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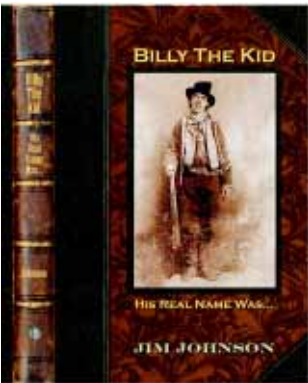


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‘We have a great challenge before us. Our nation’s soul is in jeopardy.’

— The Rev. Peter Johnson

Zogby Survey Shows Independent Gubernatorial Candidates Strong In Texas

NEW YORK — Incumbents around the nation, including Texas, appear to be in greater jeopardy as the 2006 midterm elections loom, with several sitting governors and senators languishing below 50%, a new Zogby Interactive survey shows.

Many incumbents, including some with well-known names, have lost support in recent weeks as the percentage of undecided voters has risen, the survey shows.

The individual polls of election contests in 25 battleground states find five incumbent Democratic governors below the 50% mark and six incumbent Republican governors — all of whom are up for re-election this year — failing to break 50% against challengers.

On the Senate side, four GOP incumbents and four Democratic incumbents on this year's ballots are being held to less than 50% by chal-

lengers.

In all the races where the incumbents are below 50%, their job approval ratings hover near 40% or lower.

In several of those cases, challengers still trail the incumbents by significant margins; that being said, any incumbent below 50% is facing political trouble in an election year, as undecided voters historically tend to break for the challenger.

Survey Finds Strong Independent Challenges in Texas, Oregon

The surveys also find independent candidates having significant impacts on gubernatorial races in Texas and Oregon, where candidates from both major parties find themselves well below 40% with the entry of independents.

In Texas, the independent candidacies of country singer/detective author Kinky Friedman and Republican

state comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn, the mother of White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan, holding incumbent Republican Governor Rick Perry to 36% and leaving Democratic challenger Chris Bell, at 21%, in the unenviable position of trying to avoid a third- or fourth-place finish — which is a distinct possibility, with Friedman at 19% and Keeton Strayhorn at 17%.

In Oregon, meanwhile, independent challenger Ben Westlund, a state senator who bolted from the GOP over concerns that the party had drifted too far to the right, has changed the dynamic of the race.

While the unpopular incumbent Governor Ted Kulongoski led Republican challengers by double-digits in

head-to-head match-ups, the survey finds Kulongoski (or other potential Democratic challengers) locked in virtual dead heats in the low 30s against all likely Republicans in a three-way contest, with Westlund's campaign, still in its infancy, polling in the teens.

The interactive survey is a package of 25 statewide polls conducted simultaneously to measure Senate and gubernatorial races in key battleground states across the country.

Polls were conducted March 22 through 27.

Each state carries its own margin of error. This is the fifth round of polling in a series by the *Wall Street Journal Online* and Zogby Interactive. The project continues at regular intervals through the year.

Hunger Is WMD, Says Brazil's President

CURITIBA, Brazil — Brazilian President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva last Monday told officials at an international conference on biodiversity that both rich and poor countries are in danger if they don't get their act together to fund efforts to eradicate poverty and conserve the environment.

"The industrialised nations spend about \$900 billion to defend their national borders," said the popular president known widely as "Lula." "But they allocate less than 60 billion dollars for development in poor countries, where hunger has become a silent weapon of mass destruction."

The 8th biannual Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity in Curitiba, Brazil was attended by over 4,000 officials from around the world. Delegates there reiterated Lula's comments throughout the two-week conference.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, executive secretary of the Convention, quoted French president Jacques Chirac at a meeting on biodiversity held last year: "We are probably the last generation that still has the possibility of stopping the destruction of the living environment before an ir-

reversible threshold is crossed."

Lula added that the West's insatiable appetite for consumption serves only to increase global poverty and ecological degradation. Despite repeated pledges, the rich are 60 times more wealthy than the poor, a ratio which doubled since 1980, he noted.

"Biodiversity is our planet's greatest treasure. Anything that is contrary to its conservation and to fair benefit sharing must be rejected," Lula said. "It's time to act. It's time for change."

For his part, Lula has implemented programs in his home country to protect its natural resources, such as seizing over six million hectares of Amazon rainforest in government care and starting a "zero hunger" campaign.

The Brazilian delegation at the conference also championed the continuation of a moratorium on testing and marking of some genetically-modified seeds. Lula applauded a ban on testing of so-called "Suicide seeds," which are seeds whose offspring will not reproduce: "Anything that threatens life is unacceptable." Australia, Canada, and New Zealand opposed the ban.

Clean Energy Cheaper Than 'Dirtier' Rivals: Report

NEW YORK — Fear of climate change and increased oil production costs are causing alternative energy technologies to appear "pretty mainstream," according to a recent report from a clean technology research firm.

"For the first time in modern history, clean-energy technologies are becoming cost-competitive with their 'dirtier' counterparts," state authors Joel Makower, Ron Pernick, and Clint Wilder of Clean Edge in their the Clean Energy Trends 2006 report.

"That's the result of prices for oil and natural gas increasing from global supply and demand dynamics, and clean-energy costs falling due to market growth, economies of scale, and technology advances," they add.

The report shows substantial growth in the four main clean energy production technologies; for instance, in one year, the international solar energy market increased by 55 percent to land at \$11.2 billion in 2005. During the same time, the wind market grew by 47 percent to hit \$11.8 billion, according to the report.

The Clean Edge report predicts even more growth in the years to come. By 2015, the firm forecasts the

solar market to increase to \$51.1 billion while wind hits \$48.5 billion. At the same time, the 2005 \$15.7 billion biofuel market will increase to \$52.5 billion in the coming decade, the firm predicts. Overall, Clean Edge predicts the clean energy sectors will quadruple in 10 years to \$167 billion.

The report also tracks five key trends, such as clean energy becoming a U.S. security issue; renewable energy sources tipping over the cost-efficiency point; flex-fuel vehicles emerging of with biodiesel and ethanol; innovations increasing silicon production for solar cells; and China and India influencing global natural resource markets, such as steel.

With regards to venture capital investment sector of clean energy, Clean Edge's report documents a few such stocks at or near 52-week highs: Energy Conversion Devices, Evergreen Solar, Itron, and Spire Corp. About 80 private companies increased their investments in the clean energy market by 28 percent, reaching \$917 million in 2005.

INFO

Clean Energy 2006 Trends Report
www.cleaneage.com/reports-trends2006.php



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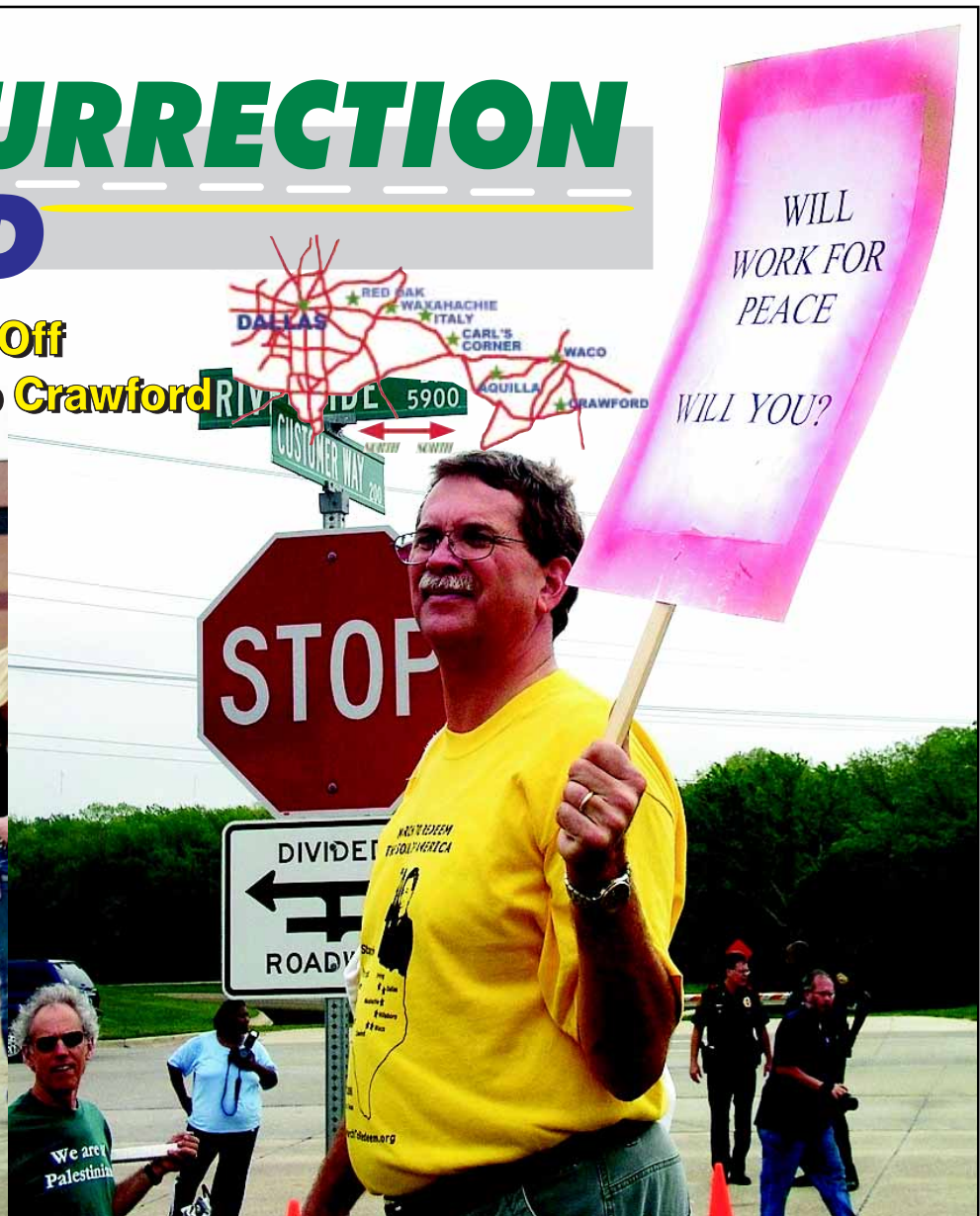
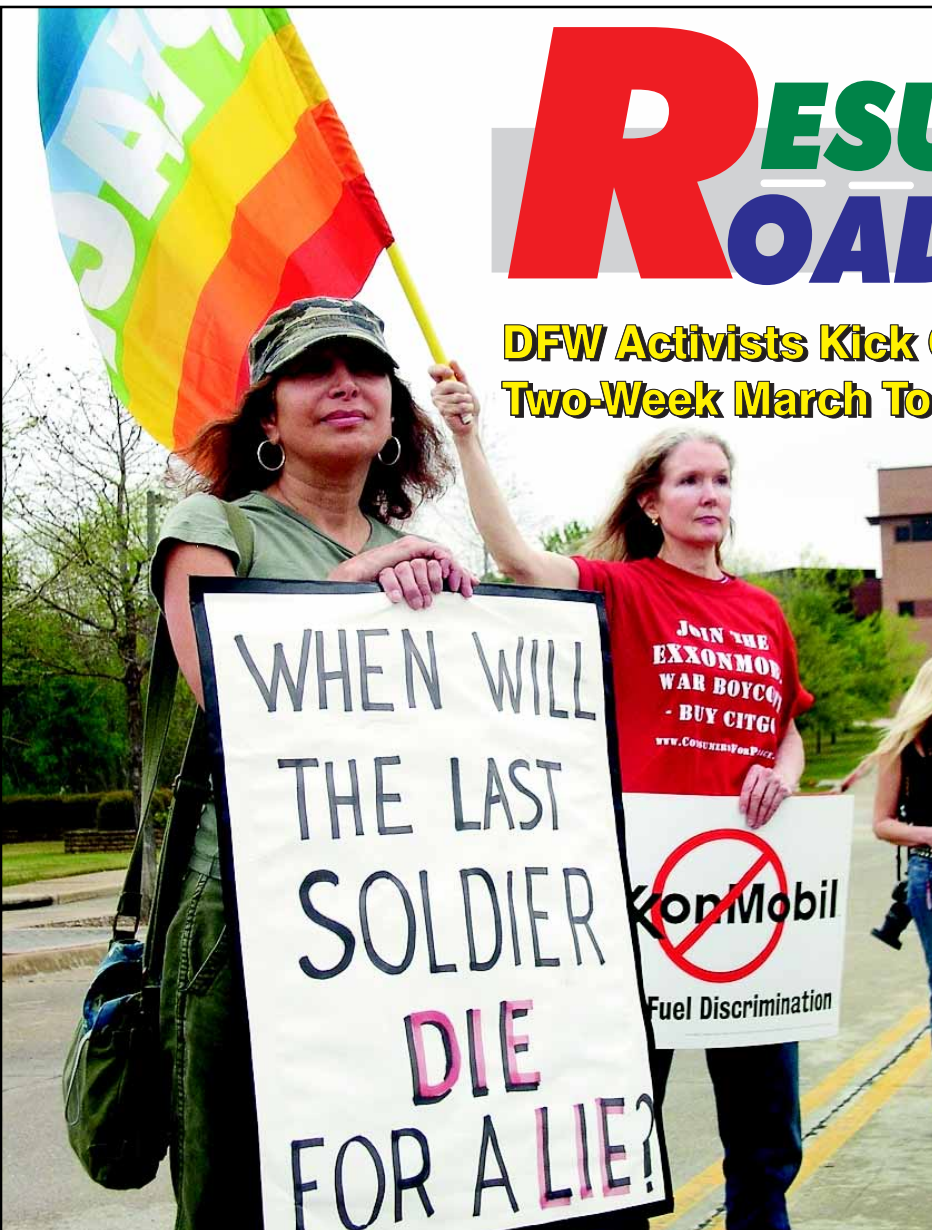
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RESURRECTION ROAD

DFW Activists Kick Off Two-Week March To Crawford



BOYCOTTING EXXONMOBIL — Carol Ezell and Molly Rooke, both of Dallas, (from left) protested outside the corporate headquarters of ExxonMobil in Irving last Saturday during a rally that kicked off “the March to Redeem the Soul of America,” a two-week march from Dallas to Crawford. — Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

THE CORPORATE GHETTO is how the Hon. Lon Burnham of Fort Worth described the area in which ExxonMobil’s corporate headquarters is located in Irving last Saturday during a march that kicked off “the March to Redeem the Soul of America,” a two-week march from Dallas to Crawford. — Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

The March Begins In Dallas — Crawford Or Bust!

By NATHAN DIEBENOW
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

IRVING — At a quick glance, you’d think they were mourning the loss of their deceased relatives by the pictures they were holding up alongside the street.

Upon closer inspection, however, the cardboard images revealed the smiling faces, a speaker on a bullhorn said, of the 12 executives from various corporations currently sitting on ExxonMobil’s board of directors.

One after another the names of the directors were read. One is Michael J. Boskin, an economist from Stanford University. Another is Reatha Clark King, a director of Wells Fargo Bank. Yet another is Marilyn Carson Nelson, the Chairman and CEO of Carlson Companies, the owner of Radisson Hotels and TGI Friday’s. Then, there’s Philip E. Lippincott, the director of Campbell’s Soup.

Nick Mottern, the director of ConsumersforPeace.org, said he has a use for these oversized baseball card-like placards: “We’re going to take them with us when we go on this march down to Crawford because we feel they are responsible for what ExxonMobil does just as much as the executives.”

All of a sudden, the sanguine expressions of the cardholders turned into shouts of red hot anger: “Exxon Gets

Rich. Iraqi People Die.”

Over the chanting voices, Mottern continued: “We’re calling on them to turn over \$7 billion in war profits that they made last year out of their \$36 billion for human needs in this country, Iraq, and other places where they are doing business.”

Thus, across the street from ExxonMobil’s headquarters in Irving, Texas, last Saturday began the “March to Redeem the Soul of America,” a two-week, 120-mile march from Dallas to the Western White House near Crawford.

As the Rev. Peter Johnson, a longtime civil rights leader from Dallas, explains, the march’s theme comes from a motto coined by his mentor, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., for the establishment of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957.

To redeem the soul of America means “we must do things that challenge our nation,” Rev. Johnson said. “We have a great challenge before us. Our nation’s soul is in jeopardy. Corporations like ExxonMobil — we must try to save their soul because they are involved in sin.”

In describing this sin, the Rev. Johnson told the 50-or-so demonstrators there the story of his meeting with an 11-year-old girl who is dying of liver cancer and of others who have lost their relatives from black lung disease in South Texas.

“Now black lung disease is particular



MARCHERS READY themselves before walking two miles from the corporate headquarters of ExxonMobil, the world’s second-largest oil company, last Saturday. The march was a preview of a two-week march from Dallas to Crawford that kicked off Monday morning. — Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

to coal mine areas. There are no coal mines in Beaumont, Texas,” said Johnson. “The homes of the black com-

munity in South Beaumont, this community sits right next to Exxon-Mobile only
Continued On Next Page

RESURRECTION ROAD

DFW Activists Kick Off Two-Week March To Crawford



Continued From Previous Page

divided by a fence. Those homes are covered with a black soot. This is environmental racism at its worst."

Activist Judith Kaufman added that ExxonMobil has a history of internal problems, such as job discrimination, as she recounted her friend's troubles attaining retirement benefits.

"ExxonMobil discriminates against their U.S. employees who are in committed relationships which fully function as marriages but who cannot legally marry. The families of those employees are not equally protected," she said. "I protest here today against blatant discrimination. ExxonMobil is indeed a merchant of misery on many fronts."

Echoing Rev. Johnson's call to "marry" various progressive social movements together during the march, the head organizer for the March to Redeem the Soul of America, Valley Reed, said this marriage was all a part of the plan to raise awareness of transnational corporate interests.

"We're going to continue to put pressure on [ExxonMobil] with this campaign by organizing teach-ins across the country on the campuses where they are feeling the most pressure by having to allow military recruitment on campuses or lose federal funding," said Reed. "We need to support the youth [such as those who] are speaking out for immigrants. It's really encouraging to see youths blocking the streets in Dallas this past week. That's what we



ACTIVIST JUDITH KAUFMAN spoke about ExxonMobil's history job discrimination at a rally last Saturday in Irving as a part of the kick off to "the March to Redeem the Soul of America," a two-week march from Dallas to Crawford.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

need to see happen to redeem the soul of America. We need to get people speaking out and marching."

With the help of a translator, immigrants rights activist Margarita Alvarez added, "The people of Mexico are suffering the same as the people in the United States, and all of it is because of the tentacles of the millionaires. We're immigrants, and we're not criminals. We're not here to do things wrong, and we work in solidarity with the American people."

Maureen Haver, spokesperson for the Jumpstart Ford Campaign and the Houston Global Awareness Collective, connected the dots between the world's second-largest oil company and Vice President Dick Cheney's former company, Halliburton.

"Halliburton is one of the leading war profiteers," said Haver. "[Exxon/Mobil board member] William R. Howell is also on the board of directors for Halliburton, for Pfizer. This is an incestuous corporate relationship. Exxon, Halliburton, all these corporations are in bed with one another and the government."

Haver said that this year, Halliburton is moving its annual shareholder's meeting from Houston to Duncan, Okla., a town of 20,000 people, because of the Collective's three-year campaign of protests and counter-recruitment campaign at their job fairs.

"This year, Halliburton has announced that they are not going to hold their shareholder's meeting in Houston because they want to avoid us," said Haver. "Halliburton is on the run, and we're on the chase."

Haver was one of 16 activists arrested outside of last year's shareholder meeting while participating in nonviolent civil disobedience actions. The action caused the company's stock price to drop 74 cents, she said, noting that the May 17 shareholder meeting will still draw anti-free-trade globalization activists.

The activists also drew parallels between their two-week march with those of other marches that occurred in the month of March, such as the Iraqi Veterans Against the War march from Mobile, Ala. to New Orleans, La.; a march from Mexico to San Francisco honoring the late revolutionary leader Che Guevara; and a march in hurricane-ravaged New Orleans to save the Voting Rights Act.

"Exxon/Mobil with all this money this City of Dallas, Irving, and all these metropolitan areas — one of the richest areas of the world, they've got families living under bridges in our community. There's something fundamentally wrong with our soul," said Rev. Johnson.

"Christ said, 'Take care of the poor. Feed the Hungry, house the homeless, and clothe the naked. Set the captives free.' That's our responsibility. That's why we must march. That's why we



REV. PETER JOHNSON said last Saturday that the people of the people of Port Arthur, Baytown, Beaumont, and elsewhere in Texas will have the opportunity to give their testimonials at a hearing on environmental racism during the last week of May. The hearing will be headed by singer/activist Harry Belafonte and attended by scientists and environmentalists.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

must go to the Western White House during resurrection week and try and



HALLIBURTON IS ON THE RUN, said Maureen Haver, spokesperson for the Jumpstart Ford Campaign and the Houston Global Awareness Collective, at a rally next to the world's second-largest oil company last Saturday that kicked off "the March to Redeem the Soul of America," a two-week march from Dallas to Crawford.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

redeem the soul of America."

After the rally across from the oil giant's headquarters, law enforcement officers from the City of Irving escorted the marchers down a two-mile stretch of road to a bus terminal. The activists sang and chanted along the way through drizzling rain and over a bridge down a single lane of traffic. The march ended before 12 p.m.

Hadi Jawad, co-founder of the Crawford Peace House, reported that the marchers will arrive in Crawford on Maundy Thursday. On Good Friday, there will be a march from the Peace House to a checkpoint near the Bush Ranch and then to Camp Casey. The Stations of the Cross will be observed along the way with stopping points where speakers will address such topics as human rights, militarism, and world hunger.

On Saturday, a rally will be held at Camp Casey where the organizers hope musician Jackson Browne will perform, Jawad said. Sunday will see another rally in the form of an Easter service which might be led by the Rev. Joe Lowry and a commemoration of the third anniversary of the Crawford Peace House.

A more complete schedule of events is posted on the March to Redeem website.

INFO

www.marchtoredeem.org



DOLORES JOHNSON, the wife of Rev. Peter Johnson, marched with other members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference last Saturday in Irving against environmental racism caused by the business practices of oil companies such as ExxonMobil.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



CHALLENGING CORPORATE AMERICA — An unidentified woman, Sarah Acker of Dallas, Penny Bisbee of Fort Worth, and immigrants rights activist Margarita Alvarez (from left) participated in a protest last Saturday by hold placards of some of the 12 corporate executives that currently sitting on ExxonMobil's board of directors.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



DEMOCRACY DOLLARS were handed out by Nick Mottern, the director of ConsumersforPeace.org, at the rally and march in protest of corporations connected with ExxonMobil.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

School Funding Plan Favors Wealthy Texans

AUSTIN — A school funding plan proposed by Gov. Rick Perry last week would generate \$5.9 billion in new taxes on cigarettes and business while cutting property taxes for homeowners by a third. However, wealthy Texans will still come out ahead with more tax cuts at their income levels without directly funding public schools, say critics.

The plan is seen as a starting point for the fourth 30-days special session of the Texas Legislature in two years. The lawmakers have a mandate from the Texas Supreme Court to correct the unconstitutional school finance system by June 1.

If no legislation is passed, the state will be forced to stop funding its 1,037 school districts. The session starts April 17.

The cornerstone of the Perry plan written by the Texas Tax Reform Commission is a business tax that will generate about \$4 billion. Another \$800 million will be added via a 41-cent increase in the state's cigarette tax along with a \$1 billion allocation from the state's budget surplus.

By dipping into the budget surplus and taxing business, the effect will alleviate the tax burden of people at all income brackets; however, local school districts can still raise taxes and increase the property taxes of homeowners and businesses.

The governor's tax commission — which is chaired by former Comptroller John Sharp — proposed to replace the franchise tax that businesses are not mandated to pay with a new tax that takes one percent of a company's gross receipts or .5 percent for retailers and wholesalers. Companies can choose to deduct the cost of their employee's salaries and benefits or the cost of their goods sold.

The Perry school finance plan disproportionately taxes in favor of income-rich Texans. Households earning more than \$146,804 will receive a 3.3 percent tax cut while those that make less than \$14,042 would get a 1.4 percent tax cut.

Critics also point out that the Perry plan complain that the new taxes and budget-surplus expenditures basically offset a property-tax cut, not fund public education in Texas.

Halliburton Rejects Internal Investigation Query

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — Halliburton and the Securities and Exchange Commission recently rejected a shareholder resolution calling for the Houston-based company to report on its policies that prevent internal investigations into its violations of its government contracts.

The human rights group that prepared the resolution for Halliburton's mid-May shareholder meeting questioned why the company's board of directors would stop the query with an excuse like "ordinary business operations" are outside the owners' responsibility.

"It is ironic and quite disturbing that Halliburton considers investigations into issues like bribery and fraud to be 'ordinary business operations,'" said John Harrington, the Global Exchange treasurer.

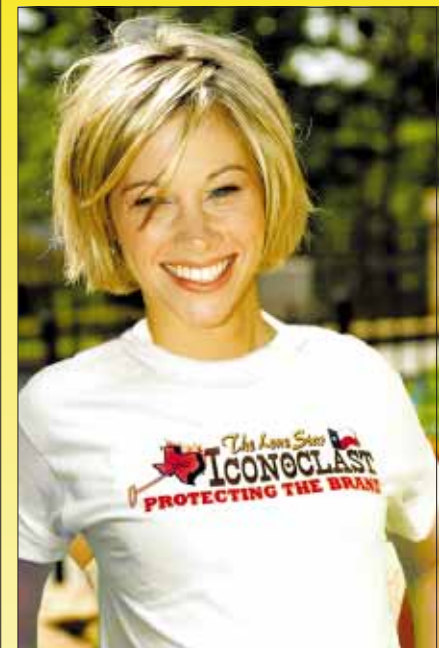
"The owners of the company — its shareholders — should certainly be allowed to put a resolution on the ballot to request that the company inform them that it won't violate its own code of con-

duct, much less federal law," he added.

The U.S. government has since launched an investigation in allegations that Vice President Dick Cheney's former company put U.S. troops in harm's way by exposing them to contaminated Iraqi water. The U.S. attorney's office has also indicted a former employee on charges of taking bribes to obtain a contract to run a military dining facility.

Controversy is nothing new to the corporation that provides oil and gas production services to countries around the world. Even before the Iraq war, Halliburton has been investigated for a number of instances of fraud, abuse, and war-profiteering.

Attempting to reform the company from within, the San Francisco-based Global Exchange has purchased shares of Halliburton stock as well as led protests outside its shareholder meetings in Houston. The next shareholding meeting is scheduled for May 17 in Duncan, Oklahoma.



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Immigration Bill Sparks Cross-Country Protests

CRAWFORD — Massive street demonstrations took place across the country earlier last week sparked by a House bill passed last December that would consider undocumented immigrants felons and okay construction of a 700-mile fence across the 2,000-mile U.S./Mexico border.

Speaking for their illegal immigrant parents, students walked out of their schools to continue to raise awareness of their needs as Senate lawmakers debated over milder legislation that they hoped would nourish economic productivity without compromising national security.

Los Angeles experienced record-breaking demonstrations last Saturday when almost a million people took to the streets there in protest of HR 4437, an anti-immigration bill introduced by Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.).

Roughly over 60,000 people also protested in Denver, Colorado; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Sacramento, California. An estimated 100,000 people clogged downtown Chicago during a march earlier this month.

The Senate Debates

By a vote that split Republicans, the Senate Judiciary Committee okayed an immigration bill (12-6) last Monday that grants an avenue for citizenship to the 12 million undocumented workers currently living in the United States. The committee also added a provision extending legal protections to charities and churches that grant aid to illegal immigrants.

President Bush has previously said he would support a bill that strengthens U.S. borders and implements a "guest worker" program which grants foreign nationals a temporary work permit for

low-paying jobs.

Student Walkouts

Student walkouts were also reported throughout the week in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Detroit as well as throughout Texas. In fact, thousands of Texas students walked out of more than a dozen school districts, including those in Houston, Dallas, Arlington, Irving, Grand Prai-

rie, Denton, Mesquite, Fort Bend, Port Arthur, and Pasadena.

Latino leaders said the students, many of which are the U.S.-born children of immigrants and illegal immigrants themselves, should have attended a march scheduled for April 10 and written letters to their senators instead of jeopardizing their academic careers during the school week.

THE UNMISTAKABLE TYRANNY PROJECT

This project aims to reconcile the difference between what our US Congressmen, US Senators, US Presidents, history books, and media commentators over the first 150 years or more of our Nations history have said regarding the meaning of the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution versus what U.S. Federal Judges are now claiming. Is this Amendment conferring an Individual Right to the People, or is it granting a "collective right" to the States and NO RIGHTS whatsoever to the People to possess Arms? Please contribute to this project by writing ALL the U.S. Senators and Congressmen from your State and ask them this question:

I need to know if you understand that the Second amendment to the U.S. Constitution confers an Individual Right to the People to possess Arms or firearms as individuals, or do you believe that this Amendment is only about a "collective right" granted to the States?

Please send their replay letter, or a GOOD QUALITY COPY (preferable color) to:

N. David Somerville, C/O P.O. Box 940, Worthington, OH 43085

Your reply will be used as evidence to resolve this question. Anyone who already has a letter from a U.S. Congressman or a U.S. Senator which clearly states that the Second Amendment confers an Individual Right to the People is urgently requested to send a GOOD QUALITY COPY of that letter to the address above. Please do your part to contribute to this project to restore the Rights granted to the People. Your efforts benefit all the People. Thank you for your Patriotism.

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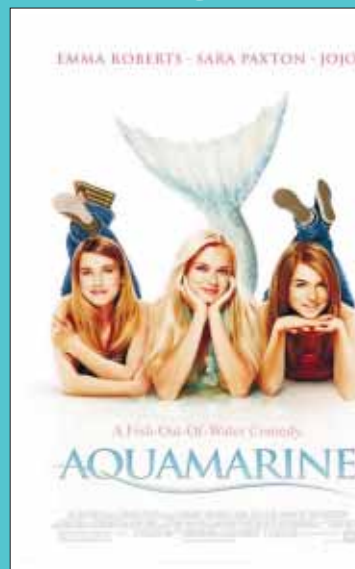
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AQUAMARINE



Claire and Hailey are best friends. Hailey's oceanographer mother has gotten a grant to work in Australia. The friends are devastated that they will be parted. During their last sleepover, a huge storm comes ashore and deposits a mermaid in the beach club pool. When the girls come out the next morning, they start on an adventure that will teach them about love and loss.

Runtime: 1 hour, 50 min.

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Fezell To Return To Pulpit

WACO—Former McLennan County District Attorney Vic Fezell will preach at Peaceful Rest Baptist Church in Moody, on Sunday April 2, as the guest of Reverend Wilbert Austin, pastor. The service starts at 11 a.m. Fezell's topic will be "Wake up and Smell the Coffee" from the book of Ephesians, chapter 5, verse 14.

Fezell was McLennan County District Attorney from 1983 to 1988. He was re-elected to the position in 1986 while under federal indictment.

Found not guilty of all charges in 1987, he then sued Belo Broadcasting Channel 8 in Dallas charging that they had initiated the indictment by libeling him. The suit resulted in the largest libel verdict for an individual in U.S. history, \$58 million.

In 1985, Fezell also presided over the McLennan County Grand Jury investigating the confessions of alleged serial killer Henry Lee Lucas. It was the long-

est running grand jury in McLennan County history. Fezell currently works as an attorney in private practice and keeps an office in Austin and in Waco.

Fezell, once a frequent guest preacher throughout Central Texas, said he has not delivered a sermon in nearly 15 years. His friend, Reverend Austin, persuaded Fezell that it was time to begin preaching again.

"Wilbert asked me a few months ago. I've been praying about it and now I feel the time is right," Fezell said.

A graduate of Mary-Harden Baylor College in Belton and Baylor University Law School in Waco, Fezell was ordained into the ministry in 1969 following in the footsteps of his father, Fred Fezell, a life-long minister. Before entering the practice of law, Fezell served as the pastor Dyess Grove Baptist Church in Temple and Elm Grove Baptist Church in Belton.

UT Regents Cite Inflation For Increasing Tuition, Fees

AUSTIN — The University of Texas System Board of Regents last week cited inflation and enrollment figures as the main reasons for increasing tuition and fees at all eight academic campuses in the system.

Critics, however, fear the cost of public education will more regularly

continue to be passed on to students since the Texas Legislature abdicated its tuition-setting power to public colleges and universities in 2003.

Throughout the UT system campuses, there was little controversy about the higher fees and tuition. Student representatives, administrators, faculty members, the former and current UT-Austin presidents unanimously recommended the changes after reaching a consensus on the need for repairing property, employing new faculty members, and raising salaries of new staff and faculty.

Though tuition, fees, and their increases differ by campus, the charges were set for two years, except at UT-El Paso and UT-Dallas where they are frozen for four years, as requested by students who wanted more predictability for planning. Instate freshmen at UT-Austin will pay about 9.6 percent more a semester this fall and 1.3 percent more the following year.

UT-Austin officials argue that the cost of attending their flagship campus is still afford about compared to national rankings.

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Why Buy American When You Can Buy America?

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "It's tough to figure out exactly when survival turns into greed."

At the risk of interrupting all the fun that hypocrisy brings, it's time for a few facts about immigration.

Fact one: This is nothing new.

The first act of the Plymouth colonists was to exclude anybody who wasn't like them.

The green goddess is just about the only American who has ever lifted her lamp beside the golden door without making sure those huddled masses paid through the nose to breathe free.

"We Hire No Irish."

Go west young man: We've over-exploited here in Yankeeland.

We do not enslave our fellow human beings.

They just can't afford to move on what we pay.

The War Between The States didn't end slavery.

Reconstruction just taught us a more economically viable version.

Strike for the 60-hour week!

Which brings us to the Twentieth Century: Let's remember Pearl Harbor, but don't forget the Alamo.

With our boys overseas, Mexicans were cheaper than women.

Did we count the illegal cleaning crew when we tallied up the World Trade Center butcher's bill?

They're not aliens; they're workers.

So if you work for a living, just keep bitching about Meskins, sucking up to the company, and buying crap at Walmart.

Your grandchildren will love you for it.

So much for Hateful History 101.

Fact two: Most "illegal" immigrants aren't Mexican.

Only about 40 percent are.

Ten percent are Asian.

A few percentage points more than a third are from other Latin American countries.

The rest are from the Republic of Other.

But for now, let's just pretend that we're all Mexicans, unless, of course, you'd rather be screwed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Fact three: It is a myth that

Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



Mexican immigrants take jobs resident Americans don't want.

No-o-o-o, they take jobs Americans don't want at \$10 an hour.

Not that you can't make it on \$10 an hour.

You just have to teach your wife and kids not to eat.

But then most immigrants don't make \$10 per hour.

Let's look at some numbers from the Pew Hispanic Center and the Center for Migration Studies.

The average immigrant makes about \$300 per week.

Only one in five works in agriculture.

The rest work in construction, manufacturing, hospitality or retail.

Just like the rest of us.

Who, oddly enough, don't seem to mind earning \$15 an hour to build a half-million dollar house.

So why are they paid so much less than the rest of us?

They're easier to fire.

Who're they going to bitch to if they're treated unfairly?

Lou Dobbs?

Two out of five immigrants, (about 40 percent for you numbers freaks out there) are out of work for at least a month each year.

That makes the rest of us easy to replace.

Fact three: They pay more taxes and use less service than other residents.

They pay about \$50 billion into Social Security, which they will never use. They pay property (through rent of substandard housing that would otherwise sit empty) and sales taxes, in disproportionate amounts to the services they use.

Fox example, the majority don't go

to school or don't own cars, so they don't use the classrooms, streets and highways their taxes pay for.

Fact four: They can't find work in Mexico.

Actually, they can.

And most have.

Only five percent of those who come here are unemployed when they leave Mexico.

The rest die trying to cross the King Ranch country on foot without food and water.

For the first six months, only about 15 percent are out of work.

From then on, five percent unemployment wanders through the rank and file: Remember that afore-mentioned at-least-a-month-out-of-work?

That's them.

(Yeah, I know it's supposed to be, "That's they," but I'm not supposed to say, "ain't," and numerous other perfectly sensible words, either. Why do you think I quit teaching English? I got tired of not talking like everybody else. So unless you'd ordinarily say, "That's they," in regular conversation, shut up about immigrants who don't learn no English.)

There is plenty of work in Mexico, even though the unemployment rate continues to increase.

After all, since NAFTA went into effect, about 3 million jobs have moved from the U.S. to Mexico.

At the same time the U.S. trade deficit with Mexico has grown from a little less than \$10 billion in 1993 to almost \$50 billion, putting the cost of most consumer goods out of reach for the average Mexican.

So why, during that same time period, has Mexican unemployment continued to increase while Mexican wages decreased?

Illegal immigration.

To Mexico from the rest of Latin America.

Don't you just love it when irony comes together?

So you see, when it comes to corporate globalization, there is no discrimination.

They'll exploit everybody.

Fact five: There's no real difference between "legal" and "illegal"

immigrants.

An "undocumented" immigrant stands exactly the same chance of getting a job in the U.S. as anybody else.

His presence merely keeps wages low for everyone, but the big loser is the resident, or approved aliens, most of whom compete for the same low-end jobs.

High schoolers pumped by an HBO after-school special may wave the tri-color eagle and shout "Viva Mexico," but they don't mean it.

If they did, they'd be marching in Ciudad Mexico or San Luis Potosi.

Where they would probably be shot.

More than half of the "illegals" in this country have lived here longer than those with the Immigration Service stamp of approval, and they're not going home.

Why?

They are not alone.

They come here as a family.

More than 80 percent of those who migrate to the U.S. from Mexico join relatives already living here who help them with housing, jobs, social acclimatization, etc.

And that brings us back to fact one.

Once a young Irish woman named Bridget arrived in New Orleans, never to marry, but giving up her girlhood and any hope of a family of her own to work as a domestic servant and earn enough money to book passage for her parents, brothers and sisters.

Including one brother who, thanks to her generosity, found work as a shipwright so that his family could buy a farm in Tennessee, where they managed the resources to migrate, again, to Texas, fleeing a war that threatened to destroy them all.

There they survived, thrived and finally chased down their promised happiness.

So that on this day, one of their descendants could sit down to write the best defense in his power of those who would make that same journey.

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Columbus Was An Alien

There are four overlapping ways to slice immigration to one's country.

- Is his stay intended to be permanent or temporary?
- Is he here to overthrow our country or become part of it?

In America, there are laws in place that have been ignored, which has resulted in a significant number of "illegal immigrants" who have not attempted to become part of America's fabric and, often, attack the foundation of our democratic form of government and our unique cultural identity.

When Congress recently discussed issuing fines and making these illegals criminals, some Hispanic groups went to the streets demanding a return of American territory back to Mexico, as though their sheer numbers here now warrants a re-revolution. Those antics are making cloudy just where the immediate focus should lie.

The recent port debacle is what catapulted the issue of the southern border with Mexico into prominence, something which should have been done before the smoke cleared at Ground Zero in New York, but which both the Executive and Legislative branches of the government have blatantly ignored.

Now, demands by the public have forced discourse, but the House and the Senate are miles apart on possible solutions.

The short-term focus should be on protection of our borders, both on land and water. Worry about the number of illegals already here later.

Probably the fairest bill to be launched was introduced by Sens. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.) in May 2005. It provided the framework for a guest-worker program for immigrants already in the country and for those who would seek to immigrate in the future. Immigrants currently in the country would be subject to back taxes and fines, would have to study English, and would have other requirements to fulfill to become eligible for citizenship.

A Legislative summit with Mexico would not be a bad idea, to find common ground on which to provide both countries some control of their own sides of the border. The key is control, not necessarily limitation.

To solve the argument that Mexicans are taking jobs away from Americans because illegals will work cheaper, simply apply the minimum wage to the task, not to individuals, and put teeth in it to

make it stick.

Immigration is the heritage of virtually every American. The United States, the land of the free, has been a magnet for those seeking religious freedom, financial security, adventure, and escape from oppression. Israelites were told in the Old Testament (Exodus), "Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt."

The insanity of the Bush Administration years after 9/11 is that nothing has been done to make orderly our borders. This, you would think, should have occurred to The White House around 9/12. Instead, the Executive branch opted for an invasion spree overseas. No matter how loudly the Fox channel and Bush neo-cons say it's not true, Americans should still believe that "The best offense is a good defense," and our own borders are the line of scrimmage.

The students whose families are here illegally who skipped class and proclaimed their desire to take over America insulted our citizenry on one hand, but also provided a wake-up call that our government is failing in the promotion of Americanization and our schools are failing badly at teaching democracy, history, and civics. Civil disobedience has its place, but illegals should be exercising this in their own country, not ours, until they do become citizens of the United States, earning that right.

What the Federal government should do post-haste is beef up the Border Patrol, use high-tech sensors to track illegals crossing over, and have bipartisan members of Congress meet with Mexican officials to begin a conversation that could result in a cooperative result. Too, Americans should again control all of our ports.

— W. Leon Smith



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— W. Leon Smith

Billy the Kid, His Real Name Was....

New Book On Notorious Outlaw Being Published

ALLEN, Texas — A new book entitled "Billy the Kid, His Real Name Was....," written by Jim Johnson will be in bookstores in April.

Said Johnson, "As you probably know, Billy the Kid's real name has never been discovered. Also, it has never been proven that he was actually killed by Pat Garrett at Fort Sumner, New Mexico in 1881. Many people think that Garrett killed someone else and Billy the Kid lived to be an old man in Old Mexico, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, or even England.

"Some say that he lived under the alias of "Brushy Bill" Roberts and died at Hico, Texas (50 miles south of Fort Worth) in 1950."

Or, said Johnson, he was "John Miller who died in Prescott, Ariz. in 1937, 'Colonel' Bill who roamed around Nevada, Henry 'Walking' Smith who roamed around Arizona and New Mexico, and many other aliases.

"This book will provide new information on the identity of the real Billy the Kid."

Johnson says that most of the claims have easily been proven to be false.

"The only two claims that seemed to have any substance were those of John Miller and William Henry Roberts."

According to Johnson, John Miller was born in Oklahoma or Texas and died in Arizona.

William Henry Roberts was born in Texas or Arkansas and died in Texas. Roberts used the aliases: Oliver L. Roberts, Oliver P. Roberts, and Brushy Bill Roberts, but claimed that his real name was William Henry Roberts.

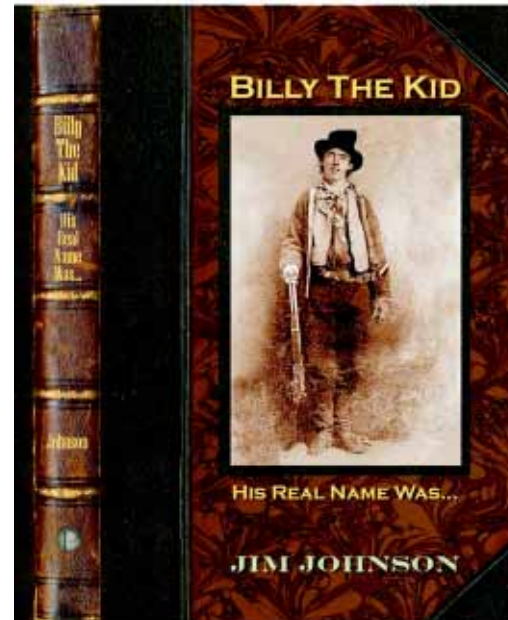
Although John Miller, himself, never publicly claimed to be Billy the Kid, his family and friends "knew" without any doubt that he was Billy. They gave many believable reasons why they felt that way, but apparently no one ever took the initiative to find out the real truth.

John Miller died at the Pioneer Home in Prescott, Ariz. on Nov. 7, 1937.

William Henry Roberts was discovered in 1949 by Attorney William V.

Morrison. At first, Roberts denied that he was Billy the Kid, but eventually confided in Morrison that he was. William Henry Roberts died on the streets of Hico, Texas of a heart attack on Dec. 27, 1950. He claimed to have been 91 years old when he died.

William Henry Roberts usually went by the name of Ollie L. Roberts or Oliver P. Roberts when he was alive, but has since become better known as Brushy Bill Roberts because of his claim to fame.



Brushy Bill amazed everyone with his knowledge of the facts surrounding Billy the Kid and the Lincoln County War, as well as his resemblance to the Kid.

Brushy Bill's knowledge of some of Billy the Kid's experiences in New Mexico makes him very believable. The scope and depth of his knowledge as to some of these facts, makes one think that he had to have been there. He made some mistakes, but those could be excused because of his age and the passage of time.

"Read my book with an open mind," said Johnson. "Verify the contents, the facts, evaluate my conclusions, and decide for yourself if either Miller or Brushy was Billy the Kid. Did Billy die in Fort Sumner, New Mexico, or was it in the Pioneer Home in Prescott, Ariz., or on the streets of Hico, Texas, or maybe elsewhere? I have tried to provide you the best available evidence and interpretations of this evidence. You be the judge."

Avery's company, Louder Than Words, consists of himself, Korey Rowe (producer), and Jason Bermas (graphic designer).

The documentary shows a direct connection between the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and the United States government. One early reviewer said, "It is everyone's duty to view this film!"

Evidence in the film is derived from news footage, scientific facts, and direct testimony

of Americans who suffered through that tragic day.

To visit the website of "Loose Change," go to <<http://www.loosechange911.com/>>.

The one-hour, 21-minute video is currently available for download, to be played with Google Video Player (which can also be downloaded free), at <<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-8260059923762628848>>.

New 9/11 Documentary Refutes Government Story

NEW YORK — A new documentary, "Loose Change 2nd Edition," has been released and can be downloaded via Internet. The documentary tells a different version of 9/11 than the controversial government account that investigators deem to be full of holes.

Director Dylan Avery includes seldom-seen footage surrounding the events of 9/11 when the World Trade Center towers collapsed, when an apparent object crashed into the Pentagon, and when a missing downed airliner in Pennsylvania was reported.

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A Baseball Dream 2006



Out Of The Blue

By
**Jerry
Tenuto**

By the time this goes to print, or zaps its way through cyberspace, the 2006 Major League Baseball Season will be in full swing.

Weather permitting in most cities.

Aah, could there be any sound more energizing than the sweet spot of a Louisville Slugger meeting a 94 MPH fastball as they move in opposite cylindrical arcs, somewhere in the open air void approximately three-and-a-half to five feet above home plate?

Or enervating if you happen to be on the wrong side.

Either way, no other combination of objects makes the same sound, and only in a proper ballpark does that sound reverberate in quite the correct manner.

The chatter on the field; the clamor in the stands.

Cold beer vendors and sellers of steaming hot dogs hawking their products up and down the aisles.

Who's on first, What's on second, Ramirez is on third.

It's Spring, and all the Big Grown Up Men come out to play their little boys' game.

Or get stinko trying.

Debates abound about how the Cards are gonna kick the Cubs' ass this year — again. (For some strange reason, St. Louis fans can never remember slight details like their team losing 10 of 16 to the Cubs last year.)

Will the White Sox be able to repeat their 2005 World Champion success story?

Can Ron Santo make it out of Shea Stadium with his hair intact?

Is there any play left in Jeff Bagwell and Roger Clemens?

How much is a 16-ounce beer gonna cost at Wrigley Field *this* year? (It's 3.2, don'tcha know, kind of a crowd control measure.)

We've attended baseball games at parks of all levels all over the North American Continent, from Los Angeles to Boston, Montreal to Houston, and with very few exceptions the experiences have generally been quite enjoyable.

Oh, there are the goofy good ol' boys from Kentucky who bring their pints of Jim or Jack to the Reds games and get stupidly hammered by the 4th inning. Of course, these yokels may not be around any longer now that good ol' Pete Rose is *persona non grata*.

Then there's them what turns out to Turner Field (Ted's shrine to himself and anything else corporate, with baseball almost an afterthought) under the guise of Braves "fans," most of whom haven't the vaguest clue as to anything that's transpiring on the field. But they've got those ridiculous foam tomahawks ever at the ready with which to demean both our Native Americans and National Pastime.

I can't speak for the "Juice Box," but its predecessor, the Astrodome was filled with the most inconsiderate, unfriendly, elitist... well, it *is* in Houston. They acted like football fans killing time until fall arrived. Funny how in 2005 there wasn't one African-American player on the team, and I could find nary a one in the stands whenever watching a game.

Of course, White Sox fans are a breed all their own. Many still scrape the ground with their knuckles while waddling along, failing to comprehend

the nose is for breathing and the mouth is for eating, not the other way around. It's pretty much a regular occurrence at Comiskey Park that any individual who utters the word "Cubs" in any context, without iterating the mandatory complementary "suck," or displays any Cubs apparel, will be beaten by thugs as alleged "security" people look on (the keepers of decorum don't wish to get involved, lest they get sued).

Some Sox fans even consider it their appointed duty to run onto the field during play and debate the game up close and personal with coaches from visiting clubs, using attack from behind tactics and the unspoken word to get their point across. They even teach their underage offspring these useful skills, their efforts thusly rewarded by Cook County courts with probation and a stern tongue lashing — plus an admonition to the White Sox front office management that *it* was at fault for selling mopes like these beer.

Hey, if somebody's dufus enough to get blitzed on 3.2 Miller at \$5 a cup, you can't blame the vendor. Budweiser, maybe...

But I kid White Sox fans. They can't help being Southsiders, with their own language, customs, airport, and driving habits. The legacy of Chicago's South Side comes into sharper clarity when one remembers it was for decades the home of the Stockyards, as well as the empire ruled by perhaps the least intelligent, yet most psychotic, gangster in American history, Al Capone.

What's worse is, unlike other parts of the city, there's no room for growth or expansion, with urban renewal being extremely slowly paced.

But, Lordy-Lordy, Sox fans are very often so mean-spirited, overtly jealous of the Cubs and fans thereof. I don't know why — their team has the fancy state-of-the-art ballpark with the big corporate sponsor.

And how about possession of the 2005 World Series rings and trophy, which last November I referred to in this column, and rightly so, as "the best team" in Major League Baseball.

Okay, from time to time there are mano-a-mano displays of temper between a batter and the opposing pitcher, usually resulting from debate regarding location of one pitch, or several. Occasionally the debates become physically charged; these may involve other players, coaches, managers, possibly entire teams.

There are also animated discussions concerning the eye care well-being program provided through the umpires' union, initiated by well-meaning managers and coaches, perhaps a veteran player now and again. These usually conclude with the manager, coach, or player taking an early shower and having a cold beer after questioning an umpire's sex habits within his nuclear family, or why he gets a quantity discount on soccer kneepads.

Machismo flies fast and furiously on the field during a baseball game, especially at the Major League level. These guys are together for the better part of eight months, traveling and living as a group. They're under tremendous amounts of pressure to win, to succeed at a game where failure is the norm.

They play hurt, they play in the heat,

they play in bitter cold. They strive to please the fans, they want to please the manager, they have to please the owners. They *must* please themselves.

They are merely human beings with particular skills; abilities that half the men (and many women) in America and in numerous countries around the World would love to possess. Besides having the skills, what sets them apart is the drive.

I never had that kind of skill or drive. Being left-handed, the only in-field position I could play was first base. Being too short for that, I was always relegated to the outfield. However, astigmatism kept me from seeing the spin on the ball when it was pitched.

Oh, would that I could pitch a 90 MPH fastball...

That said, let's look into what might have been a far more equitable solution to the complete mess George W. Bush and Fiends made out of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Middle East in general.

Instead of bombing the snot out of them, why didn't we build them some Fields of Dreams?

Hell, Georgie used to hold a large interest in the Texas Rangers (where we had one of the most enjoyable ballpark experiences of all, I have to admit). He claims to be a "baseball guy." Who was more outspoken than Georgie when he assured all of us his "pal," Rafael Palmeiro, a dude he had once "owned," did not lie to Congress when he emphatically denied using steroids (while under Georgie's aegis, no less).

It wasn't but weeks later we learned through proof positive neither Raf nor Georgie should have spoken openly as they had.

Anyway, let's teach the great game of Baseball to the Middle East. The recently concluded World Baseball Classic showed that not only is it truly an international sport, we discovered that the USA — despite fielding a team of superstars — is not the dominant force.

Besides the usual suspects — Canada, Dominican Republic, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico, USA, and Venezuela — participating teams came from countries where the game is relatively new — Australia, Chinese Taipei, Italy, The Netherlands, and South Africa. Even Communist China and Cuba fielded teams, with Japan taking Cuba in the finale.

So, let's start bringing the Muslim nations in step with the rest of the World by teaching them a kids' game.

There's enough barren desert for the Army Corps of Engineers, Air Force Civil Engineers, and Navy SeaBees to put up ball fields all over Iraq and Afghanistan.

We then trade balls, gloves, bats and other necessities of the game for small arms and RPGs. The ballparks are neutral zones, where no weapons are allowed — like the gym in "West Side Story."

Once these guys feel the catharsis associated with whacking the cover off of a baseball, they'll begin to focus on hitting that little stitched orb instead of shooting or blowing up fellow human beings.

Besides, after a day of praising Al-

lah, practicing ball, more praising Allah, playing baseball, and praising Allah yet again in that hot Mid-Eastern sun, who's going to have the energy to do anything but eat dinner and go to sleep?

The reason so many of them are in a state of permanent agitation is they haven't any jobs to keep busy during the day. So, now we've provided an outlet.

Once they've gotten the hang of the game, we explain the benefits of marketing teams and regional — but not sectarian — rivalries.

Hot dogs (Kosher, of course, or at least all beef or turkey dogs) would sell like hotcakes. Think of the mark up!

Popcorn, Frosty Malts, Pepsi (no Coke).

Souvenirs would open up a whole new cottage industry for the Muslim world. Think of pennant sales — you know how much they like flags! Batting helmets of their favorite teams.

Watch the news carefully enough now, and you'll notice a large number of the indigenous population already wearing ball caps, jackets and T-shirts with team logos.

Eventually, we may even get them to enjoy, dare I print this... ice-cold beer!

Al-Jazeera could cut down on the anti-American rhetoric by establishing a sports division. In addition to keeping them busy as hell, they would have to devote increasingly larger amounts of airtime to baseball.

Now the men would have something to discuss that didn't involve death or Allah.

Statistics like batting averages, runs batted in, and slugging percentages.

Quality of pitching based upon earned run averages, wins and losses, strikeouts to walks ratios.

Team standings, and what injuries to which players are having the most all-around effect.

Plus, there would something to aim for. The next World Baseball Classic is scheduled for, I believe, 2009. If they begin now, by then Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India, even Israel should have fine teams ready to put in peaceful contention on the field of play.

It doesn't have to be as difficult as it's been. As the old cliché goes:

All they have to do is play ball with us.

1,942 days since the Rehnquist Supreme Court illegally allowed this illegitimate takeover of our Government by the RoveBushCheney Fascists. Please implore your Senator and Congressional Representative to do whatever it takes to toss these blackguards out of the White House!

(Jerry Tenuto is an erstwhile Philosopher and sometime Educator. A veteran with seven years of service in the U.S. Army, 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. Visit his blog BLUE STATE VIEW at illinoiscentral.blogspot.com)

Broadcasting In The Nude Seen As Too Cheeky

(Warning: At all costs, the following information must NOT fall into the hands of Geraldo Rivera.)

According to a recent ad in the Toronto Star newspaper, the producers of "Naked News" are still seeking anchors for their daily Internet news program. For those of you who've never heard of this program, let me take just a moment to explain it:

They report the news, and they're naked.

That's pretty much it.

And for most men, that's explanation

enough, which is why the web site now averages six million viewers per month.

Now, before we go on, I'd like to clarify that I happened upon this website completely by ACCIDENT, while innocently searching for information about naked "Gnus," which, as you may or may not know, is the tragic plight of African wildebeests suffering from premature baldness. While painstakingly gathering this sad information, I ACCIDENTALLY went from reading about an entire herd of hairless antelope in Botswana, to watching as a naked weatherman



By
**Ned
Hickson**
Siuslaw News

pointed to three developing storms at the same time — in Seattle, Maine, and the Gulf of Mexico.

Because this is a family newspaper, I will not explain precisely how he did this.

However, in my haste to leave the website, I ACCIDENTALLY switched over to the "All-Female" broadcast team. It was at this point that my journalistic integrity kicked in, and I felt an obligation to you, the reader, to investigate until I discovered the bitter truth.

Or at least until my wife discovered what I was doing.

As a result of this investigation, I learned that, just like CNN and other major news channels, "Naked News" of-

fers in-depth coverage of events from all around the world.

I also learned that I am easily distracted from this coverage.

For those of you who are wondering how YOU can become a reporter for this cutting-edge news organization (Or, at the very least, what organization's dating policy is.), you'll be happy to know that, according to the audition requirements listed on the "Naked News" web site, No broadcasting experience is necessary!

That's right! There's no need to let your lack of experience stop you from realizing your dream of standing buck naked in front of a TelePrompTer.

I didn't.

Which is why I now work for a newspaper.

This isn't to say that any thoughts I had of becoming a part of the "Naked News" movement have been put on the shelf.

In fact, I am actually naked right now — which is why I'm currently looking for a job in radio.

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

Wake Up And Go To Sleep

One of the weirdest news stories in recent months has been a suggested link between Ambien sleep medication and activities such as sleepwalking, sleep driving, and sleep eating. Just as TV commercials for medicines spend as much time issuing their disclaimers as they do advertising their products, I must make my disclaimers now: Researchers are not certain that there is a definite link between Ambien and these activities. And a very small minority of people taking Ambien end up doing these things. So, most of the stories that we read about are not scientific studies, but are anecdotal. But some of these anecdotes are doozies.

There are stories of people who drive their cars while still in a sleepwalking mode and have accidents. And there are stories of people who get up in the middle of the night, eat enormous amounts of food, don't remember eating, but find clues like candy bar wrappers and weight gains. Others claim to have committed crimes while sleepwalking like shoplifting or even physically attacking another person. And one doctor says that he has had passengers who've been in this state on airplanes and signed contracts with businessmen sitting next to them. And I thought a little drowsiness after a sleeping pill was an unfortunate side effect.

Janet Makinen went "from wearing a size 1 to wearing a size 12. I would eat raw eggs. I would eat a half gallon of ice cream. I would eat a bag of potato chips, a loaf of bread." She would find evidence of her "sleep binging" the next day, but had no memory of doing it. Helen Cary, says that her husband witnessed her getting a "package of hamburger buns and I just tore it open like a grizzly bear and just stood there and ate the whole package." Brenda Pobre claims that she gained 100 pounds from eating things that she can't remember eating in the middle of the night. For months, she blamed the candy bar wrappers next to her bed and the popsicle sticks on the floor on her husband and sons before finally believing that she was the one doing the eating.

This being America, there have already been some lawsuits filed against the drug manufacturer. I assume this was done while the plaintiffs were awake.

Sleepwalking has long been a part of movies and scary literature. In real life, people don't sleepwalk with their eyes closed and their hands outstretched. Sleepwalkers walk around with their eyes open. They can see while they go



Modern Times
By
**Lloyd
Garver**

about their activities. It's a myth that you should not wake a sleepwalker. Believe me, if you see your spouse reaching for his or her car keys while still asleep, it's a good idea to wake them up. Similarly, if someone close to you is about to polish off a package of hamburger buns, experts would suggest your waking him up and escorting him back to bed.

What's always fascinated me — and has piqued my curiosity once again — is why are most, if not all, the tales we hear about sleepwalking negative ones? We hear about over-eating, dangerous driving, and assaulting people while individuals are asleep. How come we don't hear about overweight sleepwalkers exercising in their sleep? Why don't we hear about people who get out of bed and clean the house while still technically asleep? Why don't we read about people who get up in the middle of the night and write a novel in their sleep? Shoplifting appears to be a relatively popular crime among some sleepwalkers. Why isn't it just as popular for sleepwalkers to go to a store and straighten out all the inventory? We may read about people who supposedly commit violent crimes while sleepwalking, but I've never heard of one who donated a kidney at three in the morning and then went back to bed.

I think this is where the scientific research should be focused rather than on the possible side effects of one specific medication. If they could figure out a way for us to accomplish good things in our sleep, maybe some future scientists will win the Nobel Prize. And if they're really good at what they do, they'll be able to do their research in their sleep.

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

Texas Two-Step Still Favorite of State Politicians

What do Rep. Mike Krusee and Texas Association of Business CEO Bill Hammond share in common? Well during the past five years both have continued to "kiss the governor's butt". The latest butt-kissing has emerged as an applause of Perry and his tax commission's proposal to increase cigarette taxes, get big business to pay a small part of school financing and cut property taxes by 50 cents. Hip, hip hooray!

Except there's one question we must ask....

Exactly how is this lackluster proposal different from the one proposed by several elected officials during the last regular session and two of the "special" sessions? And where is the source of "new" money coming into public education?

I guess the governor and Speaker Craddick couldn't accept the cigarette tax proposal then because they can only bring themselves to accept the proposal when it comes from Perry's appointed leader of the Texas Tax Reform Commission, John Sharp? It's amazing that such a lackluster special interest governor still has such clout.

Some elected officials also had wanted to increase the tax on cigars and alcoholic beverages; however, that didn't sit well with some big-time campaign contributors. Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst and his senators had wanted to raise the sales tax, but that didn't sit well with the GOP's "NO NEW TAX" platform and those who feel such a "regressive" tax falls hardest on the poor.

In truth the latest proposal falls way short of any considerable progress towards resolving the financing of public education or eliminating sky-high property taxes. It



Commentary
By
**Peter
Stern**

certainly does nothing to improve the quality of education or raising teacher pay. Also, if accepted, there is no yearly maximum percentage proposed to oversee school districts from randomly increasing property taxes again, which may occur quickly if the state doesn't provide additional money to finance schools.

At least this is a start to repair a severely damaged program of financing public education and eliminate the illegal statewide property tax system. If approved the proposal will take two years to complete. God only knows how many years it will take to repair and replace each system completely. *Oh well, in Texas two small steps at a time.*

BTW, this may answer the question of whether there is life after Rep. Kent Grusendorf!

Peter Stern of Driftwood, Texas, a former University Professor and Public School Administrator, 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. While a lifetime member of the Republican Party, he does NOT support the party's current platforms, philosophies and actions. You may contact Peter Stern at: psstern@austin.rr.com.

COUNTDOWN TO TEXAS INDEPENDENCE... AFTER THE ALAMO AND BEFORE SAN JACINTO

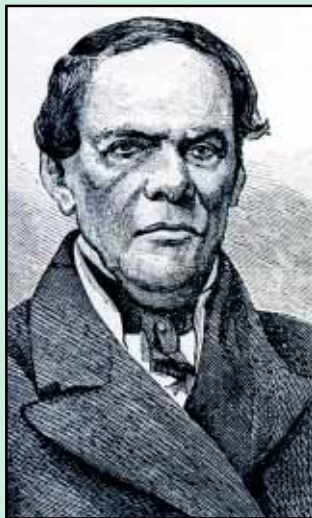
The Runaway Scrape



George B. Erath



Sam Houston



Santa Anna



Sidney Sherman

BY JOE MARCHMAN
SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

Compared to the centuries of human history of Europe and Asia, Texas historical events can only be capsulated from the early 18th Century when San Antonio was founded, until now. As with the rest of the world, Texas hasn't had that much time in which to gather and narrate its historical events as others have. The real story of Texas ostensibly began during the early 19th Century; however, Texas has proudly and insistently extolled its noteworthy happenings rightfully in its chapters of the world's chronicles since then. When likened to the rest of the world, Texas historical events are of such a flamboyant nature, the rest of the world knows about them.

It is arguable of how in God's creation, we Texans have intermingled so much folklore into our history. In retrospect, we are aware that others, not Texans, have benefited when recanting the deeds of our illustrious and courageous ancestors. Probably for the most part, such chicanery or sophistry can be laid at the door of Hollywood and the movies. After all, no true Texan would fantasize with our forefathers' gallantry and heritage which is beyond improvement.

As we know, there are many unvarnished facts about Texas that cannot be denied. About any way one would want to tell these Texas tales of yore, it is an accepted historical fact that the story of Texas is one colossal collection of valiant exploits of man's opposition to despotic tyranny.

The history of the world scarcely portrays another paragon akin to the one which the dedicated folk of Texas had in their revolution with Mexico. This contentious conflict was between a great Mexican nation of over eight million people and one of its own provincial provinces with only a smattering of folks...the power and resources of a great nation and its poor paltry colony of Texas.

In 1836, the time of the revolution in Texas, there was no money...most business was carried on by barter. One new Texas colonist from Austria, George B. Erath, said, "I know men in Central Texas that were living comfortably, who never saw five dollars in the course of a year"...his account is typical of the settler's social mores. The colorful Davy Crockett might have said it best when he, using typical colloquialism, said, "Ready money was the shyest thing in all of nature."

George B. Erath volunteered with most new settlers or planters who felt compelled to join General Sam Houston in the vicious struggle for their homes against the dastardly antics of General Santa Anna and Mexico. Erath was a private in Company 'C,' First Regiment of the Texas Volunteers that distinguished themselves in the victory over Santa Anna at San Jacinto.

Gen. Sam Houston, newly appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Texas Army, left the convention at Washington-On-The-Brazos with a hand-written copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence and proceeded to Gonzales on the Guadalupe River. Gonzales was the capi-



tal of Green DeWitts colony established in 1825, and had about 40 log cabins strewn among the trees. Houston's trip from Washington-On-The-Brazos took a week, arriving there on March 11, 1836.

In Gonzales the Texian Commander-in-Chief found his Army...it consisted of 374 rag-tag men with barely two days' provisions...many without muskets and others without ammunition. Only a few, even of the officers, had ever seen military service before. Most "Armies of Freedom" don't start with such a raw destitute handful of men, who at times were starving and worn down to a rack of bones...such was Sam Houston's Army with which he had to defend the new Republic of Texas.

Immediately, upon arrival, Houston learned of the fall of the Alamo from Susana Dickinson, a survivor of that merciless slaughter. Santa Anna spared Mrs. Dickinson for her to send word that the rest of Texas could quickly meet the same fate as those at the Alamo.

Immediately, upon arrival, Houston learned of the fall of the Alamo from Susana Dickinson, a survivor of that merciless slaughter. Santa Anna spared Mrs. Dickinson for her to send word that the rest of Texas could quickly meet the same fate as those at the Alamo.

A number of Houston's Army deserted and fled eastward, decrying the barbaric tales of the massacre...everybody was scared to death and fear was rampant.

Mrs. Dickinson also had the alarming news that General Sesma with a division of Santa Anna forces was advancing eastward toward Gonzales...and not far away. Gen. Houston, not having to be a brilliantly keen military tactician at this news, hastily began a retreat from the approaching Mexican troops. For every backward step the Texians took towards the Colorado River, Gen. Sesma took one forward, right behind.

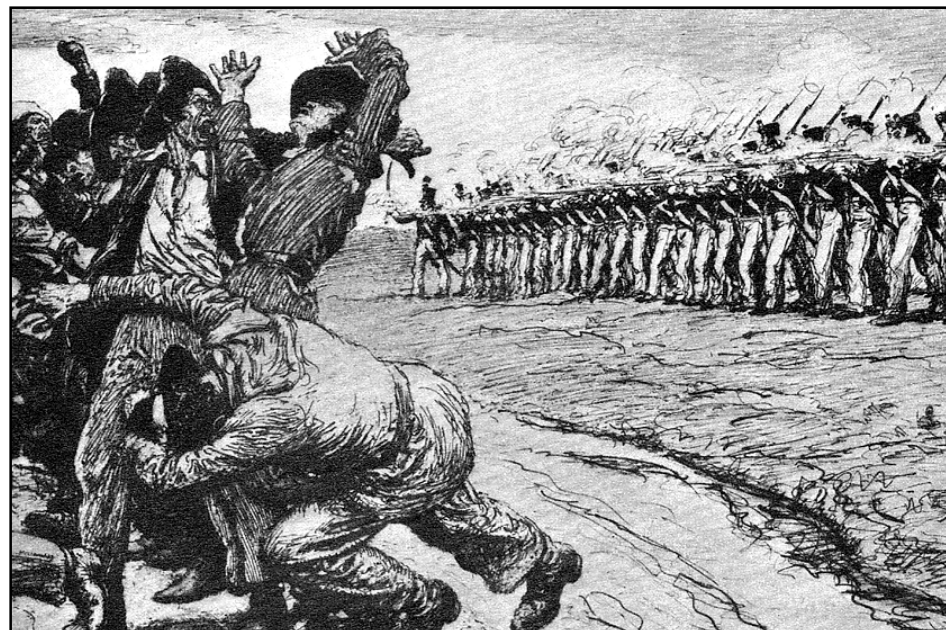
Gen. Houston determined to retreat farther and farther in what Texas history calls "The Runaway Scrape." The General followed a path that avoided any contact with the Mexican horde.

The open prairie between the Guadalupe and Colorado Rivers was a heavy sodden swamp during that early spring of 1836. The icy-rain and bitter cold northers had blighted the early flowers in South Texas. Abandoned carts, dead oxen, broken wagon wheels, and fragments of house-hold goods, conspicuously marked the desperate trail of

Continued On Next Page



Joe Marchman is a state-recognized award-winning writer for The Clifton Record. A researcher and investigator, Marchman specializes in the intricacies of Texas history.



Goliad Massacre (drawing by Norman Price) Mexican firing squad shooting unsuspecting prisoners.

The Runaway Scrape

Continued From Previous Page

Texian families valiantly attempting to stay ahead of the ruthless Mexicans. Exasperating as the bone-chilling weather conditions were, Gen. Houston continued his cautious retreat, just ahead of Santa Anna's troops and between the evacuating Texian families.

At the Colorado River Gen. Houston's Texans were reinforced by Colonel Sidney Sherman with a like amount of men, thus doubling Houston's troops. Time was Houston's ally and he realized it. While camped there on the east side of the Colorado, Colonel Sherman requested permission to re-cross the river and give battle to Gen. Sesma and his troops camped just across the Colorado on the west side. Gen. Houston refused Sherman's request. This denial did not bode well with Houston's officers or men, who were itching to have a scrape with the Mexicans. But, peccadilloes of the slightest offensive nature was a fandango that Houston could not abide.

Many of Houston's restless officers, one in particular, Colonel Edward Burleson, again solicited the General's permission to attack the Mexicans, saying that any further retreat would cause or involve the removal of every Texian family between the Colorado and the Brazos.

Again Houston denied the demand and once more determined to withdraw towards the Brazos. With this, tempers flaired, and the General reeked the smouldering protest of his officers and men...many fell into fits of doom and gloom when told of Houston's decision.

A large number of Houston's volunteers were compelled to abandon their homes and property there. Some of the men never forgave Houston this. It was a dismal sojourn for all that were there...a fitful game of tag with the Mexicans for a man's life, and even greater for the independence of Texas. Some of the men with their homes at their backs could only see across the river; however, Gen. Houston was well aware that Santa Anna had over 4,000 more troops in Texas, and as yet, he knew not where.

In 1859, the Texas Almanac published an account of an early Texas farmer by the name of Kuykendall, who stumbled into the Texians camp one day asking to see Gen. Houston. Kuykendall reported to Gen. Houston that he had been taken prisoner by some Mexican troops while he was eating dinner in his own house. He went on to say that he was taken before Santa Anna, who received him kindly and then gave him his liberty...but, not before directing him to hunt down Gen. Houston and tell him that Gen. Santa Anna was sick and tired of hunting after him and his

Texian Army like so many wild Indians in the woods...that, if he, Gen. Houston would be so brave as to come out of his hiding place...that he, Gen. Santa Anna, "the Napoleon of the West," would give him a fair fight on the open prairie. However, Sam Houston didn't wander into camp on his adversary's last tamale cart...so he recognized his ploy, although many didn't.

Those that were listening to Kuykendall became increasingly bitter. This prankish challenge of Santa Anna's was a little too much for the Texas boys to stomach...their desire to meet the enemy became almost uncontrollable. Houston's troops were tired of lying in idleness and "twiddling their thumbs." They couldn't hide their painful anxiety.

Chilled to the bone, the apprehensive Texians followed Houston's orders and trudged the mud towards the Brazos muttering their discontent. Certain discourse was recurring with each painful step, "If'n we er git to scrap, we'll show ole 'Santy Anny' whose the big hog at the trough here in Texas"... Another retorted, "quit yer belly achin"... Still another, "hush your racket and march"... as the "Runaway Scrape" continued eastward in dismal disgust.

The atrociousness of Santa Anna at both the Alamo and Goliad gnawed at the Texians' bowels. Amongst the troops there was always the lingering apprehension of the impending threat of Gen. Santa Anna and could they cope with his malicious aggressions. It would not have been abnormal if self-doubt caused much of their worried mental discomfort and uneasiness. But, show me where its ever been recorded that any red-blooded Texian ever admitted to the likes of such a preposterous notion.

Although Houston's men were a military band or supposedly an army, there was something heartbreakingly unmilitary about their demeanor... Houston himself, had had a little military experience but had never commanded an army in war...yet with the aid of a few good officers he was trying to fashion a force to be reckoned with. Houston was a man of wit and able to grasp the big picture — few men have that ability.

The plain cold fact of history was the vain glorious dictator Santa Anna had proved he was as savage as a meat axe in his recent two victories over the Texians. The Mexican general was a military man that had fought continuously for the last 20 years and had never been defeated. This subtle Lucifer in a Mexican general's attire was puffed and commented, "What, lose me Texas...I



Goliad Mission

am the head of a nation of eight million and they without a thousand men in the field."

By March 21, Santa Anna was sure that the Texas rebellion was all but over, although he was pushing on to join Gen. Sesma and his advance troop. Santa Anna saw himself as the august conqueror who would catch Sam Houston and personally tie him to his chariot wheel before he returned to Mexico.

Grumbings at the constancy of Houston's retreats brought an overt declaration by many that a new Commander-In-Chief must be appointed for Texas. Colonel Sidney Sherman was the name most mentioned to succeed Gen. Houston. When this unruly mutinous plot reached the ears of Sam Houston he angrily belched a fire order that notices be posted on the trees around camp, which stated that the first man involved in this treasonous act should be court-martialed and shot. However, this did not end the Libertine debauchery that plagued General Houston concerning his retreating tactics.

When Gen. Houston fell back from the Colorado River, he had been advised of Colonel Fannin's massacre at Goliad...that was 400 more men he had counted on. Houston then knew or had every reason to believe that Gen. Sesma would be reinforced by the Mexican troops from Goliad. In that event there would be an overwhelming force against him...yes, and where was Santa Anna. He knew that one battle must be decisive in the fate of Texas. He realized that if he engaged in battle at this juncture, that many of his men would be wounded, if not killed. The General possessed no method to transport them and he would be compelled to sacrifice the army to the wounded. He determined to fall back again, and did so.

Meanwhile, the New Republic's government removed its headquarters from Washington-On-The-Brazos south to Harrisburg, a little saw-mill town on Buffalo Bayou which was 30 miles east of the Brazos. The government didn't dally long in Harrisburg, before it sallied forth to Galveston Island and New Orleans if necessary out of harm's way.

Wandering survivors from Goliad arrived at Houston's camp...almost daily with news that Santa Anna, himself, was approaching San Felipe from the west. The wild rye was growing high under the Live-Oak trees, which provided cover for a few survivors of Fannin's massacre. One of the survivors' hiding there said he hadn't seen Santa Anna since the Battle of Medina, but the Mexican's crafty, cruel, and vainglorious face was not hard to recognize. This intelligence proved to be

correct, so Gen. Houston sent his master spy, Erastus "Deaf" Smith to keep him apprised of the Mexican's movements.

The Texian Army finally reached the Brazos at San Felipe. Stephen F. Austin had established San Felipe as his colonies' capital in 1824. One's imagination can easily focus on what this pretty little log-cabin town looked like, situated high amongst the trees on a 40-foot bluff that was overlooking the Brazos River...the Gulf of Mexico was 80 miles farther south.

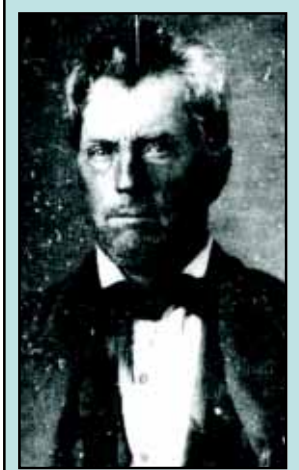
While at San Felipe, objections were still being made to Houston's orders, when it became known that he planned to march up the Brazos instead of downward toward Buffalo Bayou. Houston's ploy was to leave one disgruntled company there to slow Santa Anna crossing of the Brazos at San Felipe and then have that company march south down the Brazos distracting the Mexicans. Houston remained steadfast in his plan, marching up the swollen Brazos and crossing at Mill Creek and camped there with 520 efficient men under his command. There he remained from the last of March until April 13. The excessive rains made the Texian camp an inaccessible island and Houston had no opportunity for an engagement against the enemy...even though Santa Anna had arrived at San Felipe within 18 miles of him.

Gen. Houston had expected artillery any day from the Texas government...yet none came from them. He didn't learn until a few years later that his request had been countermanded.

For Gen. Houston the harangue continued on what some considered the folly of his ways. The President of the new Texas Republic sent a courier to Houston in which David G. Burnet said, "The enemy are laughing you to scorn." President Burnet's chastisement of his Commander-In-Chief continued, "you must fight them...you must retreat no further...this country expects you to fight...the salvation of Texas depends on you doing so."

The Texian general kept his wits about him, although annoyed by Burnet, his political adversary. Instead of answering Burnet, Houston wrote to Thomas J. Rusk, the Secretary of War, on March 29, 1836, commenting on his own conduct, saying, "I have consulted no one...I held no Councils-of-War. If I err, the blame is mine."

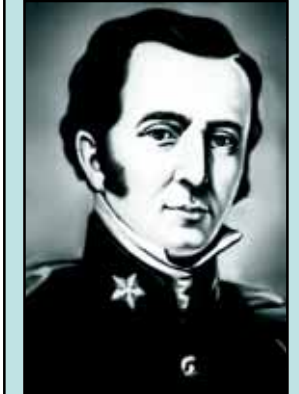
Sam Houston, as Texas history testified, was a crafty Gray Fox, who his antagonists made out to be a thick headed, lumbering, clumsy elephant that was



Edward Burleson



Erastus "Deaf" Smith



James Fannin

Continued On Next Page

Washington Decides Texas Worth Fighting For

With flags flying and bugles blaring, the sunburned soldiers paraded along the Rio Grande on March 28, 1846. They had waited too long and come too far not to fight.

As a precondition for resuming annexation talks, the Republic of Texas demanded a military presence on its southern border. Gen. Zachary Taylor landed at Corpus Christi with 3,500 troops and for eight long months kept a close eye on Mexico.

In March 1846, three weeks after Texas officially became the 28th state, Taylor was instructed to take up a defensive position on the Rio Grande opposite Matamoros. Other than severe sunburn, the only casualties the column sustained on the 100-mile march were rattlesnake bites.

The plot thickened at the Arroyo Colorado 30 miles north of Matamoros, where a reconnaissance patrol encountered a body of irregular cavalry. The Mexicans made it clear any further advance would be resisted.

Taking the threat seriously, Taylor mustered his men for the crossing. "From the General-in-Chief to the smallest drummer boy, we felt morally certain that we were on the verge of a fierce and bloody conflict," a participant recorded in his diary. When the maneuver ended uneventfully, "the disappointment of the men was shown in muttered curses."

Eight days later, the Americans reached the Rio Grande and set up camp in full view of Matamoros. That afternoon Taylor sent his deputy, Gen. William Jenkins Worth, to parley with the prospective enemy under a flag of truce.

His foreign counterpart began by insisting that the American intrusion into the State of Tamaulipas constituted an act of war. Worth replied that the no-man's-land between the Nueces and the Rio Grande was contested territory claimed by both nations and, therefore, a matter to be resolved by diplomats not soldiers.

At the conclusion of the conversation, Worth asked, "Has Mexico declared war against the United States?"

"No," was the curt response.

"Are the two countries still at peace?"

This Week In Texas History

By Barte Haile



"Yes," the Mexican answered, but he might have added, "For the moment."

Stories of the good times available in Matamoros and the Mexicans' appeal to the Irish volunteers as fellow Catholics soon had U.S. troops deserting in droves. Ten or more a night switched sides by swimming the shallow river.

Taylor had no choice but to issue shoot-to-kill orders to his sentries. The subsequent slayings of two deserters convinced their comrades to stick close to camp.

Col. Truman Cross vanished on April 9 during a recreational horseback ride. The disappearance of the popular officer on the 13th day of the tense stand-off gave the antsy Americans their best reason yet to fight.

On April 11, Taylor received a blunt ultimatum from the Mexican commander giving him 24 hours to pull back to the Nueces. The 62-year-old veteran of every American conflict since the War of 1812 sent his regrets and refused to budge.

While scouring the countryside for the missing colonel, Lt. David Porter perished in an ambush. Ironically the victim was the son of a famous naval figure, who a generation earlier helped Mexico win its independence from Spain.

That same day Cross' body was found. The fact he had been murdered instead of killed in combat incensed the Americans. A fellow officer reported in an angry letter home that the "dastardly act has destroyed all the sympathy that some few did still entertain for a people they deemed unjustly treated."

Sixteen hundred Mexican cavalrymen swarmed across the river on April 23. Badly underestimating the size of the enemy detachment, Taylor sent 63 dragoons to drive them back. The short, one-sided skirmish resulted in the death or capture

of every American.

On April 26, a special courier sped up the Texas coast with Gen. Taylor's succinct and historic statement. "Hostilities may now be considered as commenced."

News traveled slowly 160 years ago. The urgent message took 13 days to reach the president, who was sitting down to dinner on May 9 when handed the dispatch.

The timing bordered on the unbelievable. That very afternoon James K. Polk had told his divided cabinet that he had made up his mind to ask Congress to declare war on Mexico. Now he could make his charge of Mexican aggression stick.

In the House of Representatives on May

11, the reading of the presidential request took an hour more than the debate. The vote was 173 to 14 in favor of war.

In the longer-winded Senate, where Lone Star statehood had been bottled up for years, many members voiced strong reservations. But when the issue was put to a vote, only two senators opposed the president.

Ten years after San Jacinto, Washington at last decided Texas was worth fighting for.

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

GUEST COMMENTARY

Bigger Is Not Always Better School Services Should Be Consolidated

By JAMIE STORY
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Texas law requires every school to have a principal, and every district a superintendent. This mandate, which seems logical at first glance, actually has a stifling effect on districts' ability to find unique solutions to local problems.

In smaller districts, it could make sense to share principals between schools, or superintendents between districts. Three small districts within a county could remain independent, but hire a single "county superintendent," thus significantly lowering administrative costs. Unfortunately, current law makes this and other innovative management arrangements unthinkable.

This is but one example of state mandates limiting public school efficiency. Hundreds more could be found quickly. And countless more with a little work. With property owners facing sky-high taxes and seemingly endless calls from the education community for more money, it is necessary to ensure every dollar is used to its fullest potential to improve student performance.

But this requires that local school districts have the discretion to act creatively.

The term "consolidation" is often a dirty word in public schools. It conjures up images of community schools being swept away and children being bussed for hours to the "bigger and better" consolidated school. But Regional Service Center 17 in Lubbock has used a creative version of that "dirty" idea to lower costs for several of its school districts. The Regional Service Center provides payroll and accounting services, and in doing so, has helped participating districts to save between 50 and 80 percent annually on these functions.

Payroll and accounting services have little to do directly with student achievement or the culture of a school district, but the services are necessary. Through its innovative consolidation of services, Regional Service Center 17 and the participating school districts have freed up funds for use in more academically meaningful pursuits.

Understandably, citizens want their local schools and districts to remain independent. And frankly, the evidence may be on their side.

Decades ago, education reformers looked to district consolidation as a way

to lower costs and ensure access to quality teachers and facilities. From 1960 to 1984, the number of school districts in the United States declined by more than 60 percent. But over the same period, school administration grew 500 percent. Clearly, consolidation has not led to decreased administrative costs on a national level.

Texas has followed similar consolidation patterns, downsizing from nearly 7,000 districts in 1936, to just over 1,000 today. Even so, districts range in size from dozens of students in parts of west Texas, to more than 200,000 in Houston ISD. Unfortunately, districts this large (and small)

typically prove less efficient than more modestly sized districts.

The largest school districts have administrative and support staffs proportionally larger than those found in smaller districts. And administrative positions are growing faster than student enrollment.

Clearly, consolidation is not the cure-all to fix school finance. However, consolidation does not have to be a dirty word. There are benefits to be reaped from consolidation – but consolidation of services, not necessarily schools or districts.

Borrowing an idea from the private sector, innovative school districts are adopting the practice of shared services. Shared service arrangements enable districts to reduce the costs associated with functions such as transportation, food services, and human resources, just to name a few.

Shared services could also take the form of allied purchasing agreements, allowing small districts to take advantage of bulk pricing when ordering paper, desks, and even computers.

Shared services – less controversial and more effective than traditional consolidation – enable districts to save thousands of dollars each year on non-academic expenses. The Legislature should streamline state law, relaxing mandates and providing incentives that facilitate shared service agreements. In doing so, lawmakers will show through their actions that the priority of our public schools is the education of children, not the growth of bureaucracies.

Jamie Story is an education policy analyst at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a non-profit research institute based in Austin.



Jamie Story

The Runaway Scrape

Continued From Previous Page

retreating headlong for disaster and doom and taking all of Texas with him. Despite the fact that he was continually repudiated by a few of his peers with venom and vindictiveness, the General was not going to rush recklessly into battle with Santa Anna and hazard a fiasco for Texas. As commanding General, he could not entrust the future of Texas with an encounter with the Mexicans until the timing was right. At this time, the deck that he had been dealt was not "stacked" to suit him.

General Sam Houston's military plans were done without aid or support. The General required the exclusivity of himself, his agile mind and a "demijohn." In fact, his most constant companion during this desperate "Runaway Scrape" was a half full "demijohn"...a "demijohn" is a narrow-necked bottle or stoneware enclosed in wickerwork. A "demijohn" held from one to 10 gallons of rot-gut whiskey and was utilized by tilting it over the arm to the lips. This "john" was one Houston knew he could trust if taken captive by the Mexicans. This "john" also

understood Gen. Houston when he, in the sanctuary of his own tent, call upon "Aries," the Greek God of War, for military consultation with his problems. What Houston lacked in military prowess, he made up for as an accomplished student of ancient history and mythology. The man could speak his mind using such archaic expressions and most had no knowledge from whence he came.

This most notable Texas Legend did at times speak or refer to his "Fabian Plan," however, most of his apprehensive Texians knew nothing of early Roman history, indeed, where "Fabius Maximus" achieved victory over a superior "Hannibal" by avoiding a decisive contest until just the appropriate time.

The lower Brazos River was rising and overflowing its normal banks where Houston bathed that April Fool's, but, not even the divine quality of the River Jordan could cleanse Sam Houston's reputation with some.

Most importantly the Texian General would test the waters of another river...the San Jacinto in a fortnight.



To The Editor:

No Billionaire left behind

Thanks in part to King George's generous tax cuts, there was an increase of 69 new billionaires and multi-billionaires in the United States last year, a new total of 341.

For those working stiffs who are still relishing the few shillings in tax relief they got from George's tax cuts, think of how grateful those billionaires and multi-billionaires must be for the millions upon millions of pounds George has saved them in taxes.

But the greater benefits of the tax cuts have not yet been fully realized. With more and more of the nation's largest corporations having paid no taxes at all last year, largely because of relocating their operations overseas, King George will now take credit for expanding America's industrial empire throughout the world. Moreover, the abundance of serfs to perform cheap labor in other countries will further strengthen the aristocracy. Ah yes, no billionaire left behind.

Paul G. Jaehnert, Vadrnais Hts., MN
Letter to the Editor:

(The emperor has no clothes and no shame)

With scant forethought beyond doing what his father had not, topple Saddam Hussein, George W. Bush launched his war into Iraq. Now mired in the fourth year of this misadventure, Bush's litany of justifications has him sounding like the perpetual delinquent that thinks he can talk his way out of anything.

As shortsighted now as before, Bush spins out his broken-record mantra: "The world is better off without Saddam Hussein." If Bush can find a silver lining in a manmade disaster of his doing, surely he might be able to detect great purpose in a catastrophe of Mother Nature's making.

To wit, if a tsunami had swept up the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and had gotten Saddam Hussein, but in the bargain also took the lives of thousands of Iraqis, killed over 2,000 of our troops, permanently maimed untold more, seriously damaged our nation's hard-gained reputation, and cost our people billions upon billions of dollars, we might expect George W. Bush to place much value in the devastating wall of water and to take credit for its course.

He talks and talks and turns a deaf ear as he leaves unanswered the damning question; was war with Iraq our nation's only course? The answer is no.

When presidents of past were faced with the threatening march of Communism from a USSR bristling with real weapons of mass destruction and with agents secreted throughout the world, these leaders opted for containment of this threat until it inevitably fell of its own weight. These courageous Commanders in Chief believed in the courage of our people and in the superiority of our free way of life.

Sam Osborne, West Branch, IA
To The Editor:

I cannot believe my lying eyes! People continue to parrot this administration's lies regarding a connection between Iraq and the 9/11 terrorists. There is ample proof that the president lied to us and planned a war with Iraq no matter what. Willful ignorance of these facts is unpatriotic and harmful to our troops. Ethical leadership, proper equipment, generous veteran's benefits, and, above all, the TRUTH supports our troops.

Sharon Wilson, Decatur, TX
To The Editor:

I grew up in the El Paso, TX/Sundland Park, New Mexico border zone a few feet and a fallen down three strand limp barbed wire fence from the Mexico frontier. Up until a couple of decades ago the border was more of a symbol than a barrier. Before Uncle Sugar had me raise my hand to go fight the 'insurgents' in Viet Nam and afterward I was heading for my anthropology degree at TWC-Texas Western College to become UTEP University of Texas at El Paso. I also rode herd on various border cattle feedlots since childhood so I'm pretty much of a critter of the American Southwest. The ebb and flow of Latino's has always been the picture of my America and many of my Latino buddies from high school left their bones and blood in Vietnam as we served in that Iraq style thankless waste of time, lives, and effort shoulder to shoulder. And I still mourn those good Latino buddies and their awesome brave hearts and warm and earthy souls.

Notably, Mr. Cheney and Mr. Bush were conveniently absent, but that is another story.

I worked in El Paso from after the war and was employed and embraced by many older Latino foramen and business owners who were veterans of World War II and Korea who gave me a lot of comfort and encouragement to keep my head up and persevere in those discouraging days.

I've stood on the windswept border line and noticed the old 1852 boundary markers are mostly antiques and curious relics down through the years. I've studied the topographical satellite pictures from space and we can still see the veritable 'super highways' that joined a thousands-year-old march of peoples from the ancient centers of civilization that were hubbed in now Mexico City from time in memorial. And those ancient peoples seasonally migrated from summertime northern agricultural zones as a yearly river of souls and back south against the bitter northern cold on a cycle that was perennial across the millenia. And I've watched with awe and wonder that those aboriginal decedents of theirs who have since been enculturated 'Spanish Catholic' ethnically but who are still essentially native American genetically come like the tides in that ancient momentum that our national border has always been but a symbolic sieve.

Yet they are my America and the richness of their contribution to our American whole is a pure 'D' fact as it has since before there was a United States. Yeah, the newest comers are always a relative pain in the butt as all waves have always been. Yet I also know as fact that soon they settle down into the well worn family rich traditions of truly American Latinos who are largely a gentle but nearly tidal force in maintaining the healthy rhythms and vitality of Americas social and economic fabric.

As Americans closer and more dynamic ties to Mexico as a rich cultural and economic growing asset can only strengthen us. And we need it. And as far as the standard social growing pains of our rapidly, but healthily morphing conjoined Latino & Northern European mix heritage the very children of the most recent immigrants from the south are our very best border patrol and other border security agents. And their very proportionately large contribution historically to our military must not be minimized.

We need to strengthen our borders yes but also see our Latino brothers as a resource and not a plague. I found out that my Irish grandmother who died in Phoe-

nix some years back was never naturalized as a citizen but who was one of the most loyal Americans in the land, but trust me, loved her native Ireland to the grave. And her son, my Dad, was one of the most decorated Air Force bomber pilot veterans of both WW-II and the Korean Conflict. But Grandma was an Irish wetback.—)

Don't sweat the proud Latino kids in L.A. and the Mexican flags-trust me it will better for our future and yea I'm a Teddy Roosevelt guy too. But relax we will survive the current assimilation turmoil like we always have and be stronger and better for it, because that's who we Americans are! After all, I like St. Patricks Day but I think my favorite American Holiday after

the 4th of July is Cinco de Mayo! And most Latino's don't even know that Cinco de Mayo celebrates the Battle of Puebla where the Mexican farmers kicked out the arrogant French Conquering Army. Anybody who celebrates kicking the Frenchies' butts can't be all bad! :)

I know that George is trying to pad future elections in favor of his half-Mexican nephew, Jeb's son, George Prescott Bush. But that notwithstanding, I for one find myself agreeing with John McCain on this one and am willing to give George a pass on this one. . . . just this once.

Yer American Amigo,
Black Horse Ted Olafsen-
Republican~Salud!~

You Might Be White If...

I don't consider myself a Southerner. I know it sounds strange, but I just don't feel "southern," even though I've lived here all my life.

This is a real problem when almost everybody here enjoys the comedy of Jeff Foxworthy.

The thing is, if I could laugh at his "You might be a redneck if..." bits, I would, but I can't. The net is too small. I mean, rednecks share a "glorious absence of sophistication" with their non-redneck neighbors:

They share their whiteness.

We whites get away with a lot of stuff and take even more things for granted because of the assumptions the light tone of our skin afford for us.

This occurs regardless of whether or not we whites are racist, though most of the time we are when darker folk cut us off in traffic.

To my Lutheran way of thinking, we whites like to hide this reality from ourselves and others for our own advantage by using a "theology of glory," a term Martin Luther coined 500 years ago to describe the way in which people put conditions on God's power and love and then their own faith in God.

The problem with people who seek this glory and wealth at the expense of God's unconditional love is that they fail to see that their actions harm not only those around them but also themselves. For instance, when you deny illegal immigrant workers' access to healthcare, you've unleashed a biological weapon of your own making.

Perhaps the first privilege we whites have is the privilege of not knowing we are privileged in the first place.

So without any further ado, here's my own "You might be white if ..." bit free of charge:

You might be white if...

Your church has a Starbucks in it.

Your family Bible has the "love stains" of King James on it.

You watch MTV Cribs and think, "Thank God, we live our own private island!"

You think Iran is a song by the 1980s New Wave band Flock of Seagulls.

The closest you've been to a ghetto is the Elvis song, "In The Ghetto."

You go to Barnes & Noble thinking you can buy a dead prez album there.

Your front yard garden has a fountain that bubbles up chocolate.

Your toilet paper is made from Picasso paintings.

You enjoy hunting cloned wild animals.

You don't own closets because you're clothing is disposable.

You play 18 holes of golf on your yacht.

The Rubber Cement Index

By Nathan Diebenow



Your car is the perfect size to drown all three of your young children in the local lake.

Your cousin's kids trade baseball players to pay for the construction of a college dormitory built to honor your daddy.

Your neighbor's teenage kid killed 14 of his classmates with an AK-47 because his girlfriend called him "gay."

You were once on a first name basis with your heroin dealer, William S. Burroughs.

Your older sister snorted coke with Robin Williams, Liza Minnelli, and George W. Bush back in the day.

Your younger sister partied with Prince Harry when he went through his Nazi "Halloween costume" stage.

Your good friend Bret Easton Ellis is considering writing a novel based on your life.

Your daddy died of syphilis he acquired from a hooker.

Your mom's plastic surgery has her looking like the melting faces of the Nazis from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

You're a little perturbed that your half-brother's cult keeps mailing parts of his "sacrificial lambs" to your home.

You're related to every president of the United States.

You adopted Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt just last week.

You taught Michael Jackson how to molest children and get away with it.

You watched the O.J. trial and thought of better ways to kill Nicole.

You rented out your prison cell to Martha Stewart.

Your charity, you take Britney Spears and Oprah Winfrey shopping.

You receive royalty checks every time someone on the radio or television says the word "bling."

You manufactured stories like Big Foot, the Loch Ness Monster, and UFOs just to create tourism.

You're currently trying to patent the molecules to water.

Your handshake is so secret the Masons don't know it.

INFO

Peggy McIntosh's "White Privileged" list

<http://www.learn2question.com/class/log/archives/print/000442.html>

Heterosexual Privilege

<http://hometown.aol.com/ahotcupofjava/hetero.html>

Poverty And The Modern Christian

BY STEPHEN WEBSTER
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

A couple weeks ago Dr. Jim Ozier, pastor of Trietsch United Methodist church in Flower Mound, Texas, called me with a great idea for a story. He planned to give a sermon about poverty, and the responsibility of Christians to help the least of those among them. Ozier reached out to me, as something of a rookie investigative reporter, to go to his church under cover.

I was to be homeless, if only for one day. Once I accepted the assignment I realized that I had bought a ticket for a ride that I could not abandon, like it or not. In order to better articulate the soul-crushing hopelessness of poverty, I refrained from bathing and shaving for 10 days. I spent my evenings leading up to the infiltration drinking heavily and eating little. I picked up some clothes from a local thrift store and soiled them with liquor, beef stew, syrup and coffee creamer. I spent the night before the service sleeping on the floor. I simply could not bring myself to crawl into a warm bed.

I awoke early Sunday morning and put together my ensemble. I wore a tattered suit jacket with rips under both armpits. It covered a dirty black shirt featuring art from the first album by the band Incubus. Mangled, crusty sweat pants draped my legs and flip-flops from a dollar store padded my feet. My fiancée was absolutely disgusted. It was *perfect*.

I drove to Trietsch and parked about a quarter-mile down the street. I turned off my car and popped the top of a beer, downing it as fast as possible. The smell of alcohol was thick, but the stench of days-old stew far overpowered it. I somberly walked toward the church, deciding it would be best to approach from behind.

At first I was intimidated. This place, this house of worship, is *huge*. Beautiful vehicles lined the parking lot. I stopped and gawked at a sight rarely seen outside of a car dealership: four Hummers, each a different color, parked within mere feet of each other. All of them sported "Support the Troops" ribbons and "Bush/Cheney '04" stickers. A strange coincidence, I thought. As though the cars' owners all got together after service one Sunday and planned their parking arrangement. I wondered aloud if they all sprint to church each week to snag those same spots.

As I strolled down the sidewalk, sandals flipping at my heels, a woman holding a tray of what looked to be cupcakes approached me. "Oh, hmm," she said in passing, her gaze locking on me for about six steps. As the distance between us widened her pace doubled as she shuffled away, downwind.

I entered the building through a door near one of the two playgrounds I spotted. The first thing I saw was a Sunday School class full of children sitting on the floor. Several of them stared at me as I walked past. Nobody said a word. I pressed on through the hall, walking past a couple of adults. They were engaged in conversation and did not look at me.

I walked up the stairs and came upon a row of tan-colored plastic bins. A printed sign on the wall read, "Food Donations." I opened one bin and looked inside. A Nutri-Grain bar was the first foodstuff I spotted. Picking it up I tore open the wrapper and shoved about half of it into my mouth, crumbs falling all over the floor as I smacked the snack



Stephen Webster spent the day as an indigent to gather responses.

between my teeth. A girl of probably 13 or 14 years approached me. "Hey, that's not yours!" she exclaimed. "Oh," I said, posing my best startled expression. "I'm so sorry! Is it yours?" I offered the half eaten treat to her with both hands, bits of fruit goop and wheat flakes still falling from my mouth. She looked at me like I had just kicked a small animal. "Ach!" she exclaimed, rolling her eyes. She then turned on heel and walked in the opposite direction.

Approaching the sanctuary, the sound of music floated through the hall. I walked up to a door and paused, gazing through the window. A couple approached from behind. I turned and smiled, nodding my head in acknowledgement. I opened the door and motioned for them to enter before me. "Thank you," said the woman. That common phrase would be the only words of kindness I heard all morning.

Once in the sanctuary, I found my way to an unoccupied pew toward the back-left. I sat down behind a man who looked to be in his late 20's or early 30's. He looked over his left shoulder at me and grimaced, then moved about eight feet to his right, to the very end of his pew. There I sat for the entire sermon, focused intently on the pastor's message.

Ozier spoke about the people Jesus loved, and reminded the congregation that Jesus was a peacemaker above all. He repeated the fact that helping the poor was the topic most frequented by the Christian savior. He even went as far as mentioning the Iraq war, emphasizing the importance of understanding ethnic and religious differences around the world. I would have gone much further with this line of thought if I had the pulpit.

As the sermon approached its end, Ozier called upon the parishioners to welcome any newcomers into the fold. He reminded them that Christ calls Christians to be accepting of all his children,

big and small, young and old, rich and poor. I stood and began walking out with the rest of the group, making my way toward the closest door. As before, nobody said a word.

When I left the church, I felt an odd sense of relief, as though a damning judgment had just been overturned. I suddenly felt at peace, having come to a conclusion as to what I would convey from this experience. Leading up to this undercover black-op, I troubled myself with how I could describe my experience as well as address the sprawling human stain that is poverty on an individual, community, state, national and world-wide level.

I realized my freedom to editorialize on this topic through the knowledge that no matter what my experiences were, no matter how I was treated, and no matter what I say in the aftermath, only the shock of becoming broke and homeless themselves is enough to move common people of any faith to action.

I was raised a literalist Christian in a very poor, mostly-immigrant town on the Texas gulf coast. Even then, the religious affluent did not come to the aid of those suffering in the streets outside. Indeed, the town simply split into several parts – the rich, white neighborhoods and the poor, non-white neighborhoods. This "flight" of sorts can be seen in all aspects of our society.

But things have changed since I was a child. Today's reality is not as much "white flight" as it is "rich flight." The middle class of America is the Upper Class of the world. And those fortunate enough to be pulling down millions in our country are literally the global elite, even if they don't flex that muscle but for their own benefit. As our monies become increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few, those left without economic Manifest Destiny are simply locked out. Now the infamous gated neighborhoods run

by Home Owners Associations like miniature banana republics are becoming the desirable norm for the elite. I call this phenomenon what it really is: a Gulag for the rich, increasingly paranoid from being surrounded by "undesirables" of the lower class.

Why should the well-to-do help the poor and forgotten when there is so much undeveloped land to aid the further spread of this sociological oddity? Broaden the tax base, they say. Expand the infrastructure - damn the torpedoed. Those left behind when the wealth moves elsewhere are stuck in what has literally become economic apartheid. My freedom from this self-imposed oppression came in knowing that no matter what I say or do, things simply do not change without consensus. And consensus is the farthest thing from reality in modern America, let alone between Christian denominations and the world's major religions.

Christ commanded his followers to help the poor; indeed, the book of Proverbs calls such kindness a form of worship. Buddha said that a man with love in his heart considers the entire world part of his family. The prophet Mohammed urged disciples to live the "ideal" life by rejecting greed and giving a portion of their wealth to the poor. And in spite of the shared goals of these faiths, America – the melting pot of the world, the home of all cultures, the most affluent and wealthy nation on the face of the planet – claims more poverty-stricken citizens than all third-world countries combined.

What did I learn from my covert invasion of this local house of worship? Poverty is truly a flaw in the human character, fueled by greed, perpetuated by war, in a cycle that will not end until we as a species heed the words of our most followed philosophers. Until the actions of our faithful reflect the teachings of their prophets, mankind is doomed to repeat its own torrid history.