

\$1.50 Per Copy

CRAWFORD, TEXAS

Vol. 7, No. 20

MAY 17, 2006

www.lonestaricon.com

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Brazil Launches First Uranium Enrichment Facility

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil — With no objections from the international community, including the United States, Brazil launched its first uranium enrichment facility two weeks ago.

The plant in Resende, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, will produce fuel for Brazil's two nuclear power plants — a similar feat that Iran has been trying to accomplish to the chagrin of the Bush administration.

Brazil, whose constitution bans military use of nuclear energy, maintains that the plant is for industrial and commercial purposes, not military. While the country signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, its government finally allowed IAEA inspectors to see the Resende plant's equipment in November 2004 after an agreement was reached to protect the facility's designs.

Brazil expects to export enriched uranium on the global market and open seven more nuclear plants over the next two decades, but in the meantime with the \$172 million Resende plant, it intends to cut its own imports which cost the nation \$16 million annually.

Greenpeace has said that Brazil's new factory wrong for the environment, especially when other nations are investing in non-nuclear energy alternatives.

Green Tea Has No Health Benefits: FDA

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Food and Drug Administration reported last week that after studying 105 articles, it has rejected a petition for a beverage label that would have back claims green tea reduces risk for heart disease.

According to a letter posted on its website, FDA said that it found that there is no credible scientific evidence connecting green tea or green tea extract with assuaging the risk factors of cardiovascular disease.

The FDA's rejection prevents the petitioner — Ito En Ltd., a Japanese company, and its U.S. subsidiary — from printing such claims. In the past, the U.S. agency has said green tea, a brew from the leaves of *Camellia sinensis*, has no properties that reduce cancer.

Green tea's popularity has grown over the last decade because of the belief the beverage contains health benefits.

Divine Strake Delayed, For Now

LAS VEGAS — Rumors of a delay came to an end last week when lawyers for the Pentagon and U.S. Energy Department announced that the detonation of 700 tons of an ammonium nitrate-fuel oil mixture at the Nevada Nuclear Test Site will be postponed until after June 23.

Nevada Test Site office of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) confirmed the postponement last Tuesday which was due to scheduled legal proceedings in U.S. District Court in Las Vegas.

This lawsuit was filed by Reno attorney Robert Hager for a group of downwinders in Utah and Nevada as well as the Winnemucca Indian Colony so that a full environmental impact statement can be performed on the test site with input from those possibly effected to assure that they would be safe from atomic particles of previous tests in the 1950s and 1960s.

Critics and opponents of the Divine Strake blast, which was to have taken place on June 2, cheered the delay, saying the federal government has not sufficiently assuaged their fears that the explosion will throw radioactive contaminants from the site across state lines. A 10,000 foot cloud is planned to rise over the site, according to the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA).

The Defense Department, though, noted that results from a study of the revised environmental assessment found "no significant impact" to the environment.

Nuclear arms opponents, including Hager and his clients, have said they want the test halted permanently because

the purpose of the blast is to calibrate nuclear and conventional weapons to destroy buried bunkers, as the DTRA — an arm of the Energy Department — and the NNSA have stated. The U.S. Congress banned the development of low-yield nuclear "bunker buster" weapons in 1994.

Western Shoshone Indians also want the test stopped because it is scheduled to take place illegally on their ancestral lands, as outlined in the Treaty of Ruby Valley of 1863.

Regulators for the states of Nevada and Utah have called for more information from federal scientists on the possibility of air pollution from toxic materials released by the blast drifting across the Nevada Test Site borders.

Utah's delegation to Congress, Orrin Hatch, a republican Senator, and Rep. Jim Matheson, a Democratic congressman, have repeatedly questioned the federal agencies handling the test on public health concerns. Sen. Hatch was a major force in passing the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Amendments of 2000. Rep. Matheson's father, a late governor of Utah, died from exposure to radiation of the atmospheric nuclear tests in the 1950s.

DTRA and NNSA officials have expressed that a mountaintop pit explosion, like the Divine Strake, will not occur during lightning season from mid-June to mid-July.

No federal agency has explained why the test should be performed with such haste, said a spokesperson for Nevada Democrats. The state of Nevada expressed no problems with the test during the public comment period last December.

BP Texas Refinery's Emissions Calculations In Question

TEXAS CITY — Questions are being raised as to whether the nation's worst polluting plant is accurately documenting its pollution emissions. If mistakes are found, the BP PLC oil refinery in Texas City could face more federal fines.

Environmental Protection Agency data indicates that this Texas City refinery produced three times more pollution in 2004 than in 2003. EPA's Toxics Release Inventory says that BP reported a release of 10.25 million pounds of pollution in 2004, up from 3.3 million pounds the previous year.

The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration has already cited BP with a record \$21.3 million fine for 300 safety and health violations found there after a March 2005 explosion that injured 170 workers.

A BP spokesman said that the current pollution estimates in question are "on-paper calculations," not measurements on site. A spokesman for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality noted, too, that the accuracy of the BP's reported figures lies not with its actual emissions, but its reported emissions.

Still, increase or not, pollution from the refinery is real, said Eric Shaeffer, founder of the Environmental Integrity

Project, a Washington-D.C. based advocacy group. BP, however, notes that all

pollution emissions at the Texas City Plant dropped by 40 percent since 2000.



CC, Etc.

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402 N. Ave. G (Hwy. 6), Clifton



The Lone Star Iconoclast (USPS 022-833) is published weekly, on Wednesdays, by Smith Media, Inc., P.O. Box 420, Crawford, TX 76638 and 310 W. 5th St., P.O. Box 569, Clifton, TX 76634

Periodicals Postage is Paid at Clifton, TX 76634.

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

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

DEADLINES: 5 p.m. Fridays.

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Highway To El Vez

Interview With
**Robert
Lopez,
The
Mexican
Elvis**



By **NATHAN DIEBENOW**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

SEATTLE, Wash. — Robert Lopez wears his politics on his jumpsuit.

As “El Vez,” the Mexican Elvis, he uses the iconic status of the King of Rock & Roll to infuse his own brand of political activism onto the world stage.

Don’t call him an Elvis impersonator, though.

He’s an impressionist that uses East Tupelo, Mississippi’s proudest son as a starting point to open dialogue between the Latino and non-Latino communities, which in turn empowers Latinos, educates non-Latinos, and entertains both.

Lopez’s shows, for instance, draw from the same flamboyant stage presence as Elvis with frequent costume changes, kung-fu choreography, and female back-up singers.

The borders blur from there.

The ladies behind the mics — the Elvettes — help sing back up to songs like “Immigration Time,” whose album ver-

sion starts off with the introduction to the Rolling Stone’s “Sympathy for the Devil” and then segues into Mexicanized verses inspired by Elvis’ “Suspicious Minds”:

“I’m caught in a trap / I can’t walk out / because my foot’s stuck in this border fence.”

Almost two decades into the persona, Lopez granted the **ICONOCLAST**’s Nathan Diebenow a phone interview last Friday to discuss his musical and political influences, his thoughts on the current immigration movement, and his summer performance plans.

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ICONOCLAST: A friend of mine introduced me to your music in college. Your album notes introduced me to the late folk singer Phil Ochs with the quote: “And if there’s any home for America, it lies in a revolution, and if there’s any hope for a revolution in America, it lies in getting Elvis Presley to become Che Guevara.” Who introduced you to Phil Ochs?
EL VEZ: I don’t know. I guess I read

about him. I read a lot of music stuff. I’m a music kind of guy, not so much a geek, I guess. I know someone like a friend didn’t say, “Here, listen to this,” or like I borrowed an album from them. It must have been an article or a music book regarding him. (laughs)

ICONOCLAST: You know, Tom Waits has said that when people ask him where the ideas for his comes from, he’s all like, “Ah, it’s a boring story.” So it’s been known to happen.

EL VEZ: I can remember when I heard about Tom Waits.

ICONOCLAST: When was that?
EL VEZ: When I was 16, I was in a band called the Zeros, a punk rock band. We were part of the L.A. scene from when X started and the Germs and all that stuff. We lived in San Diego, but we’d drive up to L.A. and play our shows. We stayed at this hotel called the Tropicana, and we saw this weird looking scraggly guy with a hat — he used to wear more slacks — and he had done an interview at this ho-

tel that we were staying at, and he used to live at the hotel, and we used to stay at that hotel all the time. (In the interview), he said, “Yeah, there’s all these little Mexican kids with pointy shoes here hanging around the hotel nowadays. That was us because we used to wear these pointy boots and pointy shoes that we’d get at TJ.”

ICONOCLAST: So that was the first press you got, huh?

EL VEZ: I guess so. (laughs)

ICONOCLAST: El Vez has been around for well over a decade now. When did his alter ego Robert Lopez become socially and politically aware?

EL VEZ: Um, I’ve always been socially aware. My aunts and uncles were really politically activated. One was in the Brown Berets which were like the Latino Black Panthers. They used to do the Caesar Chavez rallies and marches when I was a kid. That was in the ‘60s. I was born in ‘60, so throughout the ‘60s, when I was

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a kid I'd see my aunts and uncles being politically active. It was something that was in the family. My aunts and uncles were socialists and did marches, and so it was something that was always kind of there.

ICONOCLAST: How did the El Vez part of your social activism start?

EL VEZ: I used to run an art gallery called La Luz de Jesus in Los Angeles. I had curated a show with a theme of Elvis Presley. It was all a folk art theme with folk artists from across the nation like Rev. Howard Finster and John Bach, and we'd always have these great art openings with each different show which were kind of thematic. I had hired an Elvis impersonator, but he was really bad, but good enough to inspire me. You know, "Heck, I could do this. I could be El Vez, the Mexican Elvis!"

After four months, we had two independent films on Elvis screening daily and Elvis music, and Elvis die-hard fans would come there and hang out *all day long*. It was really a funny scene. I remember half-way through the month thinking, "I'm really going to hate Elvis or go all the way." The fans said, "Oh, the place you gotta go is Memphis, Tenn. Every year they have a Weep Week, like a Dios de Muertos, where Elvis is celebrated on the anniversary of his death." It's an international event with an Elvis 5K run, impersonators galore, swap meets, film festivals, and symposiums, and just everything Elvis.

So she told me there's this place where they have impersonators, so she gave me a number. I called the place. I said, "Oh, this is Bob Cabada for El Vez, the Mexican Elvis. We'd like to book him on your show." "Oh, yeah, great! We've heard of him." Which was a lie because I hadn't existed before. He got me on the show. I wrote some words on the plane and practiced in my hotel room. I didn't know anyone in Memphis, so if I bombed, it was okay. I didn't know anybody. It was kind of like a test to myself: "Just go out there and do it. See what happens." It backfired because here I am some years later and I'm still doing it. It's been a good experience. It's taken me a lot of places. It's given me great opportunities.

ICONOCLAST: What time did you go out to Tennessee? The late '80s?

EL VEZ: August 16, 1988, was the very first El Vez performance.

ICONOCLAST: Since then, how has your audience changed over the years? Do youths of today know who Elvis is?

EL VEZ: Everyone knows about Elvis. I would say my audience tends to be older these days, more my age. It's odd playing to 18-24 year olds because Elvis just doesn't mean as much as other people, so they can't take past references. Music-wise, I use a lot of classic rock and older stuff in reference, so a lot of kids won't get the joke and the pun and the satire and the homage. It's not just a joke, but they won't get a lot of the references because it's different music as opposed to using Beyonce and Fall Out Boy as musical touchstones to do stuff. I'm using music that touched me as a kid and that was something that I was using.

ICONOCLAST: I guess, if it was my generation, I'm 26, they'd have to use New Kids on the Block.

EL VEZ: Yeah, it's a different thing, but entertainment-wise, there's costume changes, choreography dancing — I mean, what we're doing is mash-ups. We were doing mash-ups back then only with

live music opposed to a DJ doing it, so it's got a lot going on musically and then there's the social-political content or the theme of the shows that I'm putting on. There's lots to appreciate and enjoy so you don't have to be an Elvis fan to take on an El Vez show.

ICONOCLAST: With comedian Margaret Cho, you're going to be co-hosting the Miss Exotic World 2006 (www.exoticworldusa.com/) in Las Vegas, Nevada, over Memorial Day weekend.

EL VEZ: Yeah, it's a great thing. It used to be out in the desert of Hellensdale and it was this great museum made by Dixie Evans. It was like a great folk art — I love folk art stuff — so it was a great folk art museum, a tribute to burlesque. Dixie Evans was a dancer in the '50s during the golden era of Vegas, Rat Pack, all that kind of stuff. She had opened a museum with pieces in it of Gypsy Rose Lee and all the other famous burlesque queens, but it was really actually just three double-wides (mobile homes) connected together. It wasn't regulation. It was falling apart. Things weren't behind glass. People were stealing stuff, and it was like this big run-down thing, and it was in the middle of the desert — in the middle of no-place — because Hellensdale is the closest. The next biggest city is Barstow, which isn't a metropolis.

But every year they'd have this big burlesque festival, and women would come across the nation and compete. It was a great thing. Last year, they had the biggest one ever. It had these great stages and tons of camera crews. It was the biggest one, but it had gotten too big, so the city closed it down, and the museum was shut down. To keep it alive, they moved it to Las Vegas, so this will be the first year it's in Vegas, but it's a great competition with great performances.

ICONOCLAST: How did you become an emcee at this, "the 16th sequined year of the world's premier competitive Burlesque event?" Is this your first time?

EL VEZ: This is the second time. The first time was last year. I have become emcee for the burlesque shows by I don't know. It just happened. They all were El Vez fans, so now they fly me to — I just did one in Nashville. I did one in Vancouver. I've done one in New York. It's fun to do burlesque things. So somehow I became the new godfather of burlesque emceeing. It's my new sideline. I got that — burlesque emceeing — doing weddings, and El Vez-ing.

ICONOCLAST: Have you worked with Margaret Cho before?

EL VEZ: No, I haven't, so that will be fun. I like her stuff. I just recently have become watching her stuff to have a background on her. It'll be fun.

ICONOCLAST: I imagine she's going to draw some of her crowd in. But where do you think your audiences come together?

EL VEZ: I like it because I have big diverse audiences. A lot of the burlesque people fall into the rockabilly scene sometimes, and so a lot of those American roots followers are El Vez fans. I have other types of fans — art crowds, college kids, socio-political activists, and older crowds, too, so my audience ranges. That's a nice thing. My audiences are kind of blurred, so I like that. It'll be exposure for her crowd, too.

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, because I know



Cover of El Vez's new CD

that her latest album "Assassin (2005)" has a picture of her dressed like Patty Hearst during the heiress' more militant days, which shows that Cho is a little bit more militant these days.

EL VEZ: Which I think is a great thing. ICONOCLAST: So while we're on the subject of bombshells, I was a little worried for you because the Pentagon had scheduled a June 2 detonation of 700 tons of chemicals at the Nevada Test site.

EL VEZ: Oh, really? I didn't know that. ICONOCLAST: Yeah, it was going to be 65 miles from Vegas.

EL VEZ: Oh, that's why we're doing it before. (laughs)

ICONOCLAST: (laughs)

EL VEZ: There's a troupe called the Atomic Bombshells, so I'll have to take note of that.

ICONOCLAST: Well, they've postponed the "Divine Strake" test until June 23, so I'm glad you guys aren't going to get fallout from the radioactive contaminants left over from the test site. But let me move on to the topic of immigration. How do you feel about the current wave of activism coming from the community of Mexican nationals who are undocumented workers that are threatened by HR4437?

EL VEZ: I thought it was great. Seattle had two great ones, and the Seattle Latino population isn't that evident just being around there, but when you went to the marches, it was like really great because you couldn't see the end of the march. I mean, it was over 20 blocks and then around the corner. I mean, I tried to find the end of the parade, but it didn't end. Someone said that there was a count of 200,000 people. I'm not sure what it was, but it was really nice to see it politically felt and active in a town that isn't known for its Latino awareness, and that it's happening nationally is a pretty good effect.

I've gotten really pessimistic, though, because to be in the marches is great but it doesn't seem to do or make any difference these days. I mean, I was in another march a month ago for the third anniversary of wars, and it was interesting that the immigration turnouts were bigger because you'd think that war is a bigger, global concern, and it was such a minimal turnout. It was great to say that when the immigration thing came out, the Latino turnouts were so much bigger, and you know, I remember being in San Francisco when the first Afghan war

started, when the whole world was protesting — a million people in London all against Bush. I mean, he was the man most protested across the whole globe, and the thing still went on. I'm just getting very pessimistic, but I mean, you still have to fight. You still have to make an effort, but it's like, I don't know what help they're doing. I'm sure they're helping and making people aware, but it's just by the Congress or people taking action after people protesting. I'm getting real disillusioned, but you still have to do it. You have to try.

ICONOCLAST: Well, I know that it raised a lot of awareness, and it did energize people and that's a positive because it gets them out of fear, but I've been hearing a little bit of backlash.

EL VEZ: Yeah, it's stuff like that. I wouldn't think there would be but—

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, it's mainly from the Latino community that's been here for a couple of generations.

EL VEZ: Yeah, it's a weird thing. Lots of times, Latinos become conservative after they get what they want. It's an ongoing fight, in my opinion. I mean, there isn't one revolution. It's a constant change of guard and struggle, so there's lots of times, Latinos who were immigrants who struggled through say, "Oh, I got mine, and I'm going to make sure it's not going to be taken away. Let's keep other people out." That's the wrong way to be. It's sad.

ICONOCLAST: In your opinion, how should this community be treated by the U.S. government and society? Should they receive full amnesty? Should there be a temporary guest worker program? Do you think that U.S. corporations are really trying to help these illegal workers?

EL VEZ: I guess, I'm in a middle amnesty thing. I think there could be some middle way to, you know, how many years, who has families — I mean, I think it can be taken individually step-by-step as opposed to a blanket call for anyone who doesn't have family. That's how they do other immigration papers on a one-to-one basis, so I think an amnesty could work through regulation if let's say so if a child was born here, you can't leave the child. I think there's middle ground. Maybe I'm being too optimistic about that, but I think that could work.

ICONOCLAST: What about U.S. corporations? Do you think they're really try

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ing to help these people? That was another kind of criticism, in which these people were rallying and boycotting businesses.

EL VEZ: Corporations I'm not too optimistic on real help on their vantage point because it's usually like the bottom line, the money, and how is that helping us? The corporation says, "What do we get out of this? So I'm always weary and hesitant of corporations being honest about. "Oh, we're trying to help."

ICONOCLAST: How well do you think the mainstream media is reporting on this issue? I mean, I don't know if you watch CNN, but it turned into the Lou Dobbs channel, in my opinion.

EL VEZ: No, I don't have TV at home. I'm an NPR (National Public Radio) listener, and so I just put NPR in the background day-to-day, which is one-sided, I guess. I should switch channels back and forth just to see. But how well is the media representing it? Well, NPR is seems fair, but it all depends on what media you're listening to, I guess. So I haven't heard the Lou Dobbs one on CNN because I don't have TV at home.

ICONOCLAST: That's fair. As an artist whose lyrics are socially conscious, how do you feel about President Bush saying that the United States' national anthem — The Star-Spangled Banner — should only be sung in English — after Jon Secada sang the national anthem in English and Spanish on Bush's campaign trail and at his first inauguration?

EL VEZ: I think it's horrible. This is supposed to be a melting pot. It's supposed to be a mix of languages and cultures, so I think it's terrible.

ICONOCLAST: Have you ever considered covering the Spanish version of the U.S. national anthem?

EL VEZ: Um, there you go! Let me make note of that because I am supposed to sing the National Anthem at Miss Exotic World, so that would be a good point. I have a great Uncle Sam outfit, so I was going to wear that when I sing the National Anthem, but it also happens to be a break-away Uncle Sam outfit. I was thinking about doing a striptease and go from the National Anthem into "Immigration Time." I have these great Mexican flag bellbottoms that I would wear underneath the breakaway Uncle Sam outfit. But the National Anthem in Spanish would be great. (laughs)

ICONOCLAST: Awesome. I'm glad I'm inspiring you. (laughs) Well, have these demonstrations in general inspired you to go into the studio and write another album?

EL VEZ: No, not yet. The goofy thing is I've been singing these songs and different ones for such a long time, and after a while, I was thinking, "Oh, I'm just being redundant doing these songs." And now I'm thinking, "This is sad that these songs still mean so much and so appropriate for today." Does that make sense?

ICONOCLAST: Yeah.

EL VEZ: I was feeling sad. I thought that we had moved on — not that my song had changed the world. I had been singing these songs for 18 years, and I had thought we had gone past this, like we can sing about new problems, but it's sad to me that this song is still relevant today.

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, now the world is covering you, so to speak.

EL VEZ: Yeah, can't we fix this and go one forward? A new thing that is scaring me, though, is the whole "1984" of the

whole world situation, moving from the immigration thing, but just the whole idea of the NSA wiretappings and why more people aren't scared about that is the spooky thing to me.

When I did the "El Vez for Prez" in 2004, I did a version of David Bowie's "1984," the song, only I did it in 2004, how the Patriot Act changes things to make the government under the false sense that, "We'll give you security and we take away your civil rights. We'll make you feel safe because we'll be watching you."

So this whole idea I guess has inspired me. I guess that's the new fear that is spooky to me — how civil liberties are being taken up, how the latest polls say that 50 percent of the people are fine with their phones being listened to if it's going to help us catch terrorists. It's like listening to your grandma talk about her gall bladder — I mean, all the waste of millions of millions and the phones have been tapped since 9/11. And now they are just telling us now.

And the idea of letting Hayden be head of the CIA from the military operations and seeing the military is the CIA is the government, and people are fine with that? To me that's a scary thing, and I guess that's the inspiration of how come we're not shouting about this? How come we're not protesting in the streets? I am glad those people are protesting the streets for the immigration stuff, but some people say, "Oh, I'm not effected by immigration or something," but everyone is being tapped, and people are saying, "Oh, they're watching out for us." I don't know. It's scary times, and I guess to be in fear is inspiration, I suppose. (laughs) Inspiration to do something about it.

ICONOCLAST: Talking about your songs coming back into relevance, on your album "Graciasland," you have a song called "Go Zapata Go!" which is about the Mexican revolutionaries of the early 1900s who fought for the poor people's land rights in Mexico.

EL VEZ: Yeah, and later I did a different version and it was about the Zapatistas, or I guess I do it live. Hmmm—

ICONOCLAST: I haven't heard that one.

EL VEZ: Yeah, I did one in Spanish about the Zapatistas and the one from "Graciasland" is about the Zapatas and usually live I do the one about the Zapatistas.

ICONOCLAST: And the leader of the Zapatista rebels, Subcomandante Marcos, is travelling around Mexico.

EL VEZ: Yeah, that's a nice romantic P.R. move I'd say. I mean, it's his own "Motorcycle Diaries" trek of Mexico.

ICONOCLAST: And he's basically denouncing all the candidates ahead of the July 2 presidential election.

EL VEZ: I do like that. It's a good thing. I mean, see, South America is in the mind of let's get the people, and America sees that as the fear: "Oh, we gotta watch out! Latin America, South America are now nationalizing the gas." Things like that, they're putting the people back in the power of the government seats, and the idea of "Yeah, we are the people. Let's work for everybody," and then America is saying, "Oops! That's wrong. You've got to let the businesses do this." That's what's so scary to me that's so basic, you know, people trying to help the people as the majority, and you guys are saying, "Oops, that's wrong. They're evil commu-



El Vez

nists or something." That to me is scary. ICONOCLAST: Switching gears, I looked on the Internet and found that the last feature film you starred in was in 1993. You played a party DJ.

EL VEZ: Oh, yeah, "Mi Vida Loca" with Allison Anders.

ICONOCLAST: Since then, you've been in a television special, "The True Meaning of Christmas Specials," and an HBO documentary, "Americanos: Latino Life in the United States."

EL VEZ: Edward James Olmos produced "Americanos." And there was a documentary done on me called "El Rey de Rock and Roll" which came out at the same time as "Americanos."

ICONOCLAST: But you've only done one feature film. Why no more feature films?

EL VEZ: I'm not pursuing it, I guess. I'm doing theater stuff. I'm working for this thing called Teatro Zinzanni right now. That's live theater. I'm working on a one-man show for next year on a 1980s performance artist. I'm working on a theater thing here in Seattle. I don't know. I guess live theater has been interesting me and movies—

ICONOCLAST: Sounds like you enjoy the immediate gratification of live performances.

EL VEZ: Yeah, it's a live thing. Whenever you're in a studio for TV or movie stuff, it's the boring-est thing because it's all in reverse and so dead of the live actual moment and response of live action and live response. I guess that's what I get for coming from rock and roll. Yeah, I feel more gratification from live performances.

ICONOCLAST: Is that why you become a full fledged reverend who marries couples?

EL VEZ: I always thought that a good politician, a good rock performer, and a good religious leader are all so similar. It's a live performance where you reach the people to get enthusiastic about a subject. I mean, politics, religion, and entertainment are all performances, and when you have a good person doing it, it can really be inspiring. (laughs)

So yeah, I do at least three weddings a year, and I'll be doing one at Miss Exotic World. I be marrying a Japanese woman and an English man. And then I'll be doing a wedding for Anton LeVey's grandson in Los Angeles.

ICONOCLAST: How did you end up doing that? Anton LeVey started the Church of Satan in the '60s.

EL VEZ: He contacted my agent. That was really funny. Hank Williams III will be performing. Glen Danzig is going to do a performance. Rudy Ray Moore, the black comedian from '60s — he's really great — is going to be doing a performance. They asked me to be the reverend. At the end of the night is the wedding with Anton LeVey's grandson. He contacted my agent, and I said, "Sure, that sounds great." (laughs) So I'm going to be "Hell Vez."

ICONOCLAST: Oh, boy! (laughs)

EL VEZ: But it's going to be on June 6, 2006, so 6-6-6 — he's calling it the evildest day, or something like that.

ICONOCLAST: Right, so he's not converting to Christianity for the service?

EL VEZ: No, we're writing a special demonic service, I suppose. (laughs) I don't know if we have to sit or stand in a pentacle or a full-fledged satanic service.

ICONOCLAST: Any blood going to be involved?

EL VEZ: He didn't. Not yet. He did want
Continued On Next Page

School Finance Legislation Reaches Perry's Desk

AUSTIN — On Friday, the Texas House signed off on a rewrite of a Senate bill that proposes cutting school property taxes by a third by 2008.

The proposal includes a \$2,000 a year pay raise for every public school teacher, plus funds earmarked for high school enhancements. Also included was a requirement that the school year start day be set for late August every year beginning in 2007.

The 136-8 vote by the House will send the bill to Perry's desk, where he is expected to sign it, along with related legislation spun off during the fourth special session designed to change how public schools are funded in Texas.

Other measures include an overhaul of the state's business tax, including adding non-corporations to the franchise tax fold, plus a change in how used cars are taxed — by blue book value instead of transaction amount.

Perry will also likely consider a \$1 tax hike on a pack of cigarettes and a second tax cut bill that lawmakers are still debating.

McLennan County's state representative, Jim Dunnam (D-Waco), chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, criticized the Republican majority with fostering illusions for taxpayers, including the idea that the intended changes will improve schools. He described the language as enabling private companies to take over schools lagging behind state performance expectations "vouchers steroids."

With school finance apparently over the hump, Gov. Perry has added new measures to be taken up during the special session, including legislation that would ban protests or other disruptive behavior at funeral and burial services

Domestic Spying Probe Dies Over NSA Clearance

WASHINGTON — Denied requests to get security clearance from the National Security Agency, the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility last week ended its investigation into President Bush's domestic spy program which uses warrantless wiretapping on U.S. citizens.

Confirmation of the halted investigation came Wednesday in a letter faxed from OPR to the office of Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-N.Y.), a critic of the spy program which was revealed last December.

Hinchey said he and other lawmakers would get to the bottom of why

for Texas military men and women and legislation that would transfer the administration of the Irma Rangel School of Pharmacy from Texas A&M University - Kingsville to the Texas A&M University System Health Science Center.

Also added were:

- Legislation that provides for the issuance of revenue bonds or other obligations to fund capital projects at public institutions of higher education.

- Legislation that provides for an appropriation to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to fund debt service on revenue bonds

Letter Sheds Light On Geronimo's Stolen Remains

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — A letter written in 1918 by Winter Mead, a member of Yale University's Skull and Bones society, claims that the secret group stole the skull of Geronimo from the famed American Indian leader's grave in Fort Sill, Okla.

Mead wrote in the letter that these remains are at the group's headquarters, a stone tomb in New Haven, Conn. Club lore indicates that President Bush's grandfather, Prescott Bush, and other Skull members removed Geronimo's bones during World War I.

The researcher who found the letter last fall, Marc Wortman doubts that the bones are Geronimo's; however, the famed Indian's great grandson, Harlyn Geronimo of Mescalero, N.M., said that the letter might help him find a lawyer to file a lawsuit against the U.S. Army.

the security clearance was denied by the NSA.

Launched in February, the OPR's investigation was to determine whether lawyers for the Justice Department broke ethical rules, not to find potential legal trouble in the NSA, according to a Justice Department spokesman.

The White House has maintained that the eavesdropping program is important to national security, confined only to communications from Americans suspected of al-Qaida ties, and subject to supervision from both executive and legislative branches of government.

or other obligations on capital projects at public institutions of higher education.

- Legislation relating to appropriations to pay for damages and disruptions suffered by Lamar University and its related institutions caused by Hurricanes

Katrina and Rita.

- Legislation relating to the recovery and securitization of reasonable and necessary hurricane reconstruction costs incurred by certain electric utilities outside of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas area.

Crawford ISD Election Results

(two at-large seats)

* Charlie Kasperian (I)	393
* Terri K. Bukowski	352
Rick Williams (I)	220



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Highway To El Vez

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me to be in red body paint, I passed on that one.

ICONOCLAST: (laughs)

EL VEZ: Luckily I do have a red vinyl Elvis jumpsuit. (laughs)

ICONOCLAST: Right on, so what else is on your plate this summer? Are you coming back to Texas anytime soon?

EL VEZ: No, I'm working on a new show that will be premiering in Spain this summer. There's a great band here in Seattle called the Briefs, a punk rock band, but what I'm doing in the show — there was a band called Sha-Na-Na. Did you ever hear of them?

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, yeah.

EL VEZ: What Sha-Na-Na did for the '50s, El Vez is going to do for '76, '77, and

'78 punk rock. It's kind of a glammed up punk rock mash up of that period. The Briefs are going to be my back up band, not my regular El Vez band. It will be just these guys. It'll be very Rocket from the Crypt shout-along lyrics, guitar, choreography of the punk rock period. We're debuting it at a festival called the Crossroads Festival in Gijon, Spain. We're just marketing it to the Spanish and German market because they love American punk rock so much, so that it's custom made for them. I'm sure we'll do a show here in Seattle before we go there, but that's what our project is for this summer, so it'll be fun.

INFO

El Vez's Website: <www.elvez.net>



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Greetings, from the bottom of the birdcage!
Hatch an egg to see what's inside...

Minuteman 'Rumble at the Ranch'

By WALT HARRISON
FREELANCE PHOTOJOURNALIST

CRAWFORD, Texas — The Minuteman Project rolled into Crawford Texas just after 1 p.m. on Saturday during a sudden downpour to meet up with other border security and immigration reform groups around Texas and other parts of the nation.

Jim Gilchrist, co-founder of the Minuteman Project, arrived late to a hero's welcome from the crowd of 300 or so attendees. Gilchrist proceeded immediately to ring in the proceedings with the large Liberty Bell between two large Granite slabs that took the form of the Ten Commandments.

There were more than a dozen scheduled speakers and some were obviously slipped into the program at the last minute.

To the speaker President George W. Bush was the main target with the prevailing theme being the perceived border security and immigration policy failures of this President.

Curtis Collier, president of U.S. Border Watch, offered his 10-point plan that called for 10,000 more border agents, a huge volunteer army of border watchers under federal supervision and stricter enforcement of all existing immigration laws.

Arthur Loux, Independent candidate for U.S. Senate from Texas, proposed the firing and deportation of all 12 million illegal immigrants. Also proposed was the immediate withdrawal of all available public benefits that illegal immigrants may qualify for now in any state. Finally he called for increased fines for employers that hired undocumented workers.

Ray Herrera, a Vietnam veteran from California, blamed corporate America for the immigration crisis in this country arguing that in order to get corporate support politicians were forced to turn their heads away from the problem so corporations could keep their cheap laborers.

Frank Jorge, of Texas Minuteman, called for President Bush and other politicians that did not support strong immigration reform and stricter border security to be replaced in the next election with those that do.

Frank Morris, former Senior U.S. Foreign Service advisor, stated Bush was not telling the truth when he said immigrant



RINGING in the RAIN!

Jim Gilchrist (right) greets the Rumble on the Ranch audience after ringing the Liberty Bell in Crawford.

— Photo By Walt Harrison

workers were taking the jobs Americans did not want. He claimed the unemployment rate among American workers was higher than that of undocumented workers.

Jim Dillion, Constitution Party candidate for Texas Governor, believes politicians don't support stronger border security and stricter immigration reform because they are Devil worshipers and traitors. He then asked anyone that did not own a gun to please not vote for him. Dillion also claimed to have worked for



BORDER SECURITY was one of the topics discussed during the Rumble on the Ranch recently in Crawford.

— Photo By Walt Harrison



Curtis Collier, president of the U.S. Border Watch, was among speakers at the rumble.

— Photo By Walt Harrison

the CIA and NASA at some time in his career.

Other speakers spoke of immigrant workers as "lazy," "infesting" parts of the country, considered illegal aliens the equivalent of an "occupying army," and considered the 9/11 tragedy directly related to the failure of the enforcement of border security and immigration laws on the books at the time.

There were calls for the United States government to redirect its military to reinforce border security and to round up

illegal immigrants for deportation. Proposals included the use of local and state law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws.

At 3 p.m., the Crawford Peace House held an immigration press conference, which, by contrast to the rumble, was decidedly much quieter and peaceful.

Johnny Wolf, long-time peace and civil rights activist and co-founder of the Crawford Peace House, offered his take on matters of immigration reform and

Continued On Next Page

Minuteman 'Rumble at the Ranch'

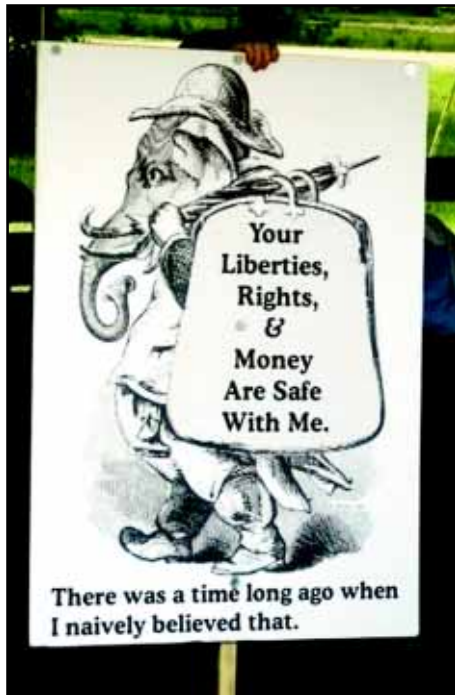
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border security.

Handouts included an article "Blame NAFTA" by David Morris, which makes a compelling argument that the reason for the immigration crisis in this country is directly related to the negative impact of the free market reforms NAFTA and GAFTA on the economy of Mexico and other Latin American countries.

According to the material, NAFTA so destabilized the Mexican economy that it created a condition where over time the unemployment rates in Mexico went up and the standard of living went down over the same period. This created a condition in Mexico and other Latin American countries that fostered the mass migration across the United States border as a means of survival.

By contrast, the European Union noticed when the flow of immigrants increases, it is because the income gap between the two countries widens.



ONE OF THE SIGNS displayed during the Rumble the Ranch appears here.

— Photo By Walt Harrison

According to the EU, sustained economic growth is necessary in those countries where immigrants come from in order to slow the flow to a reasonable and manageable level.

Domingo Garcia, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) National Civil Rights chairman states: "We seek social justice and a path to earn U.S. residency." Presi-



A CHALLENGE — Mexico, try a day without America, was one of the displays at the recent Rumble.

— Photo By Walt Harrison

dent John Kennedy said, "Our origins may be different but our destiny is the same. Our aspirations are America's. There can be no artificial distinctions; no arbitrary barriers and no unjust laws to deny these rights."

According to Garcia, "As Catholics, Christians, the Gospel calls us to love and stand in solidarity with the poor, the stranger, the least among us. Indeed Christ's love provides the foundation for our advocacy and work for just and humane immigration reform."

Hector Flores, president of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), said, "This is a historic time for our country and for the Latino community. We cannot let up now."

"Procrastination now will only worsen our immigration crisis and lead to needless pain and suffering for those who pick our food, build our homes, care for our children and economy as well as provide so many other essential services to the American people."

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PEACEFUL GATHERING — The Crawford Peace House was the site of a gathering of individuals who took a different view on immigration than attendees at the Rumble on the Ranch. However, both groups criticized President Bush.

— Photo By Walt Harrison

Requiem For A Gentleman

As Uncle Hugh use to say, "Class will tell, and bullshit smells."

"I sure did hate to see that nigger beat that white man."

That crude quip from the passenger seat of my driver's ed class was how Floyd Patterson first got my full attention.

I was a teenager who had long since hung up my gloves with a record of one and one.

One short jab that sent my 10-year-old opponent running to his corner crying.

One left hook a week later that I'm still looking for.

So, at age eight, I retired with the sure and certain knowledge that all fighters are crazy.

And that the best and worst of human experiences happen in a rope-surrounded canvas-covered square.

But even while I was trying to parallel park, couldn't recall anybody saying something like that about Joe Lewis or Sugar Ray Robinson.

Nobody was sorry to see Jake LaMotta get his hat handed to him.

Five times. Maybe it was because Ray Robinson really was the greatest.

By Ali's own account.

But how do you measure greatness?

By God's gift or human struggle?

First, Floyd Patterson was not a heavy-weight.

He was too small.

Originally a middleweight, he was too short and too lithe to belong in the big money class.

Officially listed at six feet, most agree he was probably five-ten or eleven.

Some say perhaps as short as five-eight.

There are also those who say he only made the 200-pound weight in several fights because an official turned a blind eye when he stepped on the scale in his shoes and gloves.

He carried an unnatural 30 to 40 pounds with him every time he entered the ring.

He earned the title in 1956 from the ageless Archie Moore, who, although born in 1913, was the only fighter to face Lewis, Marciano, and Ali.

Moore lasted five rounds.

Then Floyd Patterson took one of the worst beatings in ring history.

Ingemar Johansson, one of the only European fighters who could actually move his head, knocked him down seven times in three rounds before the referee stopped the fight.

Remember, this was in an era when fights were stopped only when the homicide detectives showed up at ringside.

Patterson's eye was closed, his jaw broken.

He was done.

Nobody ever reclaimed the heavy-weight title.

In the rematch he threw the undisputed "best ever punch in boxing."

Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



Johanssen hit the canvas like a rag doll.

Then the incredible happened.

The count barely over, Patterson rushed to the still prostrate Johanson, held him in his arms, asking if he was all right, promising him a rematch.

It was the greatest moment, not just in the ring, but in sport.

But for all that, he was an uppity nigger who knocked out a white man.

Patterson, on a European tour, was welcomed in Johansson's native Sweden like a national hero.

Back home, he often wore disguises to escape the abuse when he went out.

The promised rematch was a war.

In the first round Johansson scored two knock-downs, and the champ returned the favor.

In the sixth round, Johansson was knocked out so convincingly he quit boxing and became a marathon runner.

He and Patterson always remained friends.

Two fights later Floyd Patterson was brutalized by ex-con Sonny Liston, a mobbed-up thug whose controversial defeat launched Muhammad Ali's flashy career.

Don't get me wrong.

Ali was a great fighter, and I will always consider him as simply The Champ.

He is not to blame for the smoke-and-mirrors mugging that boxing has become, a television show with more belts than a tequila bottle and more drama at the press conference than inside the ropes.

In fact, when the aged Patterson challenged Ali and lost a tough TKO, Ali crossed the ring and told Patterson he was a great champion; that it had been an honor to face him.

Ali did not change boxing.

We did.

There's an old referee's warning: "Okay, boys, they came to see a fight, not a dance."

Now, we come for the dance.

Boxing has always been a vicious, dirty, often crooked, habitually mean and exploitive business.

All that is disgraceful about it frequently, these days usually dominates the ring.

Floyd Patterson kneeling in the ring, holding his shattered opponent and promising a chance at redemption, He died Thursday, suffering from Alzheimer's and prostate cancer.

Winner.

And still... Heavyweight Champion of the World!

Editorial

AT&T, BellSouth, Verizon Destroy Public's Trust

AT&T, BellSouth, and Verizon have become part of the Bush spy team and have sold out their customers to one of the most power-hungry, lyingest administrations to walk the face of the earth.

By turning over their customers' records, which carry approximately 80 percent of the nation's landline calls and half the wireless calls, to the NSA, they have betrayed any confidence regarding the right to privacy and are assisting in the piecemeal destruction of American democracy.

Had customers been warned in advance that these records would be turned over, it might have been a different story. Might.

But that did not happen.

The companies willingly embraced the covert fetishes of an administration out of control, one that the general population is just now seeing for what it really is.

How can these companies seriously say "they value their customers' privacy" with such a betrayal?

Another company, Qwest, refused the government's request for the records, despite heavy pressure by the NSA, that included a suggestion (threat?) that Qwest might not get future classified work with the government (reported by USA Today), and that the company believed "these requests violated the privacy requirements of the Telecommunications Act."

However, a recent poll indicates that there are some moronic "Americans" who don't have a problem with being spied upon in this manner. After all, Bush says the secret collection of millions of ordinary Americans' phone calls with

which to build a database of all calls within the country isn't exactly listening-in.

NSA argues that the agency is using the data to analyze calling patterns in an effort to detect terrorist activity, with the goal of creating a database of every call ever made within the nation's borders. This, of course, reveals the communications habits of millions of Americans and, in the hands of those who believe in political retribution or control, could be easily developed as a tool to undermine privacy as a pre-9/11 luxury.

What was once a right to privacy would become merely an occasional, if ever, privilege, and an empty one at that, for it would be unceasingly abridged.

President Bush says that limits have been placed on his spy initiatives and that we have forfeited to his personal discretion very few of our rights. He says the NSA has been merely collecting records of who was called and when.

No domestic eavesdropping.

This from a president who lied about weapons of mass destruction, knowing at the time they were lies, followed by a vast array of falsehoods that goes on and on, to the extent that it is shockingly rare when he tells the truth.

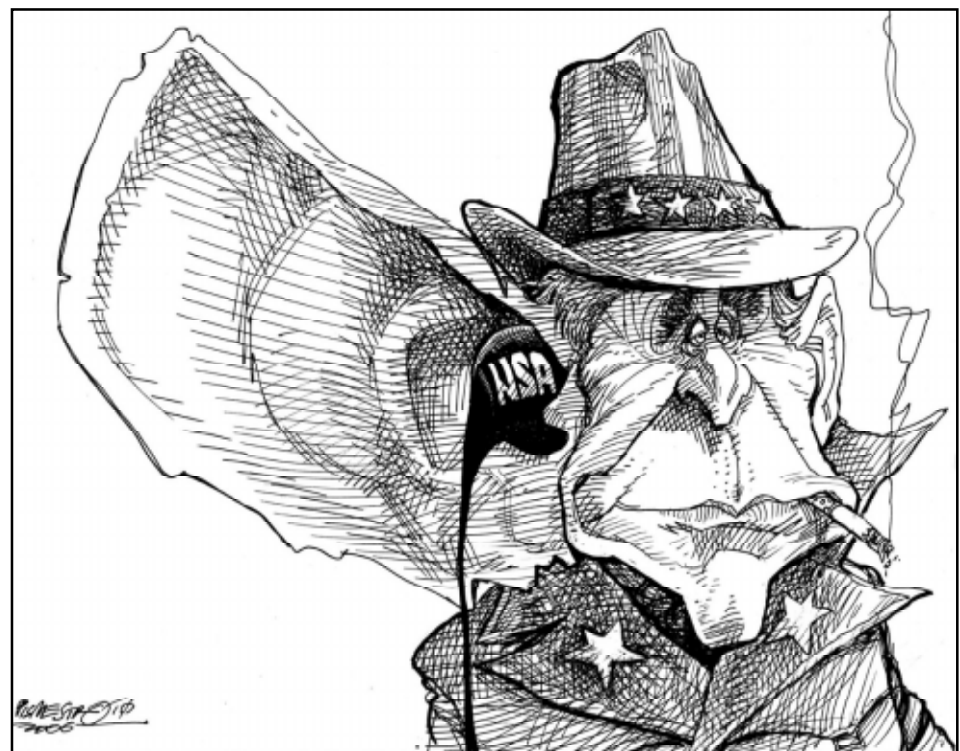
How do we know he is not lying about this spy charade?

Based on past experience, it is likely he is.

As we march backwards to "1984," with the death gaze of "Big Brother" watching our every move, a military government intent on "protecting us" cannot be far behind.

Fool me once, shame on.....you.
Fool me twice, shame on.....

— W. Leon Smith



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Attach A Vacuum Nozzle To Your Mammilla To Show Mom You Care

Soon, it will be Mother's Day.

For many of you, it means sending a flowery card that says all the wonderful things you'd say if only you had a thesaurus and someone from Hallmark breathing down your neck. The truth is, the true meaning of Mother's Day has been lost over the years thanks to stupid greeting cards filled with heartfelt phrases like:

If your love were an ocean, you would've drowned me as a child.

Or,

When I think of love, I think of you. Because of this, you have no grandchildren.

Or,

With every smile, I remember a special moment that will never ever be forgotten.

Happy belated Mother's Day!

The true meaning of Mother's Day, as any mother will tell you, has absolutely nothing to do with flowery cards or fond memories — and everything to do with sacrifice. That's right. You want to let Mom know you really care? Forget about comparing her to "a beautiful rose laden with thorns of caring," and, instead, remember all the stuff she endured for you even before you HAD a memory. If you're not sure where to begin, I have two words for you:

Breast Pump.

True, not every mother utilized this



By
Ned Hickson
Siuslaw News

torture device, but the mere thought that she could have is reason enough to be grateful. If you don't believe me, go right now to the nearest full-service car wash, attach an industrial car vacuum nozzle to one of your mammilla, push the on button, and keep it there until your chest resembles a deflated balloon animal.

Then switch sides.

Repeat this process three times a day for at least six months, WITHOUT the aid of alcohol.

And remember that breast pumping came after nine months of losing control over most of her bodily functions. This included food cravings, which came as a result of your needs inside the womb; needs that, in some cases, could gag a contestant on Fear Factor. But she did it anyway, in spite of the fact that, as you were developing and shaping, so was

she: Developing swollen feet the size of couch cushions, and taking the shape of a giant Weeble capable of destroying Tokyo. Keep in mind that during this process, she was still merrily preparing for your arrival by hanging borders, assembling mobiles, making trips to the doctor, all while visiting the bathroom once every three minutes.

Then finally, to show your appreciation upon arriving into the world, you treat her to an episiotomy.

Chances are, you won't find any of this in a greeting card. Mainly because there are very few phrases that rhyme with "episiotomy."

Although "The things you taught-a me since your episiotomy" has potential.

That's why I'm mentioning it here, so that hopefully, someone, somewhere, will read this and offer me a job at Hallmark.

Okay, that's only part of the reason. The main reason is to say "thanks" to all you wonderful mothers out there, especially those celebrating their very first Mother's Day.

You know who you are. And if you don't, try turning down that breast pump a notch or two.

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

Death Continues To Shroud Iraq As Lives, Shrines Topple There

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Death has not taken a holiday in Iraq, where this week-end violence erupted near the Iraqi capital, claiming 34 lives and leveling six Shiite shrines.

A suicide car bombing near a main checkpoint road leading to Baghdad International Airport claimed 14 Iraqi civilians and wounded six others, according

to the U.S. military.

A roadside bomb attack north of Basra claimed the lives of two British soldiers and on Sunday, two U.S. soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb in east Baghdad, said sources.

Since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the death toll of U.S. troops and military civilians is reported by the mili-

tary to be 2,439. Some 106 British troops have been killed during the same timeframe.

The shrines included four in Wajihiya, about eight miles southeast of Baquba, one in Balad Ruz, east of Baquba, and one in Kanan, about six miles east of Buquba., primarily by bombs planted by gunmen.

Texas Farm Bureau Backs New Drought Monitoring Technology

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Citing widespread drought conditions all across the Lone Star State, Texas Farm Bureau President Kenneth Dierschke today voiced his support for a House resolution that will improve forecasting capabilities and make drought information widely available to all citizens.

The National Integrated Drought Information Act of 2006, introduced by U.S. Rep. Ralph Hall (R-Texas), will help es-

tablish a national early warning system for drought conditions to assist lawmakers at all levels of government, agricultural producers and all citizens in making more timely decisions to reduce drought impacts and related costs. If approved, it also earmarks \$94 million over the next six years to assist in the system's implementation.

"This legislation will be of significant benefit to agricultural producers as well

as the various state and federal agencies working to address weather monitoring systems," Dierschke said.

Although adept at providing timely and accurate short-term forecasts, Dierschke said current weather information systems do little to prepare farmers and ranchers for the impact of extended periods of drought or weather-related disasters.

"By the time the news of a rain front is reported, decisions have been made, crops have been lost and economic disaster becomes a companion of the natural disaster," he said.

In Texas alone, drought-related damages cost the state's agriculture industry an estimated \$1 billion in damages in 2005, losses that were only magnified by the million-acre wildfires sweeping across the Texas Panhandle in March. And while recent rains over some parts of the state have provided welcome relief, the state as a whole remains in a severe drought situation, Dierschke said.

"HR 5136 is an investment in new technology and systems that will benefit the nation far beyond an individual farm or ranch," he said. "But speaking on behalf of those farmers and ranchers, Congressman Hall's bill will certainly help us prepare for an all too uncertain future."

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'Hippo' Makes Big Splash In Big Leagues

"Hippo" Vaughn awoke on May 3, 1917, the day after losing the only double no-hitter in major league history, and tried to tell himself that it had just been a bad dream.

James Leslie Vaughn grew up in Weatherford, the Texas town west of Fort Worth where he was born in 1888. And did he ever grow... to a height of six-foot five inches — unusually tall for the turn of the century.

Determined to earn his living on a diamond, Jim Vaughn started playing baseball straight out of school. He stayed close to home for the first couple of seasons, pitching for Temple in the Texas League in 1906 and the next year splitting time between Corsicana (North Texas League) and Hot Springs (Arkansas State League).

In 1908, five years before changing their name to the Yankees, the New York Highlanders called up the strong-arm southpaw. But the youngster was not quite ready for prime time, and the parent club sent him down to Scranton for the rest of the season.

Another year in the Highlander farm system did the trick. With a new curveball and a change-of-pace to go along with his fastball, Vaughn was a spring-training sensation.

Manager George Stallings had such a high opinion of the lefty that he let the 22-year-old take the mound for the first game of the 1910 campaign. Ninety-six years later, the Texan is still the youngest opening-day pitcher in Yankee history.

The rookie more than held his own that season. Although his 13-11 win-loss record was not particularly impressive, his 1.83 earned run average, 18 complete games, and five shut-outs ranked among the best in the American League.

But a sophomore slump that saw Vaughn drop 10 of 18 decisions and his ERA soar to 4.39 shook his confidence. When he stumbled out of the gate in 1912, losing eight of 10 starts, the Yankees dropped him like a hot potato.

A four-victory rebound with Washington was not enough to keep him in the nation's capital or the majors. But the Chicago Cubs decided to take a chance on the left-hander in July 1913, and he responded with five wins, including two shut-outs, and a 1.45 ERA.

The gypsy pitcher had found a home at last. For the next seven seasons, Vaughn was the dependable workhorse of the Cubs' pitching corps.

His stats say it all: From 1914 through 1920, Vaughn averaged 293 innings, 40 starts, 23.5 complete games, 4.7 shut-outs, and 20.4 victories against 13.3 defeats. His ERA was never higher than 2.87, and twice was below 2.00.

One of the unwritten rules of baseball is that everybody must have a nickname. Vaughn picked up his after putting a few extra pounds on his stocky frame. A smart aleck compared his peculiar walk to that of a hippopotamus, and the unflattering sobriquet stuck.

On May 2, 1917, "Hippo" Vaughn faced Cincinnati's Fred Toney in front of 3,500 scattered spectators at the Windy City's Weeghman Park. Both hurlers had good stuff that afternoon and totally dominated the other team's batters.

At the end of nine innings, neither the Cubs or the Reds had a run or a hit. For the first and last time in major-league history, two pitchers had thrown no-hitters.

Many years later, "Hippo" himself

This Week In Texas History

By Bartee Haile



gave a play-by-play of the fateful 10th inning. With one out, the Reds' Larry Kopf smacked one of Vaughn's deliveries "into right center" for "the first hit of the game."

The next batter hit a fly ball to center field for the second out. "Hal Chase also hit a fly out that way. Williams got both hands on it and dropped it. Kopf got to third (on the error), and Chase reached second."

"Indian Jim Thorpe sent a swinging bunt toward third. I knew I couldn't get

Thorpe at first, so I fielded the ball and scooped it toward the plate.

"Now, some of the writers said that Wilson (the catcher) didn't expect the throw. The truth is that Art just went paralyzed. The ball hit him square in the chest protector and then dropped to the ground."

The stupefied catcher stood by as Kopf scored the winning run, and Toney pitched his 10th no-hit inning to end the one-of-a-kind game.

Vaughn went on to win a career-best 23. He was even better in 1918, leading the National League in victories, earned run average, strikeouts, innings, and shut-outs.

Three years later, "Hippo" was washed up in the major leagues. His record was an awful 3-10, when he gave up back-to-back home runs to the Giants on July 9, 1921. The Cubs skipper sent him to the

showers, and he never came back.

Vaughn knocked around the bush leagues for 16 more years, pitching for clubs like the Beloit Fairies and the Logan Squares until finally calling it quits at age 49. He retired with 401 lifetime victories (178 in the majors and 223 in the minors), one of only seven pitchers to reach the 400-win plateau.

In spite of his accomplishments, Jim Vaughn never made it to Cooperstown. What about Waco, home of the Texas Sports Hall of Fame? Nope, "Hippo" is not there either, and that makes no sense at all.

"Outlaws & Lawmen" - "Best of This Week in Texas History" Vol. VI available for \$10.95 plus \$3.25 postage and handling from Bartee Haile, P.O. Box 152, Friendswood, TX 77549. And don't forget to visit www.twith.com.

Overdosing On 'The Da Vinci Code'

The movie isn't even out yet, and I've already overdosed on "The Da Vinci Code." Publicity about the book or the movie is inescapable, as are the many commercial offshoots from Team Da Vinci. There is a Da Vinci Code jigsaw puzzle, a Da Vinci Code travel journal, and a Da Vinci Code board game. There is also, "Fodor's Guide to the Da Vinci Code" which follows the paths of the novel's characters. I assume there are other commercial enterprises I'm just not aware of. There must be a Da Vinci Code mobile to be hung above baby's crib as well as Da Vinci Code breakfast cereal, guaranteed to be controversial and taste good, too. And would any of us be surprised in the near future if we hear that Broadway is welcoming the Da Vinci Code musical?

Some people feel the book is a wonderful piece of literature, and others feel it is offensive blasphemy. I don't fall into either of these categories.

When I read the book, I didn't understand what all the fuss was about. I considered it to be in that genre of literature that I call "airplane books." You know what I'm talking about. You usually buy them at the airport store, and you read them all the way through on the flight. They are the kind of books that are best read in between destinations, at least 30,000 feet above sea level. They make the trip go faster. You don't care if you spill something on them. You can skip a chapter or two. They are heavy on fast, page-turning plot, and light on character development. They are filled with so many holes in logic that they are best not discussed — or even thought about — after you have landed and grabbed your bag from the overhead bin. I'm not saying



Modern Times
By
Lloyd
Garver

"The Da Vinci Code" is a bad book, but a 747 seems a much more appropriate place for it than a library.

I know millions of people disagree with me. That's okay. It's happened before — especially around election time. Declaring a book to be "good" or "bad" is a subjective thing. And I couldn't say anybody is "wrong" for liking the book or even thinking it's a great work of art. It just didn't do it for me. And even if I had given the book the benefit of the doubt, I never would have guessed that it would have spawned a popular jigsaw puzzle.

The other element that has surprised me has been the outrage that many people feel about the book. The Pope is not a fan of the book and he's not going to be a cheerleader for the movie. Other religious groups are equally aghast. When I was in Indianapolis, I watched a late-night TV preacher demonstrate point by point how inaccurate the book was. Of course, it's inaccurate — it's fiction!

And that's what I don't get. Don't all of those who feel that it's sacrilegious know it's a novel? It's just a story. A guy made it up. It's pretend. Nobody is saying this is a true story.

When religious people in the Middle East condemn a work of art, a cartoon, or a piece of fiction, we label them irrational extremists. How different has

some of the reaction to the fictional Da Vinci Code been?

And come on, how offensive do they really think a movie from Tom Hanks and Ron Howard is going to be?

If I wrote a humorous story and said that some archaeologists discovered that Moses was actually given tablets with eleven commandments, not ten, and the eleventh commandment was, "Thou shalt always turn off the light when thou leavest a room," I don't think religious leaders would be upset. They'd think it was either stupid or amusing, but not an attack on their religion. So, why has "The Da Vinci Code" — a piece of fiction — touched such a nerve in our culture?

Of course, the author, publisher, and filmmakers are doing nothing to extinguish the controversy. It has only made "The Da Vinci code" even more popular. I wonder how many more movie tickets will be sold because of the opposition of religious leaders.

I guess it will all blow over after the movie's out for a while. In the meantime, I'm pretty sick of seeing things having to do with "The Da Vinci Code." But I can't deny its power. Somehow, it made me write a discussion of "The Da Vinci Code" in which my main point is that there's too much discussion about it.

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

Solid Waste Advisory Meeting May 18

WACO — The Heart of Texas Council of Government's (HOTCOG) Solid Waste Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday, May 18, beginning at 10 a.m., in the HOTCOG conference room located at 300 Franklin Ave. in Waco. The meeting is open to the public.

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services are requested to contact Erica Sullivan at 254/756-7822 two days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

TDD calls may also be placed by dialing 254/756-7822

Bush's Load Is Too Much Excess Weight

I would love to sit at my computer and paint a picture of an exquisite day, where grass grows lush green as flowers bloom in glorious Technicolor splendor with a sweet fragrance of freshness under warm, azure skies.

Living is calm and secure; problems are minor, easily overcome or shrugged off.

Not a perfect World, of course, that would be ludicrous — or Pat Robertsonian.

Nor a perfect United States, which would be Herr Rovian (psst: The World is in his sights, the plan well in motion).

It's impossible for me to dismiss this feeling of dread I carry around within my gut, as though 100 pounds of dead weight has been heaped upon my spirit.

I began to sense it around early November, 2000. With the passage of weeks and months, the onus became increasingly more noticeable. After five-and-one-half years, the load is crushing in its weight.

(Well, the Cubs' recent eight-game losing streak didn't help.)

Throughout my youth and somewhat beyond, we "baby boomers" — more often than not dudes born after 1950 — were regaled with tales of phantasmagoric wonder and discovery that would be achieved resultant to human endeavor at the outset of the 21st Century.

So, with that in mind I, and it's a reasonable assumption many of my generation as well, anxiously awaited the coming New Millennium.

Many of us genuinely wanted to be part of the New World. I began grad school at 40, during the 1990s, just to prepare.

Unfortunately, about 20% of us saw the opportunities for amassing power and wealth in the coming 3rd Millennium. They only wanted to begin the New World Order.

Curious how much difference one word — five letters — can make.

We all know who the "Man Behind the Curtain" is, overseeing the takeover from a hideout of relative comfort. Yes, it is kindly, jovial, ever affable Herr Oberst Karl Rove.

And, why were we led to believe that beneficent King George XLIII insisted Herr Rove leave his position of Uber-importance in the West Wing? Because it is an election year, as if this wasn't in the Master Plot all along. Now unfettered by law, Karl has free rein to pull any kind of deviant tricks he can concoct on Democratic candidates.

Herr Oberst Rove has already begun the Summer Blitzkrieg, firing some early salvos a month or so ago about how the Liberal Democrats would govern in a most un-American manner, not at all in keeping with and displeasing to Philosophie von Rove.

Republicans on the Hill have already had their tax cut votes, in which they kissed the asses of the excessively wealthy, ripped new ones for virtually all other citizens, and stuck it to the next president — no matter how honest and hard-working that person might be — if there even is another election.

In case you missed it, the simplest breakdown of the new tax package goes like this: The average American couple earning around \$20,000/year gets an extra \$10 refund, around \$60,000/year gets an extra \$110 on paper (better figure closer to \$30); that Bush White Tie base, aka two-tenths of one-percent (0.2%) at the top of the pile, get nearly \$42,000.00 (forty-two thousand dollars) more off



Out Of The Blue

By
Jerry
Tenuto

their taxes — as if their accountants allow them to pay any now.

Of course, because the only "new" ideas he ever has are which nasty stories to smear all over an opponent or family, Herr Rove will have his GOP subjects on the attack with the tried-and-true chestnuts of genuine zealotry: Same-sex marriage banned by Constitutional Amendment (let's use the singular document in the World written expressly to provide people freedom and happiness as a tool to deny human rights); new restrictions on abortions; and restraints upon government spending — pure hypocritical hubris, as it's been under Herr Rove's careful guidance that King George has allowed Donald "Rummy" Rumsfeld to go nutso on military spending while the Conservative GOP has gone pork bonkers.

The main reason Herr Rove is no longer "officially" on the White House staff should be fairly obvious. This preemptive shift makes it unnecessary to go through all kinds of rigmarole when the indictment(s) is (are) handed down. See, the new guys are all in place and running with their jobs.

This way, whatever scenario unfolds, Herr Rove remains free and unencumbered to rule the RNC roost.

Meanwhile, millions of good, Christian, even Jewish, Americans who should know better buy the bullshit.

Does anybody know if Karl Rove has retained his security clearance? If so, why? What, exactly, is his "need to know" status?

Who out there in *Readerville* thinks for one moment that Herr Rove did not have his tentacles in "The Decider's" nomination of Air Force Gen. Michael V. Hayden as the next CIA director?

There are enough Congresspersons and Senators on both sides of the aisle disparaging this Bush selection. It would be difficult under any circumstances to accept an active duty four-star general as head of this most sensitive, civilian-manned intelligence-gathering agency. But, all things considered — wars on two fronts; an ineffective president; a bullying vice-president; a secretary of state who never speaks a straight sentence; an inept, untruthful secretary of defense; half of the Planet's occupants out to fry us — what the job needs at this time is someone removed from the Militical Machinery of Washington, D.C.

For starters, Hayden has no actual field experience, at least not since last Century, yet King George wants to put him in charge of human beings who live, work and die in hostile environs. He comes from an agency where electronic surveillance is the game.

And, gee, who's been spying on Americans for the past five years? Gen. Mike Hayden. He's even gone around speechifying that it's perfectly hunky-dory to spy on U.S. citizens, and damn the Constitution.

Not only that, Hayden flat-out lied to all America when he said that the NSA "eavesdropping" programming only concerned itself with possible calls to and

from al Qaeda types overseas. We now know he was the "architect" of the massive collection of data, billions of calls, provided without a whimper by the three major U.S. carriers — AT&T, Verizon and BellSouth.

This gargantuan abuse of power has been operating in secret, wholly in disregard of any rights to privacy, since as soon after 9/11/2001 as it was possible to have the plot up and running. This is nothing less than a black ops mission against Americans!

And, as Hayden's reward, Bush wants to put its overseer in command at the CIA!

We're expected to believe Rummy when he tells us that this radical shift in command at the CIA is not a power play. The other guy whose tales we are supposed to buy, John D. Negroponte, has spent his life getting paid to lie. He insists a military officer at the helm of every intelligence agency will not provide Rummy with a power base to control all intelligence via the military. Together their explanations make hogwash.

A military officer as head of every intelligence-gathering service of the U.S.A. will bring us one step closer to tyrannical rule. Every dictatorship and despot nation — Nazi Germany, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Saddam's Iraq, etc. — have utilized such a system. It makes all things, i.e. the citizenry, so much simpler to control.

One more General in the ever-tightening BushCheneyRumsfeldRice Cabal, that includes Marine Gen. Peter ("I wanna keep this job as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs that was my reward for agreeing with the Iraq war plot") Pace and retired Gen. Tommy ("Mission Accomplished") Franks.

It seems to me there was something in reference to upholding the Constitution when I took my Army oath. Didn't these schmucks take the same oath?

The proper path is allegiance to the Nation and our laws, not extending blind faith to whatever putz happens to occupy the Oval Office and anything he declares to be "law." This becomes all the more important when that person is a moun-tebank who was never elected to the office in the first (or second) place.

This blind faith, or *Fuhrer prinzip*, an ideology dreamed up by the Nazis to give Hitler unbridled powers, is running rampant at all levels of the Government hierarchy.

For instance, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson is an African-American. I suppose it looks good for the Bush Regime to have a person of color in a job that normally deals with issues affecting people of various minority persuasions.

This only works when the appointee is not a servile bureaucrat, more concerned with fealty to the King than any

sense of duty toward the Family of Man — to whom he has sworn an oath, they who truly pay his salary.

Speaking at home in Dallas on ways to make a bundle playing the bureaucracy game this past April 28, Jackson filled in a prominent minority real estate group as to how he had shafted a minority publisher for King George XLIII. As reported in the DALLAS BUSINESS JOURNAL, the HUD Secretary told the following story:

This small businessman had tried to get onto the HUD list for 10 years. After making a proposal that got him on the General Services Administration list in 2002, Jackson decided the fellow was worth meeting.

During their conversation, the publisher said to Jackson, "I have a problem with your president... I don't like President Bush."

Said Jackson to the audience, "I thought to myself, 'Brother, you have a disconnect — the president is elected, I was selected. You wouldn't be getting the contract unless I was sitting here. If you have a problem with the president, don't tell the secretary.' He didn't get the contract. Why should I reward someone who doesn't like the president, so they can use funds to try to campaign against the president? Logic says they don't get the contract. That's the way I believe."

This tale of abuse of office and misdirection of taxpayer funding met with laughter from the listeners.

A codicil of Federal procurement law requires absolute impartiality and a total absence of preferential treatment. It seems Jackson stepped over that boundary, as he did the Constitutional prohibition on government retaliation for disagreeable speech.

The awarding of Federal funds is not to be dependent upon party affiliation, or personal feelings for or against a particular officeholder, or the whim of the person in control of the purse strings. But then, most "decisions" of the ongoing Fascist Regime seem to be made on a whim.

By Jackson's own admission the publisher had made a splendid proposal, and most likely felt some level of comfort to speak freely at a meeting with a powerful minority person.

Unfortunately, this person was power mad.

Important players in the Civil rights and housing communities, as well as around other quarters, are now calling for Jackson's dismissal. A Congressional investigation has been requested. However, I'm afraid that, as with just about everything else in this RoveBush Fascist Regime, they'll find a way to slither out with no damage — despite the secretary's own boasting in public.

The attacks upon our civil rights have escalated from trickle down to pour down

Continued On Next Page

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• TENUTO

From Previous Page

at an ever more rapid pace. Take two incidences that have come to light in Gwinnett County, Georgia schools this week.

A junior at Peachtree Ridge High School was handed a five-day suspension for singing lyrics of an untoward nature to the tune "On Top Of Ol' Smoky."

As reported in the ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION, the girl was humming the tune during a German class wherein a game allowed for open and free discussion. When a friend asked her about the song, she sang the fractured lyrics:

"On top of Ol' Smoky, all covered with blood, I shot my poor teacher with a .44 slug."

According to the teacher, this little ditty disrupted the entire class.

His claim was the girl threatened him because he had given her a bad grade.

She said that they had discussed the grade earlier, but it was no reason to become violent.

The story went on to say the student and teacher have had disagreements in the past, even to point of prompting her parents to request she be transferred out of his class.

Additionally, Peachtree is the student's school of choice; the board has now banned her from attending there her senior year. She is being forced to transfer, after three years, to a school closer to her home.

What she sang and when she sang it, how she sang and whom she sang it to are all too sketchy to make a solid judgment. Neither being a witness nor knowing all of the details, I'm not laying blame on her or the teacher. However, when I was a kid we used to sing songs and tell riddles that were far worse than that one — both in sexual innuendo and potentially violent content — and nobody ever got suspended for using language.

Rapped on the knuckles with a yardstick, highly likely. Detention, probably. Public humiliation, of course.

But a black mark on one's "Permanent Record" for words — never. (One good thing about Catholic grade school, the only "Permanent Record" on any of us was ethereal.)

So much for teaching our youth that the 1st Amendment protects all Americans' Right to Freedom of Expression.

At the same time, in the same county, one mother — out of who knows how many thousands — made a stand to make certain censorship becomes embedded in our way of life. You remember, just like in the good ol' days of the National Socialists.

This brave, lone woman had somehow managed to turn the screws tightly enough into Georgia's largest school district to force the board to actually vote on whether or not the "Harry Potter" books should remain available in school libraries.

According to the ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION, the mother of three children who attend J.C. Magill Elementary in Loganville, Ga. wanted the books banned because they, in her opinion, glorify witchcraft.

Thus, turn back the calendar to satisfy one person's unenlightened 17th Century Salem, Mass. thinking and force it upon thousands of other peoples' children.

So, Gwinnett County officials got Su Ellen Bray, a retired school administrator from nearby DeKalb County, to preside over a hearing on the mother's appeal. Ms. Bray backed her recommen-

dation of "strongly" in favor of retention with 10 reasons:

1. The complainant (as with most overzealous folks who favor censoring something*) has not read any "Harry Potter" book in its entirety;

2. The books are popular, highly praised and encourage kids to read;

3. The books depict good vs. evil, and good wins;

4. The characters don't endorse the Wicca religion;

5. Kids who read the books are old enough to understand the difference between reality and fantasy;

6. Some of the complainant's objections take parts of the books out of context (another habit of zealots who want to tilt the scale to their side*);

7. There's no reason to assume children become abnormal just because they read the books;

8. Removing the books would set a precedent because two other school system media review panels have ruled the series should stay;

9. Teachers never required the complainant's children to read the stories;

10. To remove the series based upon the complainant's objections "would open this very fine school system to ridicule by many of its citizens as well as citizens of the nation." (Dare I say Great Britain, Harry's homeland, and most of the rest of the world as well?*)

(*My own additional commentary.)

Why in the world this would even require a vote by the board is beyond me. We are supposed to be the Nation where rule of the majority is the law of the land. To have any school district, or just one school, run scurrying from a solitary woman's ludicrous and borderline loonytoon call for censorship of any book is plainly and simply WRONG!

Well, this mother has warned the school board that if she doesn't get her way, she's taking this fight to Atlanta and the state capitol.

Thankfully, common sense won out and the Gwinnett County school board unanimously decided to keep young Master Harry and his Hogwarts Academy pals in class.

One board member whose family enjoys the books, Carole Boyce, said, "At the very heart of this matter is censorship. Our students do understand the difference between fact and fiction. Let's let those who want to read the 'Harry Potter' books have the opportunity to do so."

In response to the vote, the complainant, a former missionary (which explains all we need to know about why she tied up the school district for virtually an entire year), stated: "God is alive and well and He says it (witchcraft) is an abomination. How can we say it is good reading material?"

I'm sorry, the precise chapter and verse denouncing "witchcraft" escapes me. The good sisters at Catholic school never said it was wrong to watch "Be-witched" every week (I stopped voluntarily when Darren #2 came along).

I can't help but feel sorry for the indigent youngsters upon whose feet this woman forcibly nailed sandals — and her own children, who are either social outcasts or will in a few years be at extreme odds with their parents.

This kind of tripe goes on because we've got the minority-approved** King George who some folks, if you ask less than one-third of the population, will actually say is a good leader. Or is it we're stuck with George because people get away with this kind of addle-brained tripe?

** It's not the minority folks of color or nationality I'm referring to here.

Either way, I shouldn't be this surprised that one person can stymie an entire school system.

Before I close, let me share one of the better "Simple George's Stories."

A couple of three months ago, while King George was speechifying about what progress had been made in the ruination of Iraq, he blathered on about the city of Tal Afar. Now, we all know Fearless Leader has never been within 100 kilometers of the place, but he was so proud to brag on its success.

The U.S. and Iraq troops had fought *the enemy*, that unknown quantity that keeps changing with the blowing sands, back and forth over this city of some 200,000 folks. Well, our side had finally won, taken over the city and moved in, lock, stock and barrel. We were rebuilding buildings that had been blown up and making new friends, barbequin' and just having a good ol' time there.

It didn't take more than a few days following King George's braggadocios babble for *the enemy* infiltrators to begin harassing the American and Iraq soldiers and police in Tal Afar. Infrastructure rebuilding was soon put on hold, as it had become too hot to do anything but stay alive.

Just 24 hours or so prior to this writing, a truck bomb was detonated in the town square, killing 17 and wounding at least three dozen more.

You're doing a heck of a job, Rummy.

Instead of rebuilding Tal Afar, which is just going to get blown up again, and bragging on it, Your Excellency, why not take our tax dollars and rebuild New Orleans? Or at least lose the wreckage so the landowners can rebuild?

So you see, until we rid ourselves of this blight upon humanity with the misnomer Republican Leadership, I get to lug around this excess 100-pound load, weighing my spirit down.

I fear there's a lot of it going around as well. Too much.

But there's an election coming up this November, and it's high time we Liberals, Democrats — plus any Republicans who can think for themselves — go to the polls and kick some Neo-con, ideologue ass right out of Washington, D.C.

Next step — cleaning out our White House.

How do you spell relief?

I spell it:

THE CONSTITUTION.

(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)

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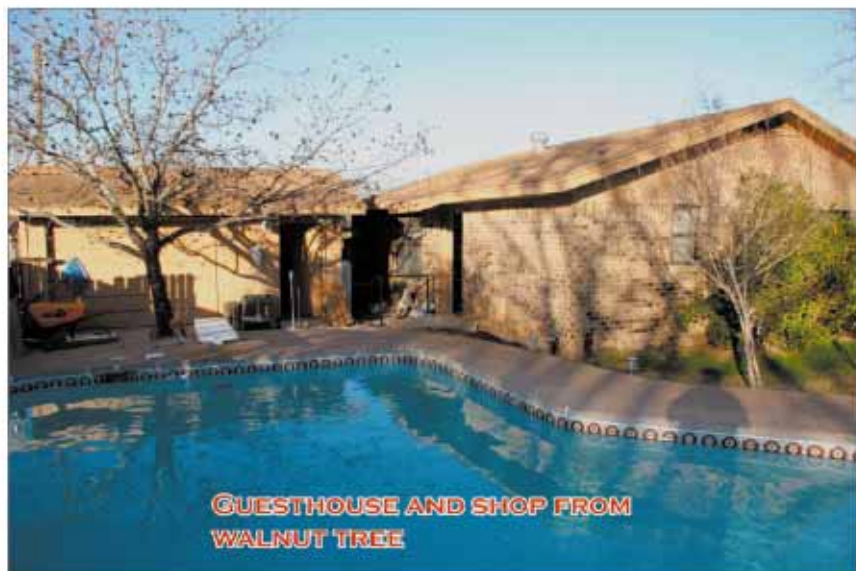


Must See To Believe!

3 BR, 2 bath brick, one BR with outside entrance, office, living room, dining room, fireplace, 35 ft. in-ground pool, patio, 1 BR poolhouse/mother-in-law house, complete woodworking shop. Back yard privacy fence, large pecan trees, and many, many extras \$189,000

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Now that everyone got to flex their muscles and mouths over the ongoing issue with Mexico and its 6 million illegal immigrants living and/or working in the U.S., it's time to resolve the issue with some fanfare and fireworks.

We can eliminate all the mutual problems faced by the U.S. and Mexico by annexing Mexico as our 51st state!

Think of it...

- We can get rid of ALL southwestern borders. There would be no illegal immigrants! All Mexicans would become citizens of the U.S. immediately!

- The U.S. would have control over Mexico's oil fields and all of its industrial works!

- The black market would lose control over illegal trade and drug trafficking from Mexico into the U.S.!

- Presidente Fox could become the U.S. Secretary of the Interior!

- Americans would own and have access to hundreds of miles of recreational beaches and waterfront properties!

- There would be no need of green



Commentary

By Peter Stern

cards or border fencing and walls.

The new state could be named *Old Mexico* since we already have a New Mexico. It's a no-brainer and a win-win proposition for everyone. What are we waiting for?

Peter Stern of Driftwood, Texas, a former Director of Information Services, 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. You may contact Peter Stern at: <pstern@austin.rr.com>.

Gift Thieves

I'm not a big fan of capitalism. It's a nice theory. Rob from the poor. Give to the rich.

Oh, and screw the earth, too. No, really, it looks great on paper. It just misses the bigger picture. That's all.

But from time to time, though, somebody turns the paper upside down, and the powers-that-be are left scratching their heads.

German authorities are — unfortunately for them — going bald.

Poor devils. Over the last few months, a gang of clever anarchists in Hamburg have reportedly been performing a little bit of wealth redistribution of their own by handing out to the poor luxury foods stolen from fancy restaurants.

This band of 30-or-so do-gooders are successfully evading police, and my guess is that they're getting away with it because they're carrying out their dynamic deeds in nifty superhero costumes.

Yeah, superhero costumes. Now, I'm not condoning these crimes against gourmet cuisine — just the dress-wear of this syndicate.

Oh, that and the polite way they gave a bouquet of flowers to a cashier at one of the stores where they plundered a bunch of £100-a-pound Kobe beef filets, some champagne, and smoked salmon.

And, of course, the time when one of their members held up a sign saying, "The Fat Years Are Over" — which is the title of a popular European film.

And their stated goal to distribute these goods to Hartz IV recipients, who are the poorest of Germany's long-term unemployed. I've got to commend these merry rascals because if we were to wait for real comic book princesses (Wonder Woman), kings (Aquaman), billionaires (Batman), aliens (Superman), and mutants (Bill Gates) to change our economic system, our brains would eventually see the light of day from

The Rubber Cement Index



By Nathan Diebenow

all the finger-tapping to our temples.

That is to say, rich people are dehumanized by this system as well. I mean, is it fair that the rich should feel the need to steal from among themselves, too?

These anarchists are just highlighting the absurdity of our immoral situation.

And to think, Germany is an industrialized country!

A pinch shouldn't draw blood neither here nor there, but it can and does.

So what are these balding Germans going to do — jail the so-called criminals or fix their so-called just economic system?

I'm not going to hold my breathe and wait.

No, I'm going to pay someone else to hold it for me.

And wait. Because that's what capitalism is: Suicide.

But wait! God didn't say, "Commit suicide."

Nor did he say, "Steal Kobe steaks."

No, he said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but give to God what is God's."

Steal a Kobe steak, fill prisons, or feed the poor, but follow God.

It's best to do that last part first.

But that's just some free advice from me to you, so you don't pull your hair out.

Actually, if the German anarchists had any clue, they'd stuff the rich with more than enough food than they'd ever need, so that their government would have no other choice but to deal with the poor fairly.

It beats a fingernail through the head.

INFO German 'Robin Hoods' give poor a taste of the high life

<http://news.scotsman.com/index.cfm?id=692762006>



To The Editor:

We Are God's Children First

Though I realize that the USA has a serious problem of illegal immigration, I can't help but imagine that American Natives, deceased and alive, are rolling over in laughter at the irony involved. The American Natives at one time were also faced with the problems that illegal immigrants brought to their borders. They feared the loss of their lives, livelihoods, and lands; and, one can almost be sure that they too expressed negative and unkind words and feelings about the illegal, uninvited and trespassing pale-faces who brought with them misfortune, violence, death and outbreaks of diseases and infections unheard of in the New World.

Almost as soon as they arrived, the illegal good Christian immigrants from Europe made it aggressively clear that "might makes right." Searching for justification to begin their Manifest Destiny, the European illegal immigrants determined that the American Natives were savages rather than humans. No further justification for conquest was required. They somehow reasoned that God had entitled them to do away with the American Natives and to take away their lands.

Today, USA citizens may worry that the same may happen to them especially if they believe that "What goes around, comes around." However, the matter is serious enough that everyone should reflect carefully as to not exasperate the problem with racial slurs, unjust accusations and judgments. If indeed laws should be upheld, they should be upheld as much as possible by all sides involved. Everyone needs to remember that this nation was started by immigrants who did not go through any legal process of immigration. Unless descendants of the European illegal immigrants are willing to accept that their forefathers were criminals, they should not be so eager today to make criminals of those crossing our borders illegally searching for a better life and better opportunities just as our European forefathers did once before.

Outraged and emotional USA citizens should refrain from judging and condemning illegal aliens and instead should focus their efforts on holding responsible the federal government which has failed to protect our borders and to safeguard jobs for citizens. In the meantime, don't forget or refuse to acknowledge that the three branches of government have been in control by Republicans. President Bush and Republicans in Congress have for some time now held out opened arms to foreign labor in the name of Free Enterprise. Furthermore, the Supreme Court is full of Republican justices who were appointed by Republican presidents. It is these justices who have ruled that it is unconstitutional to deny medical services and educational benefits to illegal aliens and their children. One can conclude that perhaps the greater crime to our country is being committed by our very own Republicans. This does not mean that Democrats have done much better; however, citizens will have to withhold passing judgment on them until and if they ever regain control of the govern-

ment.

Finally, if indeed the USA is truly a nation of Christian values and morals, we need to start working to solve the illegal immigrant dilemma by first agreeing that all people on Earth are the children of God.

However, if faith is lacking, at least acknowledge what scientists have proven to be true; and, that is that humans come from one common ancestor. If we can begin to concentrate on these commonalities, then perhaps the solution will be one in which everybody wins. Hopefully, it will also endear us or bring us closer to God. In whatever we attempt to do, we must faithfully keep in mind and strongly believe that we are God's children first, renting on God's personal property, before we are citizens of any nation or members of any race.

We must diligently recognize this fact with the uppermost reverence. Or, have we now decided to willingly, arrogantly and defiantly break the lease agreement known as the Ten Commandments?

Bob Montañez, Odessa, Texas

Mr. Smith:

*Emancipating America
from the Income Tax:*

How a National Sales Tax Would Work

The Fair Tax system is a joke supporting only rich investor types whose million dollar salaries, investments, and Stock options would be nontaxable under this plan. The Fair Tax plan would come full circle in screwing the middle and low income families of America.

Their proposal of quarterly refunds to low wage earners to offset their increase in tax payments would require government sources to know what each person earns, where he spends his money, and on what. Can you say Patriot Act intrusion in to everyone's personal business dealings?

It is a paper work nightmare for business owners and those mom and pop operators of rental homes who must collect consumption taxes. That's ok because they can keep a percentage of all the tax money they collect.

Isn't a refund the same as a tax return? Only under the "Fair Tax" it would be quarterly instead of annually.

Reducing the IRS? Creating a State IRS in all 50 states to collect and redistribute "refunds." Where is the savings to taxpayers?

The Fair Tax allows people to purchase used items tax free as they have already been taxed? That used \$9 million Ming vase is tax free but the new \$10 vase from Wal-Mart is taxable.

Give me the "Flat Tax," simple, no refunds, no tax returns to file. Income is everything everyone earns, salary, stock options, and interest income taxed at a flat rate equal for everyone.

Low income families purchasing power would be better because taxes on products would be removed just as they would be for the "Fair Tax."

A wage earner with a \$17,000 income would pay the same percentage as a CEO with a \$17,000,000 income.

Better still; we need not make a change in the Constitution to impose it.

Donald Doiron, Nederland, Texas

To The Editor:

Even when cornered and then reversing themselves, who could doubt the

veracity and sincerity behind the blandly handsome boyishness of Dr. Bill Frist or Dick Cheney's crooked, reassuring non-smile or the round, jovial and cherubic countenance of Karl Rove or Tom DeLay's dazzling, lit-up face, not to mention George's own congenial grin?

Although unpatriotic and even treasonous, some would say, one must ultimately doubt. You, George—your hollow, unrepentant politics are catching up with you and your obstinate, mendacious, self-serving leadership with still 2 1/2 years to play out, has nearly run its course, your amiable jokes and earnest delivery notwithstanding.

As the neocons have used you to further their agenda, you, in turn, have exploited a nation's trust. Do you recall your pledge to govern as a "compassionate conservative?" Twice in the Presidential Oath of Office, you solemnly swore to "faithfully execute the office of president. . ." and "preserve, protect and defend the constitution of the United States."

What about your cuts in mine safety measures and funding? Do you feel any regret as president over the Sago and Alma coal mine disasters in West Virginia four months ago? Can you defend the numerous disease-causing pollutings of streams and rivers in residential neighborhoods that you've allowed industry? In your heart of hearts, do you ever regret the Iraq war? Do you know that the framers of the Constitution created a system of checks and balances among the three branches

of federal government so that the executive and other branches could never seize absolute power? This is part of the Constitution that you pledged to uphold. Would you mind if your phone were tapped?

You're evidently proud of your role as "the decider," but do you believe that your decisions have been moral, ethical and humane? You seem secure about your honor and good will. You never miss giving a jaunty, friendly wave to onlookers as you pass by, but appearances can be deceiving.

As the Good Book says, the Devil comes bowing and smiling, or words to that effect.

Elizabeth Gerteiny, Westport, CT

To The Editor:

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

There is increasing concern about our government spending more money each year than its revenues provide. Republicans have been successful in labeling Democrats as "big spenders". Actually, the opposite has become true. Republicans are now the big spenders—big time! They are digging a deficit hole from which we may not be able to extricate ourselves.

While it is true that part of this Administration's deficit spending was caused by 9/11, it by no means accounts for the \$400 billion+ deficits being run up each year by this Administration.

The inescapable fact is that the Bush Administration, during its five years in power, has turned a large budget surplus into a huge budget deficit — a deficit that will haunt us for many years to come — and may even become irreversible.

If the President were truly willing to stop wasteful spending, he has a powerful tool at his disposal — it's called a veto! The President has not vetoed a single domestic appropriations bill during his five years in office.

Republicans have a majority in both Houses of Congress and have the support of the President. Since President Bush is unwilling to accept accountability and responsibility for wasteful spending, then I can only conclude that we should hold the President and supporters of his poli-

cies responsible and vote them all out of office.

In my opinion, the major factor contributing to these huge deficits is the President's tax cuts for the wealthy. Never, in this country's history, has the top income tax rate for the wealthiest Americans been so low during time of war. And never before has the tax rate for millionaires been lowered during time of war — it has always been raised substantially.

Moreover, the additional tax loopholes for the wealthy that have been created during this Administration have enabled many of the rich to avoid paying any taxes at all. I believe that sacrifices must be made by all during time of war, not only by our troops. It's long past time for a complete overhaul of our government. Bush cheerleaders, are you listening?

Paul G. Jaehnert, Vadnais Hts., MN
Dear Editor;

I wonder why it is OK with Bush and Cheney that the government take phone records of millions and millions of Americans, and analyze who was talking to whom, yet, they refuse the public's demand to know who the oil industry people were whom they met with in 2001, when they formed our government's energy and war policies.

Their double standard isn't simply an example of arrogant hypocrisy. It obstructs the people's right to hold our government accountable.

Fomenting a frothy fear of terrorism like they did when invading Iraq's oil fields, Bush and Cheney are invading America's privacy.

Yours truly,
Bruce Joffe, Piedmont, CA

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Karl Rove Indicted?

Charged With Perjury, Lying to Investigators, Says Truthout.org

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Former Deputy White House Chief of Staff Karl Rove has been indicted on charges of perjury and lying to investigators, according to a report issued Saturday by Truthout.org's Jason Leopold.

Leopold's report states that "Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald spent more than half a day Friday at the offices of Patton Boggs, the law firm representing Karl Rove.

"During the course of that meeting, Fitzgerald served attorneys for former Deputy White House Chief of Staff Karl Rove with an indictment charging the embattled White House official with perjury and lying to investigators related to his role in the CIA leak case, and in-

Bush Job Approval Rating Hits New Low

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Bush's job approval rating hit a new low by dropping to 29 percent, according to a Harris Interactive poll released last week.

In April, the H.I. poll showed that Bush had a 35 percent approval rating, down from 43 percent in a January poll.

In the most recent poll, 69 percent of U.S. adults said that the country was on the "wrong track." A quarter of the 1,003 surveyed said that the country was going in the "right direction."

According to a recent WASHINGTON POST report on a Gallup poll, the Bush administration's Republican support slipped by 13 percent in two weeks because of the president's spending policies.

In a related story, President Bush told a German news weekly, BILD AM SONNTAG, that the high point of his presidency thus far has been catching a fish from his own lake.

"You know, I've experienced many great moments and it's hard to name the best," Bush is quoted as saying in the interview. "I would say the best moment of all was when I caught a 7.5 pound (3.402 kilos) perch in my lake."

Bush's worst moment? Sept. 11, 2001, he said.

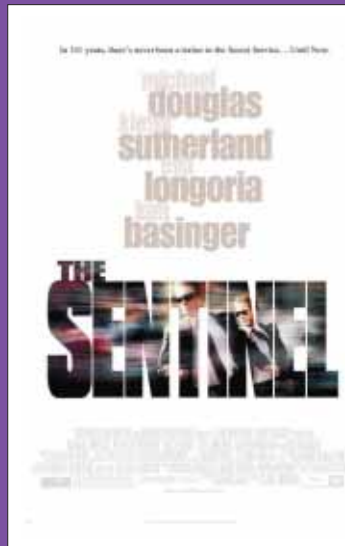
structed one of the attorneys to tell Rove that he has 24 hours to get his affairs in order, high level sources with direct knowledge of the meeting said Saturday morning."

Truthout.org reported that it was still unknown Saturday whether Fitzgerald charged Rove with a more serious obstruction of justice charge. "Sources close to the case said Friday that it appeared very likely that an obstruction charge against Rove would be included with charges of perjury and lying to investigators."

Truthout.org had reported on Friday evening that "Rove told President Bush and Chief of Staff Joshua Bolten, as well as a few other high level administration officials, that he will be indicted in the CIA leak case and will immediately resign his White House job when the special counsel publicly announces the charges against him, according to sources."

Although the mainstream media as of Sunday was yet to confirm the indictments, several statements by media sources and political officeholders indicate that a public announcement by Fitzgerald is expected during the week.

THE SENTINEL



A Special Agent is convinced that a neo-Nazi disciple has managed to infiltrate the White House. When a White House agent is murdered, the Special Agent is framed and blackmailed over an affair with the First Lady. He is relieved of his duties but won't stop trying to prove his innocence and save the life of the President. While attempting to uncover it all, he comes into confrontation with his protégé.

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