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Barbara Ann Radnofsky in front of a Zorro movie poster at the Iconoclast office.
(She is a long-time Zorro fan)

Medicare Part D To Harm 7 Million Americans: Report

WASHINGTON — A new report shows that President George W. Bush's prescription drug plan will harm the health and finances of about seven million Americans. These citizens on Sept. 22 will fall into what is termed the "doughnut hole," a huge gap in coverage for seniors whose annual drug costs are between \$2,250 and \$5,100.

The report released by the Campaign for America's Future explains that the average Medicare-eligible American is bound for this "hole" in coverage and will have no other choice but to bear the total burden to buy their prescription drugs as well

as pay for Medicare Part D's expensive monthly premiums.

"The 'doughnut hole' will create a dangerous ripple effect on the health of America's seniors," said Congressman

Berry. "Seniors will have to scale back on critical medications which could endanger their health and increase health care costs over the long-run. This is the result of a broken benefit that defies common sense."

The leading sponsors of the Prescription Drug Savings and Choice Act (H.R. 752), Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) and Rep. Marion Berry (D-Ark.), say that the government can do a better job of negotiating for fairer drug costs for seniors — as the Veterans Administration currently does for military veterans — than the drug companies.

'War on Terror' True Cost Unknown: Watchdog

WASHINGTON — The United States government, including the Defense Department, has no accurate data showing the cost of the so-called "war on terror" since Sept. 11, 2001, according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

The GAO, an agency that reviews items for Congress, said the legislative branch has dished out roughly \$430 billion for military operations and reconstruction costs in Iraq. The agency also questioned how the accounting of those funds was made.

The GAO report found that the Pentagon, which received criticism last September over cost accounting problems, had not fixed its process for recording its costs. The report noted that estimates, not real cost data, and no documentation were the norm.

In the latest estimate taken through this April, about \$215 billion for the Iraq occupation and about \$58 billion for the Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and the Philippines maneuvers was spent.

U.S. Trails Other Developed Nations In Child Poverty: Study

WASHINGTON — The United States is behind other developed countries in addressing its own children living in poverty, according to a new study.

Sylvia Allegretto, an economist with the Economic Policy Institute, said that she compared the child poverty outcomes in 16 countries with economies similar to the United States and found them possessing more effective policies for

eliminating child poverty.

Her data, a part of The State of Working America, 2006-2007, to be released in August, was based on child poverty rates before and after government assistance that takes into account taxes and transfers. In this study, the definition of poverty is families with incomes below one-half the median income for that country. This is a traditional poverty measure for interna-

tional comparisons, according to EPI.

"Compared to other industrialized nations, the United States is woefully lagging: even after government intervention over one-fifth of all U.S. children were living in poverty in 2000," wrote Allegretto. "Before taxes and transfers, the United States had one of the highest market-based rates of

child poverty in 2000: 26.6 percent. Four other countries—New Zealand, France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland—had comparably high market rates of child poverty."

Through taxes and transfers, the other 15 countries cut child poverty by about a half on average, her findings show. France took the lead by reducing the child poverty rate by 20.2 per-

centage points to 7.5 percent. The United States, on the other hand, cut the rate by 4.7 percentage points to 21.0 percent.

"The contrast between the great wealth in the United States and such appallingly high child poverty rates is quite stark. The United States needs to make a strong commitment to reduce child poverty," wrote Allegretto.

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Lawsuit Challenging Spy Program Proceeds

SAN FRANCISCO — A lawsuit challenging President George W. Bush's domestic spy program was allowed to proceed last week after a federal judge rejected the government's argument that the case might compromise national security.

"The compromise between liberty and security remains a difficult one," said U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker. "But dismissing this case at the outset would sacrifice liberty for no apparent enhancement of security."

The ruling, the first to confront the government's most recent "state secrets privilege" argument,

also kept AT&T, Inc. in the suit filed by the Electronic Frontier Foundation privacy group. The lawsuit itself accuses the San Antonio-based telephone giant of illegally working with the National Security Agency to allow the spy agency to eavesdrop on Americans without warrants.

In December President Bush admitted that the NSA was monitoring the phone calls and emails of Americans presumed to be working with al-Qaeda terrorists. This month, Bush agreed to okay a bill that would send the program for a constitutional review before Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court.



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The Contender

Interview With Barbara Ann Radnofsky Democratic Candidate For U.S. Senate

By W. LEON SMITH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

CRAWFORD — Barbara Ann Radnofsky is a lawyer, mediator, volunteer, teacher, mother, and wife, but come Nov. 7, she wants to add another title to her list: U.S. Senator of Texas.

In fact, if she wins, she'll be the first-ever Texas Democratic woman elected to the U.S. Senate.

To get it, she will have to knock out Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, a three-term Republican who Radnofsky says hasn't been acting very Texan as of late.

At the Texas Democratic Convention in Fort Worth in June, the Houstonite pointed out that her opponent relocated her primary address to Virginia.

As a send off for the senator, Radnofsky packed a "Welcome to Virginia" tote bag whose contents included cans of Alaskan salmon, which served a reminder of Hutchison's support of the "Bridge To Nowhere" bill authored by Sen. Ted Stevens of Alaska. To view her convention speech, visit her website or <YouTube.com>.

Humor aside, Radnofsky told the *ICONOCLAST* last week that she is serious about the wasteful spending and corruption in Washington. And it would seem that she is off to a good start, being that she won the run-off to the Democratic primary by 60 percent.

ICONOCLAST editor-in-chief W. Leon Smith spoke with Radnofsky about her loyalties to Texans and military veterans, her views on the privatization of

government and the separation of powers in the three branches, and her opponent's falling popularity.

ICONOCLAST: If elected to the U.S. Senate, will your loyalties lie with the Senate or with Texas? How important is institutional patriotism?

BARBARA ANN RADNOFSKY: My loyalties would be with Texans in the state of Texas. I feel strongly about that and the particular question because I think we suffer now from those who are beholden to certain institutions that are unrelated really to the needs of Texans.

ICONOCLAST: Are you concerned about the disappearance of oversight of federal governmental agencies?

RADNOFSKY: Absolutely, to a great degree.

ICONOCLAST: What would be a good fix for that?

RADNOFSKY: I think by way of example some of the key agencies responsible for safety in the workplace — OSHA — Occupational Safety and Health Administration has been gutted in terms of its abilities. FDA is another excellent example. This deals with our everyday safety. It is not an expensive proposition to give adequate pay and adequate enforcement powers to these agencies. It is not an intrusion on our life. It makes our lives safer, and the drugs we take safer.

ICONOCLAST: You think having a legal background would be a huge benefit in being able to put the United States back on



Barbara Ann Radnofsky

track as far as oversight goes?

RADNOFSKY: Yes, I do think it's an advantage to have some training in reading laws, but I will say I think it's just as helpful to be an interested mother, interested teacher, interested wife — I've had to give my kids and I have had to see my husband come home — my husband is a physician, but physicians like any worker are subject to on-the-job injuries and problems, so I think living in the real world is perhaps just as useful as having a 27-year law background.

ICONOCLAST: What about the perceived disappearance of meaningful debate in the Senate?

RADNOFSKY: I think it's one of the largest problems we have, that there is no discourse. There's no one, with few exceptions, trying to find common ground, and you get there through debate, not through rancorous, ill-tempered name-calling, but through traditional debate which is an art that seems to be lost by many. Some of the Senators, by the way on

ernment in the hands of business interests?

RADNOFSKY: The trend is dangerous. The trend is costing us waste. It's harmful to our economy. It's hurting business and individuals. The Trans-Texas Corridor is an example of that. I believe there is bipartisan opposition as I've traveled the state to what the Trans-Texas Corridor is doing. I've been in small towns. They fear that corridor. I've talked to the mayors of small towns and business owners, heads of commerce in these small towns who really recognize what would happen if they were by-passed. So we're not only going to lose whole areas of history in these regions, but whole towns that are so valuable — all those little museums that people love to visit, that I love to visit when I travel. The towns are going to lose their character if not their entire business. So many depend on tourism.

ICONOCLAST: Do you have an opinion over fair trade versus free trade and the North American Union?

RADNOFSKY: Yes, I believe that many of these trade agreements, particularly NAFTA — NAFTA contains provisions that give foreign businesses an unfair advantage over American business at the same time that they hurt American labor, so it's bad for labor and bad for business. I'd like to give you an example. When an American company competes in the United States, it's subject naturally to certain reasonable restrictions — MTBE, pollution controls, wage requirements. They're not enforced too much nowadays, but there are certain restrictions.

ICONOCLAST: It is being said rather loudly that the Senate is not functioning adequately as a strong branch of government, that senators are acting more like field lieutenants or cheerleaders in the president's army. What is your take on that observation?

RADNOFSKY: I agree with it to a great degree. I think Congress and the Senate has become something of an unruly classroom, where the bullies and the loudmouths have taken over and it's preventing most people from accomplishing their business. Just as an unruly classroom needs people with power and strength to look to where the common good is, Congress needs the same.

ICONOCLAST: Where do you stand on the Trans-Texas Corridor and the privatization of gov-

ernment in the hands of business interests?
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The Contender

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is just crazy.

Of course, what we're also seeing is our jobs go overseas, and those jobs wouldn't be hemorrhaging if companies were required to have a fair policy in terms of what they pay overseas domestically, and, it's not quite on your point about the trade agreement, but we've got to get a decent minimum wage. We've got to.

Lastly, by way of another example, it's readily conceded that NAFTA has created a situation that caused damage to Mexican farmers and is in great part responsible for the exodus from Mexico into the United States. There are huge, increasing numbers of illegal immigrants.

ICONOCLAST: We've created our own problem.

RADNOFSKY: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. It's not a problem that can't be solved, but the provisions of NAFTA that created these problems were extreme and ill-considered.

ICONOCLAST: I'm hearing more and more that citizens are concerned about what they deem as the piece-mail dismantling of the U.S. Constitution. Do you think this is happening?

RADNOFSKY: I'm optimistic about the independence of the judiciary, and that it will hold strong. I do see assaults constantly, and ironically, I see the assault coming from frankly Texas Senate leadership. Don't you find it interesting that as a candidate, I come before you, and I'm frequently asked what my position is on the judiciary. I have actually to say that I'm against terroristic threats on the judiciary because we've seen the last few years senators who feel that it is acceptable to make terroristic threats on the judiciary.

Likewise, it's not from the judicial branch or the executive branch that we hear comments that defend perjury. I think one of the most outrageous statements of the last year and of my 50 years of being on this earth — a lot of those have been politically aware — was when my opponent sat on one of the Sunday morning talk shows said, anticipating indictments of either Mr. Rove or Mr. Libby, as it turned out they came down on Mr. Libby, she said when asked about the pending indictments, if the indictments were to come I certainly hope they wouldn't be on the mere technicality of perjury but rather under an underlying crime.

ICONOCLAST: I saw that.

RADNOFSKY: And that's an outrageous statement reflecting a tremendous misunderstanding not only on the role of the judiciary and the role of prosecutorial discretion, but that's the great assault we have to fear. The Constitution is a wonderful document and the Homdy decision and the trilogy decision several years ago and the most recent Supreme Court decision concerning the tribunals reflect hope. It shows that even what is considered a conservative court can stand up when there's an assault on the Constitution.

You haven't asked about some of the First Amendment and some of the attacks on the press, which I see coming from the Department of Justice fairly recently. We see the attacks and yet we have a system which if we can just keep in balance, if we have the three branches of government every school child is taught to love and honor, if we can just keep those and prevent, frankly, our senators from making assaults on the other branches, we're going to be okay.

Congress needs to stand up to the president. Congress needs to understand the role it has in the government. It needs to make sure that it doesn't wipe out the judicial branch in its zeal to lay down for the presidency.

ICONOCLAST: What is your take on the Iraq war and the current problems in the Middle East with Israel and Lebanon?

RADNOFSKY: I think that the Iraq War was ill-planned. I have tremendous faith in our military. I'm the daughter and granddaughter of veterans. When Gen. Casey came out two weeks ago and laid out a timetable for withdrawal, albeit not the same timetable others were talking about, at least it's a timetable. I believe we should set a timetable for withdrawal and I believe Gen. Casey's comments and conduct reflect such a timetable. I think for the government to say otherwise as if they could defend what they've been doing is just double-speak.

ICONOCLAST: What about the Middle East and Israel? I know it's a very fluid thing. It's changing every minute.

RADNOFSKY: It is very fluid. I am very disappointed that there is no leadership in the United States, no statesmen, no professional mediators and diplomats to take our rightful place among the nations as a leader

and there's a lot of reasons for that. I place a lot of that causation on not just the president but those who rubber stamp and don't stand up for what they think is right. I place blame for that squarely at the feet of my opponent who rubber stamped the president 95.6 percent of the time without questioning or thinking. There comes a time

“NAFTA has created a situation that caused damage to Mexican farmers and is in great part responsible for the exodus from Mexico into the United States. There are huge, increasing numbers of illegal immigrants.”

— Barbara Ann Radnofsky

when loyalty to your country demands that you exercise your responsibilities as a branch of government.

ICONOCLAST: Do you think that the United States should continue to use radioactive munitions that contain depleted uranium?

RADNOFSKY: There's going to be some necessity for it. What we need is depleted uranium screenings, so we can protect our military folks. There are going to be depleted munitions that have to be dealt with. It's a fact of life. The real crime is the failure of the government to protect its military personnel who have to be nearby. They need to all have the latest in protective equipment but also monitoring. It's not happening, and it's finally being recognized for the dreadful problem it is.

ICONOCLAST: Some states are taking care of business themselves. I think Louisiana, Connecticut, and a few others are moving forward with that. Texas is not. Do you think Texas should?

RADNOFSKY: Yes, but that's a stopgap measure. This is not an issue that should be decided on a state-by-state basis. This is a problem of clearly federal magnitude. This one is easy. This isn't some debate about, “Hmmm, should you be able to go from state to state to decide?” As you know, military men can't decide where they are posted, and to know the vagaries of state law, to know whether you will be protected, it makes no sense. This is not what state powers under the Constitution were originally conceived for. Not by any means. This is time for federal action, and the reason for federal inaction is the same reason the federal government has

been disappointing and deserting our veterans for years. There is too low a priority placed on the needs of military personnel and veterans. I know we probably don't have to go into the lengthy discourse, but the issues chart there on the website <RADNOFSKY.com> has a tremendous amount on veterans.

As I mentioned earlier, I'm a daughter and granddaughter of injured World War II and World War I vets, so veterans issues and the treatment of our military personnel has been extremely important to me. I might add that my opponent

brings home the bacon. No matter what the issue, she answers it — not that she has provided leadership because she has not, not that she's been an effective advocate, because she is not, but what she says is I bring home the bacon, as if the state were one large congressional district and her sole job was to bring home pork. So let's measure her by that.

I'll tell you where Texas ranks with federal largess bringing home the bacon. Texas ranks 51st. That includes per capita basis, all states and the District of Columbia. Fifty-first in bringing home the bacon. Take for example, the transportation bill. I would have voted against the transportation bill. So did Texas' junior senator and so said my opponent when she first talked about it last May. She said it was unfair because what it did to Texas was make us a

donor as we have been for so long to the rest of the country with our Texas/federal gas tax dollars. She switched. She flip-flopped, and she voted for that pork-laden bill which made Alaska number one in per capita dollars. It gave them the famous “bridge to nowhere,” the million dollar bus stop. On average it gave Alaskans \$1,500 per person. Texas ranked 49th in that bill. We got \$36 per person.

When I brought this up, her camp replied, “Well, she made some progress along the way.” Wrongly taking credit from Phil Gramm whose bi-partisan work with Sen. Byrd interestingly was responsible for bringing us from the 75 percent category to the low 90 percent category. But it's still not enough, and little progress has been made, and it's why she said she'd originally vote against the bill and why Texas' junior senator did vote against the bill. Full of pork. Wasted billions and billions of dollars. And here's the ultimate: if you're going to waste billions and billions of dollars, why give it away to the rest of the country? Why not allow any of these projects in significant numbers to come back here? To me it's the epitome of wasteful government spending, waste of our taxpayer dollars and at the same time, having it wasted and not coming home to Texas.

We have many examples of that kind of waste, FEMA being the most recent example — \$2 billion admitted by the federal government. Wasted. Stolen. Given away for improper use. We've put in the issues chart the example of what I call the road to nowhere, the Mississippi railroad, for which she voted. Mississippi got a tremendous amount of money from that, yet

who is subcommittee chairwoman on appropriations for veterans affairs has a series of votes that have frankly deserted our military.

The most cynical of her conduct was last spring when having forgotten somehow with Iraq and Afghanistan and Secretary Nicholson echoed and championed by my opponent who stood on the floor of the Senate said this, decided that no new money was needed. No additional funding was needed for veterans even though every major veterans organization, Sen. Patty Murray and a number of experts in veterans' needs pointed out what the needs were, and that having failed to do the right thing, frankly the administration was caught in this huge mistake of failing to take into account the returning Afghani and Iraq war veterans far more seriously injured than in prior wars because they're living thanks to modern-day medicine.

Veterans are disproportionately represented in Texas, particularly in South Texas. Not enough is being done in terms of their injuries you can see and in terms of the post traumatic stress disorder and the other problems they've got. We need a VA hospital south of San Antonio, which I've been trying to champion since I got into this race, and we need better services for our veterans.

ICONOCLAST: How will your election benefit Texas?

RADNOFSKY: What I will do is serve as a very effective advocate, articulate, passionate, caring about Texans, beholden to Texans. I would contrast that particularly with the last several years of my opponent's tenure in the Senate. She touts her seniority, and I'll tell you what she touts the most — she says she

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Texas by the account of our federal and state elected officials on a state-wide basis can see that we need at least \$2 billion. Meanwhile my opponent boasts wrongly that she secured \$200 million. Anybody doing the math will see that \$200 million out of \$2 billion is not good enough, and even that has not been secured.

She's an ineffective advocate. She votes for waste. She voted against pay-as-you-go. She came into office claiming that we needed to balance the budget, that we needed to have term limits, that she made a solid contract with America to serve only two terms. As you know she's not only running for her full third term, she had a partial term on top of that. And that she would eliminate corruption. She's now a part of the problem. That's how I'd answer that.

ICONOCLAST: Are we headed toward World War III?

RADNOFSKY: These are dangerous, dangerous times, and I think we all have to be on high alert — we really do — on what the dangers are, but I think that world war will indeed be averted. I say that as an optimist because I believe the good faith and ability of the people to turn out the scoundrels, to stop making us weak, and what is increasingly making us weak truly has an economic as well as a diplomatic and military base. We have to get control of our economy. We have to get control of the deficit, and I'll add the account deficit in there.

Let me give you one last example which isn't on the scope of what you're asking, but the example is North Korea. We owe \$500 billion to China. That's a huge sum of money. In our personal lives, we would never borrow from people whose interests are not well aligned with ours and whose power over us would be considerable. Therefore, I would be against my opponent's suggestion to invite the Chinese to invest in our space program and our rocketry. Bad idea.

Now, we're at the mercy of China in dealing with North Korea, having failed on the diplomatic front and having a situation develop where now we want to call on the Chinese to help coordinate the activities because we can't count on our allies. We no longer have the preeminence in the world order that would have permitted us to have the influence we wanted. We now find ourselves asking

China to take care of the North Korean problem. That's shocking.

It's a country whom we owe \$500 billion and therefore feels quite at ease in manipulating its currency, and we don't stand up to them. It feels quite at ease dumping steel on our markets, and we don't stand up to them and instead allow manufacturing jobs to escape overseas, which has enough control somehow that it could actually create a situation where the Texas state senior senator would actually seriously propose to allow

to hear it because the way I succeeded in both winning the primary and the run-off has been a more business-like approach perhaps than other politicians have taken, but that's because I've taken the approach after 27 years in the business world.

I'm not going to be able to match my opponent in how much money I take, and how much money I spend, but I'm pretty darn careful on how I spend my money. We have a rule that for every dollar I get I count it as if it was 20 when I spend it. That equalizes things. As a mat-

I'm a daughter and granddaughter of injured World War II and World War I vets, so veterans issues and the treatment of our military personnel has been extremely important to me. I might add that my opponent who is subcommittee

chairwoman on appropriations for veterans affairs has a series of votes that have frankly deserted our military.' — Barbara Ann Radnofsky

China to invest in our space program.

The economy matters. Deficits matter. The vice president is wrong when he says that deficits don't matter. We're paying a huge, huge debt someday. Our children and grandchildren will. Interest is going to eat us up, just like it would in our home life.

ICONOCLAST: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

RADNOFSKY: If you have questions or comments, I'd love

to hear it because the way I succeeded in both winning the primary and the run-off has been a more business-like approach perhaps than other politicians have taken, but that's because I've taken the approach after 27 years in the business world.

I think that the whole condition, with all that's happening in the world, there's a reason she has dropped 17 points since I got in. She's down from 70 to 53 percent, and there's a reason. And I haven't started advertising yet.

INFO
www.radnofsky.com/

First Openly Gay Person Wins State Office In Alabama

WASHINGTON — Patricia Todd became the first openly homosexual person to win a seat in Alabama state legislature last week. With no Republican opponent to face in the general election in November, the Democrat will represent the state's 54th legislative district.

"The road to equality in Alabama is a mile shorter today," said Chuck Wolfe, president and CEO of the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, the nation's largest gay and lesbian political action

committee. "Gays and lesbians in Alabama will now have what all Americans deserve — a voice and a vote. Alabama knows well what a single voice can accomplish."

Another openly gay candidate, Rep. Karla Drenner, advanced to the general November election as a Democrat. Allen Thornell, who could be the first openly gay man in the Georgia legislature, moved on to a runoff in his Democratic Primary election.

Edwards Supports Constitutional Amendment To Ban Gay Marriage

WASHINGTON — Congressman Chet Edwards (TX17) last week supported H

J Res 88, a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage.

Editorial

EARTHQUAKES: Global Warming or HAARP?

The incidence of historic worldwide earthquakes seems to be increasing, especially since 2002.

At least according to statistics rendered by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

The USGS website lists high magnitude earthquakes by year, and this is a sampling, with the year and how many:

- So far in 2006 — 18.
- 2005 — 51.
- 2004 — 48.
- 2003 — 70.
- 2002 — 44.
- 2001 — 7.
- 2000 — 6.
- 1999 — 13.
- 1998 — 10.
- 1997 — 2.
- 1996 — 1.
- 1995 — 1.
- 1994 — 2.
- 1993 — 2.
- 1992 — 2.
- 1991 — 0.
- 1990 — 1.
- 1989 — 1.
- 1988 — 2.
- 1987 — 3.
- 1986 — 3.
- 1985 — 3.
- 1984 — 0.

- 1983 — 4.
- 1982 — 0.
- 1981 — 0.
- 1980 — 5.
- 1979 — 4.
- 1978 — 0.

Going on back in time, the list shows mainly less than four each year, although there were five in 1975, six in 1957, and five in 1906. The list traces earthquakes back to 1556.

Whether earthquakes are tied to global warming, or to the High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) which some scientists say is utilized by the military to drastically alter weather patterns in specific areas of the world with the ability to cause droughts and hurricanes, the advent of the increased numbers is worthy of concern and of additional study.

Perhaps it is mere coincidence that the number of high magnitude earthquakes appears to be on the rise.

Whatever the reason, something is going on.




— W. Leon Smith

SOURCE:

<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/regional/world/historical.php>

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Texas Prisons Were Hell On Earth

After a guided tour of the Texas Prison System on July 16, 1931, a county sheriff with a sick sense of humor or very poor eyesight expressed the opinion that "some men really enjoy themselves here."

The Lone Star lockup was a barbaric embarrassment from the beginning. Gov. Richard Coke remarked in 1873, "A personal visit to the penitentiary has impressed upon me the conviction that a serious defect exists in our prison system," and added he was particularly appalled by "the promiscuous mingling of children from nine years old upwards with old, depraved, and hardened criminals."

Following the example of other southern states, Texas already was "leasing" inmates to private businesses. This controversial practice thrived for the rest of the nineteenth century because the income from convict rentals covered the entire cost of the penal operation. Law-abiding citizens were sickened by the horror stories of in-

This Week In Texas History

By Barte Haile



mate mistreatment but generally felt criminals got what was coming to them even when it meant a death sentence for a petty offense.

Sanitation and medical care were strangers to the private work camps, and conditions were not much better in the penitentiary at Huntsville. Just over 2,000 prisoners perished from disease, neglect and abuse between 1876 and 1899, while another 3,000 chose not to stick around. Breakouts were so common that in a single year one out of six inmates successfully escaped.

Leasing was phased out in the early 1900s in favor of state-owned plantations. By World War I, there were 10 prison farms in Brazoria County, two in Fort Bend County, and one in Houston County. Contrary to

popular myth, however, agriculture did not achieve the penologist dream of self-sufficiency, and the TPS invariably ended the year in the red.

Only "The Walls," the central unit in Huntsville, had cells. On the farms inmates lived like sardines in 40-x-100 foot black holes of Calcutta called "tanks." Designed for a maximum occupancy of 60 convicts, the overcrowded cubicles often contained 150.

Prisoners were segregated by race but not according to age, crime and sexual appetite. Young first offenders were at the mercy of psychopaths, perverts, and career criminals.

Guards rarely set foot in the inmate quarters leaving it up to "building tenders" to keep fellow convicts in line. These bullies with a blank check terrorized the tanks with sawed-off baseball bats, knives, and an arsenal of improvised weapons.

The guards were no angels either. A prison board member on a visit to the Darrington farm spoke to "a youngster whose ankle had been smashed by a .38-caliber slug fired into the tank by a guard to frighten another prisoner who had called him a dirty name. I also saw a prisoner ruthlessly shot by a guard because he forgot to shout 'alley' before going to the latrine."

All inmates except for trustees toiled in the field from first light until well after dark with lunch the only break allowed. The work week was five and a half days, exactly like the slave plantations before the Civil War.

Food was notoriously bad and usually in short supply. "We almost starved to death," recalled an ex-convict who did his time in the 1920s "The only thing we had was beans, peas, sowbelly, and corn bread. The bread had

weevils in it." Fresh milk should have been plentiful given the presence of dairy cattle, but disease and a lack of pasteurization equipment made the beverage a luxury.

Inmates were supposed to receive a change of clothes twice weekly but sometimes wore soiled garments for a month or longer. Another member of the prison board saw with his own eyes a prisoner wearing a shirt "so rotten and filthy I pulled it to shreds with my thumb and index finger."

A 1911 law permitted punishment with the "bat," a three-foot leather strap attached to a wooden handle. Twenty blows on the bare buttocks were the legal limit, but sadistic guards took pleasure in losing count. Even a comparatively humane prison manager like Lee Simmons, who instituted minor improvements in the 1930s, defended use of the bat.

The farms leaked a sieve with 3,164 recorded escapes between 1927 and 1947. Others sought

drastic relief from the drudgery of the fields and brutality of the tanks in self-mutilation. "Heel cutting" or slicing the Achilles' tendon and intentional fractures were temporary solutions, but inmates that chopped off three fingers on the same hand never returned to work because they no longer could grip a hoe.

At the end of World War II, Texas prisons were considered the worst in the country. Beauford H. Jester vowed to clean house, if elected governor in 1946, and kept his campaign promise by hiring Oscar B. Ellis of Tennessee to make the decades overdue changes. Until his death in 1962, the reformer struggled to bring the medieval penal system into the twentieth century.

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

Embryonically Speaking...

I learned a lesson from the Texas Department of Transportation this past week when I spoke at a public hearing challenging the Trans-Texas Corridor.

The corridor that would affect Central Texas is called TTC 35. Numerous public hearings are being held around the state, and a complaint from TxDOT that I had read about prior to my excursion was that not enough alternative suggestions were being offered from the public.

So, I got together with some folks who intimately know the highway systems in Texas and spent several hours devising an alternate plan that would negate the need for the corridor.

The Trenchwalker

By W. Leon Smith



We were given three minutes for oral testimony at the hearing. My talk apparently would have taken about six, so I was interrupted twice by the moderator and was forced to cut it short, which is hard to do and provide a comprehensive alternative. I was offered the opportunity to put my comments in writing or to go to the back of the bus and finish my comments at the end of the program.

Therefore, now I've caught the brevity bug (at least for this week's column).

This is my comment about stem cell research and why I am outraged at its recent veto.

If I was an embryo and had the choice of being discarded into a trash heap or making of myself an organ donation, so to speak, to perhaps rid mankind of serious illnesses, suffering, and health conditions, which would I choose?

Embryonically speaking, I think most embryos would choose the latter, not only as a gesture of heroism but to perhaps help families across the world be shielded from the ravages of disease. I think they'd take the high road.

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Get An Earring, Join The Lawsuit

A legal action was taken the other day that is so outrageous that it actually gives frivolous lawsuits a bad name. Allen Heckard, of Portland Oregon, is suing Michael Jordan and Nike because Heckard claims that he's tired of people thinking he looks like Jordan. Heckard says people come up to him all the time, mistaking him for the basketball legend, and he's fed up with it.

I've seen pictures of Heckard, and he doesn't look like Jordan to me. But I guess that's for our legal system to decide. He's eight years older than Jordan, and somewhere between three and six inches shorter. Granted, he's an African-American, has a shaved head, and wears an earring in his left ear. Oh, I almost forgot. He also likes to wear Air Jordans on his feet.

If your first reaction is, "I



Modern Times

By Lloyd Garver

can't believe this guy is suing," before jumping to that conclusion, I think you should learn the specifics of the lawsuit: He is suing Jordan for defamation and permanent injury as well as emotional pain and suffering. He's also suing Nike founder, Phil Knight, for helping to make Jordan one of the most recognized men in the world. All right. Now you can say, "I can't believe this guy is suing."

And he's not just suing for a couple of bucks. He's asking for \$832 million — \$416 million from Jordan and the same from

Knight. Heckard paid the \$206 filing fee himself, and so far, doesn't have a lawyer. But once word gets out, I'm sure there will be many concerned attorneys who will rush to Heckard's "permanently injured" side.

When asked how he arrived at the \$416 million amount, Heckard responded quite logically: "Well, you figure with my age and you multiply that by seven and, ah, then I turn around and, ah, I figure that's what it all boils down to."

Once again, a simple lawsuit is obscured in fancy legalese.

What doesn't he like about being mistaken for Michael? It's simple: "I want to be recognized as me just like Michael's recognized as Michael."

Do you get the feeling that our society is just a bit too litigious? For a little over two hundred dollars, this guy is able to

force both Jordan and Nike to respond. Shouldn't there be some consequences for filing "nuisance" suits? Maybe instead of claiming that "he can't live a normal life" because of his resemblance to Jordan, if he loses, he should be forced to admit publicly that "he can't live a normal life" because it's not normal to sue people because of the way they look.

But maybe we should try to look at this from Heckard's point of view. This whole thing could have been avoided if Michael Jordan had acted responsibly and with some sensitivity. If Michael had any common sense at all, before he started shaving his head and wearing an earring, he should have realized that some people were going to see a resemblance between him and somebody he never heard of named Allen Heckard.

What kind of legal precedent will be set if Heckard wins? I have bushy eyebrows and write for cbsnews.com. Andy Rooney has bushy eyebrows, and his words appear on cbsnews.com. Does that mean I should multiply my age by seven, turn around, and, ah, sue Andy Rooney? I don't think so.

Usually, when someone thinks they look like somebody famous, they're the ones you might feel like suing — for being annoying. We've all experienced this. We've met people who say things like, "Everybody thinks I look just like George Bush, but I guess you can tell that. I sent a photo to the President, but I never heard back." Or, "Hey, this is my wife. Doesn't she look just like Michelle Pfeiffer?" Or what's worse, "My daughter not only looks just like Barbra Streisand, she sings like her, too. Listen."

At least nine times out of ten, the person doesn't look or sound anything like the celebrity. It's just in his or her head.

They want to look like somebody famous.

So, maybe we should congratulate Mr. Heckard on not being caught up in celebrity worship like so many people in our society. He doesn't want to be mistaken for Michael Jordan. He wants to be known for himself. He just wants to live his life as Allen Heckard. He doesn't want people to make a fuss over him. So, he's doing what anyone would do who wants to live a quiet, anonymous life: he's suing a celebrity for hundreds of millions of dollars.

Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier" to "Home Improvement." He has also read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the "Modern Times" column for CBSnews.com's Opinion page and a weekly column for SportsLine.com. He can be reached at lloydgarver@yahoo.com

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Cutting 'Mad Cow' Tests Risky: Group

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Agriculture is endangering the lives of U.S. citizens by cutting its mad cow surveillance program, according to the Consumers Union, the publisher of Consumer Reports.

"The USDA is playing Russian Roulette with public health," said Michael Hansen, Ph.D., a staff scientist with the Union.

The USDA has recently reduced its testing program to 40,000 cows a year, a tenth of one percent of all cows slaughtered. The agency tested about 759,000 cows in the last two years. Only three cases of the brain-wasting disease has been found thus far.

The Consumers Union, however, said that the tests were performed on dead cattle, not the higher risk live animals that have shown symptoms of the disease that effects the nervous system.

The United States now has no restrictions on imports of beef

or live cattle under 30-month-old from Canada. The nation to the north recently confirmed a seventh case of the disease in six years.

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Wagging the Dog to World War Three

(w/ False-Flag update)

Professional Prologue

In the early days of the Bush League crusade into Iraq I wrote two essays that predicted where things were heading. The first of these, written in April, 2003, was *Visions of Stalingrad: Claim victory in Iraq now*: <<http://www.ghosttroop.net/stalingrad.htm>>, flatly predicted an endless *quicksand* war, and warned of a world war — very much like the one now being predicted by pundits today. The second, written in July, 2003, was *Still worried about the quicksand of war in Iraq*: <<http://www.ghosttroop.net/quicksandofwar.htm>>, and pointed out that by then the professionals of the U.S. military were agreeing with me.

Those essays were the last I ever published for the Chronicle or any other major media, after a successful ghostwriting career in which I had written about everything everywhere, from Military Intelligence Magazine in my officer days to the Wall Street Journal and NBC in my ghostwriting days. I had even been interviewed by Karen Hughes, the Bush League Media Medea, in 1996, as she searched for a Texan speech writer for George W. Bush, the then-governor of Texas.

My inability to publish plain truth while we were marching, lockstep, into Gulf War *Gotterdammerung* pretty much proved the sayings that the first casualty of war is truth, and that messengers are not kindly treated when they bring unwelcome news. So far I'm still alive to lament the injustice of it all, but like all who write too much truth about King George and his Ruffian Rove, I have clearly made powerful enemies.

Jingoistic Journalists

The two-week-old Israeli offensive into Lebanon has brought on the same kind of pro-war media operation that I saw — and opposed — three years ago:

- Appearing on NBC's *Meet the Press*, Newt Gingrich went unchallenged as he proclaimed that World War Three was already underway.

- In his latest edition of his Neocon *Weekly Stan-*

dard, Bill Kristol agonized over the hesitance of the US to attack Iran.

- In his nationwide race-baiting *Savage Nation*, host Michael Savage urged World War Two mass bombing campaigns against Middle Eastern malefactors.



Captain Eric May

- Sophist-for-hire, Victor Davis Hanson, wrote nationally "So for now, let us pray that the brave pilots and ground commanders of the IDF can teach these primordial tribesmen a lesson that they will not soon forget."

All of this as the newsrooms unquestioningly promulgate Israeli promises to (humanely) "sterilize," "cleanse," "root out" and "exterminate" Hezbollah — even if it means leveling Lebanon to do it. All of this backed up by adrenal action-movie theme music (each network with its own) all aiming to glorify the gore of war to a dumbed-down America that doesn't understand how things have

been, are now, or are going to be.

Congressional Cowardice

Nothing should so disturb the citizens of a republic as official unanimity on a matter that deeply divides the public — which is what we are seeing in the U.S. Congress. Having failed to exercise its oversight function at every critical junction since 911, it's not surprising that last week it voted with Reichstag-like unanimity for the "good war" now in progress in the Holy Land. The strong endorsement of the Israeli war plan was passed by 98-0 (100%) in the Senate, and 410-8 (98%) in the House of Representatives.

As I wrote in the LONE STAR ICONOCLAST two weeks ago in my essay, *Bush League Media & Sins of Intermission* <<http://www.lonestaricon.com/absolutenm/anmviewer.asp?a=296&z=42>>, in June the Democratic Hearing on Pre-Iraq War Intelligence heard several top-echelon Bush League intelligence witnesses blow the whistle on the war cabal and the war conspiracy. One after another affirmed that they had done everything necessary — from fixing intelligence to planning war provocations — to lead us into Iraq.

There has been no follow-up, and not a whimper of complaint that the media hasn't even bothered to tell the public about the hearings. What else are they capable of not telling us, not investigating or not confronting on our behalf? Is there a limit to their comfort with not doing their jobs?

False Flags

Time is working to rectify things, of course, and the duplicitous Bush League is having a harder and harder time duping the American People, though the Israeli offensive has gained it a bit of breathing space at present. King George's approval ratings hover at around one-third, while the Cowards Congress has sunk as low as one-fourth. November elections promise to bring in new lackeys of lobbies who have one single quality, though, and a considerable one: they haven't been led to lie about 911, the Quicksand War that came from it, or the World War that was always intended as the segue of the "Global War" on Terror. For once their capacity for compromise and cowardice may work for us instead of against us, as they will find it advantageous to distance themselves from a failed administration, perhaps even investigate and impeach it.

All this is a tonic to the Republic, but a toxin to the current monarchy, which is why I think the patient (America) is heading for a new crisis, before the elections.

A month ago I wrote a much-read article, *911 Truth and Texas Terror* <<http://www.lonestaricon.com/absolutenm/anmviewer.asp?a=248&z=37>> for the ICONOCLAST, and I'm standing by its prediction that some sort of "911-2B" event looms on our near horizon — unless we are vigilant. Just this week, I led a cyber-posse of different organizations and individuals who may well have shut down a set-up aimed at making the Orient Queen, then filled with Arab-Americans evacuating Lebanon, into another USS Liberty. Many Americans recall that the ill-fated Liberty was nearly sunk in 1967 by an Israel trying to scuttle the ship, then blame it on Egypt, against whom they were trying to lead us to war.

"Operation Orient Queen" has my cyber-intelligence unit, Ghost Troop, back in the international spotlight with such organizations as the Irish 911 Truth Movement <<http://www.911truth.ie/>>, and marks our seventh mission against possible 911-2B attacks, the last six of which comprised my last-week Iconoclast article *9/11, 3/11, 7/11 Terror Dates: Code or Coincidence* <<http://www.lonestaricon.com/absolutenm/anmviewer.asp?a=318&z=44>>.

If these were normal times, an experienced military man like me, with national political and media contacts, would surely receive calls of inquiry from military or police investigators after stirring up such a hornet's nest of controversy with such claims as I have made — and convinced a worldwide consortium of alternative media to publish. The phone doesn't ring, though, and the emails don't come — all of which is most ominous. The watchdogs who are supposed to guard our lives and liberties are asleep in these dog days of our democracy. Meanwhile the world warriors who never wore the uniform of their country are searching for a pretext — convenient or contrived — to send it deeper into the quicksand.

Captain Eric H. May, MI/PAO, USA
CO, Ghost Troop, 3/7 Cybercav+
Mission of Conscience / Patriots in Action

Captain May went underground for most of 2003 after his controversial anti-war Houston Chronicle op-eds, during which time he founded Ghost Troop and published his Congressional Report on media/military conspiracy: <www.ghosttroop.net>. His "Operation Orient Queen" results can be found via the Irish 911 Truth Movement: <<http://www.911truth.ie>>.

Investigators Find Organ Harvesting Claims in China True

WASHINGTON — An independent investigation has found evidence that China has harvested the organs of prisoners of conscience, specifically the body

parts of the members of a religious group called Falun Gong.

"We believe that there has been and continues today to be large scale organ seizures from unwilling Falun Gong practitioners. Their vital organs, including hearts, kidneys, livers, and corneas, were virtually simultaneously seized for sale at high prices, sometimes to foreigners, who normally face long waits for voluntary donations of such organs in their home countries," concluded the 46-page report.

The "Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China" was released late last week after a two-month independent investigation into China's organ harvesting practice.

The investigation was headed by David Kilgour, the former secretary of state of Canada for Asia Pacific, and David Matas, an international human rights lawyer from Canada.

For more copy of the report in English and French, visit the website.

INFO

The Kilgour-Matas Report
investigation.redirectme.net

Superman Returns



The Man of Steel returns after a five-year hiatus. Seems he got word his planet Krypton was on the verge of destruction and he flew back to check things out. But things at the Daily Planet haven't changed all that much except for the fact that Louis Lane now has a child and a steady beau. After an extended absence, Clark fortunately scores his old reporting job at the newspaper. Ah, but what lurks on the horizon. The villainous Lex Luther has discovered Superman's home away from home on Earth, and also the possibility of creating a new continent that looks remarkably like Krypton.

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This Nation's De-Facto Draft Hits Rural America

By RICHARD M. BENJAMIN
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

It feels like déjà vu all over again witnessing the recent criminal scandals erupting from Iraq. Private first class Steven Green, the 21-year-old soldier accused of raping a 14-year-old Iraqi girl and killing her family, shares a common thread to several Abu Ghraib abusers, besides the viciousness of his alleged violence. They hail from our nation's rural hamlets.

Green grew up in Midland dropping out of high school in 2002 after the tenth-grade. Both he and his mother, who divorced his father when the boy was four, have alcohol-related criminal records.

The day of his arrest, there was Steven, splashed across the media, sporting a Johnny Cash t-shirt, cargo shorts, flip-flops, and bed-head.

He looks so common and fa-

miliar – the harmless school prankster we all remember – just like Lynndie England, the pug-nosed, mop-topped tomboy convicted of abusing Abu Grhaib prisoners, cigarette dangling from her smirk. Born to a railroad worker in Ashland, Kentucky, England joined the Army Reserve during high school to escape a night job in a chicken-processing factory in rural West Virginia.



Richard Benjamin

Rural America has been over-represented since the start of our all-voluntary military in 1973-1974, military experts say. And roughly 35 percent of troops who've died serving in Afghanistan and Iraq come from rural America, much higher than it's 25 percent share of the national population.

With terrific valor comes this dishonor.

Rural America deserves national attention for sacrificing a

GUEST COMMENTARY

disproportionate number of its sons and daughters, but a dark sidebar haunts that acclaim. As evidence of military prison abuse, rape, and murder surface, we see the baby-faced mug shots of young soldiers, who look like our neighbors, from small-town Anywhere and Everywhere, USA.

How will rural areas and small towns retain future generations in economies hobbled by three decades of decline in farming and industrial jobs?

Green's official hometown — Denver City, Texas (population 3,967) — has a per capita income of \$13,921, well below the national per capita income, \$41,3990. Roughly 19% of Green's community lives below the poverty line, including 22% of those under age 18.

Meanwhile, the median salary of an Army private first class is \$19,032. When you fac-

tor in benefits like pension contributions, health care, and time-off, that compensation can jump to \$29,727. Factor in roughly \$40,000 of possible tuition assistance and that arithmetic helps explain why Green reported for duty to patrol the "Triangle of Death," the south-west area of Baghdad notorious for roadside bombings.

Joe Bageant, Gonzo journalist and self-proclaimed rural "cracker," derides what he calls America's "unspoken contract": the nation's political and business elite tolerate the white working-class, so long as the latter keeps the economic trains running smoothly.

"Lots of Americans don't seem to mind having a pack of young American pit bulls savage some flyblown desert nation, or running loose in the White House for that matter, as long as they are our pit bulls protecting Wall Street and the 401-Ks of the upper middle class," Bageant writes.

The rural barroom analysis of military recruitment often

mocks political establishment-types who pretend there is no disparity in a military and political system that they perpetuate.

"We do your dirty work for you, not to mention the international smackdowns and muggings for the republic – from which you benefit more materially than we ever will," says Bageant, scolding the political and business establishment.

"About half of the Americans killed in Iraq come from communities like Winchester, Virginia or Romney, West Virginia or Fisher, Illinois or Kilgore, Texas," Bageant notes. "These so-called volunteers are part of this nation's de facto draft — economic conscription — the carrot being politically preferable to the whip. The carrot does not have to be very big out here, where delivering frozen food wholesale to restaurants out of your own car entirely on commission is considered a good self-employment opportunity."

Discharged in May for "anti-social personality disorder," Green is said to exhibit chronic behavior that manipulates, exploits, and violates the rights of vulnerable people.

If Green and the other accused soldiers are just random bad apples, as the military brass insists, let's leave their judgment to the psychiatrists, the lawyers, and a jury. And though Green reportedly committed an individual act in no way sponsored by the government or our people, he embodies a larger problem that we should stop ignoring.

Green may suffer from a documented mental illness, but he is also very much a symptom of this nation and the times. Neither nature nor nurture should excuse the vile cruelty of his alleged crimes, no. But those crimes should draw our careful attention to the quality and fairness of military recruitment and to the economic conditions confronting rural young folks.

War has always been hell, but these recent crimes provide the necessary opportunity to change the war's execution and our rural kids' stagnant prospects, especially since we quickly changed the subject after Abu Grhaib.

If we liken America to an individual, then she has some personality disorders of her own, not unlike Steven Green's.

Rich Benjamin is a Senior Fellow at Demos, a research and advocacy organization in New York.

Toll Roads And The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA)

According to its website at <<http://www.ctrma.org>>, "The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA) is an

Medicine Peddlers On A Mission!

independent government agency created in January 2003

to improve the transportation system in Williamson and Travis Counties. Our mission is to implement innovative multi-modal transportation solutions that reduce congestion and create transportation choices that enhance quality of life and economic vitality.

The Mobility Authority is overseen by a seven-member Board of Directors. The Chairman is appointed by the governor. The County Commissioners of Travis and Williamson County each appoint three board members.

The Mobility Authority employs a small professional staff of 11 led by an executive director. The Mobility Authority uses private sector contractors with specialized expertise to provide staffing support for individual projects."

An interesting bit of news is that one of the first full toll project is in Northern Travis County, which is soon to be completed. Toll tags currently are on sale and are placed on the windshield of a vehicle so that it may proceed through the toll booths without stopping to pay the tolls.

Another interesting tidbit is that despite that the toll road is



Texas Commentary
By Peter Stern

in Travis County, most on the CTRMA Board are Williamson County residents. By the way, there are few toll roads slated for Williamson County — does anyone see a special interest pattern emerging?

I believe it's time for Central Texans and those around the state to wake-up and smell the Starbucks!!!

We must make our state government and its affiliations once again representative of the majority of voters/residents and NOT their own special interests.

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 Disabled Vietnam Veteran and holds three post-graduate degrees. You may contact Peter Stern at: <psstern@austin.rr.com>.

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King George And The Moral Boundary

“This bill (H.R. 810) would support the taking of innocent human life in the hope of funding medical benefits for others. It crosses a moral boundary that our decent society needs to respect. So I vetoed it.”

— George W. Bush, King of the United States of America, 19 July 2006

Methinks the time has come to pass that we should veto King George XLIII.

Once again, in a rerun of last year’s archive video op, George held his “White House Stem Cell Panderfest” in a roomful of evangelicals and their “Snowflake Kids” – some of the 128 infants, toddlers, and buns-in-ovens who were provided to barren or otherwise child-challenged couples by the zygotes’ originators.

I’ve long held a theory about most barren couples — natural selection made them unable to procreate. (Please, before anyone goes ballistic, realize that I used the word “most,” not all.) Without going into great detail, let’s just say be observant and consider the obvious dynamics within such a family, like the parental units’ inability to comprehend “kidthink,” a complete absence of imaginary thought processes throughout, smothering overprotectiveness, or how the youngster(s) dress, behave, interact with other children, and so on.

First, the vast majority of Americans, in the neighborhood of 70% or more of us, want research to go ahead with fresh, viable stem cells rather than “only on embryonic stem cell lines derived from embryos that have already been destroyed,” as King George will allow. Once again, the Theocratic Monarchy trumps our Democratic process, tossing aside the will of the majority in favor of some 20%, the most hardcore of Christian religious fanatics.

The King calls his policy of it’s okay for stem cells created from samples taken from umbilical cords and skin to be used in research, but not unwanted frozen Petri dish embryonic zygotes wasting away in sperm banks, as “balanced.”

Apparently, Georgie never played on a see-saw because, as any four-year-old knows, one side up and the other down is “lopsided,” not at all balanced.

This least nebulous man among men decided back in 2001 that he knows more about the human embryonic journey than virtually all of the Earth’s doctors and research scientists. Pretty good for a schlemiel whose family money bought his



Out Of The Blue

By Jerry Tenuto

way through a C college grade point average... along with everything else in life.

Read my lips, King George: Those embryonic stem cell zygotes are not people.

“Human beings are not a raw material to be exploited,” saith the King.

In this year’s replay of the staged “Panderfest” event Sanctimonious George, along with his most pious Seraphim pair from the Senate Rick Santorum (R-Penn) and Sam Brownback (R-Kan), shamelessly exploited the children one more time. Georgie used them yet again as the ammunition to shoot down H.R. 810, which would have allowed funding for research with existing unused frozen zygotes.

Spake His Excellency, “Each of these children was adopted while still an embryo and has been blessed with the chance to grow – to grow up in a loving family.”

Horsefeathers!

Conjecture and speculation.

Smoke and mirrors to muddy the true issues.

How in the hell does George W. Bush know what goes on within the core of any of these families, or what life in their homes might entail?

Just for starters, in some women it takes four or more implants before they go full term. The mothers-to-be are often high-risk to begin with, and have numerous miscarriages. The “science” itself is by no means precise.

Statistics indicate that a significant percentage of children such as these “Snowflake” kids will be abused either verbally, mentally, physically or sexually – or any combination thereof. The odds against them increase in direct correlation to the intensity level of the fervor of the parents’ religious zeal and suppression of social vices.

Has anyone considered the long-term affects of this social engineering project under the guise of Christian soul-making? It’s painfully obvious King George has not, nor have the 256 sets of “parental units” responsible for this concoction of kids.

So, this very process is experimentation, and may be considered destruction of embryos.

What’s going to happen in 20 years when one of these chil-

dren needs a kidney transplant, but no one in the family is a suitable donor? Or, when there’s an accident and identification is hampered because the DNA can’t be matched?

What about grandparents who will never see or get to know their “grandchild?”

The human psyche cannot be fooled, even by filling up the mind and attempting to confuse it with a lifetime of convoluted misinterpretations of the Old Testament and the life of Christ. The child is going to know that something is missing from his or her life.

How about when the child turns 16 and tells the “parent” that he’s gay, or she thinks praying to Jesus is just a bunch of “hooley?”

Yep. King George XLIII paints a rosy picture while talkin’ outta his ass, meanwhile all these evangelical white folks think it’s gonna be all sweetness and heather from here on out, because they got a Christian Petri dish baby.

We’ve explored this territory before, but it requires another reconnoiter. There are approximately 400,000 unused frozen zygotes around the U.S. in sperm banks. These are the property of the couples that placed them there. The zygotes are unused because these people have all the children they want.

These zygotes belong neither to the Government, nor to the facilities wherein they’re kept.

However, King George XLIII has been attempting to dictate where and how these Petri dish minutiae should be put to use.

Of those 400,000, a mere 128 children have been “cultivated,” zygotes donated by originating parents to like-minded couples incapable of conceiving on their own, or simply wishing to bring more unwitting souls into the family of Jesus Christ. Whatever their personal agenda, it’s kind of scary.

When one considers all the children languishing in orphanages or worse, this method of “adoption” is selfish as well as self-righteous. Oh, did I remember to mention self-indulgent?

From what I’ve seen at these White House gatherings, the vast majority of “parental units” for what King George refers to as “blessed children” are as white as a slice of Wonder bread with its crust removed. Since it takes people of a unique mindset to allow their seed to be gestated and nurtured by others, and it likewise requires folks of an equally singular worldview to bear and raise

someone else’s natural offspring, the selection process has to be grueling.

Somewhat akin to the process used in Germany 70 years ago to insure every SS descendant was a perfect Aryan.

To date, of King George’s master plan approximately 399,872 people with unused frozen zygotes have chosen not to allow other couples to have their children. My guess it’s for two reasons right off the top: 1) They don’t want fanatics raising their seed; and, 2) They aren’t insane.

These people most likely considered the ramifications noted above, plus others I may have missed, of this Christian-based experiment in social engineering.

In simple percentages, 99.9997% of the people who have unused zygotes frozen in sperm banks around the U.S. do not wish to have other couples bearing and raising their “kids.”

Thus, only two alternatives are left of what to do with those zygotes: Destroy them eventually, or donate them for research.

Under King George’s policy they would ultimately be destroyed, unless researchers received a humongous monetary gift from some private donor(s).

But, George and his Religious Rightist pals would rather destroy than learn, for it is far more important to eradicate than to put something to positive use. As he said, “I believe that with the right techniques and the right policies we can achieve scientific progress while living up to our ethical responsibilities.”

“We must continue to explore these hopeful alternatives and advance the cause of scientific research while staying true to the ideals of a decent and humane society.”

Now, to exactly which “ethical responsibilities” do you think King George is alluding? Possibly it’s the ethical responsibility to lower our infant mortality rate, currently one of the highest among industrialized nations.

Then, there’s the ethical responsibility to make sure every man, woman and child – especially the children – have healthcare coverage. Could that be what George meant?

Sure, the ethical responsibility to use all the knowledge in man’s collective wisdom, along with every device and resource at our fingertips, to do everything possible to end as much pain and suffering for the living, breathing, thinking, viable hu-

man beings who are here, now, among us today.

It’s the “ethical responsibility” of the person posing as the president of the United States of America, even if he thinks he has the powers of a king, to stay out of the business of science!

Damn it, George W. Bush! You do not have the right to dictate the quality of life when it comes to medical matters! Neither does Laura!

And I’m 110% certain that if one were to read any version of The Bible, Old and New Testaments, from beginning to end, there would not be one word about stem cells or zygotes or Petri dish goo!

I also think that I’m on solid ground when speculating that if Jesus Christ really is the Son of God, He’d tell you to quit using Him as a scapegoat for your addlebrained plots to stifle medical progress and make your wealthy cronies richer.

Oh, yeah, “staying true to the ideals of a decent and humane society” does not include tearing people away from their homes and families and spiriting them away in the night. These ideals have nothing to do with keeping nameless people incommunicado without charges or representation for months or years.

No “decent and humane society” I ever heard of has ideals that include torture, rape, and murder of innocents.

Proclaimed the King, “If this bill were to become law, American taxpayers would for the first time in our history be compelled to fund the deliberate destruction of human embryos. And I’m not going to allow it.”

To hell with the wishes of the people, eh, King George? When exactly was it that you ever gave a rat’s ass for the taxpayers’ money and where it went?

I can’t think of a time when you respected life, either.

As Texas governor George thought nothing of executing 154 inmates in just five years – more than any other Texas governor, averaging 31 per year. He even got several last ones in after the 2000 presidential election.

It didn’t matter if the inmate was mentally retarded, insane, left unable to functionally reason due to combat wounds – if they were on death row and their date came up it was “so long” as far as governor Georgie Bush was concerned.

Following King George’s logic, it’s perfectly acceptable to compel us taxpayers to waste countless billions upon billions of dollars to slaughter tens of thou-

Continued On Next Page

When Looking Ahead, Look No Further Than Your Behind

There was a time when, in order to promote an important issue through a week of "National Awareness," you actually

needed to have an issue that was important — something that could save lives, improve society, or, at the very least,

TENUTO

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sands of people who are old enough to realize they're being blown to bits.

Let us not forget all those folks he's adding to the ranks of the disabled.

However, it is not permissible to invest even a modicum of that expenditure on research to help defeat the most debilitating and painful diseases known to mankind involving the use of certain stem cells.

You are personally responsible for (according to the latest estimates from www.unknownnews.net):

211,000 Iraqi civilians killed, 380,000 seriously injured;

30,000 Iraqi troops dead, 90,000 seriously wounded;

2,560 American military deaths, 39,100 seriously wounded;

3,500 Afghan civilians killed, 6,300 seriously injured;

8,600 Afghan troops dead, 25,800 seriously wounded;

308 American military deaths, 924 seriously wounded.

I sure as hell didn't ask for my tax money to be thrown away killing Mid-Easterners, while making Halliburton's and the military-industrial complex' coffers fatter.

The destruction of embryos for medical research trumps the murder and mutilation of full-sized humans every day. *That's* the true Christian thing to do.

Ask any Rabbi.

In the meantime, King George and Lady Condoleezza Rice are sitting on their hands, making no effort whatsoever to attempt some sort of cease-fire between Hezbollah and Israel.

Ach, du Lieber, how this Regime does love death.

As long as it doesn't involve microscopic zygotes. Where's the fun in that?

His Excellency had more to say: "I made it clear to the Congress that I will not allow our nation to cross this moral line. I felt like crossing this line would be a mistake and once crossed we would find it almost impossible to turn back."

No, Bush was not talking about his fabrications to rouse the Nation into invading Iraq without cause. We crossed the biggest moral line America had ever broached, and Fearless Leader hasn't a clue as to how to get our brave troops back.

King George is still going on

about how immoral it would be to use frozen, unused zygotes to help the most desperately ill among us.

"Crossing the line would needlessly encourage a conflict between science and ethics that can only do damage to both, and to our nation as a whole."

A true leader would have followed with this statement: Look, I know absolutely nothing about science. Because I have no moral compass, I've created needless ethical conflicts these past five years. I possess a stubborn, pigheaded inability to be flexible.

Take all that, toss in my illegal invasions of two sovereign nations that were no threat to us, and I have done immeasurable damage to our nation as a whole on the world stage.

But we're never going to get that; there's not a snowball's chance in Ciudad Juarez that George W. Bush would ever be honest for more than three seconds at a stretch.

Then again, a true leader never would have trashed our Country in the same manner as King George and his Fascist Gangsters.

As I write this, it's July 20, 2006, the 37th Anniversary of the landing of the Eagle on the Moon. Neil Armstrong became the first human being (that we know of) to set foot on the surface of that satellite, along with Buzz Aldrin.

"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

If we're ever going to be that great Nation again, if we're ever going to make another giant leap, we must veto George W. Bush and every scrap of garbage he brought into our White House.

And we need to veto him now, before he gets the new and improved spy on Americans programs in place!

(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)



Life Is A Funny Place

By Ned Hickson

Siuslaw News

boost the sale of Hallmark cards.

But not anymore.

I say this because, as you may or may not know, we're fast approaching "National Psychic Week." (For those of you who weren't aware of this, I'm sorry: But there's a very good chance you are not psychic.) According to one website, the purpose of this week-long focus is to "dispel skepticism [of psychics] through factual awareness."

Thanks to an article that appeared in the Chicago Sun-Times sent in from Barry Smythe of Dallas, Texas, I have a better understanding of how it might take an entire week to dispel all that skepticism — especially after reading about Ulf Buck, a blind psychic from Meldorf, Germany, who claims he can read people's futures by feeling their naked buttocks.

(Warning to women who frequent singles bars: Men who frequent singles bars may be reading this column.)

According to Buck, creases

representing success, career and artistic ability extend inward from the extremities of the buttocks (Similar to a map of Hollywood), while five other creases radiate outward. Though Buck explained that those creases represent areas such as love and money, when asked about that crease radiating down the middle, he just said, "Ewww."

My point is, if you have a habit of sitting naked on wicker furniture, don't waste your time getting a buttocks reading.

No. My real point is that people no longer pay any attention to "National Awareness" weeks because the topics have gotten so stupid.

For example, when's the last time you observed "National Fresh Breath" week with any level of enthusiasm? Did you gargle more? Brush better? Buy an extra roll of Certs?

(No one in THIS office did, I can tell you that.)

The problem is that there are no guidelines when it comes to petitioning for "National Awareness" status — which is why we have 40 states that participate in "Sky Awareness" week each year. First of all, do we really need a whole week? Unless you're lying face down getting a buttocks reading, how long does

it take to look straight up? Considering that there are 10 states that don't observe "Sky Awareness" week at all, we can conclude that they either, 1) Think it's stupid, 2) Put all of their efforts into having a great "Fresh Breath" week, or 3) Have no idea the sky actually exists.

Which could explain the idea behind "Brain Awareness" week.

That's right. The same people who brought us "Mustard" week and "Bat Survey" week would like us to remember that we have brains. (Even though, oddly enough, those same people scheduled "National Hot Dog" week to take place three months AFTER "National Mustard" week.)

The bottom line, of course, is that coming up with wisecracks about buttocks readings, while cheeky, requires more brain activity than most "Awareness Week" topics.

Though I'm sure that'll change some day, exactly when is anybody's guess.

Then again, they do say hindsight is 20/20....

(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)

An Open Letter to:
The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-0303
Dear Senator McCain

I repeat my letter of June 29 and am registering it. Like many of your constituents, and not a few supporters, I wonder why you, along with many other senators, are "fiddling while Rome burns." You certainly know what I mean by that metaphor.

The mighty United States Senate is busy, again, debating flag-burning and gay marriage amendments to the U.S. Constitution while potential disaster exists in many places around the world: specifically, Iraq, Darfour, Iran, North Korea, and not least in the budget process of United States. Have politics and small thinking become dominant in your building, the ambience of the great Barkleys, Haydens, and Russells?

Many of us who know Washington well, some like I, having worked one way or another for U.S. Presidents of both parties, wonder what is going on in the White House: snoopers reading our correspondence, maybe examining our bank accounts, especially those of us who have traveled or have worked extensively abroad.

Many armed service veterans, some even disabled in other wars, myself among them, wonder also how you in particular can go along (without speaking out) with this Administration and its secretive assault on our liberties, all in the name of an endless, often vague, cry of "We're at war," and the "War on Terrorism." If we are at war, let's start acting like it. People, the masses I mean, usually suffer in wartime. I see little suffering and grief other than that of the immediate families of those who are killed or maimed. Should we count the more than Iraqi 50,000 dead, and their wounded thousands? Has President George W. Bush attended, publicly, one dead soldier's funeral?

Finally, I pose to you the question of the Gedalist Jews in Primo Levi's story set in Central Europe during World War II: "If not this way, how? If not now, when?" I simply do not buy yours and Senator Kyl's "What not to do" column in last Sunday's, 9 July, Star. We've heard this all before. It's Viet Nam all over again?

John, there's a matter of Honor in all this. I'm not sure of your Walthall County, Mississippi ancestors, but my own in Greene County, a hundred miles due east of yours, would have long since demanded an accountability. Where's that Honor? Certainly it is not to be found in W. Bush's bravado, now U-turn, as he continues to hide and distort the truth and mislead our great country!

Jimmye S. Hillman
730 North Alamo Avenue,
Tucson, Arizona, July 13 2006



The Lone Star ICONOCLAST

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor:

Is the road to Hell paved with good intentions? I raise this question in response to those who claim Israel has "over reacted" to recent attacks by Hizbollah and Hamas - Arab militant groups backed by Syria and Iran. Israel's critics obviously fail to appreciate that these militant groups will not rest until they exterminate Israel - or are themselves exterminated. That's the very harsh truth.

Calls are being made for UN involvement including the deployment of UN peacekeepers. I agree that the international community can help, but they should begin by trying to convince Syria and Iran to honor Israel's sovereignty and stop supporting Arab militants bent on Israel's destruction.

For almost 60 years Israel has fought fiercely to defend it's right to exist as sanctioned by international law. Israel has made a good faith effort to make peace with the Arabs living in the West Bank, Golan Heights and Gaza. But the conflict continues.

In the recent past a unique political solution was proposed to

end the seemingly endless bloodshed - the Elon Peace Plan. The plan called for Israel to annex the Golan Heights, West Bank and Gaza and create a massive buffer zone along it's Lebanese border. In my opinion, the Elon Peace Plan deserves a fresh look and should be considered very seriously. I am convinced that the recent efforts to achieve a two state solution in Israel, though well intentioned, is not the answer - it's the road to Hell.

*Harold S Kramer,
Marblehead, MA*

To The Editor:

Now, more than ever, the fate of our republic is on the line and a vigorous movement to save it is urgently needed. This could happen, since someone with the courage, conviction and credentials to do so has taken the initiative.

The election of 2004, with its blatant, yet mainly unquestioned and disregarded irregularities, has been seriously investigated and publicized for the first time in 1 1/2 years. The current report, however, isn't receiving the media attention it merits.

Not since journalist Keith

Olbermann, COUNTDOWN, MSNBC, reported each evening, the findings of the extensive inquiry headed by Rep. John Conyers, ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, and the televised hearings on C-SPAN, has there been a national airing of this critical issue on which our very democracy hinges. The mainstream media have been largely dismissive of any suggestions, much less allegations, of fraud, or in some cases, even derisive of the Conyers investigation.

Discrepancies between exit polls and vote counts were the earliest sign of a fraudulent election. In every state but four, the disparities favored George Bush.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., environmental attorney, president of Waterkeeper Alliance and author of CRIMES AGAINST NATURE, who has evidently inherited Kennedy, Sr.'s tenacity, with Tim Dickinson and a team from Rolling Stone Magazine, spent months reviewing election documents and interviewing concerned parties. Their labors have established a conservative estimate of how many Ohio voters were either prevented from voting or whose votes went uncounted—at least 357,000, preponderantly Democratic—"more that enough to shift the results of an election decided by 118,601 votes."

Lou Harris, father of modern political polling, told Kennedy,

"Ohio was as dirty an election as America has ever seen."

According to the New York Times, new registrations in Ohio had increased in traditional Democratic strongholds by 250%, while in Republican, only 25%. To counteract this phenomenon, the Republican National Committee and the Ohio Republican Party sent illegal mailings to tens of thousands of mainly minority and urban voters, disenfranchising them; but this was only one technique. The Conyers report cited a 25-member team of volunteers, "The Mighty Texas Strike Force," that not only made intimidating phone calls to voters, but threatened rehabilitated ex-convicts with more jail time if they attempted to vote. This "force" was a fraction of an RNC group of 1500 Texas volunteers sent to battleground states, similar to the election 2000 "Brooks Brothers" rioters—paid Republican staff members—that halted the recount in Miami-Dade County, Fla.

Other methods were "destruction, mutilation and damage of public records" and improper purging, barriers to registration, rural county fraud, blocking of provisional ballots on election day, discouragingly long lines at the polls, faulty machines and a rigged recount. The long lines were artificially created by the GOP's ordering of local election boards to reduce the number of precincts across the state. Officials also distributed a minimal

number of machines to inner city precincts.

Ohio State law professor and elections scholar Dan Tokaji said that a minimum of 66,000 votes was invalidated by flawed voting machines. Hand-counted records are more reliable; machines with no paper trail are infamously subject to tampering. Leon County, FL election board supervisor Ion Sancho stressed that "Every board of election has staff members with the technological ability to fix the election. Even one corrupt staffer can throw an election. Without paper records, it could happen under my nose and there is no way I'd find out about it."

Ohio voting machine manufacturer, Diebold, Inc., is deeply involved in the scandal. Its erstwhile CEO, Walden O'Dell, suddenly resigned in December 05 amidst massive fraud allegations of insider trading and the stealing of elections in Georgia and Ohio. It's he who promised to "deliver" Ohio to the Bush/Cheney campaign in 04.

With certain variations, what happened in 00 was brazenly repeated in 04, giving rise to valid questions about the future: What's in store for 08? What's in store for the midterms, three months from now? Has a precedent of corruption been set? What will happen to our already fractured democracy if lagging election controls and reforms aren't quickly put in place?

Elizabeth Gerteiny, Westport, CT

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