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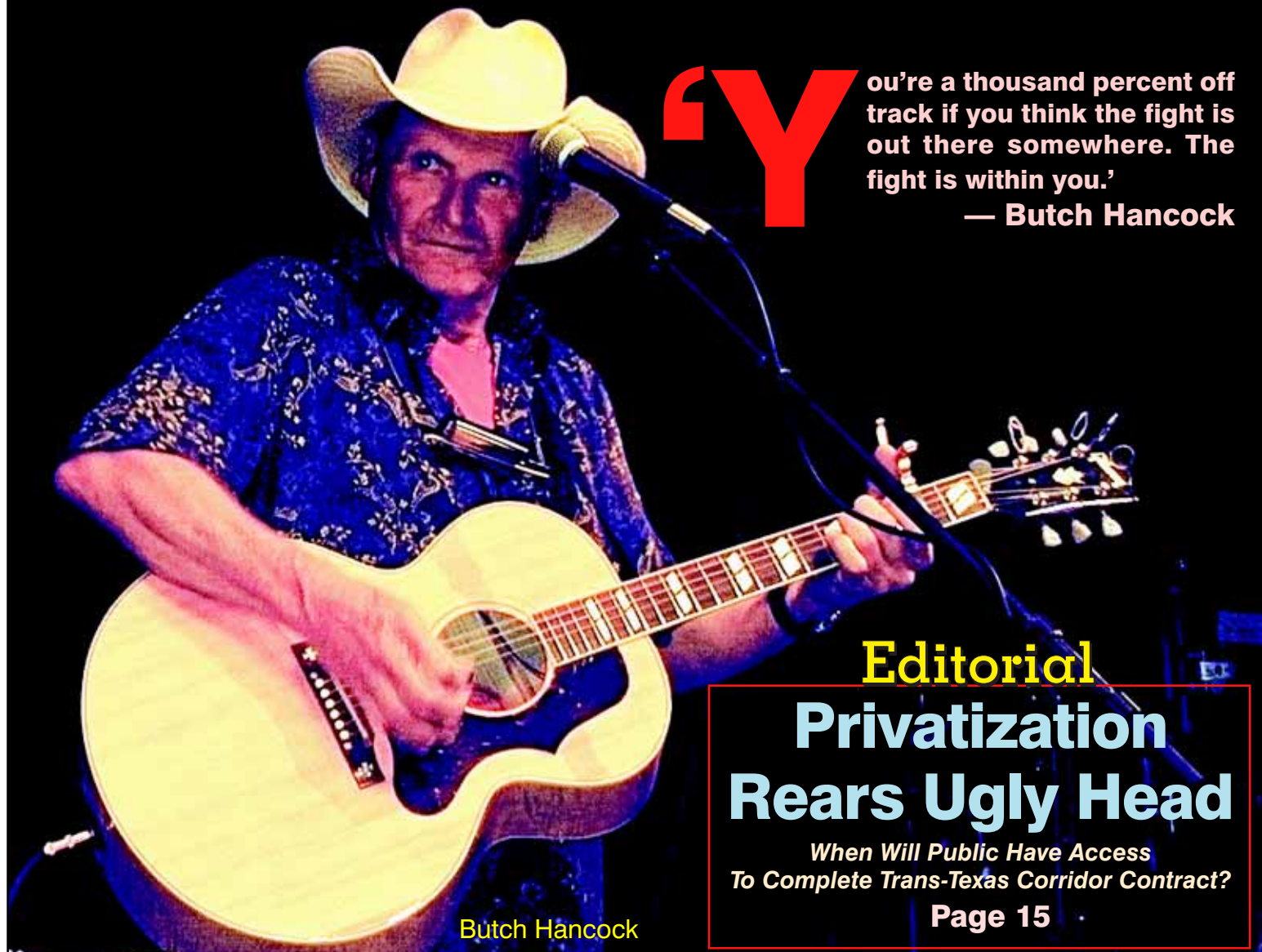
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Casualties:
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Butch Hancock

Feds Halt 'Divine Strake' Blast

LAS VEGAS — An explosion of 700 tons of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil that could have spread radioactive particulate matter 10,000 feet into the Nevada atmosphere was postponed late last month.

The \$23 million weapons test called 'Divine Strake' was scheduled for ignite over the Nevada Test site on June 2, but officials at the National Nuclear Security Administration called for the delay after a hearing in U.S. District Court in Reno.

The test is dead, according to Bob Hager, the Reno attorney who filed a lawsuit against the blast for the Winnemucca Indian Colony and Nevada and Utah down-winders. The government's attorneys asked that a June 8 hearing in U.S. District Court be canceled.

Hager added that attorneys for the U.S.

government were unable to respond to experts who filed affidavits explaining that the environmental impact information on the test failed to show the blast was safe. Federal officials said that the government would look into the scientists' claims in the meantime.

The National Nuclear Security Administration said in a court paper that it would withdraw its "finding of no significant impact" statement related to its environmental impact statement on the nature of the weapons test.

Before this newest delay, according to officials, no test would occur prior to June 23, a move that came as state and federal lawmakers from Nevada and Utah became increasingly skeptical of the test's health effects on their constituents as well as the blast's true purpose.

Divine Strake's critics worried that the blast would stir radioactive dust left from the open-air nuclear testing that took place there 50 years ago. They also questioned government documents that said the blast was to re-calibrate nuclear weapons current in stock to destroy underground targets in similar

land conditions as the Middle East nation of Iran.

Two days after the postponement was announced, 300 demonstrators celebrated their victory with a gathering near the Nevada Test Site. About 70 people were reportedly ticketed for trespassing.

FCC Investigates Bush's 'Fake News'

WASHINGTON — The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is investigating dozens of television stations in the United States using a report provided by the Center for Media and Democracy.

The non-profit group's report states that at least 77 stations broadcasted news stories that were in fact created by corporations at the request of the Bush administration. These fake news spots — called "video news releases" (VNRs) — were passed off as normal news that in some cases praised the war in Iraq.

One VNR by the State Department depicted an Iraqi-American in Kansas City saying, "Thank you Bush. Thank you USA" when asked his thoughts of the 2003 fall of Baghdad.

There are at least 20 federal agencies that have manufactured and handed out these spots, but not all of the news in them is about Iraq. Companies like Pfizer, Intel, M&M/Mars, and General Motors have produced segments that in some cases have had their VNR disclosure tags removed prior to broadcast.

Non-profit media reform group Free Press stated recently that through its efforts more than 25,000 people contacted the FCC over the issue of VNRs.

Last spring after problems concerning VNRs first started, the FCC warned broadcasters that they must tell consumers whether news items were sponsored

or face a maximum \$32,500 fine for each violation.

Bomb Kills Two CBS Crewmen In Iraq

NEW YORK — A roadside bomb took the lives of two crewmen, veteran cameraman Paul Douglas, 48, and soundman James Brolan, 42, who were working in Iraq for CBS News last Monday.

The blast also seriously injured CBS correspondent Kimberly Dozier, 39, by an improvised explosive device that hit a convoy with the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. After surgery, she was listed in critical condition at a U.S. military hospital in Baghdad.

The CBS crew had donned protective clothing while reporting outside their Humvee, the network said in a statement.

Another of the Big Three networks — ABC News — found their employees wounded on assignment in Iraq this year when its anchorman Bob Woodruff and cameraman Doug Vogt were struck by a roadside bomb. Woodruff sustained serious head injuries and is expected to recover.

Last year, 23 journalists died on assignment in Iraq — the most dangerous country for news reporting, said The International Press Institute.

Peace House Honors Fallen Soldiers

CRAWFORD — Several peace activists quietly paid their respects to soldiers who died in American conflicts on Memorial Day at the Crawford Peace House. Others listened as passages were read from activists who were unable to attend the ceremony.

A quote from the Veterans For Peace National Executive Director sought to motivate the participants to action after mourning the fallen soldiers.

"It is not enough to simply remember and mourn. If we are able, we must also ... work towards ending the madness and horror of war," Michael McPhearson is quoted as saying.

Read by Peace House board member Kay Lucas, the words of Cindy Sheehan, the founder of Gold Star

Families for Peace, asked the U.S. government to bring home the troops fighting overseas and encourage Memorial Day participants to serve veterans and the families of soldiers still serving in the U.S. armed forces.

"Honor the vets who have served America by meeting their every need. Honor the families of needlessly slain children by realizing that America is a country at war," read Sheehan's quote. "Look in your hearts, look at the truth about this immoral war, and work for peace. Our children died for peace; make it so."

A wreath of rosemary and flowers was laid near a stone monument dedicated last November in a garden of the Peace House.

Public Hearings Set For TTC-35

AUSTIN — Texans have another opportunity to participate in the decision-making process on the Trans-Texas Corridor 35. Beginning in mid-July and continuing for five consecutive weeks, the Texas Department of Transportation will hold 54 public hearings throughout the TTC-35 study area to answer questions and listen to public comments.

The hearings, scheduled from July 10 - Aug. 10, will be the fourth set of public meetings on TTC-35 that give residents an opportunity to comment on the proposed development of TTC-35. These public hearings will wind up a two-year public involvement process that has already included 117 public meetings netting more than 4,000 comments.

Public comment has already influenced the project decisions: The preferred corridor alternative incorporates

the most miles of existing highways and rail - response to comments frequently heard at previous public meetings. The presentation at the hearings will focus on the preferred corridor alternative from Gainesville to Laredo and why it best meets the state's long-term goal of relieving congestion and improving safety on I-35.

Other corridor alternatives that were evaluated will also be presented for public comment. Each hearing will begin with an open house at 5 p.m. so that residents can review maps of the preferred corridor alternative and ask questions of TxDOT staff. The presentation and oral comments begin at 6:30 p.m.

To ensure that everyone gets a chance to participate, the 54 hearings cover all parts of the study area.

A complete list of hearings is posted on <www.keeptexasmoving.org>.



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Find Yourself At Kerrville

Kerrville At 35: Hearing Is Believing

By DON M. FISHER
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

KERRVILLE — If you haven't been to the Kerrville Folk Festival lately, you haven't missed much.

Which is why you need to go back.

Even by this reading, you will still have time to tail-end this 35th anniversary of Texas oldest and largest outdoor music festival and remind yourself of all you thought you'd lost.

Circus-colored dome tents still bury themselves among the cedars, and chunks of Austin chalk still line the trails to remind you once again that you shouldn't have worn sandals.

There are some changes, like wider guts and thinner hair, old people in new T-shirts, with that Kerrville look about them. It's a look, like they actually believe the "Welcome Home" and "It Can Be This Way Always" signs at the gate, like parents who still believe in Santa Claus long after they've become Santa Claus.

Yet you're also surprised at the number of young people at Kerrville, people you used to be, who smile from a heart without scars or calluses, who *know* they can fix the world and politely pretend your stories are wisdom.

It's one of the few places left in Texas that hasn't been taken over by "ranchettes" and tame deer hunts.

And you don't have to put up with them damned born-again, shiny-boot Republican fern bars.

Hold on, Kerrville still isn't about politics.

Half the people there could be out-and-out Fascists and you probably wouldn't know it. Well, OK, a little hyperbole never hurt anybody.

Musical Maternity

The Kerrville Folk Festival, ultimately, is still about music.

In Texas, Kerrville is pretty much the birthright of anybody who picks a string. And it is the birthplace of most of them.

Kerrville's stages have introduced generations of musicians to a kernel of Texas audiences; some players went on to wider recognition; others, lucky or not, remained comfortably within the shuck, successful by that ultimate standard of all real musicians: always having a place to play where people listen.



Steve Fromholz pays tribute to Allen Damron.

— Staff Photo By Don Fisher



Dulcie Taylor picks her way through the Kerrville crowd.

— Staff Photo By Don Fisher

Kerrville is not nostalgia; the maternity continues with songwriting and guitar schools, singer-songwriter competition, two stages and those nightly campfires.

That may be the essence of Kerrville's success. Nightly, after the spots have cooled and the audio system is quiet, all up and down those hills, faint and flickering yellow-orange circles of sound welcome all manner skills, and there ain't no bad music.

Even those who sit and listen are part of Kerrville.

The Real King Of The Cowboys

If Kerrville is the mother of Texas music, the late Allen Damron was the attending physician.

"Allen Damron kicked open the doors for a lot of people," Steve Fromholz said at Damron's memorial. Although he hadn't performed there in two years, this was the first festival since Damron died last August.

Allen Damron was the best known "unknown" figure in the music business.

He wasn't fodder for CMT or Entertainment Tonight, but you'd be hard pressed to find anyone in the music business who didn't know him, or owe him.

Name a Texas musician, from Guy Clark to the Dixie Chicks, and he or she probably shared a stage at one time or another with Allen Damron, who commanded a fanatically loyal core audience like a band of Comanches.

They extended that loyalty to anyone Damron introduced.

It was then up to the performer's where-with-all whether he or she could build upon that core.

Allen Damron had more than talent. He had character.

Ramblin' Jack's Saga

It says a lot for a man that Ramblin' Jack Elliot would deliver a eulogy at his

memorial.

Damron introduced Elliot to Texas at Austin's Chequered Flag, an early '70s picker's bar.

"Allen Damron saved my life a couple of times," he said. "I won't tell you about the second time because the first time was too good."

He launched into a monologue about letting his dog, Caesar, drive him to a Colorado gig while he slept.

"I had a Volvo, which is a pretty easy car for a dog to drive," he said, but he still woke up to find Caesar hadn't made good time, and he had to call the club owner to explain he would miss the performance.

Uh... Elliot made the call, not Caesar. "He said, 'Oh, yes, tonight we have Ramblin' Jack Elliot.' I knew he didn't know me, because there is no 'G' in my name."

"I sang a few songs into the phone. I thought I could hear people clapping."

In fact, he said, Allen Damron played his set that night and held the audience.

At that point, Ramblin' Jack Elliot sang Bob Dylan's "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right."

Peacemaker

Texas A&M Chancellor Bob McTeer, former Federal Reserve Bank in Dallas talked about how Damron mixed with his banker friends, and taught his bank guards anger management, a lesson Damron added to his handgun permit classes.

He said he particularly remembered Damron's admonition that when dealing with an angry person, "Telling them to calm down is not always the best strategy."

There was more that was said and still more that could have been.

His performance and persona earned Allen Damron the title of Texas "Goodwill Ambassador to the World" from the Texas Legislature as part of the state's sesquicentennial celebration in 1986.

But the most telling tribute to Damron, and perhaps the real reason that Kerrville remains the kind of celebration that it is, came from Dan Merry, also known as Dan the Tire Man, who annually showed up at Kerrville with a trailer full of tires for the casing-ly challenged.

He told of Damron's last days battling cancer when he took time to teach his songs to a 12-year-old boy who also suffered from the disease.

"One sick old man teaching one sick kid to play a song. In the eyes of the world, what does that matter? But in the eternity of things, that's significant."

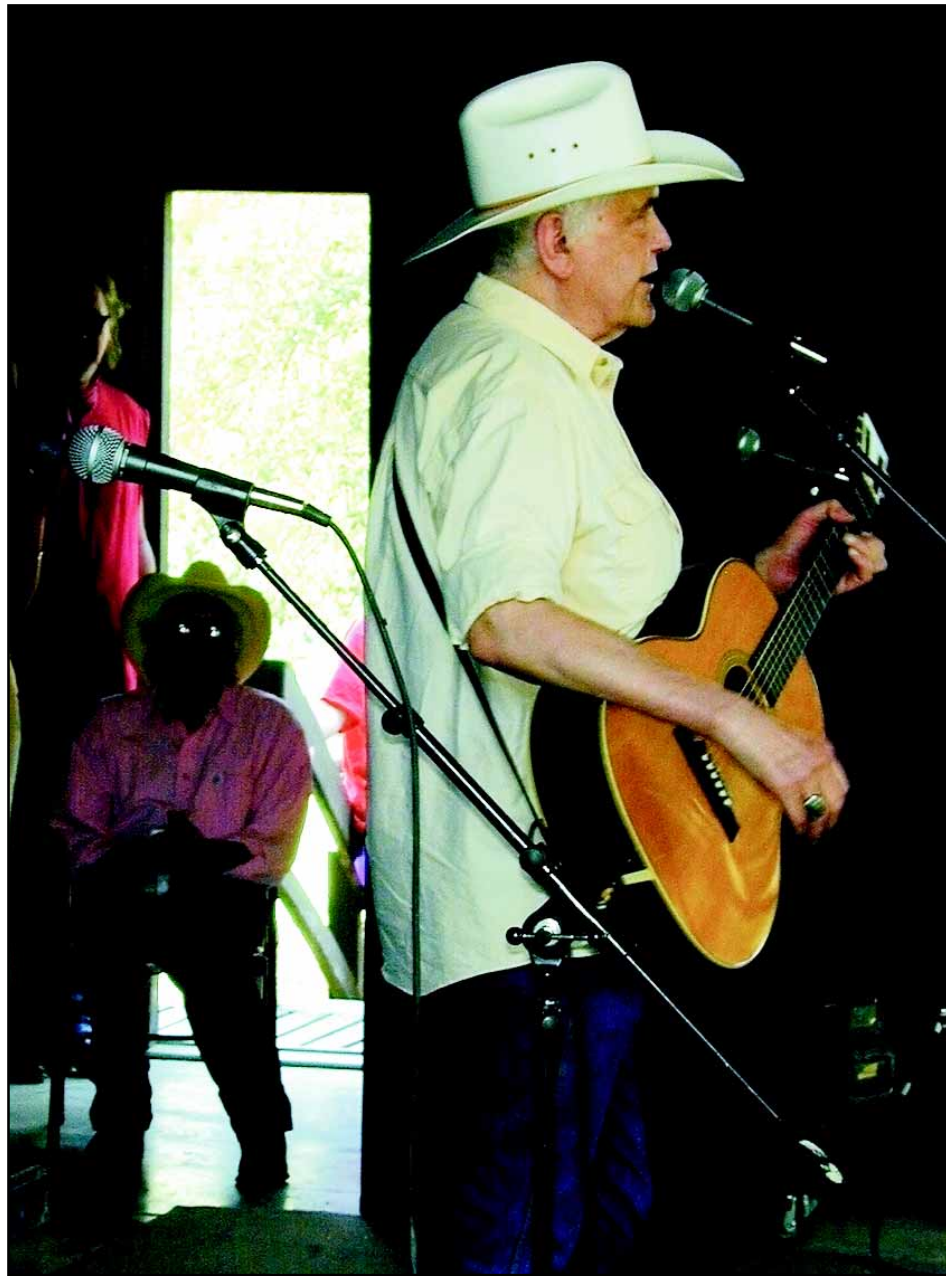
Such significance imbues the Kerrville

Continued On Next Page



Allen Damron's family and friends at the May 29 memorial.

— Staff Photo By Don Fisher



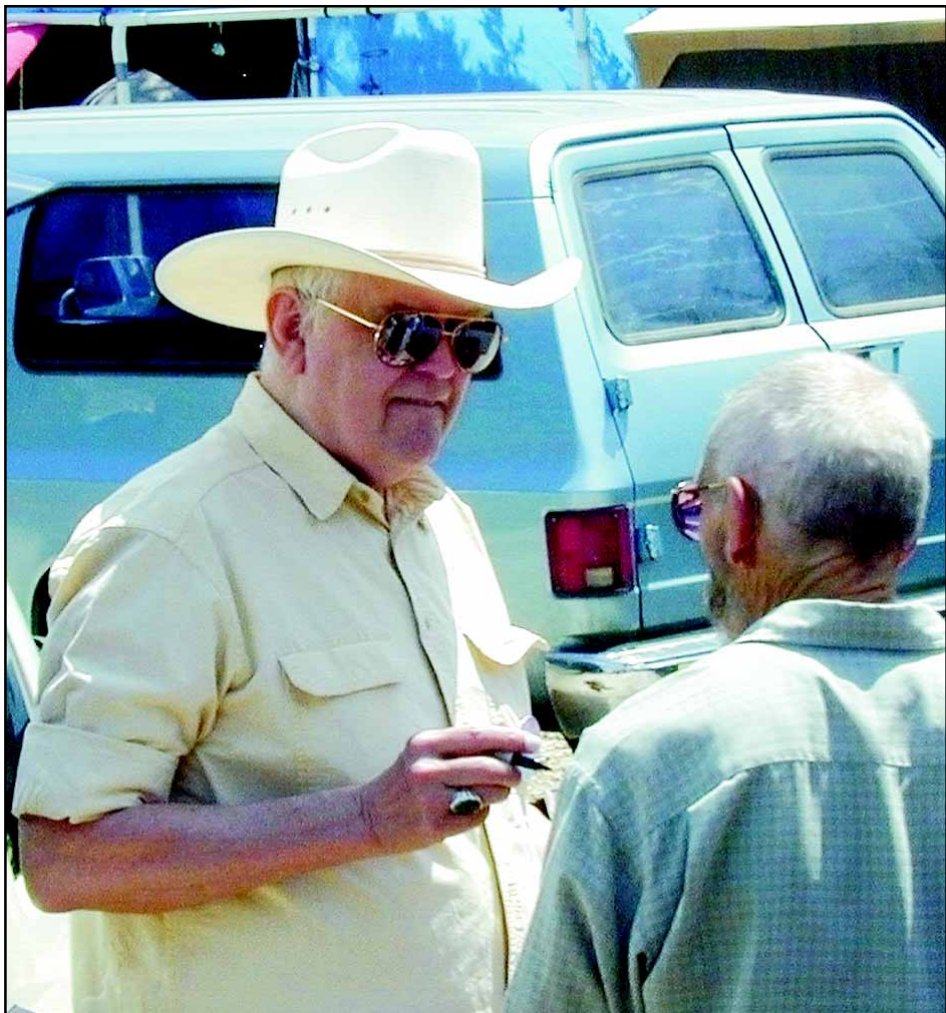
Guy Clark, at the Damron tribute with Ramblin' Jack Elliot in the wings.

— Staff Photo By Don Fisher



Air conditioning, Kerrville style.

— Staff Photo By Don Fisher



Guy Clark surrounded by friends and fans.

— Staff Photo By Don Fisher

Find Yourself At Kerrville

From Previous Page

Folk Festival, from stage to campfire. So cancel any plans you've got between now and June 11.

For more information, go to

<www.kerrvillefolkfestival.com>.

This weekend's performances are the last shows in the 35th Anniversary of the Kerrville Folk Festival.

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Butch Hancock Wages The War Within



By **DON M. FISHER**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

KERRVILLE — Butch Hancock looks like he belongs on a poppin' Johnny tractor seat or a high-cantle saddle.

He talks like he belongs in a Shaker hall or an ashram.

But in fact, Butch Hancock sounds like he belongs on stage.

He is more at home there than any other performer I've seen; few songwriters could have held onto a Guy Clark audience as he did at the Kerrville Folk Festival May 23.

But Hancock's music is hardly relaxed; rather, there is a tension and urgency to his music that commands attention, and a commitment and honesty that sustains integrity, credibility in each phrase.

Still, Butch Hancock is not a "protest" singer.

"You're a thousand percent off track if you think the fight is out there some-

where," he said as he decompressed after his set. "The fight is within you."

"You have to get people to turn into themselves," he said at my suggestion that a cynicism pervades even American progressives' attitudes.

"It's all reactionary thinking these days," he said. "Ask yourself, 'What is the truth?' That's what Pilate asked Jesus. But Jesus didn't answer him, either."

"It's all show business anyway."

"Politicians know what every magician knows: Deception is at the heart of being a magician or a politician. We are distracted by the show, so that we don't notice that the words don't match what their actions are.

"(Stephen) Colbert and Bill O'Reilly and Jon Stewart are all one in the same person . . . The news is pathetic, but people keep watching like they're going to hear a secret or something."

"That's part of the game, designating

any kind of dissent as unpatriotic. If we gave one percent of the effort we spend on negativity and dissing each other on helping people that are needy and seeking understanding, we'd live in a world at peace in 24 hours."

"How can a waking, conscious human being kill another waking, conscious human being? It just doesn't make sense."

There is a deeper commitment to Butch Hancock than shouting from behind the chain-link sidelines or a friendly Kerrville stage. The Flatlanders, the reunited group from the '70s made up of Joe Ely, Jimmy Dale Gilmore and Hancock, joined, impromptu, Cindy Sheehan's Austin march.

"She deserves everyone's support. She suffered a huge loss," he said.

Hancock said he found a song in the experience. Backstage at the rally concert, he said a volunteer was standing with his arms filled with bottled water asking Sheehan what to do with it.

"She said, 'I don't know, go find someone who's thirsty and give them water.' I said, 'I'm going to make a song out of that,' and I wrote 'Give Them Water.'"

Hancock's own opposition stretches back to the first U.S.-Iraq war, and I was surprised to learn that

most of his songs were written at the beginning of Desert Shield.

"We live in the most absurd times, when we can't believe in the government. These poor guys need our prayers, Saddam and Bush both.

"I told my wife when the first Gulf war started, 'The pitiful thing is, the worst is yet to come.'"

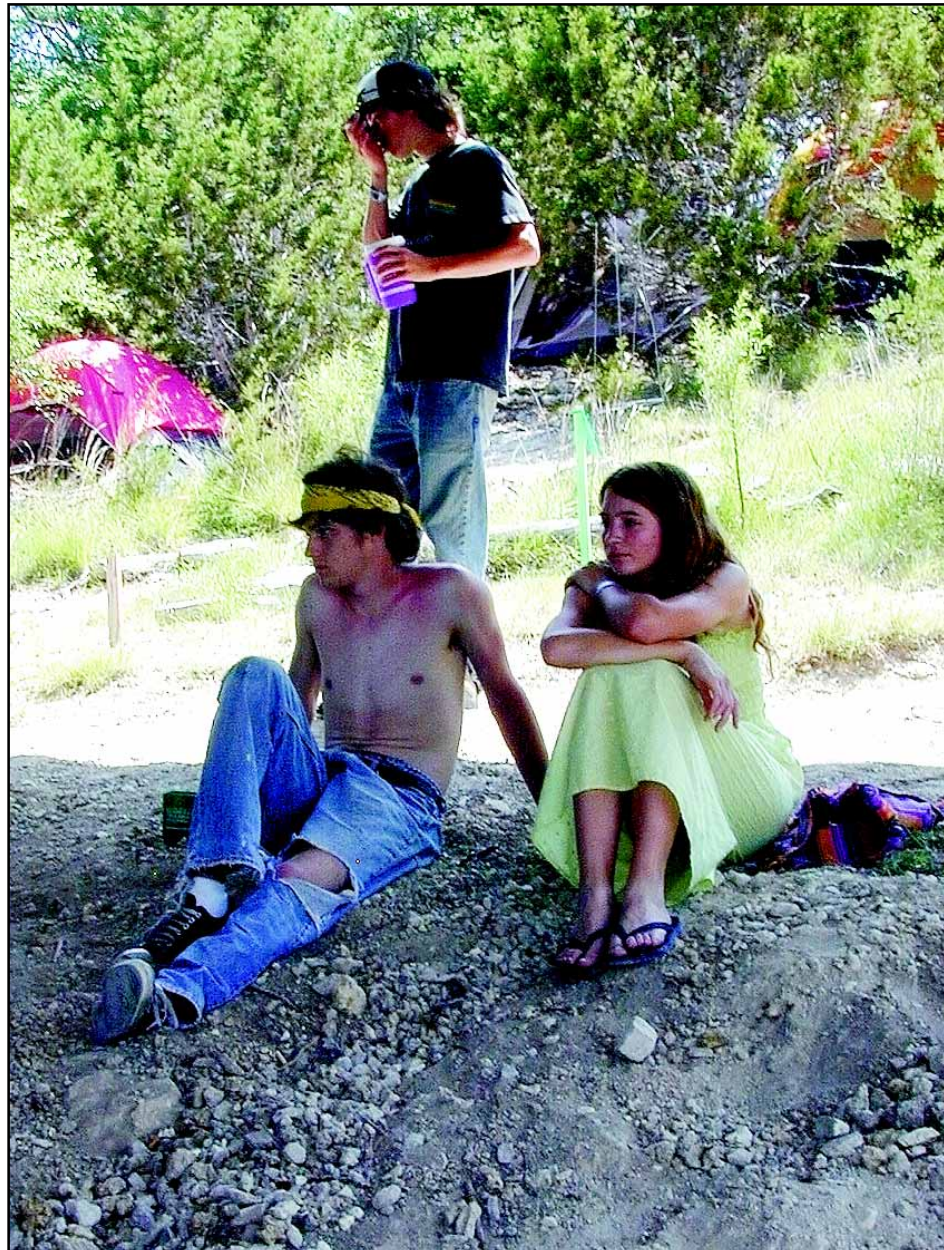
He said although he likes and respects with political columnist Molly Ivins; he has come to disagree with her on one point.

"Molly Ivins said she didn't really believe in conspiracy theories, that instead we just sort of stumble along from one foolishness to the next. I agreed with that until I began thinking about government secrecy, and classified and declassified information. The fact that there is government secrecy proves that there is necessarily a conspiracy. That's why we have to make sure the votes are counted, and make sure who the winners are."

He talked about his "Cast the Devils Out" as an example.

"I don't even believe in devils. But it was written to people who do, and what I thought about that way of thinking."

"It's like the old Buddhist said, there is no hand, and there is no fire, but you'd better not put your hand in the fire."



Proof that some Kerrville fans still have all their hair.

— Staff Photo By Don Fisher

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Entertainment

Hogcreek (What I Remember Of It) Doesn't Disappoint

Like most, I spent Memorial Day talking to my grandfather about war, his life, and his old memories. My other memories, the good, the bad, and the hazy, of Memorial Day were spent at the Second Annual Hogcreek MusicFest hosted at East Cameron Park. Twenty bucks a day, or 50 for a three-day pass – and a 15 dollar cooler charge (beer only, no hard liquor allowed.) Friday, Saturday, and Sunday such as Cross Canadian Ragweed, Jason Boland, Aaron Watson, Ray Wylie Hubbard and David Allen Coe.

Friday: Jarrod Birmingham: While I arrived at the end of his set, I was pretty impressed with what I heard – his voice and the simple, to-the-point lyrics in songs “If you don’t like me”. His voice is deep and direct with plenty of country in it and it sounds like he has lived what he sang, which is probably the most important aspect of a country musician. His band helps by delivering a sparse sound and a heavy baseline to really get everything out of his voice.

Roger Creager: Part of the new Texas Country movement along with artists like **Cory Morrow** and **Pat Green**, Creager is a talented musician that has to be near the top of that food chain. With a radio-friendly voice and look, his hit single “Love is Crazy,” is getting plenty of airplay, and his underground smash “The Everclear Song,” keeps people yelling for an encore. Good, friendly performer.

Cross Canadian Ragweed: hmmm... they seemed to be a Mohawk-wearing rock band masquerading as a country band for this concert, but no one, including me, seemed to mind, at least not too much. Meaningful, cynical lyrics abound. The headliner for Friday did not seem to disappoint; even though the lead singer, **Cody Canada**, complained of a sinus infection that made him end his set early.

Saturday: I did not arrive in time for acts like **Casey Kelley**, **Mike Mancy**, and **Level Hill** that, and after asking around on I got mixed feelings. Most thought they all gave a pretty solid showing.

Wade Bowen: the hometown boy made me a solid fan instead of just a fair-weather one. “God Bless This Town,” his new single is a great track about hypocrisy and rumors in a small town and got plenty of crowd response. He even covered **Bleu Edmondson’s**, “50 Dollars and a Flask of Crown” and **David Allen Coe’s** “Please Come to Boston”.

Aaron Watson: The “honky-tonk-kid” put on a good show on Saturday, but the whole day lacked the energy of the other days. The women were swooning and dancing while he was on stage, and he sang all his hits (“Reckless”, “Off The Record”, etc.) He’s an energetic performer with a good voice that belies his young age, and has a good future ahead of him.

Sunday: Honestly, one of the best nights of my life. Reviews will be



Feat Of Clay

By Clay Turner

skewered because of my intense and severe intoxication as the night carried on. Thank you Bud Light for sponsoring this event, and thanks everyone around me for sharing the Colorado Kool – Aid.

Blue Edmondson: Also part of the “Texas Country,” movement this band has some hard-hitting lyrics and some songs garnering some attention (“50 Dollars and a Flask of Crown.”) If you put a country band into today’s club scene, you’d have **Bleu Edmondson**.

Ray Wylie Hubbard: one of the big selling points for me. My first time seeing him was just simply great. He sang some oddities, but that’s what Hubbard does. He also sang “Conversation with the Devil,” “Screw You, We’re from Texas,” and “Redneck Mother.” He’s not getting any younger, but he still puts on a good show and is quite friendly with the crowd.

Cory Morrow: Roger Creager’s buddy, Morrow is quite a crooner and has plenty of good songs, but it was obvious that most of the people during his set were just biding time until **Jason Boland** and **David Allen Coe** hit the stage.

Jason Boland: Great songs, Great band, Great time. Part of the Texas Country/Red dirt Movement, and I think should be the leader of it. Sang all the favorites (“Pearl Snaps”, “Mexico or Crazy,” and of course, “The Drinking Song.”) This man is a great songwriter, good singer and really puts on a good show. However this is the part in the night that gets kind of hazy for me. I remember singing along and acting a fool, I remember dancing, and I’m purdy sure I talked to three dozen people I don’t know. People, I was the guy in the plaid pearl snaps and straw hat trying to dance. With everyone.

David Allen Coe: The legend himself in Waco, Texas; hard to believe for us all, but the singer/songwriter that had written songs for everyone from **Tanya Tucker** to **Kid Rock** has lived quite a life, and its beginning to show.

His stage presence alone is worth the price of admission, but his voice, while not exactly saggy, is beginning to lose some of its luster and he has trouble sustaining, or even hitting those high notes very often.

He played nearly all of his hits and favorites, and it certainly was the highlight of the night.

Sadly enough however, his set was cut short by some jackass throwing a beer at him.

Thanks jackass.

Spring 2006 Graduates At MCC

WACO — Many local graduates were among the Spring 2006 graduating class of McLennan Community College. Three former Crawford students graduated and one received a certificate.

Crawford students graduating include **Brandi L. Compton**, with Honors; **Amanda L. Henson**; and **Katie L. Robinson**, with High Honors. **Katie L. Robinson** received a certificate.

More than 300 students received Associate in Arts (A.A.), Associate in Science (A.S.) or Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degrees or certificates of technical education.

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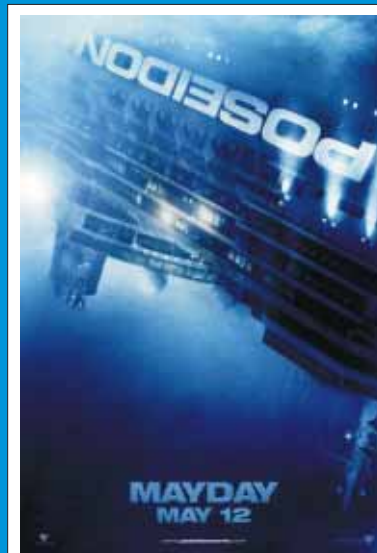
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'Blades in the Sky' On Exhibit At Gordon Center In Thurber, Texas

Windmill Photography Exhibit Opens At Gordon Center

STEPHENVILLE – “Blades in the Sky” is the title of a traveling exhibit of historic windmill photographs that opened this week at the W.K. Gordon Center for Industrial History of Texas.

The exhibit is expected to be open about two months.

A temporary loan from the Layland Museum, Cleburne, Texas, the exhibition consists of photographs made by B.H.

“Tex” Burdick of El Paso, Texas, between the 1920s and the 1940s.

During the 1930s B.H. Burdick became one of the largest distributors of water-pumping windmills in the United States. His company in El Paso erected thousands of factory-made windmills throughout the desert Southwest from Texas to Arizona and in northern Mexico.

During this time he systematically photographed his men at work in all phases of windmill erection and maintenance, creating a unique visual record. In the 1970s historian T. Lindsay Baker reproduced his entire collection of photographs, over 400 of them, on safety film for the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.

The images in the “Blades in the Sky” exhibit are drawn from these significant photographs.

Earlier this week, when the exhibit first opened, historian T. Lindsay Baker spoke on B.H. “Tex” Burdick and his role as a documentary photographer.

The W.K. Gordon Center, a museum and research facility of Tarleton State University at the Thurber ghost town, is located at exit 367 on Interstate 20 midway between Fort Worth and Abilene (take exit 363 to avoid construction).

Hours of operation are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and from 1p.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, closed on Monday.

For more information, call the center at 254-968-1886.

Baby Boomers Get Help Deciding What To Do Next

AUSTIN –There are 77 million baby boomers. This year the oldest boomers turn 60 and the youngest are 41 years old. The tip of the retirement iceberg has been exposed for the baby boomer generation. Boomers are dealing with their own personal quandaries about how to have a happy retirement, what to do to fulfill their heart’s desires, and how should they craft the second half of their lives.

A nationally recognized business-woman has developed a tool to help America’s boomers answer these questions.

In her book, *What I Want Next...30 Minutes to Reveal Your Future*, she discloses a novel evaluative process designed to give boomers the power to target their actual goals based on their strongest personal values.

At the book’s core is the simple 30-minute written process which requires only a pencil, a watch, and a personal

calendar to help the reader determine his or her path to creating their own future. Cathy Bonner writes about her success with the process that has changed her life, and to demonstrate the effectiveness of this benchmark tool, she complements her experience with stories of people who have used the process to change their lives and make a lasting difference, such as former Texas Governor Ann Richards.

Bonner has demonstrated her belief that “you can live a life of your own design.” She believes the future is something you can create instead of just something that happens to you. As a result of a dream she had, Bonner conceptualized and built the nation’s only comprehensive women’s history museum <www.thewomensmuseum.org>. She is the founder of two national leadership-training programs and three successful businesses including her marketing firm, Bonner Incorporated.



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Patients With Chronic Kidney Diseases Outpace Funding: Experts

AUSTIN — An increased number of patients with a chronic kidney condition could lead to the collapse of state and federal programs if more funding is not acquired, according to a member of the Texas Medical Association.

Dr. Glen Stanbaugh, Jr., MD, a nephrologist, told Texas Medicine magazine recently that public money with which to care for people diagnosed with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) — permanent kidney failure — is not keeping pace to meet their needs.

“The only way to treat ESRD is with

dialysis or transplantation, both of which are extremely expensive. As of now, the growing number of ESRD patients is outstripping treatment resources,” said Dr. Stanbaugh, the chairman of the Texas Renal Coalition (TRC) board. “You can build more dialysis centers, but you can’t necessarily grow more nephrologists, nurses, or kidney donors.”

While patients with ESRD survive longer with help from technology, still more patients are developing ESRD and other chronic diseases, like obe-

sity and diabetes, that lead to it.

From 1978 to 2002, there was an almost 600 percent increase in new ESRD patients in the United States, according to Texas Medicine. This growth rate is unsustainable to cover patients enrolled in the current federal and state Medicare programs, said Dr. Stanbaugh.

About 36,000 of the estimated 320,000 patients who receive ESRD therapy nationally are Texans. A typical treatment, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, costs more than

\$65,000 per ESRD patient per year.

To solve the problem, the Texas Renal Coalition has launched a public education program designed to curb the number of ESRD by highlighting the controllable diseases that can lead to ESRD — namely high blood pressure and diabetes.

The TRC proposal calls for the regular testing of children for high blood pressure because children who suffer from the disease carry it into adulthood. The long-term effects of high blood pressure have negative health implications.

U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers Offers Water Safety Suggestions

FORT WORTH — Drowning is the nation’s second leading cause of accidental death, yet it is possible — just by wearing a life jacket — to reduce drowning deaths. Statistics show that 90 percent of those who drown at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes may have survived if they had done so.

More than half of all drowning fatalities involve alcohol. Just one beer can impair balance, vision, judgment, and

reaction time. Research shows that four hours of boating, exposure to noise, vibration, sun, glare, and wind produces fatigue that simulates drunkenness. Boating fatigue combined with alcohol consumption intensifies the effects and increases accident risk.

The Corps suggests knowing your boat and the rules of the “road” by taking a safe boating course. Be sure to check the boat for all required safety equipment,

and to follow manufacturer’s suggested procedures before starting the engine. Also, don’t overload the boat — consider boat size, the number passengers, and extra equipment before loading.

Make sure life jackets are U.S. Coast Guard approved and appropriately sized. Coast Guard law now requires life jackets for all children age 12 and younger, unless otherwise specified by state law.

Some other safety tips from the Corps include:

- Check the weather forecast, and file a float plan with family or friends who are not on the vessel, and carry a set of navigational charts on board.
- Watch children at all times when around the water.
- Never rely on toys such as inner tubes and water wings to stay afloat.
- Don’t take chances by overestimating swimming skills.
- Reach or throw a flotation device to help someone in trouble... don’t go in the water.
- Swim only in designated swimming areas, and never swim alone.

For more tips on how to be water safe, visit the Corps’ water safety website <watersafety.usace.army.mil>.

2004 Presidential Election Stolen: RFK, Jr.

SAN FRANCISCO — The son of the late U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy said he believes that the 2004 U.S. presidential election was stolen out from under the Democratic nominee Sen. John Kerry.

In an article “Was the 2004 Election Stolen?” Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. wrote that high-level Republican officials focused on rigging the elections in the state of Ohio to put President George W. Bush back in the White House for another term.

“After carefully examining the evidence, I’ve become convinced that the president’s party mounted a massive, coordinated campaign to subvert the will of the people in 2004,” wrote Kennedy in Rolling Stone magazine. “Across the country, Republican election officials and party stalwarts employed a wide range of illegal and unethical tactics to fix the election.”

Kennedy said that evidence shows Ohio Sec. of State J. Kenneth Blackwell, a Republican, took part in the scheme by mandating that voter registration forms to be accepted only on “eighty-pound unwaxed white paper stock.”

Blackwell’s move, thereby, violated the Voting Rights Act by denied the right to vote because of a registration error

that “is not material in determining whether such individual is qualified under state law to vote.” Although 72,000 voters (or one percent) were disenfranchised as a result of this error, the election was still decided by a two percent margin.

Also, in Ohio, the entire Board of Elections in Ohio was forced to resign in 2005 only after members had processed Republican mail-in voter registration cards ahead of Democrats’ cards that had to be dropped at the board’s office less than a month until the election, wrote Kennedy.

For their “grassroots efforts” four days after the election, President Bush praised Bernadette Noe, who served as both chairman for the Lucas County Republican Party and chairman of the Lucas County Board of Elections, and her husband Thomas Noe, the former head of the Toledo GOP who last week pled guilty to three counts of funneling \$45,000 illegal contributions to Bush/Cheney ’04.

Kennedy’s article, which can be accessed online at (http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/10432334/was_the_2004_election_stolen) also tackled such points as faulty electronic voting machines and inaccurate exit poll data from the Edison/Mitofsky exit poll firm.

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Texas Tree Planting Guide Now Available

COLLEGE STATION — An expert Texas tree planting guide that you don’t have to be an expert to use is now available from the Texas Forest Service and the Texas A&M University System.

The illustrated Internet guide is the quickest way to find the best trees for your yard, and to find all the tips you’ll need to buy, plant, and care for your new trees.

The guide features an “Express Tree Selector” to provide the quickest way to find the best trees for your yard; a “Custom Tree Selector” which customizes the search to find the best trees; and a “Tree Planting Tools” section to help buy, plant, and care for the new trees.

The guide can be viewed now on-line <texasreeplanting.tamu.edu>.

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Want To Be A Ventriloquist? Eat More Beans.

When Stephen King wrote the novel *It*, little did he realize that the fanged creature from the Microverse, Pennywise the clown, would pay a visit to Iraq.

In King's book, Pennywise arose from the void of darkness with the ability to transform his visage into an individual's greatest fear, whatever that may be. Ask O'Brian in George Orwell's *1984*, where "Power is not a Means; it is an End." He can tell you about Room 101, where the "worst thing in the world" awaits.

What drew our comparison of Pennywise and his gleeful consumption of children to the killing of women and children in Iraq actually began with George Lakoff, who wrote *Don't Think Of An Elephant*, a book that challenged the world to realize that neo-conservative "frames" tend to make evil sound good.

You know the drill.

War on Terror.

Clean Air Act.

Patriot Act.

The aforementioned are just three examples.

There is no such thing as a War on Terror. It is a myth perpetrated to encourage you to give up hard-earned freedoms without a fight. To challenge terrorism is actually quite simply an exercise by police, or you throwing away your VHS copy of *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, or a mother grounding Johnny for scaring his little sister for a laugh.

Clean Air Act? It has nothing to do with cleaning up the air, rather allowing it to

The Trenchwalker

By W. Leon Smith



be trashed.

Patriot Act? *You ain't a patriot if you ain't fer it.* But if you are for it, you ain't a patriot in the sense that our Founding Fathers thought. You are a coward.

If you believe in the Patriot Act and embrace it, you are actually about as un-American as they come.

These are frames. Diabolical frames brought forth by our own Pennywise, who is not a clown.

Well, maybe he is.

Anyway, granddaddy Prescott, who hated the New Deal and the New Dealer, might be proud that finally his overseas short-mustachioed buddy is getting

some respect. Lord rest their souls.

Or, as the preppie Robin with his hood on backwards might say as he empties the U.S. Treasury, "Privatization rocks!"

So, if fiction is indeed truth inside a lie, then this new world that was ordered to coincide with the new century cannot be real. It is a macabre nightmare where blood is simply a shared parasite whose extrication can be cheered and mourned in the same breath.

It is a way of saying that killing little children "over there" is okay.

A young adult who was trying to straighten me out on the concept of the War on Terror shrugged it off this way: "Shit happens. Live with it."

What a wonderful epitaph for Planet Earth!

In this "new world" the political occupationists call the shots on worthiness of life. Their stature is based upon the depth of blue in *their* blood and the green in their bank accounts and the power they steal at voting precincts.

So, following Lakoff's lead, if being

good means having money and being bad means not having money, then with a vanishing middle class, you will end up with some very good people, the super rich, and some very bad people, everyone else.

When the teacher lets us out for recess, this will become abundantly clear.

So what's the point of all of this?

Go back to the title: "Want to be a ventriloquist? Eat more beans."

We must all begin to pay close heed to what's behind the labels, both in terms of the meaning of the label and the contents in the can.

The beans are the lies we willingly purchase in order to nourish the ventriloquist.

The sound of terror is nothing more than the ventriloquist speechifying with rancid hot air from his personal Back Forty.

The victims are everyone in the room.

Public Web Users To Have Access To Border Patrol Live Images

AUSTIN — According to Gov. Rick Perry, Texas will enlist web users in its fight against illegal immigration by offering live surveillance footage of the Mexican border on the Internet.

This will allow web users throughout the world to help watch Texas' southwest border and contact authorities if they witness any apparently illegal crossings originating from Mexico.

Perry made his announcement at a meeting of police officials last Thursday

and noted that "A stronger border is what Americans want it's what our security demands and that is what Texas is going to deliver."

The cameras will cost \$5 million to install and will be trained at strategic sections of the 1,000-mile border.

Persons logged on to the streaming of border surveillance camera footage over the Internet will be able to call a toll-free number to report what they deem as problematic.

Hunter's Choice Bag Tops List Of Migratory Bird Proposals

AUSTIN — Pending U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decision in July, Texas duck hunters could get a "partial-mulligan" on their duck straps during the next three seasons.

A Central Flyway experimental bag configuration would create the "Hunter's Choice" that would help eliminate the confusing season-within-a-season framework for less abundant bird species such as pintail and canvasbacks. If implemented by the Service, the bag limit drops from six to five birds overall.

The "Hunter's Choice" proposal would allow hunters to shoot five ducks daily in one of two categories. In the "aggregate category" of less abundant ducks, one of those birds could be either a pintail, or a canvasback, or a "dusky duck" (mottled, black duck, or Mexican-like duck) or a hen mallard.

Including hen mallards in the category would create a buffer to help reduce the harvest of the less-abundant pintails and canvasbacks.

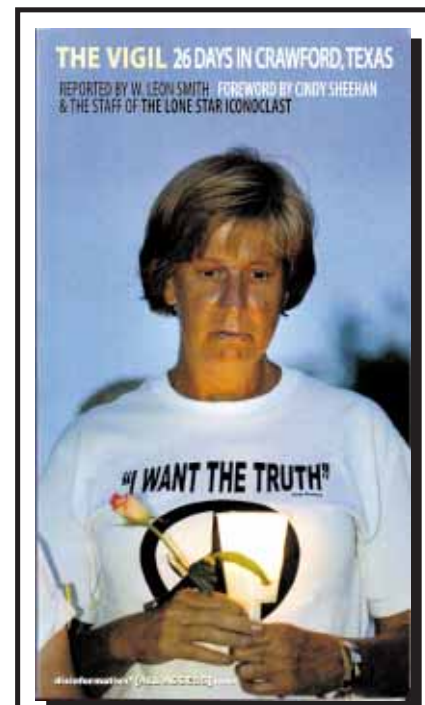
The proposal would make the regulations less complex and eliminate the risk of hunters accidentally shooting a pintail or canvasback during the closed portions of the duck season, since the season-within-a-season takes place only during the last 39 days of the regular duck season.

Dove Season

Proposed dove season dates remain virtually unchanged from last year other than calendar shifts: North Zone, Sept. 1-Oct. 30 with a 15-bird daily bag limit; Central Zone, Sept. 1-Oct. 30 and Dec. 26-Jan. 4 with a 12-bird daily bag limit; South Zone: Sept.

22-Nov. 12 and Dec. 26-Jan. 12, with a 12-bird daily bag limit.

In the Special White-winged Dove Area in the South Zone, the season would run Sept. 2, 3, 9, and 10, then Sept. 22-Nov. 12 and Dec. 26-Jan. 8. During the first two weekends, the bag limit would be 12 in the aggregate, no more than four mourning dove or two white-tipped dove. The bag limit for the remainder of this season would be the same as the rest of the South Zone, except only two white-tipped dove daily.



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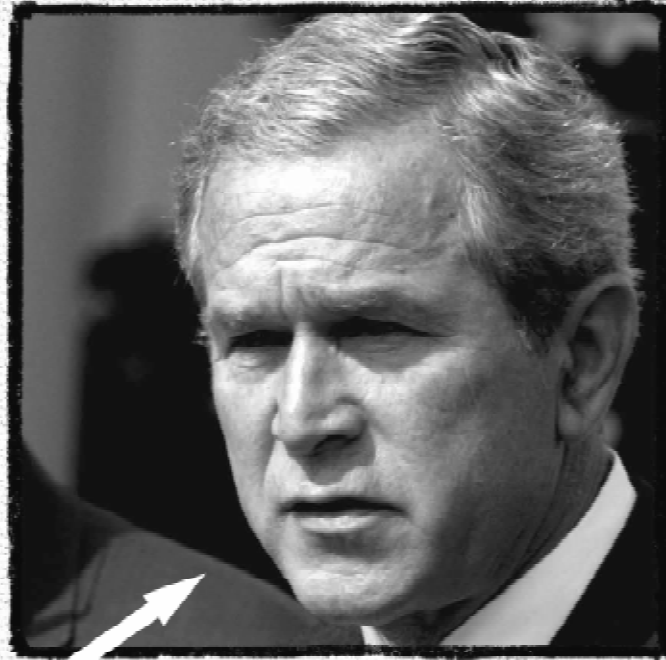
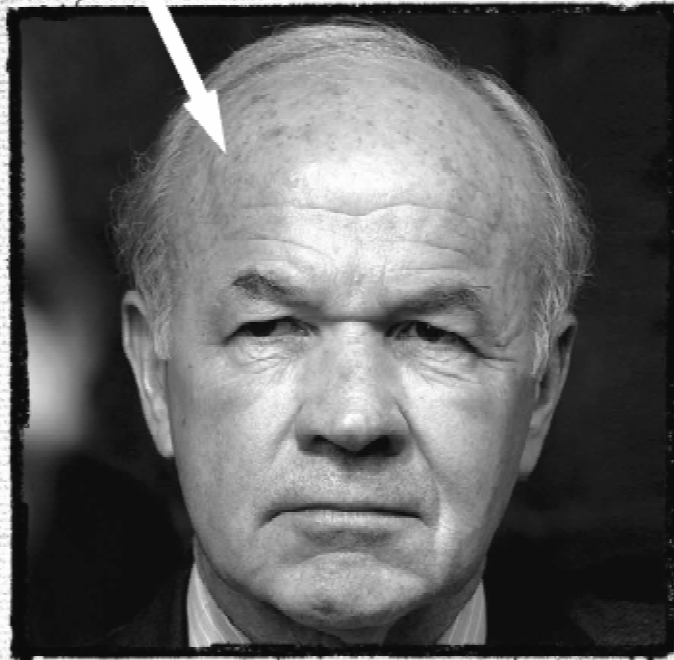
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A criminal's millions helped put George W. Bush in the White House.

Ken Lay, convicted felon and former CEO of bankrupt energy giant Enron, pumped vast amounts of money into Bush's political career: \$1.1 million to Republicans, \$439,500 to Bush campaigns, and \$550,000 for the GOP convention and inauguration. All counted, Lay and Enron anteed up more than \$2 million to buy Bush.

Lay also gave \$10,000 for the 2000 Florida recount and used the Enron jet to fly GOP operatives to Miami-Dade to disrupt that recount.

Bush wants us to believe that he hardly knew "Kenny Boy" Lay. But that's a lie. Just look at the favors Bush did for his close friend and top lifetime contributor:

Bush and Cheney invited Lay into their secret Energy Task Force where "What's good for Enron" was repackaged as "What's good for America"—higher energy prices and bigger corporate profits. Bush even had Lay on his short list for Energy Secretary.

Bush flew to California to warn the state against regulating Enron or capping its obscene profits—even though Enron was pocketing billions by driving up energy prices as much as 800%—and nearly bankrupting California.

Bush called Pennsylvania's GOP governor and urged him to help Enron enter Pennsylvania's energy market—another state for Enron to rip off.

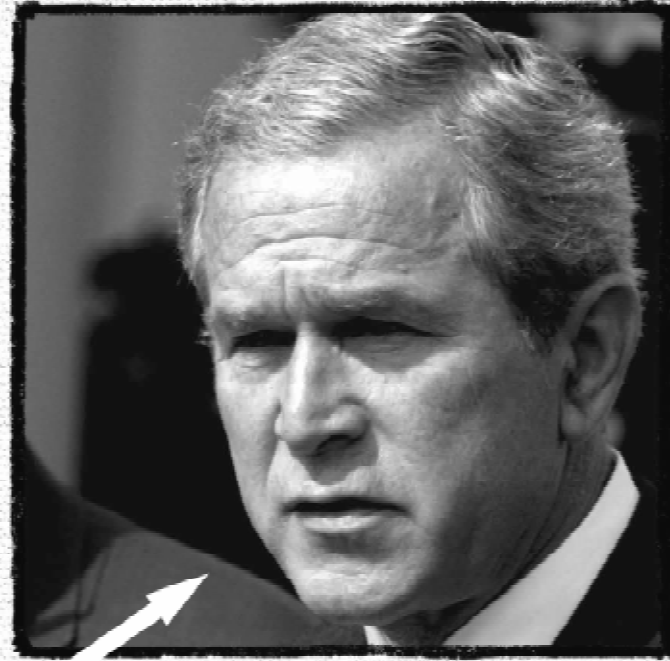
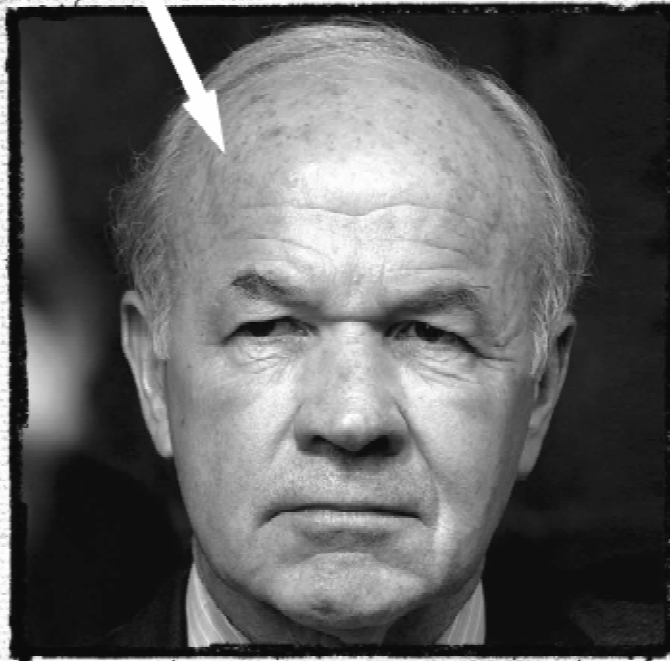
Bush's National Security Council met repeatedly to bully India into a \$2.3 billion payoff to Enron for a botched power plant. (India refused.)

What we have here is government of criminals, by criminals and for criminals, not government of the people, by the people and for the people. This has to stop. Tell your Congress Members to march to the White House and demand that George W. Bush resign. If he refuses, impeach him.

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Perry Signs MOU to Authorize National Guard Troops on Border

Says Homeland Security Funding Cut Jeopardizes Security

AUSTIN — Gov. Rick Perry last week signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) authorizing the deployment of National Guard Troops to the U.S.-Mexico border as part of Operation Jump Start, under which the troops will support federal border security officers. The Governors of Arizona, California and New Mexico have also signed the MOU.

“The National Guard is already a part of Texas’ border security strategy, Operation Rio Grande, which brings together federal, state and local law enforcement and the National Guard to conduct joint operations to better protect Texans from border-related crime and violence,” Perry said. In February, Perry launched Operation Rio Grande, a comprehensive border security strategy that gives the state a leading role in coordinating intelligence and law enforcement assets within an 80,000 square mile region.

National Guard troops operating in Texas as part of Operation Jump Start will remain under Perry’s command, although the federal government will cover the cost of the mission. Troop activities may include detection and monitoring, engineering, transportation, logistics, vehicle dismantling, analysis, road building and language support. The temporary deployment is expected to be phased out as new Border Patrol agents are hired.

Operation Jump Start planners immediately will be dispatched to the border to lay the groundwork for the full deployment of guard troops. About 2,300 Texas guardsmen and airmen are expected to be involved, although troop levels and deployment details are still being finalized.

“The Texas-Mexico border is becoming an increasingly dangerous and violent place for peace officers and the citizens they protect. We are pleased that we will soon have more resources and personnel to address the border threat,” Perry said. “However, we will continue to urge Congress to meet its long term responsibility, and provide the manpower and resources to secure our border.”

The Department of Homeland Security announced this week that it has cut homeland security funding for Texas —



the state with the longest international border — by 31 percent from last year. Perry said this funding disparity, combined with continued federal inaction

24 Children Beaten At Gitmo Bay: Lawyers

NEW YORK — Lawyers speaking to Time magazine said recently that 24 children were probably detained and beaten at the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The Pentagon has denied that juveniles are held there currently. The Defense Department has never denied that inmates under the age of 18 were not segregated from the older inmates.

Time’s story came on the heels of a human rights report from the London-based Reprieve, stating that the prison contained more than 60 minors, some of which were 14 years old.

Time reported that many of the teenagers received the same treatment as adults. U.S. federal law, as with international laws like the Geneva Conventions, requires that child prisoners are sepa-

rated from adults. “jeopardizes our security and reinforces my belief that Texas must never wait for Washington to act.”

On Thursday, Perry announced Texas will soon provide additional funding for

local law enforcement along the border, seek a long-term financial commitment from the Texas Legislature to support ongoing border security operations, and create a virtual border watch program.

Librarians Speak Out Against Patriot Act

HARTFORD, Conn. — Librarians in Connecticut have broken their silence to challenge the USA Patriot Act on first amendment grounds.

In August 2005, the four librarians, all of whom are members of a non-profit resource sharing cooperative called Library Connection, were served National Security Letters (NSL) so that the FBI could gain access to patron’s records.

Under the Patriot Act, the NSLs legally prohibited librarians from discussing that they had received the letter, the details of

the letter, and talking about the Patriot Act. These letters also allow police to get records of people without a court order whether or not they are suspects in an investigation.

Because the U.S. government continued to appeal its case against the four librarians since last September, the group was unable to participate in the debate surrounding the re-authorization of the Patriot Act.

During their silence, however, U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales denied that the Patriot Act was violating the civil liberties of U.S. citizens. Since the act was re-authorized this past March, the government stopped appealing, though the Connecticut librarians still cannot discuss the case or the NSL.

The four plaintiffs — Barbara Bailey, President of Library Connection; Peter Chase, LC Vice President; George Christian; LC staff liaison, and Jan Nocek, LC Secretary — are all known together in the court filings as “John Doe.” Their suit names as the defendants in the case Alberto Gonzales, Robert Mueller, and an un-named FBI official.

The American Civil Liberties Union’s lead attorney in the case said that the Bush administration has abused the rhetoric of “national security” to quiet critics and hide embarrassments.

“Every time the government invokes national security in defense of secrecy — as they’ve done most recently with NSA wiretapping — the American public should remember these four librarians,” said ACLU lawyer Ann Beeson.

No one is sure of the extent NSLs have been used, but a survey of 1,000 libraries conducted in 2002 by University of Illinois found that 85 libraries had said they were asked by law enforcement for patrons’ records.

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Take Control of Rising Gas Prices: Don't Let Your Money Evaporate

Soaring fuel prices have motorists scrambling to find ways to save money by using less gas. Sure, you can simply stop driving as much, but for many consumers, that's not an option. But you can fight skyrocketing gas prices by taking

control of your vehicle's unnecessary fuel consumption.

Performing simple and inexpensive vehicle maintenance will not only save gas money, perhaps as much as \$1200 per year, but will also improve a vehicle's

safety and dependability.

The Car Care Council offers these gas-savings maintenance and driving tips:

- Check your vehicle gas cap. About 17 percent of the vehicles on the roads have gas caps that are either damaged, loose

or are missing altogether, causing 147 million gallons of gas to vaporize every year.

- When tires aren't inflated properly, it's like driving with the parking brake on, and can cost a mile or two per gallon.

- A vehicle can have either four, six or eight spark plugs, which fire as many as three million times each 1,000 miles, resulting in a lot of heat, electrical and chemical erosion. A dirty spark plug causes misfiring, which wastes fuel. Spark plugs need to be replaced regularly.

- An air filter that is clogged with dirt, dust and bugs chokes off the air and creates a "rich" mixture – too much gas being burned for the amount of air, which wastes gas and causes the engine to lose power. Replacing a clogged air filter can improve gas mileage by as much as 10 percent.

- Keep your car properly tuned. A 21st Century tune-up can improve your gas mileage by an average of four percent. Fixing a serious maintenance problem, such as a faulty oxygen sensor, can improve your mileage by as much as 40 percent.

These simple vehicle maintenance steps can add up to serious savings. To learn more about how to maintain your vehicle and reduce your fuel expenses, visit <www.carcare.org>.

U.S. House To Debate Net Neutrality Bill This Week

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House of Representatives this week will debate and vote on a bill that would prohibit companies from limiting the access of information on the Internet through a pay-to-play system.

The H.R. 5417 bill, dubbed the "Internet Freedom and Nondiscrimination Act of 2006," was passed in U.S. House Judiciary Committee by a bipartisan 20-13 vote two weeks ago.

A large, diverse coalition of online businesses, such as Amazon, Google, and eBay, and political advocacy groups, like the Christian Coalition and MoveOn.org, strongly support this net

neutrality bill.

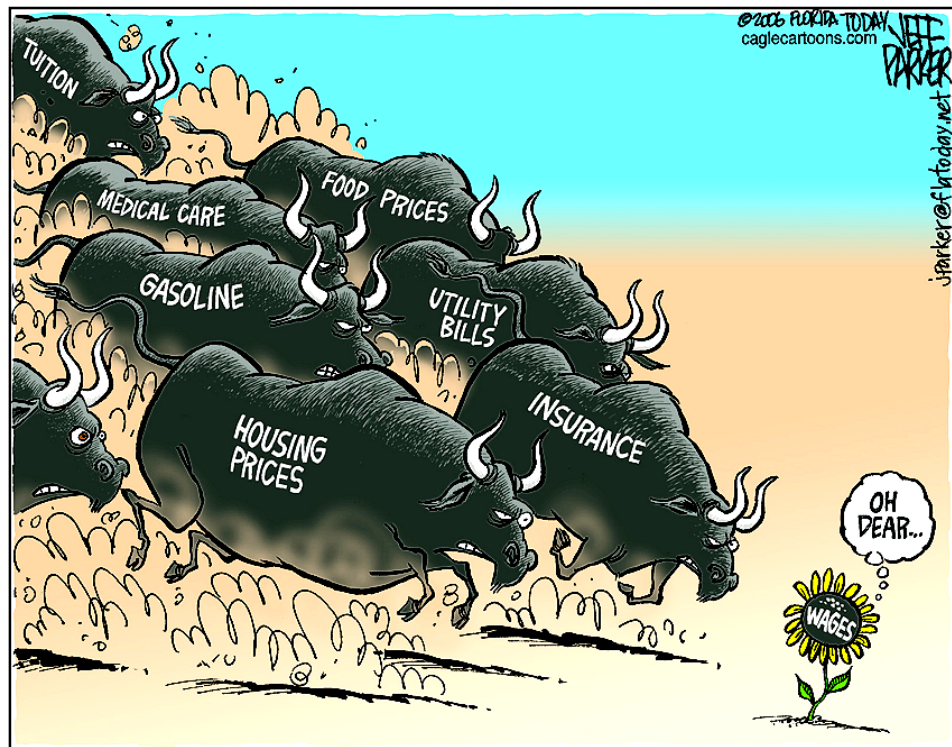
Coalition groups like SaveTheInternet.com and ItsYourNet say that the bill would ensure the free speech rights of millions of Internet users by preventing phone and cable companies from splitting the Internet into fast and slow lanes. The wealthier the customers, they say, the quicker and the better the Internet access.

These groups also argue that, contrary to claims by AT&T and Verizon, the Internet would continue to be a strong generator of economic dollars, entrepreneurship, and innovation because more people would have the opportunity to

gain access to information and technology without paying a toll to one or a handful of Internet service providers.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee has passed an anti-net neutrality bill last month. On the other end of the legislative branch, the Senate Commerce Committee also had a shorter hearing on net neutrality.

So far, the SaveTheInternet.com Coalition has more than 750,000 signatures for its petition supporting the net neutrality bill. By contrast, the big cable and telephone companies have launched an aggressive media campaign opposed to the bill.



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Texas-Sized Reminder Launches *Click It or Ticket* Campaign

AUSTIN — State and local law enforcement officials announced the 2006 *Click It or Ticket* education and enforcement campaign on May 9th by fastening the world's longest seat belt around the Texas State Capitol's southern façade.

Safety advocates used the 550-foot-long belt to announce the annual crack-down on drivers and passengers who don't buckle up. Thanks to four straight

years of *Click It or Ticket* campaigns, speakers acknowledged that almost 90 percent of Texas motorists now routinely use safety belts, and they promised citations to those who fail to comply with the state's mandatory law to buckle up. Law enforcement officers wrote 52,404 safety belt and child safety citations—an average of 2,096 per day—during last year's campaign.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) are again teaming up with thousands of law enforcement personnel statewide to boost safety belt use in Texas. This year's enforcement campaign began Monday, May 22—a week before Memorial Day—and extends through Sunday, June 4.

"Improving safety for drivers and passengers on Texas roads is one of my top priorities, so I am proud to support the innovative efforts of the Texas Department of Transportation," said Texas State Representative Tony Goolsby. "*Click It or Ticket* saves lives. It's that simple."

The Texas safety belt law, enacted in 1985, requires drivers, front seat passengers and children under 17, whether

riding in the front or back seat, to be buckled up. Also, children under the age of five and less than 36 inches tall must ride in child safety seats. Adults who don't use safety belts or fail to secure their children face fines from \$25 to \$200, plus court costs.

Though safety belt use in Texas has increased from 76 percent to nearly 90 percent since the *Click it or Ticket* effort began in 2002, highway safety officials caution that there is still much to be done. Six out of every ten children between five and nine years old still ride in vehicles without the protection of safety belts. Teen drivers use belts only half as frequently as adults. Pickup truck drivers and their passengers also are less likely to use safety belts than other motorists.

Recent FBI Search Of Jefferson Office 'Justified' Says Congressman Edwards

WASHINGTON — U.S. Representative Chet Edwards today said that the recent search of Rep. William Jefferson's office by the FBI was justified, disagreeing with the views expressed by Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi.

"Members of Congress should not be above the law and I disagree with those who say the FBI has no right to search a congressional office when there is strong evidence of a serious criminal violation. Should a member of Congress be allowed to accept bribes or rob a bank and then be able to hide the money in a congressional office without any fear of it being confiscated?" said Edwards.

According to Supreme Court rulings, protection afforded to members of Congress under the Speech or Debate Clause extends only to "legislative acts." A Congressional Research Service report says that the clause "does not protect criminal conduct, such as taking a bribe, which is not a part of the legislative process."

"In this case, Mr. Jefferson had \$90,000 in marked FBI bills that he received in an apparent bribery scheme. Mr. Jefferson also repeatedly refused to provide information subpoenaed by law enforcement officials so a federal judge issued a warrant for the FBI search.

"The separation of powers is a vital con-

stitutional principle, which I greatly respect," he continued. "And that is why I would oppose the FBI going on fishing expeditions in cases where the FBI was seeking retribution if a member of Congress criticized them or refused to fund some of their requested program. That kind of act would be a clear abuse, but this was not a blind fishing expedition, it was a situation where there was serious evidence of illegal actions by Mr. Jefferson. I think it would be a positive idea for constitutional experts to develop specific criteria so that we can protect the separation of powers without protecting the criminal actions of a member of Congress."

"I believe one of the reasons there have been a series of ethics violations in Congress recently is that too many members of Congress have been wine and dined and flown on luxury corporate aircraft across the country and have begun to think the country owes them a life of privilege," Edwards said. "Members of Congress should never forget that it is a privilege to work for the people of our district and the people who write our laws have no right to consider themselves above the law. It is time for strong new ethics legislation in Congress and to renew the responsibilities of the House Ethics Committee to investigate possible violations of congressional rules or laws."

College Republicans Mock Global Warming

WASHINGTON — Ignoring the legacy of environmental conservation of Republican President Teddy Roosevelt, the College Republican National Committee (CRNC) recently called on its 200,000 members to mock global warming by staging beach parties.

Students are encouraged to set up "kiddie pools, sand, bikinis — you get the idea," according to the CRNC's website. At Oklahoma University, College Republicans went so far as to handing out free snow cones at an event "Global Cooling Day."

"Prior to your 'Global Cooling Day' event, arm your College Republican chapter with solid talking points on the issue, and then kick-back and enjoy the sun. The facts are on your side," read the website.

The so-called "facts," however, are derived from a small group of discredited scientists funded by petroleum and chemical companies who argue that the threat of climate

change as facilitated by human pollution is a scare tactic.

The "internationally known scientist, motivational speaker, and author" that the CRNC promotes through its website for speaking engagements — Dr. Jay Lehr — is the science director for the Heartland Institute, a non-profit think tank based in Chicago, Illinois.

The institute's funding is derived from various right-wing foundations (John M. Olin Foundation, Inc., Claude R. Lambe Charitable Foundation, and Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation), corporations (ExxonMobil and Philip Morris USA), and other private sources.

Its board of directors come from the petroleum, auto, insurance, and banking industries, such as James L. Johnston, Amoco Corporation (retired); Thomas Walton, General Motors Corporation; Walter F. Buchholtz, ExxonMobil Corporation; Lee Tooman, Golden Rule Insurance Company; and Leslie Rose, Fidelity Bank.

A Road Less Traveled in Palestine

By JOHN M. KELLEY
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

The situation in Israel and Palestine is at its most crucial point in decades. Unfortunately at a time when an American president could take meaningful action in bringing about a just and meaningful two state solution, Bush is abandoning all sense of fairness concerning the Palestinian people to advance his agenda against Iran and shore up his base. Make no mistake they are all tied together.

Olmert, the new Prime Minister of Israel, has been given the go-ahead to ask for concessions that no Palestinian leader can accept, and then impose a unilateral solution when they refuse. The Palestinian people through the actions of Israel, the Arab nations, the U.S., and at times their own leaders have suffered from some of the worst kind of exploitation, apartheid, and repression committed in the last century. Palestinians have and do suffer from forced evictions, theft of their homes and land, imprisonment without charge or trial, search without cause, disruption of their homes and businesses, repeated humiliation at checkpoints, torture and death at the hands of Israeli security forces. These are conditions that no American should condone. Their crime, trying to salvage a part of a country that was once theirs. Forget the fact that before the resto-

GUEST COMMENTARY

ration of Israel, it was Christian crusaders that slaughtered and drove Jews from Israel or that for centuries, Muslims provided asylum to Jews escaping persecution in Europe. Let's avoid the fact that European and American governments who wouldn't accept Jews escaping Nazi Germany were quick to give someone else's land to Zionists and refugees. Muslims are the favorite political victim of the moment, and unfortunately for them Palestinians are mostly Muslim.

Even though Jews only invaded and controlled the "land of Israel" for about 1,200 years of over its 5,000 year history of human settlement, Zionist elements claim it on the basis of their religion. Right-wing Christian churches who support George Bush have supported this claim because they believe that when Israel is restored, Christ will return. Olmert now has been given a free hand by Bush to further divide the West bank into three large prisons and take the rest for Israel resulting in a permanent state of repression for the Palestinian people which will feed terrorism forever.

This fits, however, with the Bush and Neo Con agenda. Bush will push for a military confrontation with Iran in order

to dominate Mideast oil supplies, a Neo Con dream since 1991. Hamas has received support from Iran. Bush's refusal to push for a just settlement and Israeli land seizures will cause an increase in terrorism that will allow both Israel and Bush to justify further aggression against their supposed enemies. The U.S. will proceed against Iraq, and Israel will destroy the integrity of the Palestinian state.

Bush does not believe in democracy when people who resent American collaboration and support of repressive policies elect groups such as Hamas. The support of Hamas by 75 percent of the people threw the slow nibbling away at the West Bank by Israel to a halt. Bush failed to recognize that it is U.S. support of Israeli expansionist and human rights violations that caused the overwhelming support of Hamas and a rejection of the corrupt, ineffectual and failed leadership of Fatah and the PLO. The reaction of Bush has been to try and cut off all aid to the Palestinian people for their democratic reaction. Israel is refusing to pay taxes due to the Palestinian government. The result is even more unemployment, shortages of basic goods and services, including fuel and hospital supplies. The Palestinian people are being cruelly punished for expressing their opinion.

The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) ruled by Fatah under Yasser

Arafat was corrupt, ineffectual, and bumbling most of the time. Their new leader Abbas, has no support from the Palestinian people but refuses to step down and is propped up by U.S. and Israeli interests. Bush could be a hero and probably win the Nobel Peace Prize if he would push a settlement that would require 1) Recognition of Israel's right to exist, 2) Restoration of a Palestinian state that included Gaza, all of the West Bank and East Jerusalem (the pre 1967 borders), 3) No right to return but fair reparations to Palestinians who lost their homes and land, 4) Recognition of a free, independent, and viable state of Palestine.

As a president who has enormous control over billions of dollars of aid sent every year to Israel let alone millions in donations that are raised by Americans to support Israeli encroachment through "settlement" expansion he could exert pressure to bring about a just and permanent conclusion to this mess. But that would require Bush to stand up to the Zionist lobby, the Christian Right, the American arms dealers and reach a rational, reasonable settlement with Iran. It would require an interest in justice and human rights, a farsightedness about geo-politics for the common good, an ability to place world peace above political interests. Sadly, all characteristics missing from our current administration.

Nostalgia Be Damned, I'm Still A Hateful Old Man

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "Even if you was what you wanta be, you'd just wanta be sumpum else."

I hate being an entertainment writer. Readers only pay any attention when they agree with you.

As far as musicians go, how'd you like it if somebody walks up while you're working, asks you a bunch of lame and/or personal questions, then either tells everybody who'll listen about the perplexed babble you said, or tells them all how insufferably supercilious you are if you ignore him?

That's pretty much the job. Sounds like fun, hunh?

I know, regular readers of this space, both of 'em, are probably wondering why I don't like writing about entertainment, considering my accustomed temperament, ordinarily only experienced among rabid bats and yellowjackets.

Not even I really enjoy pulling the wings off of some poor heathen whose sole offense was attempting to entertain me.

I went to Kerrville last weekend intending to interview Guy Clark.

There were two things wrong with that.

First, you should never interview anyone you admire.

Admiration is about the most dishonest human virtue I know, second only to spite.

I have found in Guy Clark's music so much reflection on things I thought I forgot and needed to remember that I don't really think I could be honest, even if I knew something bad about him.

Which I don't.

But even if I did, I wouldn't tell you.

So now you don't know, either.

And that ain't what you pays me for.

Second, Guy Clark is getting over cancer.

Based on that fact alone, since I've seen three of the people I loved best fight that particular demon, I wouldn't be ornery with you about him even if I wanted to.

And lest we forget, I don't.

Anyway, I just asked him for an interview if he felt like it and left him alone.

Then I went out front and listened.

Which is what you ought to do instead of paying attention to me.

I came to the conclusion in the middle of a hailstorm 30 years ago that I should not write about entertainment.

It was at the old Chequered Flag, 15th and Lavaca in Austin, after a particularly contentious day for a crime reporter at the American Statesman.

I stood in the doorway watching a supercell turn the hills blue (This was back when you could still see the sky between the Capitol and the University.)

With every beer my courthouse tie loosened down one more shirt button, and by this time it was halfway to my belly button.

Somebody said something about hoping it didn't rain, and somebody else said:

"I hope it rains like a cow pissing on a flat rock."

"Sounds like a man who's been cursed with a farm," I said.

I only remember one thing he said after that.

One of us was too drunk, and I'm pretty sure it was me.

My inability to recall that conversation is one of my few regrets in this life.

That, and my later discovery that I could not drink more whiskey than those deceptively clever distillers could make.

Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



All I remember of that conversation was, "My name is Allen Damron."

And suddenly hailstones the size of my fist began punching everybody's insur-

ance rates.

I watched those big chunks of ice crack like rifle shots against the city sidewalk and wondered if all them boys out there where the pavement ended had made it to the barn.

And later on, listening to Steve Fromholtz singing about the trials of Mary Martin Archer, I thought about a childhood of praying for rain and catching hail.

Maybe I'd write about that some day; maybe I still will.

But I knew for certain that I shouldn't

write about those who did write about it.

Of course, like most things I knew I shouldn't do, from time to time I did it anyway.

I can only console myself with the fact that I have never done it very well, as can be confirmed elsewhere in this issue.

It was the best of all times to be young, when Austin offered a typewriter full of politicians, killers and outlaws to occupy my days, and a night full of music to occupy my heart.

You can still have my days, but I keep my nights to myself.



Editorial



Privatization Rears Ugly Head

When Will Public Have Access To Complete Trans-Texas Corridor Contract?

Independent gubernatorial candidate Carole Keeton Strayhorn lit a Texas firestorm last week when she attacked remarks made by Ric Williamson, Gov. Rick Perry's appointee as chairman of the transportation commission, that a foreign-owned company could supercede local officials in deciding where new toll roads might be built.

Williamson had told North Texas leaders who wanted the proposed super-highway built closer to the Metroplex, "You can't tell them where to build the road," referring to Cintra, a Spanish firm, pandered to by Perry as a private company being offered the contract for the Trans-Texas Corridor.

"To me, that is absolutely shocking," Strayhorn said during a news conference. "Texas property belongs to Texans, not foreign companies. Texas freeways belong to Texas companies."

"Apparently, the governor and his transportation chairman believe that what a foreign company wants, a foreign company gets," she said. "And Texans have no say over our freeways and critical infrastructure."

Along with the jab, came a left hook, as Strayhorn demanded that Perry instruct the transportation commission to release all portions of its toll road contract that relate to projects that would be worth an estimated \$6 billion to the Cintra Zachry consortium, which would pay the state \$1.2 billion to collect tolls for 50 years.

About a year ago, Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott ruled that the contract must be made public. But the consortium and the transportation commission have filed a lawsuit to overturn that ruling on grounds that it contains sensitive proprietary information.

According to an article in THE SAN ANTONIO LIGHTNING newspaper, "the LIGHTNING has been threatened with legal action, civil and criminal, by Zachry

Construction, should we reveal 'certain' details of plans now being formulated to fund, build, and maintain the 4,000 miles of the 50-year project called Trans Texas Corridor.

"Taxpayers have already paved the way for this payway-hiway with a \$3.5 million payday to Zachry Group. For planning, Taxpayers should be allowed to see what their money has bought them."

Zachry is based in San Antonio.

Little were most voters aware of a hidden agenda when they approved Proposition 15 in 2001, which read on the ballot: "The constitutional amendment creating the Texas Mobility Fund and authorizing grants and loans of money and issuance of obligations for financing the construction, reconstruction, acquisition, operation, and expansion of state highways, turnpikes, toll roads, toll bridges, and other mobility projects."

At the time, the popular arguments for this initiative were:

- That the Texas Mobility Fund is a special account that would allow the state to pay interest on money the state borrows for projects

- That Toll Equity would allow the state to subsidize the construction of toll road projects with non-toll revenue, since highways are the only major capital projects for which the state does not borrow money. This was deemed no longer defensible in light of spiraling needs, lost economic opportunities, and reduced quality of life and safety.

Cintra-Zachry reached a \$7.2 billion deal with the state last year to develop the first phase of the Trans Texas Corridor - a traffic route running generally parallel to Interstate 35, although there has been some question as to the exact route.

The concept of the proposed corridor would supposedly connect Texas with a 4,000-mile network of corridors up to 1,200 feet wide with separate lanes for

passenger vehicles (three in each direction) and trucks (two in each direction). The corridor also would include six rail lines (three in each direction): two tracks for high-speed passenger rail, two for commuter rail and two for freight. The third component of the corridor would be a 200-foot-wide dedicated utility zone.

There has been a public outcry by rural Texans who, in droves, do not want the project to move forward, but most citizens feel ill-equipped to battle the initiative that has been already put into motion. Although public hearings regarding the corridor have been scheduled for this year, many feel that this is simply lip-service and that the project cannot be defeated — especially if Perry is re-elected. Most of his political opponents have come out against the corridor.

But key issues should be the damage and costs caused by converting what should be public trusts into fodder for privateers.

You already have foreign interests suing the state. You have a secret contract. You have decision-making removed from the hands of Texans.

That's not to mention this very basic question: Why should Texans give up rights to foreigners and pay for their profit margin, when the state should not be shirking its responsibility to efficiently improve the highway system in which we are already invested. What's wrong with having public trusts that Texans would own and control?

The Lone Star State is getting a vivid glimpse of the devil "privatization" even before the first spade of dirt is tossed. Privatizing government is not only expensive and a sell-off of rights, it is sick.

Let Gov. Perry build his road in Spain. If he needs a rail to ride on his way there, perhaps he will find it in November.

— W. Leon Smith

Can't Bully The Chicks From Dixie

Congress takes two weeks off, and there's more nonsense going on than you can shake a stick at.

The hardest thing for me to learn is that I can't find a resolution for all of America's ills in a once-a-week column.

So, how about something on the positive end of the spectrum:

To Martie Erwin (Maguire), Emily Erwin (Robison) and Natalie Maines, a.k.a. The Dixie Chicks, I say, "You go, Girls!"

Just prior to the invasion of Iraq, Natalie informed an audience in London, England that they were not proud to acknowledge George W. Bush as a Texas homeboy. In a firestorm straight out of The Old Testament, the blinded-by-George's-divine-light Country Music community immediately ostracized these three women of song.

It offended the sensibilities of the self-righteous purveyors and fans of mindless ditties based upon drinking oneself into a nightly stupor and spousal infidelity as ways of life that these "little wimmin" would dare be so unpatriotic as to speak out against the president. Why, their musical instruments must be crafted in hell by gargoyles relegated to eternal damnation; their music, previously held in such high regard as to have received eight Grammy awards as well as numerous additional accolades, most assuredly was written with a pen guided by the hand Satan himself.

(They have earned 39 RIAA gold, platinum and multi-platinum certifications, and are the only female group with two Diamond Awards for sales of over 10 million units. Must have been that pact with the Devil that brought all the success.)

In a replay all too eerily reminiscent of the insanity that erupted after John Lennon was misquoted about The Beatles being more popular (in many instances) among their fans than God, Country DJs (collectively not the brightest group of people on the planet) led the charge to banish and bankrupt the ladies by never playing any Dixie Chicks songs again. How lame. A broadcaster should be the absolute last of all people to trample anyone's 1st Amendment Right to Freedom of Expression into the ground. It's the very duty of all broadcasters to uphold that most important of American Freedoms — that's why it's listed at the very beginning!

Without the safety net of Freedom of Expression the broadcaster stands subject to be the first victim of unjustified silencing, even unwarranted arrest and incarceration.

These DJs incited folks to, or at a minimum went along with, marches and demonstrations denouncing The Dixie Chicks. Just as imbecilic preachers had done with their hypnotically-mesmerized teen faithful during the late '60s, events and gatherings were held with the sole purpose being to burn Dixie Chicks CDs and cassettes.

How dare some upstart musicians — girly musicians, no less — defy the edicts and power of the Fuhrer... er, King... oh, whatever the hell George is.

To the standing-on-its-head, Jack-and-Miller-soaked logic of the baloney and mayo on white bread, F-150 drivin', Christian-bred sundry Country Music aficionado, if you ain't fer Bush and his war of egomaniacal gratification, then you ain't fer our troops.

Anyone who's read this far perceives the sheer inanity of that line of thinking.

Well, The Dixie Chicks have not softened any in their rhetoric; if anything this cold shoulder treatment has only steeled



Out Of The Blue

By Jerry Tenuto

their resolve.

As George's lies came back around to bite him in the ass, folks began to realize the depth of his phoniness and utter incompetence, while his poll numbers sank lower than whale excrement — creating dissidence within the GOP — the fans are returning to The Dixie Chicks in droves.

Or, could these be new, younger, hipper fans?

Does it really matter?

In a way, yes — because warmongering, hard-headed, irrational "My president's always right no matter what"-types don't deserve The Dixie Chicks!

Their latest album, "Taking the Long Way," was released on May 26. That same evening the ladies played to a standing room only crowd at Bryant Park in New York City.

The album sold in excess of 525,000 copies in the first week, making them the only female group in history to have three albums debut at #1 in the Top 200 (#2 in Australia).

Virtually across the board the reviewers are raving about their combination of classic rock and Texas stylings — fighting words, tough music. On July 21 they'll begin their "Accidents & Accusations Tour" in Detroit.

I'm about to buy my first Dixie Chicks CD; I think it'll make a nice complement to Neil Young's newest, "Living With War."

I don't write all this because I'm a Dixie Chicks fan. I never paid the group a whole heck of a lot of attention until the Country Music community made outcasts of them. Just to show how uninformed that segment can be, though, during the 1990s I used to watch Bill Mahler's "Politically Incorrect" every night, first on Comedy Central then ABC-TV. Quite often he would have Country artists as guests: Naomi Judd; Toby Keith; Natalie Maines, to name a few.

Ms. Maines always showed a propensity for progressive thinking and Liberal open-mindedness, as did some of the other Country stars. Had the folks who listened to that genre of music been paying attention, they might not have been so filled with shock and awe at her comment back in January of 2003.

Let's face it — so many of these Country stars who have filled the airwaves with

ingoistic pro-war songs have never spent one day in uniform or service to our Nation. It's really easy to praise the glory of war and combat when you have absolutely no idea what misery and horror is left in its wake.

Take that clown "Big Bully" Bill O'Reilly. He recently lambasted Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa. for doing his job as a member of Congress — questioning the level of responsibility the U.S. Marine Corps and NCIS were willing to take regarding the alleged massacre of civilians at Haditha, Iraq.

As an off-decorated Marine Colonel, a veteran of combat in VietNam who retired after 37 years, and a lifetime servant of the people of this Country with more than 30 years in Congress, there is perhaps nobody more eminently qualified — or deserving — to bring this atrocity out into the public arena.

Rep. Murtha is absolutely, 100% correct in being outraged that the Corps sat on its hands in this matter for some four months, doing literally nothing but accepting the false reports of the participants until autopsy reports began to hit the media. Once a Marine always a Marine — and this sort of disaster undoubtedly sickens and disgusts every living Marine.

It should sicken and disgust every living American.

It should sicken and disgust every human being who is alive and possesses a conscience.

That, of course, would eliminate George W. Bush, the Dick Cheney, Don Rumsfeld, Condoleezza Rice, Peter Pace, Herr Oberst Karl Rove, and the rest of their Cabal.

"Big Bully" Bill, in his true blowhard, Neo-con mouthpiece fashion, tried to spin it out of control, as if he, the "military-never-been," knew more than hero Murtha, who was not present to defend himself, and guest Gen. Wesley Clark.

One of the Bully's asinine observations was that Murtha should not have brought the issue, which is under investigation, up on national television. Gen. Clark shot that ignorant suggestion down as Murtha doing what he should.

The Bully then attempted, at length, to smear the incredibly courageous, selfless men of our fathers' generation by accusing them of purposely slaughtering innocent civilians during World War II; Clark all but told him he was crazy, that there was never any such allegation.

So, O'Reilly altered his "fair and balanced" rant to state documented proof exists wherein American troops shot unarmed SS men, and burned Japanese soldiers in caves with flamethrowers. Again, Gen. Clark admonished him for making an

unreal comparison, that there is absolutely no way to judge what transpires in the heat of battle with the systematic execution of civilians, as what happened at My Lai.

Whenever "Big Bully" spews chunks about anything involving the military, his complete nescience of the subject shines through. O'Reilly's logic of that which should transpire on the battlefield, or simply within the ranks of fighting men and women far braver than he, reeks with a stench of implausibility matched only by Rumsfeld.

It's not for me to judge what happened at Haditha. However, at this juncture forensic results are beginning to paint a picture that's not entirely positive for those members of the USMC who were present. I hate to think that's the case, but why did the Corps and NCIS wait this long to begin to conduct a thorough investigation?

I know it cuts John Murtha to the quick — as an American, as a member of Congress, but mostly as a Marine — to have this dark cloud hovering over his beloved Corps. Yet, there's no one else I'd rather have on the hunt than this truly honorable man.

As to "Big Bully" Bill O'Reilly and his attack upon Rep. Murtha's vociferous questioning of the handling of this tragedy, I send a salute — with a single-finger.

This is the kind of mess that arises when young adults are forced into stress situations, fighting for a cause to which they have been given no proper explanation. They aren't over there to save America; they're not there to save Iraq. At this point the U.S. military is only in Iraq to try to keep each other alive.

I can fully understand the utter frustration with losing all decorum over seeing your friends killed and wounded on a daily basis by an "enemy" that essentially does not exist.

These brave young people are mired in a war not of their own making, begun with lies, for the sole purpose of making the illicit, Fascist "leaders" who stole control of our Nation nearly six years ago, and their pals, wealthier than they already were.

Many of our current military leaders are woefully inadequate for the task, because for decades the modern all-volunteer Army and Marine Corps have been breeding grounds for bureaucrats and politicians rather than warriors, especially throughout the officer grades. Take a look at Gen. Peter Pace, Gen. Mike Hayden, and the other commanders who appear in news briefings or as shills for White House policies.

No officer was even with the patrol that day in Haditha — the highest-ranking man was a Staff Sergeant.

If in fact these Marines did flip out en masse, it's not too difficult to comprehend how a combination of a lack of mature leadership, a never-ending war that's more like a series of daily murders, repeated rotations to the front, and one IED plus one dismembered friend too many could lead to the creation of hell in a small village.

We would all have to be blind, deaf, dumb and stupid to think this was a singular occurrence.

Therefore, I submit: Whom should the blame be put upon?

The poor lost sheep who cracked after being pushed beyond human endurance?

What about the miscreants who've been slithering out of every crime they have committed all along, lo these five-and-a-half years and longer?

George W. Bush has promised the World that whoever was responsible for these grisly acts shall be punished.

That's a statement we've heard that from his lie-infected lips before.

This time, the blame should go all the way to the Oval Office.

Continued On Next Page

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TENUTO

Shadows Of My Lai

Continued From Previous Page

Along the way, the crimes of murder and sedition, as well as myriad Constitutional malfeasances should be charged against every general, bureaucrat, cabinet member, and rubber-stamp Congressperson or Senator who has allowed Bush to gain this dictatorial hold over our Government, especially the Prince of Torture, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. We should then hold a special tribunal just for Herr Oberst Karl Rove.

I would like to have discussed the first salvo of tyranny from King George's Right Wing Supremes. In a five to four decision the New Supremes concluded that Government employees do not have 1st Amendment protection when blowing the whistle on superiors. In short, an administrator in a Government workplace can now use the concept George W. Bush (Herr Rove perhaps, eh?) stole from Hitler of *Fuhrerprinzip* — and there's nothing anyone can do about it.

The Federal Communications Commission continues to kiss the rumps of self-righteous evangelistic loons by upholding its inane \$550,000 fine levied on CBS-TV (\$27,500 maximum per each of the 20 network owned-and-operated stations) for Janet Jackson's "wardrobe malfunction" during the 2004 Super Bowl halftime show.

The network is entirely correct in its assertion that the charges as outlined by the FCC defy all logic because neither was the incident planned, nor could it have been avoided since the broadcast was live. This is nothing more than Right-wing horseshit, considering that costume errors happened quite often throughout the early days of television, when live programming was the norm, and nobody was ever fined for an "oops" situation.

Also, that only the CBS-owned stations and not its hundreds of affiliates have been hit with fines further suggests that this is more political payback for non-support of George W. Bush and his hare-brained policies than an attempt to uphold decency in broadcasting.

If the FCC wanted to fine somebody for the "wardrobe" incident, it should have gone after Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake. Their act was indecent with or without clothes.

Now, The Dixie Chicks, well...

Note to "Big Bully" O'Reilly: One of those WWII vets you attempted to malign, Robert Yazzie, a Navajo "Windtalker," passed — fittingly — this Memorial Day. He would have turned 82 on Tuesday, May 30.

Mr. Yazzie was one of 400 Navajo men who joined the Marine Corps and developed a code based upon their native, unwritten language. They were instrumental in confounding the Japanese, who never broke the unique code, in battles all across the Pacific from 1942 to 1945, including Iwo Jima.

Although the white invaders stole their land and forced them to live on a reservation, these Native American men willingly served when our Country needed them.

Lest we forget...

Shalom, friends and neighbors.

(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)

*We'll be fighting in the streets
With our children at our feet
And the morals that they worship will be gone
And the men who spurred us on
Sit in judgment of all wrong
They decide and the shotgun sings the song*
— The Who, "Won't Get Fooled Again"

March 16, 1968; North Vietnam. Charlie Company's 11th Brigade was ordered into Son My village, divided up into four areas by U.S. military intelligence: My Lai 1, 2, 3 and 4. The civilians would be away from their homes by 7 a.m. at the latest. Everyone remaining was Viet Cong or a sympathizer, or so they said. The men of Charlie Company's 11th were to destroy the entire village with extreme prejudice.

Unfortunately, the Viet Cong was not there. U.S. soldiers so mentally fractured by their time in the war had to either kill innocent civilians or face years of court-martial. Most of the men went ballistic, blindly slaughtering en masse. Various accounts put the total number of dead between 347 and 504. The victims were old men, women, children and babies. The gruesome details of the attack are spine-chilling. An American gunship saved a small group when it landed between the last remaining encampment of Vietnamese civilians and U.S. soldiers. The pilot, Hugh Thompson, Jr., later known as "The Hero of My Lai," claimed that he would *open fire on American soldiers* if they did not halt their attack. It was three years before the truth came out.

The cover-up of this terrible bloodletting — a war crime, by all definitions — was swift and absolute. Colonel Oran Henderson took up the investigation and concluded 22 innocents died that day; unavoidable deaths in what was otherwise a successful attack that snuffed out the lives of over 120 "insurgents." But that is not what happened. In response to written reports from soldiers who refused to take part in the massacre, Colin Powell, then a Major in the Army, whitewashed it, claiming that relations between Vietnamese civilians and American soldiers were "excellent."

It took a journalist, Investigative Reporter Seymour Hersh, now with *The New Yorker Magazine*, to break the painful truth. Within days it was all over the national media. By the time the military trials had finished, America's heart had changed. It was the single most important turning point of the Vietnam War, jarring those who simply did not want to know the truth into opening their eyes to the ugly, brutal reality of America's blood-soaked foreign policy.

On Nov. 19, 2005, Marine Lance Cpl. Miguel Terrazas of El Paso, Texas, died just outside of Haditha, Iraq after an improvised explosive device detonated near his convoy. He was just 20 years old. His unit, many of whom were on their third or fourth tours in Iraq, simply snapped. They went on a rampage through the small Sunni Muslim city of Haditha, killing over 25 civilians that we know of. Old men, women, children, even babies were murdered in cold blood. The only witness to this was a nine year old girl.

In a video captured by a local student, the girl looks like any other innocent child. She is wearing a pink shirt with a smiling bunny rabbit adorning the front. But the expression on her face is simply haunting. She tells the cameraman how her grandmother died, on her knees in prayer, shot in the back of the head. Then, she says, soldiers went into her grandfather's room and shot him as he lay in bed. They stepped out and hurled a grenade into the

room. Then they killed her brother. Then her baby sister. They lined them up in a row, execution-style, and shot them one by one. The children were wearing pajamas. Their blood and tears stain the walls and floor, caught on a tape that will rock your sheltered, Conservative-Christian reality.

Now the mainstream U.S. media is paying attention, thanks to the efforts of Congressman John Murtha, a former Marine and well-known Democratic war hawk. Once a trusted advisor to Johnson, Nixon, Carter, Reagan and Bush Sr., he is *persona non grata* with Dubya's administration, having called for a withdraw from Iraq last year.

We can only wish the Haditha massacre were an isolated incident. The reality is far more terrible.

This past April I spoke with Geoff Reymillard, a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War. He recounted a story of how a mother, father and their two children, both under the age of five, were killed at a roadside checkpoint in Baghdad. The report went up the chain of command, and a meeting was called. That night, a crowd of soldiers gathered to listen to their superiors address the matter. "If those [expletive] Hajis would just learn how to drive,"



The Webster Retort

By Stephen Webster

said one Colonel, "that [expletive] wouldn't happen."

"What we are seeing here is an Iraqi no longer being a human," said Reymillard. "They become this Haji, just like they became Gooks in Vietnam, they have become Haji's to our soldiers. Their deaths are not reported at all. They are all just chalked up to being insurgents. That is what happens over and over again. All the Iraqis being killed just 'become' insurgents. I just... I don't know how you can be in favor of that at all."

This time, we were lucky. Haditha was but a shadow of My Lai. This is the consequence of waging an unprovoked war with a currency of lies. Putting young men fresh out of high school into the middle of a civil war is no strategy for victory; it is a recipe for massacre. The Bush Administration has run out of white paint. Wake up and smell the truth.

U.S. out of Iraq. Now.

Stephen Webster is an Investigative Reporter with North-Texas weekly THE NEWS CONNECTION, a Staff Writer with PEACE JOURNALISM MAGAZINE and George W. Bush's hometown paper THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST, a former contributor to THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS' Science & Technology section and the former Editor-in-Chief of BINARY CULTURE.

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June 10, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
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U.S. Army Tries 24 Texans In 'Stockade Case'

The sensational murder trial of two dozen Texans, denied bail and held for months in an open-air stockade, began at Jefferson on May 24, 1869.

George Washington Smith was a veteran of the Union Army, whose chief claim to fame was a flesh wound sustained at the Battle of Gettysburg. He migrated to Texas with his uncle after the war and opened a store in Jefferson up the road from Marshall, the secessionist stronghold.

When he failed as a merchant, Smith went into politics as a Radical Republican. As head of the local Loyal League, he controlled the freedman vote which ensured his election as a delegate to the constitutional convention of 1868-69. Even worse, in the eyes of most whites, was the fact that he lived among the former slaves and had a black mistress.

Following a Republican rally on the evening of Oct. 3, 1868, Smith and a black companion were fired upon by a group of four white men led by Col. Richard P. Crump. The carpetbagger returned fire wounding two of the attackers and took refuge at the army post.

Later that night, Crump appeared with a delegation of civilian officials to insist that Smith be turned over to them to face a charge of assault. Major James Curtis, the post commander, acceded to the request over the protests of Smith, who told the officer in no uncertain terms that he was sending him to his death.

By the next morning, Major Curtis was having serious second thoughts. Could the Marion County authorities be trusted to protect the unpopular prisoner? Just to be on the safe side, he ordered a squad of soldiers to stand watch.

That night an armed and masked mob of 70 to 100 men, presumably organized by a Klan offshoot called the Knights of the Rising Sun, stormed the jail and overpowered both the civilian and military guards. Several black prisoners were dragged into the woods, where two were shot to death execution style.

When the horde attempted to remove him from his cell, G.W. Smith fought for his life and reportedly killed one of the vigilantes. Rather than engage the wild man in hand-to-hand combat, they shot him through the windows of the cell. Once he was dead, the firing squad squeezed into the cramped quarters and took turns pumping bullets into the corpse, 18 by the army surgeon's count.

After a two-month investigation, the army started rounding up suspects on Dec. 5, 1868. William P. Saufley was at the top of the list, but the grand commander of the Knights of the Rising Sun had gotten out of Texas while the getting was good.

Thirty-five were eventually arrested and held in the army stockade. Shackled, abused, underfed and exposed to the elements, their incarceration soon became a symbol of the hated Reconstruction occupation.

Two attorneys traveled to Washington to plead with the secretary of war for the transfer of the prisoners to civilian custody. The lawyers talked until they were blue in the face but to no avail. The army was bound and determined to sit in judgment of the accused.

The editor of THE JEFFERSON TIMES and THE TEXAS REPUBLICAN in Marshall made more of an impression. Robert W. Loughery published a widely read circular that took the army to task for stubbornly refusing to defer to the civil courts or even to grant bail.

This Week In Texas History

By Barte Haile



Loughery's broadside somehow wound up on the desk of President Andrew Johnson, who passed it onto the war department with a personal note asking for the details of what was now known as the "Stockade Case." The answer ultimately came from Gen. Joseph J. Reynolds, commander of occupied Texas, in the form of a published rebuttal to Editor Loughery's allegations.

According to the "Handbook of Texas," the general "pointed out that the civilian authorities, who were now asking for the right to try the case, were the same ones who had assured the military that George W. Smith would be safe in their hands and receive a prompt and impartial trial in the civil courts." Reynolds added that denial of bail was a prudent precaution in light of the fact that several suspects had vanished as well as consistent with state law in murder cases.

Eleven defendants were cut loose before the curtain was raised on the show trial in May 1869. That left 24 to be judged by a military tribunal of eight officers.

A grand total of 176 witnesses testified (47 for the prosecution and 129 for the

defense) during the 71-day marathon. The accused, their families and most white Texans feared the worst, but military justice proved to be, at least in this instance, not a cruel oxymoron.

Eighteen defendants were acquitted outright and released on the spot. Three were convicted of murder and sentenced to life, but there is no record of their spending a single day in prison. The remaining three were found guilty of a lesser offense and quickly pardoned by President Grant.

Barte Haile welcomes your comments, questions and suggestions at haile@pdq.net or P.O. Box 152, Friendswood, TX 77549. And don't forget to visit www.twith.com.

Impress Your Date: Freak Out On A Carnival Ride

I have a basic rule of thumb when it comes to carnival rides: If the person running a ride, such as the Squirrel Cages, keeps a garden hose available for spraying out the seats, I stay away. That's because this person's sole ambition is to make me — and others like me — vomit. I realize this person may be a trained professional who, on a daily basis, makes countless split-second decisions on whether to push the red or green button to stop the ride. And, yes, I realize this individual has nothing but the safety of his passengers in mind when he secures a safety latch by removing his boot and whacking it until his arm gets tired, at which point, being a trained professional, he bolsters the confidence of his nervous riders by hacking up a cheekful of phlegm and shrugging his shoulders before walking off.

Yet somehow, in spite of these assurances, I'm still terrified of carnival rides. I think it's because, when I was 10, my "friends" talked me into riding The Drop Out, which wasn't actually a ride as much as it was a barf-a-torium with an observation deck. Basically, 30 people entered a circular room and found a spot along the wall. Gradually, the walls would begin to rotate faster and faster, creating enough centrifugal force to suck the cotton candy from the mouth of anyone standing within 100 feet. Once the ride reached optimum



Life Is A Funny Place

By Ned Hickson

Siuslaw News

centrifuge, occupants would be stuck to the wall as the floor dropped out, leaving them suspended 20 feet above a pit of (presumably fake) spikes.

All of this was visible through a series of windows surrounding the ride so that, while waiting in line, people such as myself could prepare for the experience by, very slowly, having a bowel movement. I still don't know how I got talked into this ride. All I know is I ended up next to someone whose stomach contents went on display the instant the floor dropped out. Due to the force of gravity, I couldn't move my head without blacking out, which meant watching the sum total of this person's food consumption — which was considerable — reconfigure itself on the wall next to me.

This was, without question, the longest ride of my life. To this day, I can still see the apologetic look on that person's face as the ride came to an end and the three of us — him, his vomit and I — gradually slid down the wall together.

Since that fateful encounter I've had no

interest in being strapped down, cinched up or buckled into something specifically designed to do things I wouldn't normally do without a flight suit and full medical coverage. My wife gets frustrated by this because she's one of those people who is exhilarated by having her stomach in her mouth. The one time she talked me into riding with her was during one of our first dates, when I tried impressing her by joining her in the Squirrel Cages. Everything was fine until that part in the ride where — and you know the part I mean — it starts to actually move.

Granted, I'm not a professional carnival ride operator, but I think I could recognize some of the subtle signs exhibited by a rider who is in distress. For example: Someone who is pressed so hard against the cage that his lips are actually outside the door while screaming "LET-ME-OFF-LET-ME-OFF-LET-ME-OFF!" would be a red flag to me. Particularly if the rider in question began doing this after traveling less than two feet. In my case, these signs were somehow missed by our ride operator. I'm not saying it was all his fault.

Who knows, he might've been busy looking for a garden hose.

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

At Best Texans Ruled By Slick Used-Car Salesmen

Believing the hype pushed by the governor and legislators is much the same as buying a used-car from "Honest" Abe's car lot. To get you to spend your hard-earned cash and buy the broken-down heap, Abe makes it look like the best deal on four wheels. He'll "spit-shine" it and tell you about all the "bells and whistles" that come with the purchase, even if you can't see them with your own eyes.

Then after you buy the glorified heap, "Honest" Abe will follow you around for a while reminding you of what a great deal you just made and how lucky you are that you have him as your salesman.

Sound familiar? It should, because that's the same kind of deal we Texans got from the governor and the legislature when they triumphantly sold us the legislation that is supposed to be the great deal for Texas schools, homeowners and businesses! By the way, we'd probably get a better guar-



Texas Commentary

By Peter Stern

antee from "Honest" Abe than we did from our elected officials.

A few quick questions:

• Why would BIG businesses support and be so happy about the new law on paying their business taxes?

• What good is cutting property taxes and putting a cap on appraisal values, when the court determined that the statewide school property tax system is illegal, and schools will need to increase property taxes in the near future? In addition, it

adds a control to home values, which over time will hurt homeowners when they sell.

• Why increase taxes ONLY on cigarettes? Why not on all tobacco products? Why not also on alcohol?

• Why increase the tax on used vehicles? Why not on all vehicles new and used?

• Why give back \$2,000 per teacher when last year much more was taken from them in combined salary and benefits?

Upon closer scrutiny, it sure does look like old "Honest" Abe isn't the only "honest" salesman in Texas.

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>.

Unspoken Injustice; Breaking The Cycle Of Abuse

Part Two In A Series

By STEPHEN WEBSTER
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

On July 29, 2005, Larry Dale Floyd, a former Denton County constable and resident of The Colony, was arrested in Canon City, Colorado. He is accused of attempting to seduce an eight year-old girl. His solicitous attempts via telephone and the Internet were rooted out by an undercover Freemont County police officer and Floyd was promptly arrested.

While serving time in the Freemont detention center, he allegedly told cellmates William Johnson and Justin Lopez stories of repeat offenses, dating all the way back to his military service during the Vietnam War.

Floyd told Johnson of how he would visit prostitutes overseas and buy their entire families. He recounted how he would chain young girls to polls and act out his perverse fantasies before finally killing them. He made inappropriate comments about Lopez' three children when they

came to visit him in prison. Both of Floyd's cellmates came forward offering testimony against this former Denton County officer of the law, claiming they did not want to see him have any contact with a child again.

When Floyd was arrested, he claimed that he was on an "undercover sting operation," that somehow nobody in local law enforcement knew of. He told cellmate Johnson of his plans to travel the country in an RV, stopping at as many nudist colonies as he could. He is also accused of multiple accounts of possession of child pornography. A Lake Dallas bartender claims Floyd showed her photo albums of children bound and gagged, either unclothed or dressed in lingerie. He told her stories of how he would get their parents involved in all-night "parties." He is currently awaiting trial in the Freemont County Detention Center on a \$100,000 bail.



Floyd

work at the theatre with dozens of kids who were in the summer musicals that year. Within a year, I was suicidal. I was only 11 years old."

"I found myself up at two in the morning, crying, walking around my living room with a knife," said Largen. "My parents found me like this, and I told them what had happened. They asked me why I hadn't told them sooner so they could have done something. Well, at 11 years old I didn't know anything about the statutes of limitations, or even what those were. I trusted my parents to react, and they didn't. They dissociated from it as much as I had at the time."

"Then, when I was 13, I was assaulted by a guy who graduated from the same private middle school/high school I attended in St. Louis," said Largen. "He was the son of one of the city's most wealthy men, and still hung around the school. He was pretty well known and well liked. This guy spent about a year cultivating a sort of big brother relationship with me. He never tried anything during that time, but he would make comments sometimes about sex that a 13 year old shouldn't hear, but otherwise he was always nice to me."

"He befriended my family," continued Largen. "One day he asked my mom if he could take me on a road trip down to Branson to help his grandmother move. At that point, he started drinking with me. I thought it was cool, you know? Drinking with the old dude. I'm just 13, and I really didn't know any better. I had never been told of the dangers. We get back to his apartment after helping his grandmother and he broke out some pills. He said they would make me 'fly real high.' Well, turns out he gave me Chloral Hydrate, Phenobarbital and Valium. He told me the names of the pills, but I didn't know that taking them with alcohol could have injured or killed me. When I woke up, he was assaulting me and I completely dissociated. I went to another place and repressed it for years. And my fear and silence let him do it to others, I'm sure. They are skilled at what they do. Predators are fixated, and nine out of ten will become repeat offenders."

Christopher Largen's experiences are what lead him to found Building Block, a Denton County activist group that helps survivors of childhood sexual assault break their silence and confront their inner demons. "Breaking the silence about your victimization is step one. There can be no healing unless you do that," claimed Largen. "I should know."

THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST encourages members of the community to speak out against this unspoken injustice. To tell your story, or promote your ideas as to what we as a society should do about this horrific and escalating problem, write a letter to Editor W. Leon Smith. For more information about Building Block, visit www.building-block.org.

Additional reading:
www.perverted-justice.com
www.nationalalertregistry.com
www.childsafenetwork.org



To The Editor:

Snatching Defeat from the Jaws of Victory

Far too many Democrats simply don't get it!

As I see it, the largest issue that has had the most negative response from both ends of the political spectrum (aside from the Iraq war) is illegal immigration.

Are Democrats now going to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory?

It sure is beginning to look like it. Fortunately, Republicans are all over the map on this one; now they must make a choice as to whether they should please their corporate constituency or please the majority of voters.

With Bush's botched war in Iraq, his failed disastrous proposals to privatize Social Security, his support for the pharmaceutical manufacturers' Medicare Prescription Drug rip-off, his appointment of countless incompetent Republican political hacks, his bullheaded refusal to use diplomacy as a first option (instead of the last), widespread corruption among his cheerleaders, loss or lack of accountability for many billions of dollars that were to be spent on Iraq reconstruction, porous borders, and out-of-control budget deficits (to name but a few), has put the Democratic Party in the position of having a 'slam dunk' in the 2006 elections.

Yet, many Democrats are putting the cart before the horse. When are they going to learn that they must first and foremost advocate a position to stop illegal immigration at the border — now! The issues of amnesty can and must come at a later time, if for no other reason than the issues are too complex and controversial to deal with in a carefully-considered fashion in so short a period of time. It will take time to assess the magnitude of the problem and come up with practical solutions.

Here's my concern: Even though Republicans were previously in lock step with GWB on the issues of immigration and/or amnesty, now that the voter is up in arms on the issue you can bet that more and more Republicans will abandon GWB (to save their own hides) and promote a get-tough policy of sealing the borders — with little or no amnesty — and embrace such a policy as one of their very own; then they will label amnesty proponents as 'free-spending, bleeding-heart Liberals.' Ironic, isn't it?

Democrats must hold Bush and the Republicans' feet to the fire, constantly reminding the American voter of all of the

Bush Administration's corrupt, inept and bankrupt policies. Now Democrats have all the ammunition they could ever have dreamed of to win an election — if they'll only use it.

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

Would you please print the enclosed Open Letter to President G.W.B. sitting in office now, as I can't get through to any officials, that I am here, do exist, a U.S. citizen, done as I have been.

Please print in your paper.

Maybe Mr. President will see and read the letter! (get to the bottom of no records.)

The Attorney General's Office (AR) told us to hire a P.I. to prove who I am. I'm sure there are more U.S. citizens whose records have been erased and get the same answers from their government agencies. If there are, they all need to write and speak up.

Dissenters are being wiped away and records messed up. It's to show American citizens what can/does occur if you rock the boat.

Where's this democracy Bush is pushing? Shouldn't it start at home, the U.S.?

Laura L. Morseth
President George W. Bush:

I want my records corrected and put back.

Jewell Pauline Flaherty
DOB: Aug. 29, 1958
County: Logan
Town: Paris, Arkansas
Smith Wayward Girls Home, place of live birth

Parents: Benjamin Wenson Flaherty and Verna Marie Pace (maiden name)
Laura Lea Sherrill
DOB: August 29, 1958
County: Logan

Town: Paris, Arkansas
Smith Wayward Girls Home, place of live birth

Parents: Howard Witt Sherrill and Laura Cornelia Smith (maiden name)

I know Margie D. Schoedingers' story, court dockets, to be true now, as she was erased, many believe her entire mess now and cover up! Strom Thurmond was a better man.

Cowards do what's being done to certain persons - erasing peoples identities and so forth.

I'm asking nicely for you to put all my documents back and I am a U.S. Citizen, born here, signed, sealed, and delivered.

Thank You,
Laura L. Morseth
20194 Carters Lake Road
Bokoshe, Okla. 74930

Texas Highways Hits The Beach

AUSTIN — Nothing kicks off summer like a trip to the beach. And with more than 300 miles of coastline, Texas is a beach-lover's paradise. If you need proof, just check out the June issue of *Texas Highways*. An eight-page photographic feast spotlights the sandy shores of Galveston, Port Aransas, Bolivar Flats, South Padre Island, and other coastal retreats.

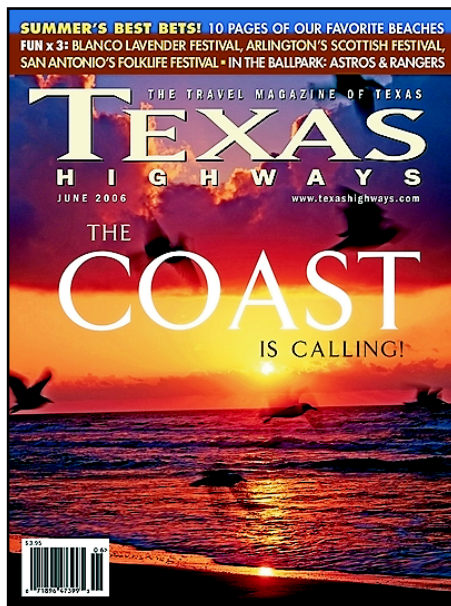
The June issue also plays up another summer tradition, that of going to the ballpark. Texas boasts not one, but two world-class Major League stadiums—Houston's Minute Maid Park and Arlington's Ameriquest Field. Lisa Martin, author of *The Cool Chick's Guide to Baseball*, explains why the action on the field is only a fraction of the fun.

Another Arlington attraction—the Texas Scottish Festival—also makes the magazine this month. With Highland games, sheepdog trials, and nonstop music (bagpipes and more), the annual celebration offers a bonnie good time for lads and lassies of all ages.

More fun awaits in the tiny town of Lipscomb, nestled in the far northeast corner of the Panhandle. In the summertime, folks come from all over to dance on a wooden platform under the stars, revitalizing an early Texas tradition. Veteran travel writer Sharry Buckner paints a revealing portrait of Lipscomb residents and their abiding connection to the land.

A story by editor Jack Lowry highlights San Antonio's Texas Folklife Festival, which has been showcasing the state's diverse ethnic roots for more than three decades with food, music, dance, storytelling, and folk demonstrations. By all accounts, the party is better than ever.

Rounding out the issue is a feature by senior editor Ann Gallaway about laven-



der, an up-and-coming Texas crop that...well, just makes scents. If you've been wondering about those fields of purple that now blanket parts of the Hill Country, you can find out more at this month's 2nd annual Blanco Lavender Festival. From sandy shores to lavender-studded hillsides, the June issue of *Texas Highways* delights the senses and inspires adventures from one end of the state to the other.

Texas Highways is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation. The official Travel Magazine of Texas, it encourages travel to and within the state and tells the Texas story to readers around the world. *Texas Highways* is available at newsstands and by subscription. For details, go to <www.texashighways.com>.

TPW Commission Approves Public Hunting At Whitney, 41 Other Parks

AUSTIN — One-third of Texas state parks — including Lake Whitney State Park — will allow public hunts for the 2006-07 hunting season, as approved by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission at its May 24-25 public meeting.

Most of the state parks approved for public hunting will be offered through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's computer drawings for a variety of game and hunting options, including new youth opportunities. New categories include youth-only deer management and youth-only exotic hunts.

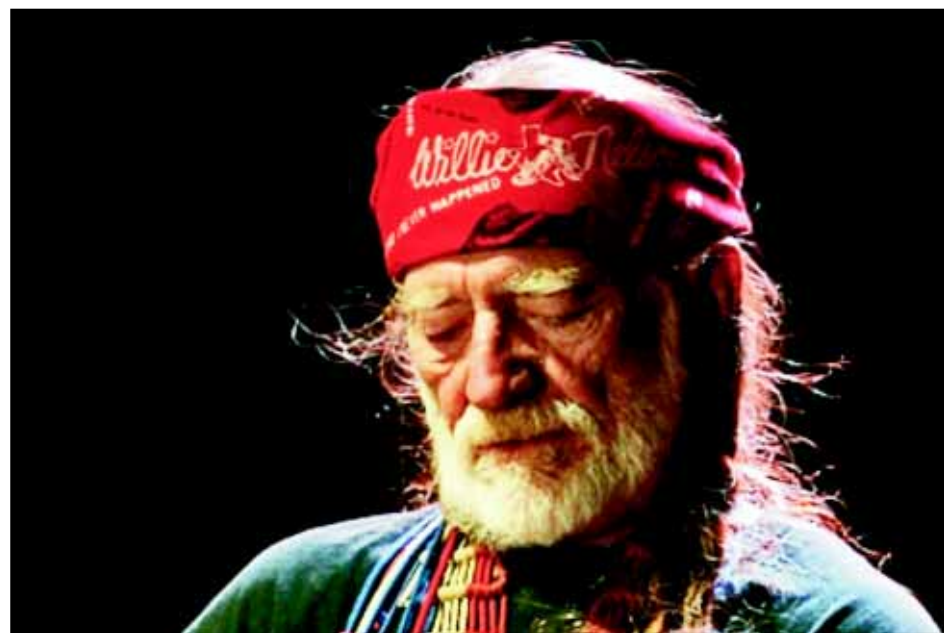
To minimize conflicts between park user groups, public hunts are offered during off-peak visitation periods, typically on weekdays in the winter months. A number of youth hunts are scheduled during school holidays. During these events, signs are posted at parks alerting visitors that a hunt is in progress.

Applications for special drawing hunts to be conducted on state parks, wildlife management areas, and other TPWD-managed properties during the 2006-07 season will be available in early July from TPWD headquarters and field offices, and posted on the TPWD website. Each hunt's application fee ranges from \$3 to \$10 for adults and is free to youth, who must be accompanied by an adult hunter.

Many parks will also provide hunting

opportunities as part of the department's Annual Public Hunting Permit program, which offers purchasers of the \$48 permit hunting access to more than one million acres throughout the state.

Information about the drawings for hunts by special permits can be obtained by calling (800) 792-1112 or on-line <www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/hunt/public>.



THE RED HEADED STRANGER is set to perform a benefit concert on July 3, at Carl's Corner Truck Stop, located some 50 miles south of Dallas. Other bands will be on hand for the performance.

Willie Nelson Goes Above And Beyond

HILLSBORO — The Red Headed Stranger is no stranger to the citizens of Hill County in Texas. The entire county population is an estimated 35,000 people. A native of the community of Abbott, located in Hill County, Nelson has been supportive of the area since he first played his guitar at the local radio station, KHBR, some 60 years ago.

On July 3, Nelson returns to his roots once again to perform at Carl's Corner Truck Stop at Carl's Corner, located some 50 miles south of Dallas. Along with bands including Asleep At The Wheel, Shooter Jennings, Ray Price, James Hand, Tommy Alverson, and many more, Willie will break out his famous headband and perform for the hometown crowd and thousands of other fans.

Also scheduled prior to the July 3rd event, the Willie Warm-Up Weekend will take place at Carl's Corner Truck Stop and acts from across the state of Texas will perform in the Willie Nelson Theater, located behind the truck stop.

While many are expected to attend, what they may not know is that a majority of the tickets for the event were donated to local organizations throughout Hill County. Nelson generously offered 5,000 tickets to the Hill County Fire Departments to sell to help the various departments with equipment and other needs. He also provided tickets to Hill County Paw Pals, an

organization raising funds to build an animal shelter in the county.

Finally, Nelson gave tickets to the family of a fallen Hill County Department of Public Safety Officer who recently lost his battle to brain cancer to help defray some of the medical expenses the family incurred.

Nelson's generosity did not just start there. Back in 1993 after the Hill County Courthouse in Hillsboro, burned almost completely to the ground, Nelson held benefit concerts at the site and raised \$275,000 to help in the rebuilding of the facility. He also has a room dedicated to him in the Hill County Cell Block Museum, also in Hillsboro, and has provided several platinum albums and other memorabilia for visitors to enjoy.

Nelson has even broken ground on a Bio Diesel plant at Carl's Corner with the hopes of providing area farmers with an opportunity to benefit by providing their products to the production of the clean-burning fuel.

For further information on the concerts, contact the Hillsboro Area Chamber of Commerce at 1-800-HILLSBORO or e-mail <info@hillsborochamber.org>. For tickets, call 254-582-8433 or order on line at <www.willienelson.com>.

Organizers said, "As far as Hill County is concerned, if this angel fell too close to the ground, the citizens would be there with open arms to catch him."

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