achieving, middle and low-income high school students, it might mean many of them have to give up their dream of a college education and a brighter future.

If this bill becomes law, which will probably happen, students and graduates should act quickly to consolidate their loans now as current consolidation rates can be as low as 2.75 percent with benefits applied. Other incentives to consolidate include a longer payment term, one monthly payment and no prepayment penalties.

To consolidate, you first need to know all your outstanding loans and

their interest rates. If you are like many college students and your loan records are not quite up to date, you can visit the National Student Clearinghouse Web site at <http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/>; click on "students and alumni," then on "loan locator." You must have your Social Security number and date of birth to receive your loan information.

If these cuts were being made as a belt-tightening policy that applied to

all Americans to reduce the deficit, then at least I could respect it as bad policy pushed for principled reasons. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The \$11.9 billion student aid cuts won't reduce the deficit. Instead, they are being pushed so the Congressional leadership can pass a few weeks from now an extension of recent temporary dividend cuts that give a \$220,000 annual tax break to those making \$1 million a year in dividend income. It is hard to imagine that Members of Congress and people making \$1 million a year in dividend income will get huge tax cuts, while working families pay for them with an \$11.9 billion student tax.

If that isn't scandalous, I don't know what is.

I believe the House leadership is out of touch with the values and priorities of American families, Democrats, Republicans and Independents alike. If Congress would ask those making a million dollars a year in dividend income to give up just a part of their \$220,000 annual tax cut, it wouldn't be necessary to pass a \$11.9 billion student tax that will hurt high achieving students and their families and harm our nation's future competitiveness.

With tuition rates skyrocketing in Texas since the state Legislature deregulated tuition in 2003 and the state's share of funding for higher education dropping to historic lows, the federal government must do more, not less, to ensure financial aid is available for deserving students working hard to receive a quality college education. Access to higher education should be based on a student's hard work and achievement, not on a family's bank statement.

The House already voted on this partisan budget bill in December, approving it by just six votes. But slight changes that the Senate made to the bill are forcing it back to the House for another vote in early February. Congress should put the interests of college students and our nation's future above special interests.

The college student tax scandal should be stopped.

Edwards serves on the House Appropriations and Budget Committees. He can be contacted by e-mail at [www.edwards.house.gov](mailto:www.edwards.house.gov).

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# Lone Star State Gets Four-Star Hotel

The husband and wife owners gave their new hotel, the finest to be found between the Mississippi and the Pacific, a final going-over on the night of Jan. 31, 1859, in preparation for the grand opening the next day.

Thirteen years earlier, Mary Baumschlueter learned from bitter personal experience that inns of any description were scarce on the Texas frontier. Landing at Galveston in 1846, the German immigrant and her aged mother had to sleep under the stars before arranging transportation to San Antonio.

The younger woman survived the six-week trip by ox cart but not her frail companion, who died days after reaching their destination. The daughter soon married but wound up a widow within the year.

Forced to fend for herself, Mary took in boarders. One of the tenants, a fellow German named William Menger, became her second lawfully wedded husband in 1851.

Partners for life, the enterprising Mengers were also partners in business. The key to their mutual success was satisfying two basic needs of the boomtown — beer and shelter.

The Mengers met the first by founding San Antonio's original brewery in 1855. To provide the second, the couple constructed a larger boardinghouse next door to the suds factory.

But the demand for rented rooms exceeded their short supply. Besides the farmers who required beds on their overnight visits, there was a steady stream of military personnel and cross-country travelers. The Alamo City was the central junction for three stagecoach lines linking New Orleans and southern California.

Adjacent to the brewery on Alamo Plaza, the Mengers built a two-story hotel with 50 rooms and ventilated stables for the guests' horses. The elegant establishment set them back \$16,000 — a stupendous sum which caused local skeptics to scoff at the couple's extravagance.

But the Mengers had the last laugh and in record time to boot. Within 48 hours of the grand opening, they had a full house. Business was so brisk that the pleased proprietors erected a 40-room annex that very summer.

William Menger died in 1871, but Mary ran the hotel for another 10 years. And a prosperous decade it was, as the long-awaited arrival of the railroad dramatically increased human traffic through San Antonio.

Residents did not need a schedule to know when a train had pulled into the station. Passengers sprinted to the Menger for the privilege of paying extra for one of eight rooms with a private bath.

Following the purchase of the Menger by Major J.H. Kampmann, the hotel underwent extensive expansion and renovation. The crowning achievement was a world-class watering hole, an exact replica of the House of Lords Pub in London, England.

The clone cost a whopping \$60,000 with its cherrywood decor and imported French mirrors. Ice for the customers' drinks was bought in Boston, shipped to the port of Indianola, and carted overland in custom-made, insulated wagons.

The beautiful bar was the site selected by Teddy Roosevelt for recruiting cavalrymen to fight in Cuba. For most Rough Riders, the charge up San Juan hill began at the Menger.

The future president was not, of

## This Week In Texas History

By Barte Haile



course, the only notable to grace the premises with his presence. The long list of celebrated guests included actresses Sarah Bernhardt and Lily Langtry, southern poet Sidney Lanier, opera star Jenny Lind, writer O. Henry, sculptor Gutzon Borglum, and flamboyant English wit Oscar Wilde.

Capt. Richard King went so far as to die in his room. Funeral services for the South Texas rancher were held in the hotel's opulent parlors.

During the Depression, the Menger deteriorated into a sad eyesore. After the neglected landmark was put up for sale, word leaked out that the prospective buyer planned to turn the prime piece of real estate into a parking lot.

J. Frank Dobie led the public-spirited campaign to save the historic hotel. The famed folklorist eloquently argued that the Menger was worth preserving because it "belongs as quietly and as rightly as the evening star belongs to after-twilight, something settled and in harmony with itself in this screeching world of ceaseless change."

W.L. Moody came to the rescue in 1943 and bought the Menger from the Kampmann heirs for \$205,000. The Galveston multi-millionaire spent many thousands more restoring the grand old lady to her former glory. The number of rooms was increased to 327 in the mid-1960's with a modern five-story addition and 33 more rooms were added 20 years later.

As the marvelous Menger approaches its own sesquicentennial, the one-of-a-kind hotel offers a unique blend of the past and present. To spend the night next door to the Alamo is like sleeping in a Texas museum, only a lot more comfortable.

Barte Haile welcomes your com-

ments, questions and suggestions at [haile@pdq.net](mailto:haile@pdq.net) or 1912 Meadow Creek Dr., Pearland, TX 77581.

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## Join Us For In-depth Olympic Coverage Live From Utah

As many of you know, every two years I try to convince my editor to send me to the Olympics. The closest I've come was during the winter Olympics in Utah, when I was offered gas money, thermal underwear, and a set of binoculars for watching the events "from a great spot on the third floor of a car garage not far from the Olympic Pavilion — or thereabouts."

This year is no different. Especially when you consider the games are taking place in Italy, which means there's no way I'm going to see anything from any car garage in Utah. However, it doesn't mean we won't be offering you the same in-depth coverage as the larger media outlets. It's just that ours won't include any photographs, scores, statistics, biographies or interviews with Olympians, unless you count Buddy, our vending machine repair guy, who won the Brickerville High School "Donkey Basketball Olympics" in 1987.

(To be honest, that interview is still sketchy. The last time I asked Buddy about "riding a donkey for the gold" he threw a Diet Sprite at me.)

While it's true we won't have anyone at the Olympic Games again this year, it doesn't mean we weren't able to come up with something just as exciting and informative, especially when you compare it to, say...

Staring at a grapefruit.

Keeping that in mind, I'm proud to announce an in-depth look at all 15 Winter Olympic events in a special three-part series we're calling:

Fifteen Reasons to be a Summer Olympian

We will begin with **The Slalom**: First introduced by Germany in 1936, this event combines the speed and skill of downhill skiing with the kind of bravery one only attains from years of drinking German beer. Athletes launch themselves down slopes and attain speeds of up to 120 km per hour (approximately the speed of sound) while navigating around flags, moguls, photographers, journalists, border patrols, assorted swimmers



By  
Ned  
Hickson  
Siuslaw News

and cabana boys before crossing the finish line somewhere in Peru. Events also include the "Super-G," which combines the thrill of slalom with the danger of rap artists on skis.

Next, an event dating back to 1932, when a Swedish marksman was driven into a snow bank by a hot-dogging American skier, **The Biathlon** combines cross-country skiing and long-range target shooting. Endurance is the key factor as competitors race around long loops of varying lengths, stopping only occasionally to shoot at targets until, eventually, firing five shots from a seated position inside of a portable commode.

Since 1924 **The Bobsleigh** has been thrilling Olympic spectators with its combination of speed, technique and general lack of a steering mechanism. In both the two-man and four-man events, each athlete has a specific purpose. This begins by getting the sleigh off to as fast a start as possible before piling inside the chassis, where athletes contribute individually by grabbing their ankles and saying the Rosary. Once they cross the finish line, the brakeman goes to work by pulling on a handle that, for all intents and purposes, does absolutely nothing.

There you have it, our first installment of pre-Winter Olympic coverage. Join us next week for a look at Curling, Figure Skating, and several other exciting events, none of which, I should remind you, can be seen from Utah.

(You can write to Ned Hickson at the Siuslaw News at P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR. 97439, or visit his website at [www.nedhickson.net](http://www.nedhickson.net).)

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# Just What Is 'The Unitary Executive'?

*Unilateral*  
Pronunciation: "yü-ni-'la-t&-r&l, -'la-tr&l"

*Function: adjective*  
1 a : done or undertaken by one person or party b : of, relating to, or affecting one side of a subject : ONE-SIDED c : constituting or relating to a contract or engagement by which an express obligation to do or forbear is imposed on only one party.

2 a : having parts arranged on one side <a unilateral raceme> b : occurring on, performed on, or affecting one side of the body or one of its parts. <unilateral exophthalmos>

Source: Merriam-Webster Online  
(www.m-w.com)

While our windbag Senators wasted their time wringing their hands over Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito's college club affiliations, a much deeper, darker side of his judicial views came to surface. On Feb. 5, 1986, Alito, as then deputy assistant attorney general in the office of Legal Counsel, drafted a memo outlining a legal strategy that would allow the president to bypass Congress and "help shape the law." This loophole was dubbed a "signing statement."

The signing statement was most recently

employed by Bush Jr. when he signed the McCain anti-torture bill into law. "The executive branch shall construe [the law] in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President as Commander in Chief," wrote Bush, adding that the signing statement "will assist in achieving the shared objective of the Congress and the President of protecting the American people from further attacks."

In short, Congress passed a law with near unanimous support in the Senate (only nine out of 100 voted against it), and Bush affixed a sticky note to the law that makes it null



The Webster Retort

By Stephen Webster

and void at the time and date of his choosing. Citing the Unitary Executive doctrine of Samuel Alito, President Bush has overruled Congress and put his foot squarely in the face of our system of justice. This is, by very definition, the primary intent of the Unitary Executive.

Speaking to the Federalist Society in 2001, Alito said, "When I was in OLC [...], we were strong proponents of the theory of the unitary executive, that all federal executive power is vested by the Constitution in the President. And I thought then, and I still think, that this theory best captures the meaning of the Constitution's text and structure. [...] [T]he case for a unitary executive seems, if anything, stronger today than it was in the 18th Century."

In the Federalist Papers, James Madison wrote that "The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny."

If you are not connecting the dots by now, let me make the point of this perfectly clear. <B>The Unitary Executive is code-speak for a president with powers so inflated, it trumps Congress and the Judiciary in all respects. By way of the Alito doctrine, Bush's desire for unilateral power is quickly and quietly becoming a reality. This usurper seeks to unhinge our system of checks and balances and cross this longstanding legal boundary that is the very foundation of our democratic society. Now you know why Bush nominated Samuel Alito.

Silly me. Here I was thinking Republicans supported limited government. If you still adamantly back this man's actions and the nomination of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court, I would say that you should assume a new title: "Nationalist." Perhaps the anti-Republican Republicans (I.E.: Neo Cons) should break away from the party who's platform is all but irrelevant to this president. You could be the United Nationalist Party. Your slogan could be something like, "My country, good or bad." I've been hearing that one a lot lately.

The title of this new party would be fitting; far more telling than the deceptive Republican tag. Coming from an independent Liberal point of view, I would love to see some true conservatism in the halls of power. But instead we get unrestrained spending, neglect of our national security, infringements upon our constitution, and a new political atmosphere where colleagues from across the isle no longer walk together through the storied halls of the Rayburn building, hammering out compromises in the interest of all. Today, this anti-conservative Republican amalgam movement seeks "to keep building the party until we're hunting Democrats with dogs," in the immoral words of Republican Senator Phil Gramm.

The funny thing about Nationalists is their propensity to ignore reality. "The nationalist not only does not disapprove of atrocities committed by his own side, but he has a remarkable capacity for not even hearing about them," wrote George Orwell. Lately, it seems the words of the 1984 author offer the most telling truths of our time.

Stephen Webster is an Investigative Reporter and Syndicated Columnist with The News Connection, a Staff Columnist with George W. Bush's hometown weekly The Lone Star Iconoclast, and a former Contributor to The Dallas Morning News' Science & Technology section. For more of Webster's musings, visit GonzoMuckraker.BlogSpot.com.

# The Technology Race

I'm slipping in the technology race. It's official. Maybe it has something to do with that birthday I celebrated yesterday. But no, this has been coming on for a long time.

I vaguely remember when I was the one who could program the VCR, wire all the various wires, boxes, and players that attached to the TV or stereo. I think I can recall that I was the family member who bought the used Apple II C computer and determined to become literate in that brave, new world back in the 80s.

When my son, Josh showed an aptitude for such things, I gladly passed the reins to him. He surpassed my wildest expectations. Both Josh and his sister Becca grew up with computers and exhibit an ease with all types of technology that just doesn't come so smoothly to good ol' Mom. I was the one who held out longer than most in getting a microwave oven years ago. I just didn't think I needed it. And I was wary of all those radio waves. Now of course, I don't know how I ever lived without one. I didn't get a cell phone for a long time either. I could still live without that, but I do see it as a convenience and a safety item.

On the kids' last visit to me, Josh especially became exasperated that four major things seem to be missing from my life. (I thought I was doing fine without them, but apparently I was wrong).

"Mom," both kids confronted me, "You HAVE to get a debit card!!! Do you ENJOY writing checks? Do you LIKE standing in line?" So Josh marched me to my bank and set it all in motion. I have actually used it. I even checked my account online. Josh claims he pays all his bills online, hasn't written a paper check in years. I was amazed. It's a whole new world.

"Mom, you need a better cell phone plan! This one is so old the company doesn't even offer it any longer, and there aren't enough daytime minutes." They were, of course, using my phone because theirs didn't work so well out here in the sticks. So, naturally, I warned them not to run up a big bill, to make lengthy calls at night after 9 p.m. or on the weekends. I tried to explain to them that I don't yack on the phone constantly and can usually limit my daytime minutes or phone them on nights or weekends. Long distance calls to my kids are the only ones I care to make on a regular basis.

"But for only \$15 more a month, you can get a much better deal," they insisted. "Then you wouldn't have to worry about going over some ridiculously low limit." I gave them the "fixed income" speech, and told them how

"only" \$10 here and \$15 there could add up to too many extra dollars a month for me. I hoped to impress them with the speech about "It's not only what you save but what you do NOT spend." They shook their heads in disbelief. And my kids are actually pretty thrifty. They just have different priorities. I tried the story about how much it adds up if you buy one bottle of water a day instead of refilling your own and taking them with you to work or in your vehicle. I updated the tale by using the "one latte a day at Starbucks" approach. Do you know what that adds up to in a month? In a year? They rolled their eyes.

"How can you stand dial-up?" they asked me. "It's so slow! I can't even use your computer when I'm here. I'd rather just not use it." (Fine, don't use it, go outside and clear brush or something.)

"You HAVE to get high speed Internet." Oh really? "Well, yes, it's ONLY about another \$20 a month." Ouch. My budget was killing me. I agree that dial up is hideously slow. So I actually checked around to see what my options were for upgrading. With all the hidden fees and taxes and what it will cost after the initial special offer runs out, it still turned out to be too much. I keep waiting for these services to become more reasonable, but logic tells me that things increase in cost as time goes on. They do not usually decrease. I'm not sure how we're all supposed to keep up. I have enough trouble just filling my gas tank in the truck these days.

And if you add high speed Internet through your phone service, sometimes the company makes you buy additional services before they will deign to give you the high speed Internet at that wonderful introductory price (for only six months). I momentarily considered upgrading my cell phone service, getting rid of my land line (which some friends have done), and getting Internet service through Dish Network. But this phone number has been attached to the property for over 60 years. I just couldn't let it go. Not yet.

The phone company here seems to have a monopoly. So all the wonderful, cheap offers one sees on TV for high speed Internet service aren't exactly available. Yet.

"Mom," we KNOW you want a digital camera. You would love one!" You have to understand that in my world, until just a few years ago, the word "digital" only referred to a kind of medical examination you didn't want any part of.

I agreed with them finally about the camera, though. Again, I had been waiting and waiting for the prices to drop. I told Josh to start looking for good deals

## 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.

on the Internet. He had bought a camera for a girlfriend that way, and also for his sister's last birthday. Turns out the kids were planning to surprise me with a digital camera for my birthday, but Zach beat them to it. Zach and Josh conspired to find the perfect camera for me. I was thrilled when I opened the box. I had it for three days before I was brave enough to turn it on.

I read the manual. I charged the battery. I installed the software on my computer (and congratulated myself that nothing seemed to go wrong, for once. I have had some very, very bad experiences with new software installations over the years).

The digital camera is tiny. Couple this with the fact that, like most people of a "certain age," I need reading glasses. Everything on this little device is so small I could use a microscope. And there are too many tiny options. Tiny close-up, tiny zoom, tiny wide angle, tiny black and white, tiny MOVIES, for heaven sake. MOVIES!! I think this might be some sort of conspiracy against people old enough to use reading glasses. No wonder us older folks can't operate all this new technology. It isn't that we aren't intelligent enough! We just can't see it!

[You might remember I was the one who had such a hard time adjusting to a new cell phone after losing the one I was accustomed to (and happy with) — in the pasture last year.] Becca and Josh told me, "Mom, forget all that. Turn the camera on! You won't break it. You'll only use three functions anyway. Take a picture. View it. Move back and forth. That's it!" Still I resisted, terrified by my new toy.

Luckily, friends who had recently acquired a digital camera came to visit. One is a physicist. The other is a computer person who took a course to learn to operate her digital camera. Such a couple could surely teach me how to turn this thing on without having an anxiety attack. I had a quick, hands-on tutorial and braved this new digital world. And Becca was right. I only use three functions. I love it. Thank you, Zach.

Josh's parting shot, after learning how much I loved my gift was this: "Well, if you want to send any pictures through e-mail, now you'll have to get high speed Internet."

# Toll Roads Coming 'Round the Bend

## Whether Or Not We Want Them Or Need Them



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**WANTED: Public Uprising!**  
Gov. Perry, CINTRA, Rep. Mike Krusee, TxDOT and transportation maven Ric Williamson are planning to rule Texas via building the toll road empire? Well then, it's time for a good ol' fashion Texas revolution! They're going to privatize toll roads by selling the rights to any company and other special interests who will pay for them. For the next 90 years generations of Texas families will be forced to pay endless and escalating toll taxes so that those special interests can make enormous profits. *Those guys will be laughing at us all the way to the bank!*

I'm reminded of the time in my life when I was eight years old and my parents forced brussel sprouts down my throat. "They're good for you!", I was told. "You need them!" Well, my parents forced down the brussel sprouts in much the same way special interests are ramming toll roads down the throats of Texas families — and guess what? Toll roads AREN'T good for us!

Texans are being deceived. We're told that we have a choice to pay the tolls or to use alternate roadways. We're told that TxDOT has a shortage of taxpayer dollars to build, repair, and maintain roadways. We're told that with no "new money", we can't build new roadways. We're told that without toll roads we will be stuck in endless traffic jams. *Bull*



**Commentary**  
**By Peter Stern**

*dinky!*  
Go to New York City during "rush hour" and you'll see that traffic jams occur both on and off toll roads — even more so at toll plazas! Furthermore, we'll all pay toll taxes whether or not we use the toll roads. Special interests don't tell us that part. We'll all pay toll taxes at the cash register when we purchase goods and services. *Why?* Because when businesses get charged toll taxes when they use toll roads, they will pass along those expenses on to their customers as part of the cost of doing business. Consequently, the average Texas consumer will pay thousands of dollars per year in additional toll taxes!

What we need here in Texas is a good ol' fashion political revolution. We need to vote-out the incumbents who have "conflict of interests" with their special interests. We need to demand that the Office of the Attorney General and various District Attorneys file suit against those officials who maintain "close eco-

nomics ties" with various corporations, organizations and individuals who have bought the best government money can buy. Furthermore, if they want to build toll roads, they should be forced to prove — **beyond a reasonable doubt** — that toll roads are absolutely needed.

Toll roads are just another new scam thought up by the precious few to take more taxpayer dollars for their own profit. Stand up and be heard. Write letters, send faxes, make telephone calls — but most of all, vote-out special interest incumbents during the next several elections.

*Peter Stern of Driftwood, TX is a political writer well-known and published frequently throughout the Texas community and nationwide. He is a Vietnam-era Disabled Veteran and holds three post-graduate degrees. Since 1999 Mr. Stern has studied and followed legislative politics in Texas and writes prolifically about various urgent issues and proposed legislation to inform the community without political bias or affiliation. While a lifetime member of the Republican Party, he does NOT support the party's current platforms, philosophies and actions. He maintains he is an "intelligent" Republican with a conscience — a minority branch of the ruling party. You may contact Peter Stern at: <pstern@austin.rr.com>*

# There She Was, Miss America

**DATELINE: MY COUCH**  
Intrepid writers will go to extraordinary lengths to get their stories. Some go behind enemy lines, some live on the street with the homeless, some disguise themselves to see what it's like to be a different race or gender. The sacrifice I made to get my story was to actually sit through the recent Miss America Pageant.

Miss America has fallen on hard times. At the height of its popularity in the 60s, the contest had a TV audience of more than 80 million people. This year, not one of the major networks wanted to televise it. So, a cable channel called Country Music Television aired it. And to spice things up, they moved the pageant from Atlantic City to Las Vegas.

These moves didn't make a lot of sense. If you're going to move it to Country Music Television, shouldn't there have been some connection to country music — other than the commercials for the show, "Trick My Truck?" And why move it to Las Vegas if you're not going to use the Vegas background in a meaningful way. Not one of the contestants chose shooting craps for the talent competition.

There was a period when Miss America was kind of camp or kitsch. Comics would talk about contestants who'd say in the same breath that they'd like to see World Peace and no more Split Ends. You know something's outside the mainstream of popular culture when comedians aren't even making fun of it anymore.

And these young women this year were not "air heads." They all seemed intelligent and committed to their education. That's important progress, but it didn't make for compelling television.

Even though all the women wore bikinis, the swimsuit competition seemed



**Modern Times**  
**By Lloyd Garver**

completely sexless. The talent competition provided a chance for me to get up and get a snack. Finally, the contest was narrowed down to three contestants. I couldn't follow how it got narrowed down, but I was glad that it had. The three were all asked to, "Describe a significant experience from your childhood and the impact it had on you today." One of them talked about surviving an awkward childhood when she wore unattractive glasses, one talked about her parents' values helping her overcome any prejudice towards her for being an Asian American, and one talked about ballet. Ballet trumped self-esteem and parental values, so Miss Oklahoma, Jennifer Berry was declared Miss America for 2006. And she got the most scholarship money.

The whole thing ended with Bert Park's recorded voice being piped in, singing the Miss America song.

I'm sure there were times in my life that I have spent a duller two hours, but never before without having someone trying to sell me a whole life policy. I know it's sad to see an institution die, but it's tough to watch this thing choking on life support. It just might be time to let the Miss America Pageant die an almost dignified death. Continue to give out the college scholarships, but do away with the painful smiles, evening gowns, and tap

dancing.

But if those involved in the "Pageant" want it to continue no matter what, I have some suggestions. To compete with today's "reality television," it's far too tame. I know it's a tradition for all the contestants to hold hands and act like they love each other, but the ratings would definitely go up if we got to see some bad-mouthing and backstabbing. A hidden camera in the dressing room wouldn't hurt.

And let the women fight. Literally. A couple of rounds of boxing or wrestling would certainly bring in some viewers.

In the past, Miss America has been no friend to scandals, but now it's time to change all that. Encourage the contestants to bribe the judges. And if there were a rule that at least one contestant has to fool around with one of the judges, that Pageant will be back on network TV faster than you can say, "Sweeps."

But is it really worth doing away with all its tradition just to keep it on TV? That's a question the heads of the Miss America Organization are going to have to answer. But if they don't do something to change things, I don't think it will be on Country Music Television next year. It's quite possible that from now on, the only place we'll be watching the Miss America Pageant is on the History Channel. And maybe that's not such a bad thing.

*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 a weekly column for SportsLine.com. He can be reached at [lloydgarver@yahoo.com](mailto:lloydgarver@yahoo.com)*



# Vote-PAD Might 'Save American Democracy': BradBlog

YOLO COUNTY, Calif. — A software-less voting machine intended for people with disabilities might "save American democracy," according to BradBlog, a web-log that advocates for voting rights.

The Voting-on-Paper Assistive Device (Vote-PAD) works with the use of a plastic sleeve fitted to an existing paper ballot. An audio prompt and an electronic "verification wand" to further assist blind voters gives voters with dexterity and visual impairments more control in marking and verifying their ballots without any outside help.

Because the Vote-PAD contains no secretly-coded software or electronic parts, and these paper ballots can be optically-scanned or hand-counted, BradBlog says, "It may well be the solution that exasperated elections officials across the country have been praying for."

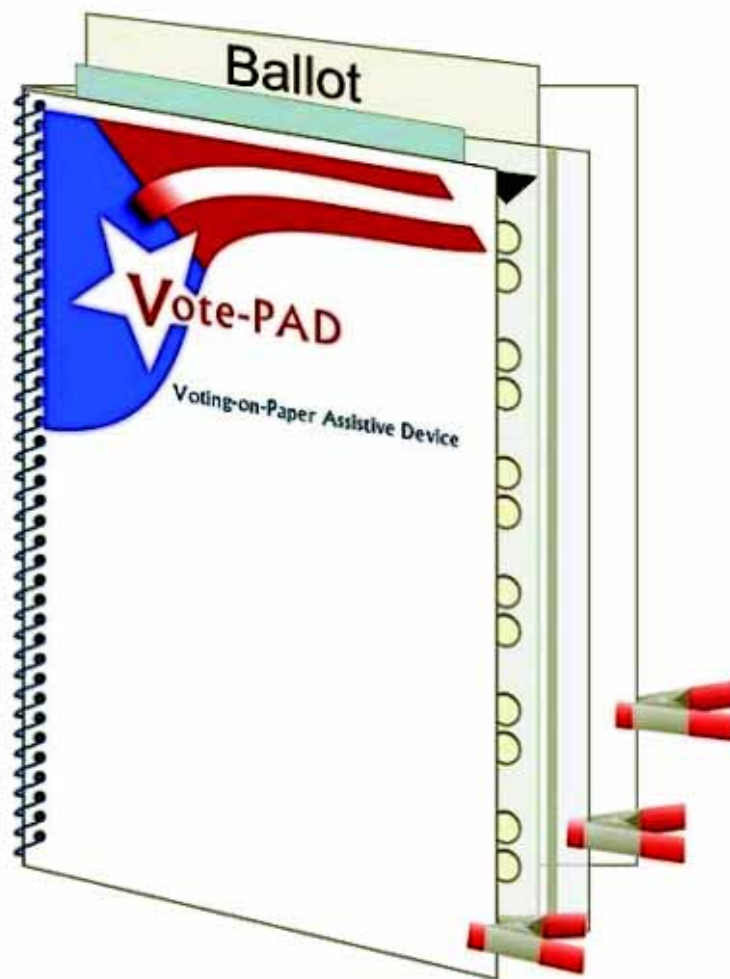
The device's designer, Ellen Theisen, the former executive director of the election watchdog group, VotersUnite.org, says that since the machine works without software, it needs no certification from the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

So far, Yolo County, California, is the only jurisdiction in the country to purchase Vote-PAD, though more counties and states have thought about using the device.

Freddie Oakley, the clerk-recorder of Yolo County, sang the praises of the Vote-PAD in a company press release: "After an enormous amount of research, we in Yolo County feel lucky to have found this assistive device. My skepticism about computer-controlled voting is well-known, and so is my concern for poll workers.

He continued, "The Vote-PAD is so well thought out, it keeps control of the

elections with the people's servants rather than surrendering it to big corpo-



rations. And at the same time it provides the most useful features for persons with a wide variety of disabilities of any assistive device we've seen."

Critics of the HAVA guidelines say that its requirements put millions of dollars in the pockets of voting machine companies like ES&S and Diebold, Inc. because it mandated that at least one disabled-accessible voting device be placed in every precinct around the country, including small precincts with no voters with disabilities.

The HAVA criticism is compounded by the fact that these voting machines leave no verifiable paper-trail and are expensive to purchase, repair, and store; the companies keep the software a secret, all the while the software can be hacked into to change the results of the vote.

The Vote-PAD, on the other hand, costs about one-tenth of the cost of its competition. According to Wired News, Yolo County officials considered spending \$250,000 to design storage space for optical-scan machines in each precinct. Each Vote-PAD, however, costs \$2,000 per precinct and comes with audio production software and five years worth of plastic sleeves.

Vote-PAD comes with no maintenance fees and no licensing fees. "All you have to do after you buy the original package is replace the consumables (plastic sleeves)," Theisen told BradBlog.

Theisen also reported that she is struggling to manufacture the device to meet the demand for the product.

For more information on Vote-PAD, visit its website.

INFO  
www.Vote-PAD.us or www.BradBlog.com

## Gitmo Hunger Strikers Said Near Death

LONDON — THE LONDON TIMES reported last week that a number of detainees on a hunger strike at Guantanamo Bay could be near death.

Lawyers for the detainees say their clients' health is deteriorating even though the U.S. military has implemented a force-feeding program.

Conditions for three prisoners are being closely watched, two of which from Yemeni have refused solid food since August. The other, a Saudi prisoner, is reportedly hospitalized.

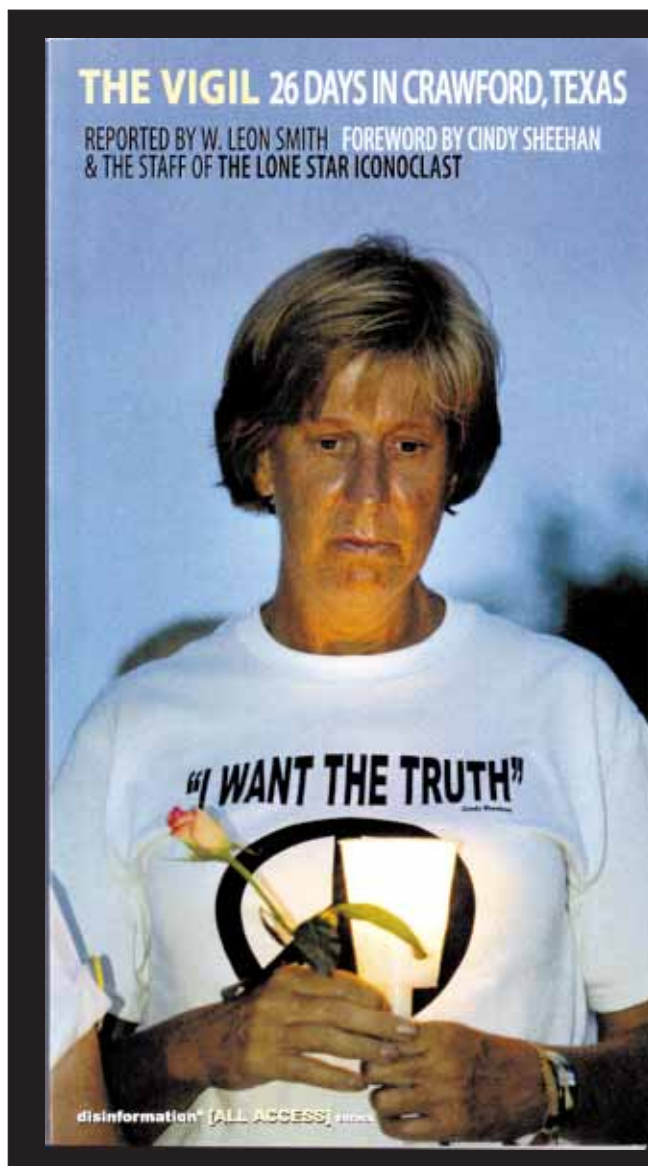
Prisoners' rights group Reprieve reported that the two gravely-weak Yemenis are named Abu Bakah al-Shamrani and Abu Anas. Shamrani weighs 70 pounds.

The U.S. military refused to say how many detainees were in the hospital; however, a spokesman for Joint Task Force Guantanamo stated that the hunger strikers were "malnourished" but "clinically stable."

Military reports indicate that now 17 of 22 hunger strikers are being fed by "tube."

Shaker Aamer, who has been on hunger strike since Nov. 2, 2005, said he will continue until he receives a fair trial or a release.

"The British government refuses to help me. What is the use of my wife being British?" Aamer said in a statement, adding that the British government as well as the Americans will be "responsible for my death."



## AVAILABLE IN BOOKSTORES & ON THE WEB...

### THE VIGIL

In August of 2005, a grieving mother and her supporters laid siege to Crawford, Texas. Cindy Sheehan set up camp outside of President Bush's ranch, determined to find some answers. For 26 days, all eyes were on Camp Casey.

At the center of it all was Crawford's own *Lone Star Iconoclast*. In the heart of the reddest of Red States, *The Iconoclast* found itself caught between the public's (deeply conservative) expectations, and the paper's publisher, W. Leon Smith's, sense of journalistic duty to report objectively. **THE VIGIL** is an invaluable record of *The Iconoclast's* coverage, with Sheehan herself providing a scene-setting foreword.

The result is a high stakes, blow-by-blow account of the events as they unfolded. You experience this vigil right along with the writers and participants: the heat, the fire ants, the gunplay, the celebrity appearances, and the intense emotional rollercoaster that has yet to end. Smith and his crew demonstrated a level of professional virtue that—to quote Sheehan herself—"shines like a lone spark of integrity in the prairie darkness."