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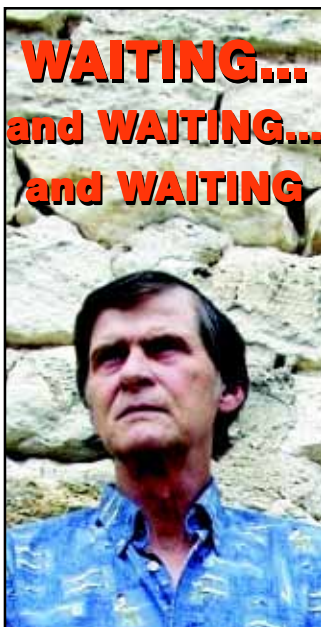
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Good-by, Ann Richards

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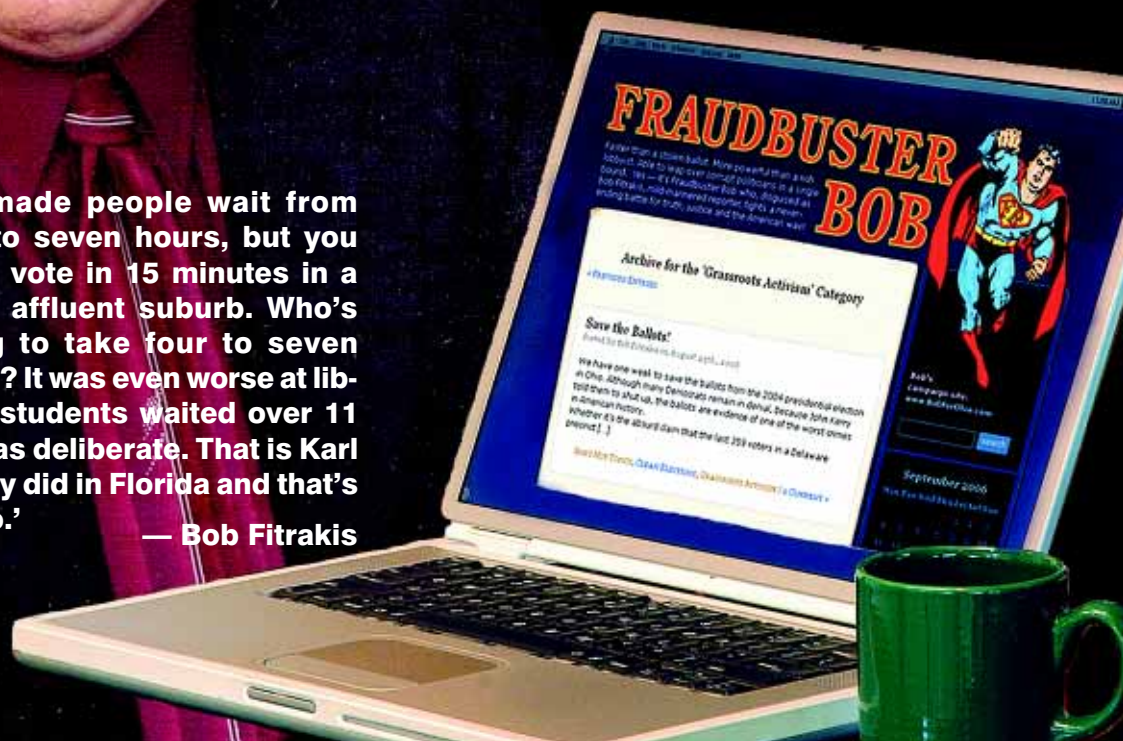
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They made people wait from four to seven hours, but you could vote in 15 minutes in a white affluent suburb. Who's going to take four to seven hours? It was even worse at liberal colleges. Some students waited over 11 hours to vote. This was deliberate. That is Karl Rove. That's what they did in Florida and that's what they did in Ohio.

— Bob Fittrakis



Former Texas Gov. Ann Richards Dies

AUSTIN — Ann Richards, 73, the sassy 45th governor of Texas, is dead after a six-month battle with cancer. She had been diagnosed with esophageal cancer in March.

Known for her toughness and wit, Richards became a Texas icon.

A Democrat, she was elected governor in 1990, defeating Republican oilman Clayton Williams. She called her administration the "New Texas," and appointed numerous minorities to various boards.

Born in Lacy-Lakeview, a Waco suburb, as Dorothy Ann Willis, her father, Cecil Willis, was a pharmaceutical salesman and her mother, Ona, was a homemaker. She earned her bachelor's degree at Baylor University in 1954 and later earned a teaching certificate at the University of Texas, teaching social studies at Fulmore Junior High School in Austin.

While at Baylor, she married her high school sweetheart, David Richards, who later practiced law in Dallas. Their four children are Cecile, Clark, Ellen, and Dan. She described her years as a homemaker and mother in her autobiography, *Straight from the Heart*.

It wasn't until 1969 that Richards became deeply involved in politics, helping to run a legislative campaign for Sarah Weddington, at that time the 25-year-old lawyer who won fame by winning the Roe v. Wade case in the Supreme Court legalizing abortion. After Weddington's victory, Richards became her legislative director.

When her husband, David, declined an offer to run for county commissioner in Austin in 1975, Ann Richards stepped up the the plate instead, defeating the incumbent. But she began drinking in light of her marriage deteriorating, and eventually, in 1980, she received treatment for alcohol depen-



Ann Richards

dency in Minnesota. She then became an advocate for people suffering from alcohol and substance abuse, which she carried with her to the Governor's mansion in later years.

Two years before her divorce in 1984, she became involved in statewide politics becoming elected state treasurer.

She became nationally known in 1988 when asked to be keynote speaker at the Democratic National Convention when she attempted to show how out of touch then-Vice President George Herbert Walker Bush with poor and middle-class citizens.

She said, "Poor George, he can't help it — he was born with a silver foot in his mouth."

Then, in 1990, Richards defeated former Gov. Mark White in the primary and former Attorney General Jim Mattox in the runoff to represent the Democrats for Governor against Clayton Williams. He won the majority of male votes and she won the majority of female votes, edging out Williams to become the first woman governor of Texas since Miriam "Ma" Ferguson in 1924.

It was under her reign that the lottery was created and a \$2.7 billion tax bill balanced the

state's budget.

Perhaps her fiercest battle was with school finance, to meet orders from the Texas Supreme Court. Eventually a measure now known widely as "Robin Hood" was approved which redistributed wealth from rich school districts to poor ones.

In 1994, Richards became a target of Karl Rove and the Bush political machine (for reference visit www.lonestaricon.com and find a link to a DVD "Bush's Brain.") Here, she ran against George W. Bush, whom she called "some jerk who's running for public office." However, after execution of a massive political assassination strategy by Rove and Bush, Richards fell short on the total number of votes needed for re-election.

Following her tenure as governor, Richards made the talk-show circuit and made numerous public appearances.

According to Evan Smith, editor of Texas Monthly, "Ann Richards was one of the truly funniest people God ever put on this earth. Ann was obligated, chemically and biologically, to say what was on her mind, even if the truth was uncomfortable. Ann's honesty and candor is one of the great things about her that will be missed."

In her final months, Richards became one of the first Texans to try a highly touted new cancer treatment, undergoing a regime combining chemotherapy with proton therapy, a more precise form of radiation that leaves the surrounding tissue unscathed. She was treated at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, which opened a \$125 million proton center in May, one of five proton facilities in the country.

According to U.S. Rep. Chet Edwards (D-Texas), who serves the Waco area, "With a sense of humor and a love of Texas, Ann Richards led our state through

a time of economic growth, prosperity and opportunity for all. She gave Texas a lot, but perhaps her greatest gift was to help us all laugh at ourselves."

Commented former State Comptroller John Sharp, "Governor Ann was a beautiful lady and one of the most gifted politicians Texas ever saw...It's like my daddy used to say at times like this: A tall tree fell in Texas

today."

On Saturday, former President Bill Clinton tearfully escorted a flag-draped casket carrying Ann Richards into the State Capitol, where she was to spend the next two days lying in state before her funeral and burial.

Clinton described her as "spontaneous, unedited, earthy, hilarious."

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FASTER THAN A STOLEN BALLOT

Zero Tolerance For Corruption

By W. LEON SMITH

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, THE ICONOCLAST

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Dr. Bob Fitrakis, who is running as the Green Party candidate for Governor of Ohio, has a simple platform: “Zero Tolerance for Corruption.”

Ohio is the state made infamous for its inability to hold a proper election, the one where its Secretary of State, Ken Blackwell, promised he had a secret weapon to deliver to George Bush the presidency in 2004. Those who have studied the election say this weapon was disenfranchisement of the poor in Ohio, a swing state.

Now, with Ohio Republican Governor Bob Taft ineligible to be a candidate this November due to convictions on misdemeanor charges, there will not be an incumbent in the race.

But the Secretary of State who provided Bush the fruits of the secret weapon is now the Republican candidate for Governor, and he still presides over the ballot boxes. He is challenged by Democrat Ted Strickland, who has an apparent lead in the polls, Libertarian candidate William Pierce, and Green candidate Dr. Bob Fitrakis, the subject of this week’s LONE STAR ICONOCLAST interview.

Ohio is traditionally known as a two-party state — none other need apply. The Democrats and Republicans have structured the government so that independent candidates have to climb a very high perpendicular mountainside just to get on the ballot. Fitrakis, for instance, submitted 10,915 signatures of Ohio voters just to get on the ballot. Under Ohio law, “the Democrats and Republicans running for statewide office only had to get 1,000 signatures to get on the ballot, while ‘other party candidates’ have to get five times as many signatures,” noted Fitrakis.



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Dr. Bob Fitrakis
Green Party Candidate
For Ohio Governor

He went on, “And, under Ohio law, the Democrats and Republicans at the county Boards of Elections get to jointly verify our signatures without our presence. In Ohio, we have a two-party system, only slightly better than a dictatorship. And for every dollar the wealthy send the Republicans, they flip a 50-cent piece to the Democrats. Because they’re beholden to the same corporate money and studies indicate one percent of the population gives 90 percent of the money to political

candidates, there’s very little real policy debate in Ohio, or the nation in general.”

Minority parties and independents have also had difficulty being included in debates, which, according to Fitrakis, vastly limits new ideas, since the ties to the R’s and D’s are so close.

Fitrakis has been fighting what he deems is a corrupt election system in Ohio. He has been on the forefront to spread the word of what went wrong in the 2004 election. He considered

it a victory on Sept. 7 when U.S. District Court Judge Algernon Marbley ordered all of Ohio’s 88 Boards of Elections to preserve all 2004 presidential election ballots in paper or electronic form until a civil rights suit, brought by inner city black organizations against Ken Blackwell, is resolved.

Described as a “fraudbuster,” Fitrakis will not be alone on the Green Party section of the ballot, as two other fraudbusting veterans, Anita Rios, who is running for Lt. Governor, and Tim Kettler, candidate for Secretary of State, will join in spearheading the Green Party campaign, the three being principals in the battle waged by the Green Party to recount the votes after the 2004 election.

“The goal of my campaign will be to win the Governor’s mansion back for the people of Ohio,” said Fitrakis, when he announced his candidacy last November. “Both the Republican and Democratic parties have brought dishonor to our great state with their cronyism and insider dealing. We need to clean house and end this culture of corruption.”

Fitrakis’ harshest criticism is of Blackwell, whom he calls “an enemy of the state,” and the man who fixed the presidential election in 2004. Fitrakis holds Blackwell responsible for the devastating discrepancies between exit polls and the highly improbable and virtually impossible vote total that gave George W. Bush a second term. He pulls no punches about precinct-by-precinct illegalities including unguarded ballots, election machine tampering, an unexplained bogus Homeland Security alert, the firing of whistle-blowing election board officials, and much more.

Banning the ballot in Bush’s America has to stop, says Fitrakis, noting the recent testimony of an elderly man:

“I voted in every election. I believed my civic duty was important. The right to vote gave me the power to determine my future. I was obviously very proud — never missed an election. I have been voting at the same precinct for 50 years.”

But, as happened to so many others on Election Day, the man’s name just disappeared off the rolls. His name was removed, no explanation. He was forced to use a provisional ballot — which was not only an insult to someone like him, but a crapshoot in terms of whether the vote would actually be counted. “I guess my vote don’t matter anymore,” he said at a public hearing.

Fitrakis says that in Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), some citizens have been caught “Registering While Black.” A statistical analysis of would-be voters indicates that black voters are three times as likely as white voters to have their registration requests “returned” (i.e. subject to rejection).

And to give a boost to this whitening of the voter rolls, for the first time since the days of Jim Crow, the Republicans created challenges to black voters on Election Day.

Such racial profiling as part of a plan to block voters is illegal under the Voting Rights Act. Nevertheless, neither the Act nor federal judges have persuaded the party of Lincoln to join the Democratic Party in pledging not to distribute blacklists to block voters during the 2004 election.

Fitrakis was an election protection attorney on Nov. 2, 2004 in Franklin County. He called the first public hearings to investigate voter suppression and election irregularities after the 2004 election, and was one of four attorneys to file a challenge to Ohio’s presidential election results in the *Moss v. Bush* and

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Moss v. Moyer lawsuits. Fitrakis served as an international elections observer in 1994 during the first democratic election in El Salvador since the recent civil war. He co-wrote the official report on the election to the United Nations.

Dr. Fitrakis, who won his school's Distinguished Teaching Award in 1991, currently serves as the National Vice Chancellor and the Chancellor for Ohio of the International Association of Educators for World Peace. He served as Chair of the Columbus State Community College Instructional Support Council and is a past President of both the Columbus State Educational Association and Columbus State Faculty Senate.

He also served as the Faculty Advisor to the Ohio Board of Regents and served on the Africentric School Advisory Board for the Columbus Public Schools, as a Near East Area Commissioner, and by helping local Columbus youths through the West High School College Preparation Program.

In 2002, Fitrakis was awarded the Golden Ruler Award from the Columbus School Board for his journalism in behalf of Columbus schoolchildren. The local Police Officers for Equal Rights honored Fitrakis with its Best Community Journalism award, and the Native American Indian Center of Central Ohio honored him with their Selma Walker Award for Lifetime Achievement in Human Rights Activism.

As a fraudbusting journalist, Bob has won awards from the Ohio Society of Professional Journalists, the Press Club of Cleveland, and other professional organizations for articles on the Voinovich family, drug smuggling, Ku Klux Klan activities, and corruption in the local bail bond industry. In addition, he serves as Executive Director of the Columbus Institute for Contemporary Journalism (CICJ), where he publishes and serves as an editor and writer of the FREE PRESS. The FREE PRESS article "How a Republican Election Supervisor Manipulated the 2004 Central Ohio Vote" received the Project Censored third most censored story in the world in 2005.

From 1990 to 2000, Fitrakis co-hosted a regular public access news/public affairs pro-

gram, "From the Democratic Left," offering analysis of political events and social issues, both locally and nationally. This program chronicled the activism of the progressive community in Central Ohio, from Gulf War demonstrations to anti-Klan protests. From June 1996 to February 2003, he co-hosted a weekly public affairs call-in talk radio program, "Fight Back!" on WSMZ 103.1FM, and from March 2003-May 2006 hosted two programs on WVKO 1580AM.

The ICONOCLAST interview:

ICONOCLAST: You have been very critical of Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell, who is also seeking the governorship of Ohio. Will he be presiding over the upcoming Nov. 7 election, and, if so, is that a conflict of interest?

FITRAKIS: Yes, he will be presiding, and of course it would be a conflict of interest.

Ken Blackwell broke an agreement that we had in Ohio that has gone from Republican Secretary of State to Democratic Secretary of State that would even include Bob Taft, our current Governor. You go out and register as many people as you can and you run a clean election.

Mr. Blackwell decided that he would work for the Bush team in Ohio and we had everything from his famous decree that you couldn't register unless it was on E bond and on white waxed paperweight. He also switched all the precincts around and said that if you are out of your precinct, you couldn't vote.

I was just looking at some data here for a possible lawsuit. Some 356 people in Columbus, mainly in the city, were given a provisional ballot accidentally by the poll worker and then Kenneth Blackwell didn't count their vote because they should have voted on the machine. That's absurd. The poll workers made the mistake, so he just disenfranchised literally tens of thousands of people. Now he's going to preside over his own election. That's unacceptable.

ICONOCLAST: How else could he handle it?

FITRAKIS: Well, he could essentially appoint, in fact we've recommended that there are some very good people, Republicans that used to work for Bob Taft when he was Secretary of State that have the confidence

of the people of Ohio. I would like to actually see independents from Ken Blackwell's partisan political machine oversee the election.

ICONOCLAST: You are listed on the Secretary of State's website as an Independent, but your PR says you are running under the Green Party? Can you explain?

FITRAKIS: We explain that in Ohio the same way that we explain I had to get five times as many signatures as the Democrats and Republicans. On thing the Democrats and Republicans agree on in Ohio is "no third party." You'd break up their essentially joint monopoly over ballot access. So they required us to get five times as many signatures as the Democrats and Republicans and you're not allowed to list your party's affiliation, so that's one law and one thing they agree on completely, to keep all independent voices out. As we like to say, the Democrats and Republicans of Ohio like to span the political spectrum from A to B.

ICONOCLAST: You wrote in a column that the 2004 election in Ohio was rigged for Bush and used an analogy about buses. Can you explain that again?

FITRAKIS: If you know there's a huge traffic area...like, everyone in the nation knows that in democracies that vote on a working day, that, in effect, people are going to be lined up at the polls from 6:30 to 9:00 because they're trying to vote before they have to go to work.

We know another smaller crowd is going to gather at noon and we know a huge crowd's going gather from 6 to 7:30 when they're off work. I mean, it's absolutely predictable, when people vote on a Tuesday, a working day after the first Monday in November.

So if you then show up and say you have a shortage of machines...what they did literally is that they knew they couldn't stop a huge voter turnout. What they could stop is facilitating easy voting for these people. So in the precincts I observed, I was in two wards in the inner city, they were essentially polling places in these precincts and we were calculating between 10 to 20 percent of the population was leaving because the lines were between three to seven hours long.

And Ken Blackwell knew.

And so did Matt Damschroder who was the former chair of the Republican Party in Franklin County who designed the voting machine allocation. They knew that they shorted 125 machines, which is the first time I've ever seen this happen in modern Ohio history. There's a court case back in the 50s that said you have to have

one meter per hundred voters. But if you are going into an election with one machine for two-three-four-hundred and fifty voters, you can bet that you're going to disenfranchise 10 to 20 percent of the population, particularly the handicapped, the elderly, the working poor that may be fired, the single mothers that were standing in line with their babies.

ICONOCLAST: I notice that in Ohio the governor and lieutenant governor run as one unit, sort of like the president and vice-president. Do you feel that this is an advantage or a disadvantage?

FITRAKIS: I actually see it as a disadvantage. You know, I think it would be a better check and balance to have other parties running and the possibility of a lieutenant governor that doesn't belong to the same party as the governor. I think it would be good to have a check and balance, electing somebody as lieutenant governor to watch the governor. We've got a governor who is the only sitting governor in Ohio history who has been convicted of a crime, four first-degree misdemeanors. If he wasn't elected governor, he would have gotten a felony. They would have combined those, you know, the other 62 times he admitted to taking gifts from lobbyists.

ICONOCLAST: Does Ohio have a run-off if no candidate gets over 50 percent of the vote, or is a plurality all that is needed?

FITRAKIS: No. No runoff. It's most votes wins.

ICONOCLAST: A poll taken by Survey USA on Aug. 11, 2006, showed the Democratic candidate, Ted Strickland, was ahead of the Republican, Blackwell, 57% to 35%, and lists you and the Libertarian candidate, William Pierce, as contenders, but no numbers are given. If a poll were taken today, how do you think the candidates would stack up? And do you think you are gaining ground?

FITRAKIS: I think that the last poll I saw by the DISPATCH had Strickland up by 20 points. About 47-27 in Ohio. It's almost not close enough for Blackwell to steal it. And this is a state where remember in 2005 in November issues two and three in the last poll by the COLUMBUS DISPATCH, the most accurate poll in the state that came out on Thursday.

On Tuesday, issues two and three were winning by 59 and 61 percent. Now they lost by 32 and 28 percent. That is, they want us to believe there was a 60-point shift in a small period of time.

This was the first time they used the electronic voting machines throughout the state. My favorite term that the main-

stream media uses is recalibration, which is another term for recording the votes wrong. You are talking 10 to 20 percent error factors, and we're finding this throughout Ohio. We've been busy all summer looking at this stuff. I think Strickland is up by 20 points, but polls are reporting us anywhere from one to five percent. The Libertarian candidate with similar numbers. I think where we're gaining ground is in the awareness of the people that the system in Ohio is broken. And I think there'll be a suit in the very near future to try to save the ballots from the 2004 election.

I mean, Blackwell said it was a model election. What we're saying is a model for what, a third world banana republic?

He said that there wasn't a single act of irregularity. We agree with him. We found tens of thousands.

My favorite story is in Delaware County where we've been fighting these people since the election to look at the records, which should be public record. Blackwell has said that we have to go to the prosecuting attorney's office.

Prior to Blackwell you could go to the board of election and say, "This is a public record under Ohio public record law, in 1.49.43," which I spend hours everyday citing all across the state of Ohio. Now it goes to the prosecuting attorney which, perhaps rightly, treats it like it like a crime was committed, and we look at the records, but not very many of them. They claim it is not reasonable for us to make copies of a lot of these records, but in Delaware County when they unsealed the ballots from election day, we found in one precinct, they want us to believe the last 369 votes were for George Bush. And this was a precinct that was 70-30 or so for Bush. Statistically, it didn't happen. The last 369 people did not vote for George Bush. So we wondered who touched these ballots since they've been sealed.

They told us the following story, which kinds of reminds me of *The Last Picture Show*, the movie and the book:

They said, well, we handled it the same way. It's a Republican county, so the presiding judge brought the ballots in and, as usual, the Boy Scouts came down and helped her deliver them to, "a mentally retarded man" who scraped the chads off the punch cards. Then they ran them through the machine. I'm thinking, how do you depose a "mentally retarded man?" Now we did calculations, because these ballots came in about 8 o'clock and they were posted at midnight. And we figured it up.

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The “mentally retarded man” may be an idiot savant of chad scraping because he would have had to scrape five chads a second for 40 straight hours. So a lot of their stories make no sense whatsoever.

We went down to Clairmount County and they wouldn't let us see the ballots, so I negotiated a deal that one precinct we picked randomly from the 192 or so precincts they have down there, and one of the precincts had come out with a replacement ballot. So we asked the woman pulling it to keep pulling the replacements. We found 38 replacement ballots where somebody had put a replacement punch card ballot in there, and there was only five of these from that precinct lifted, so I asked them, “Why would you replace them?” and she said well the ballots were spoiled. My approach was that they were spoiled because they were voting for Kerry. You don't have 38 straight people come in and make a mistake.

ICONOCLAST: Do you think Ohio will continue to be a swing state in the national elections?

FITRAKIS: The thing is, Ohio is pivotal and will be a swing state in many ways. For one thing, the population is almost precisely reflective of the country, and the country's split down the middle. Right now, as Ohio goes, so goes the nation. What the Bush team, really using Blackwell as the Katherine Harris of the 2004 election, was able to figure out is to have a key man in any state, or a key woman, as a Secretary of State, in states where they have power, so all you need to do if it is a realitively close election is get someone in there to suppress two or three or four percent of the vote in major cities, particularly the minorities and the poor that are voting 80 or 90 percent. Our new slogan is that the race isn't over until the Republican cyber-vote comes in.

ICONOCLAST: In 2006, Ohio voted 71.77 percent in all?

FITRAKIS: Yes.

ICONOCLAST: So those numbers would be skewed?

FITRAKIS: My favorite is that despite record lines in the inner city, in Columbus the voter turnout was the same in the city as it was in 2000 when Gore didn't even contest the election. So here you have the greatest voter registration drive and the

longest lines in the history of Ohio, and the voter turnout is essentially the same. That's because they made people wait from four to seven hours, but you could vote in 15 minutes in a white affluent suburb. Who's going to take four to seven hours? It was even worse at liberal colleges. Some students waited over 11 hours to vote. This was deliberate. That is Karl Rove. Part of it is people don't like to think, but there's a long tradition of gaming elections in the third worlds. I think that which they used to do overtly in the third world like in Central America and around the world, they brought some of the same tactics home. I think that's what they did in Florida and that's what they did in Ohio. But no one really wants to talk about it.

ICONOCLAST: Do you think that the admitted ethics violations of Governor Bob Taft has more to do with the Republicans in Ohio being in disfavor, or is Kenneth Blackwell partly to blame?

FITRAKIS: I think it's a combination of things. Long ago we began to associate the Republicans with plutocracy rule by the rich. Everyone expects that. But we're now getting kleptocracy ruled by thieves. We've got the obvious sitting governor with criminal violations. And you've got Ken Blackwell who is sort of become infamous nationally for using what used to be thought to be Jim Crow tactics from the deep South in 1965. It's the first time, really, in Ohio history where you've got blatant, blatant voter suppression within the inner cities. Also, just like Georgia, now they're going to require voter ID and they're only going to send out one notice, so the next tactic is how to shrink the electorate.

So I think with the corruption of Taft, the blatant corruption of Blackwell and the election process, plus the coingate scandal in the state. If you're taking \$50 million in a secret coin fund, and a Republican operative is taking \$13 million to himself, that money ends up in every elected Republican party statewide official's campaign, including the Bush campaign. That's just old fashioned money laundering and corruption and people are aware of these things.

We're allowing private partisan corporations to secretly count our ballot with proprietary software. That's not done

in any democracy on earth. I say this as a former international election observer. I co-wrote the report after the El Salvador first elections after the death squads and guerrillas came in there. If I went into a polling area and they said a private company was counting the ballots without a paper trail, my report would have been simple. Presumption of fraud. Lack of transparency. What we understand is that a lot of the third-world countries are struggling for democracy. What we require from our state department is infallible technology, it's called a pen and paper... and the whole community and all the political parties, and the media be standing around, with cameras as the ballots are counted.

ICONOCLAST: Do you think President Bush's downturn in ratings is being considered in Ohio as it is in the rest of the nation?

FITRAKIS: It's having a devastating effect. Much like Lyndon Johnson, there's only so many times you can say things are going well in Iraq and the middle east. There were only so many times that Lyndon Johnson could say the boys will be home by Christmas. There's only so many times you can say mission accomplished, we're going to be greeted by sweets and flowers, things are going good.

People have eyes, they watch the news, and Ohio has been economically devastated under the Bush Administration. Between 2000 and 2004, we were 49 out of 50 in new job growth, and up to the year before the election we had lost 323,000 jobs, many of them high-paying jobs.

The only solution in many of the cases is to do what J. Kenneth Blackwell did. He ran a one-issue campaign. Even though gay marriage is illegal under state law in Ohio, he had them amend the constitution to outlaw all forms of domestic relations. So everytime the people realized that we're being economically devastated in our major cities. You know, Cleveland's going to be under 400,000 people. Toledo is down, Cincinnati has lost more people fleeing Cincinnati more than any other city in America. So as our cities are rotting here, in the former rust belt, what they're saying is, “Hey, what about gay marriage?”

ICONOCLAST: To change the subject.

FITRAKIS: Yeah, or divide everyone. The last tactic by Ken Blackwell, the Republicans had to fire an operative to circulate an internet site saying that Rep. Strickland was gay. I mean, that's their notion of a tactic. A good street rumor. And trying to divide the people on irrelevant

issues often based on lies. Blackwell is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Bush White House, and they're grooming him to split off the Black vote. Just like McCain, you spread a good rumor that he's got a mixed-race child with a Black prostitute. The tactics here are just absolutely desperate, and there's a backlash against it. I think the people in Ohio realize that our economy's devastated. Our chief export in Ohio is 18 to 44 year olds who are college educated, well trained, licensed with technical skills.

ICONOCLAST: If elected governor of Ohio, what issues and initiatives would you pursue?

FITRAKIS: Number one, I intend to issue an order as commander in chief of the National Guard prohibiting any Ohio National Guard troops that aren't deployed from serving in Iraq. I think we need a discussion of that issue in particular, that when you invade a country in a so-called pre-emptive strike — I don't believe it meets that standard, I don't think Iraq was a threat to the United States — and then you don't find the weapons of mass destruction and at that point you're violating international law, and you apologize to the United Nations to come in. I think we need to have that debate. The other one tied to that is I want to make sure that Ohio's a Bill of Rights enforcement zone, that we will not cooperate with the Federal government when they're spying on people without warrants without probable cause. Those are the things on the statewide level.

Governor Bob Taft actually voluntarily turned over all the state stats to a wacky program called matrix. So that's one of the things, sort of opposing what I believe are violations of the U.S. Constitution, because when I swear that oath as governor it's to defend against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

We are also going to equalize the educational system here in Ohio that's been declared unconstitutional four times. So we're going to make sure every child gets the same amount of money spent on them, has the same opportunities. I believe the talent is randomly distributed, not just to the white suburban school districts, and that they don't desert children, that they should not be offered education based on whether they are living.

And the environment. My main goal is to get trains as good as Bulgaria here under my government. The infrastructure has been allowed to rot in the heartland. We're going to look toward mass

transit in the major cities to make it more deliverable, more efficient, and to run a rail line through the major cities from Columbus to Cleveland to Cincinnati, and Toledo. To look for alternative energy. Ohio's always been a very innovative state. We'd like to move to wind power, we'd like to move to solar power, and of course, as part of that environment we would like to grow hemp here. Not marijuana, but hemp, which used to be legal and you can't get high off of. We could provide a variety of things. We have the Ohio hempery in Apalachia which does a good job of providing medical fiber products, clothes, and other things. So we're looking towards a state of localized economy here in Ohio and less reliance on large corporations that have often fled and gone to Mexico or China.

ICONOCLAST: I have been told that you are running for the wrong office. That you should be running for President.

FITRAKIS: (laughs)

ICONOCLAST: Would that be a possibility in the future?

FITRAKIS: Well, you know, if the Green Party catches on in some of these ideas, I'd consider running as the Green Party candidate for President. There's a long tradition, particularly with third parties, while they often don't win, most of the innovative ideas can come from people like E.V. Debs, Bob LaFollett, and some of those legendary figures in U.S. history, so, yes, I've considered it.

ICONOCLAST: Anything you want to add?

FITRAKIS: Just remember, the Bushes were homeboys here in Columbus before they lived down in Texas. This is where Kevin Phillips hits it on the nose when he says in his book *American Dynasty* when he calls them four generations of war profiteers. He says Samuel Bush owned Buckeye Steel Castings and were very close friends of the Rockefellers and gave them that contract for Remington Arms that started World War I.

Prescott Bush left here, of course, after a story got written in the newspaper saying that he saved General Pershing by knocking down an incoming shell with a bolo knife. Ohio has long ties to the Bush family and Blackwell is just their latest surrogate, so we're going to fight that and we're going to oppose it. There's a long tradition in Texas for iconoclastic newspapers and those like Ronnie Dugger and Molly Ivins really are heroes to me. I publish the COLUMBUS FREE PRESS, <freepress.org>, and we work in that tradition.



Therapy Sisters



Numerous Booths



Gospel Project



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Peace Festival Honors 100-Year Anniversary Of The Modern Non-Violent Movement

AUSTIN — Sept. 11, 2006 marked 100 years to the day that Mohandas K. Gandhi launched the modern nonviolent movement through his proclamation of Satyagraha in Durban, South Africa. On Sunday, Sept. 10, groups promoting peace and justice dedicated their second annual Austin Peace Festival to 100 years of speaking truth through the work for justice.

City Hall Plaza was the location where over 20 local groups, along with multiple performers, provided entertainment and information to the Austin community regarding issues of peace and social justice. The festival was kicked off with performances by Barbara K and Thom the World Poet, followed by music by Zach Whitney, Fared Shafinury, The Gospel Project, and The Therapy Sisters. Throughout the day, attendees listened to poetry by Genevieve Van Cleve, Erin Livingston and Susan Bright. The day was wrapped up by a powerful musical performance by Carolyn Wonderland.

The goal of the festival was to help link members of the community with local groups promoting peace and justice. Organizers also hoped to provide participants with an alternative to many of the violent messages associated with 9/11. Austin Centers for Peace and Justice Coordinator and APF committee member Lisa Jackson said of the event, "I felt rejuvenated after the festival and feel I can start again with some refreshed positivity."

Mac McKaskle with the Travis County Green Party and festival committee member provided an explanation of why groups decided to put on this festival.

"We consulted with families of the 9-11-01 tragedy last year and they said the best way to commemorate their loved ones was to fight for peace and justice." He goes on to say, "The last century has been called the bloodiest in history, but it also has been marked by the empowering of the world's people by the use of non-violence to work for peace and justice. Of course there is Gandhi in India, the Danish opposition to the Nazi occupation, the workers of Poland overthrowing the Stalinist government, the mothers of Plaza de Mayo working to oppose the Argentine dictatorship, housewives



Code Pink

in Manila leading the overthrow of Marcos, Dr. King in the United States, to name just a few. Let's remember them and empower others today."

Examples of some of the groups providing information at the festival included Texans for Peace, Non-Military Options for Youth, The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. The event was coordinated by the Austin Center for Peace and Justice, the Travis County Green Party, CodePink Austin and Instruments for Peace.

Local CodePink member Debbie Russell handled the sound equipment at the event. She said of the event, "It's absolutely essential to take the time to celebrate our efforts in building peace, and it was appropriate that it occurred on City Hall Plaza since Austin is the only city in Texas to have formally adopted a 'City for Peace' resolution. The event has helped build momentum to move our city officials to take a more pro-active stand against war, like the honorable Rocky Anderson, mayor of Salt Lake City did."

The sponsoring groups



Carolyn Wonderland

plan to continue to hold the event in future years. CodePink local coordinator and APF committee member Susie Kirk said this about the event: "There was amazing energy from the performers and those that came out to table. Everyone was so gracious and giving. It was exactly the feeling we were aiming for. This is our second year to hold this festival and we hope that it will continue to grow each year."




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The McKay Brothers Serve Up Cold Beer and Hot Tamales

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—The music of The McKay Brothers was born in the wild and dusty Texas Hill Country. Just like the title of their second album, *Cold Beer and Hot Tamales*, the McKays make music that is cool, spicy and satisfying. Two of the songs on the disc are in English and Spanish, one of the unique signatures of the McKay Brothers' music. Lloyd Maines produced the album.

The McKay Brothers come by their Texas twang honestly. Noel and Hollin McKay are fifth generation Texans who were born and raised in hills of Bandera County. The music bug bit early and the brothers began playing professionally while still in their teens. They've steadily built up an extensive and loyal fanbase through non-stop touring and have shared the stage with the likes of Willie Nelson, Guy Clark, Charlie Robison and Robert Earl Keen.

Gurf Morlix, known for his work with Lucinda Williams and Slaid Cleaves, produced their self-titled debut album. That album helped raise their profile and led to a feature in the *New York Times*. They also made a fan out of Guy Clark, one of their songwriting heroes and friends, who said, "They are enchanting and amazing."

Cold Beer and Hot Tamales showcases the McKay Brothers'



The McKay Brothers

ers' songwriting skills and honkytonk roots. The album runs the gamut from the rhythm-driving opener "Lock And Key" to the mournful "Warmer Place To Sleep" to the melting romance of "Acompañeme." They also deliver a characteristic dose of humor on "Making License Plates," "Bottle of Fire" and "Silicone Baby." One of the most compelling songs on the disc is "Disappearing Texas," which protests the suburbanization and homogenization of the brother's beloved Hill Country.

Not many bands can segue seamlessly from laugh-out-loud funny to cry-in-your-beer heartbreak. But the McKay Brothers aren't just any band—they're true Texas originals and with *Cold Beer and Hot Tamales* they're ready to export their music well beyond the Lone Star State.

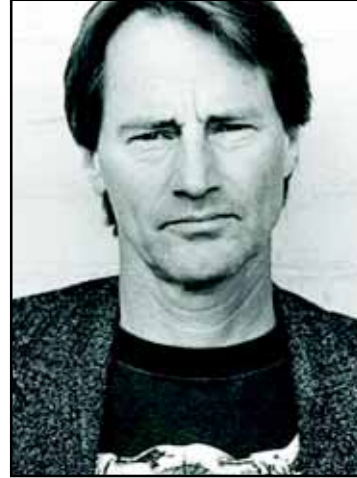
Collection Of Playwright Sam Shepard Obtained By University of Texas Libraries

AUSTIN — An archival collection of materials by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, actor, and author Sam Shepard has been acquired by the University of Texas Libraries.

The archive contains materials from the latter part of Shepard's career as author, playwright and actor, roughly from the late 1970s to the present, and includes manuscripts, film scripts, correspondence, volumes from his personal library, awards and other personal items. The archive will be part of the Fine Arts Library special collections.

Shepard has written more than 40 plays and five screenplays, receiving numerous accolades, including eleven Obie Awards. Among his most notable dramas are "Buried Child" (1979), "La Turista" (1967), "Curse of the Starving Class" (1978) and "True West" (1980).

Though considered one of the preeminent contemporary American playwrights, Shepard is perhaps better known for his various acting roles in such no-



Sam Shepard

table films as "Days of Heaven" (1978), "The Right Stuff" (1983) and "Crimes of the Heart" (1987). For his role as Chuck Yeager in "The Right Stuff," Shepard was nominated for the Best Supporting Actor award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Among the materials in the collection are manuscripts from

such plays as "The Tooth of Crime" (1972) and "The God of Hell" (2004), as well as for the screenplay "Don't Come Knocking" (2005) and his collection of stories "Great Dream of Heaven" (2002). Shepard's film scripts for "Black Hawk Down" (2002) and the upcoming release "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford" (2006) are part of the collection, as is correspondence with German director Wim Wenders. Also included in the archive are eight of Shepard's Obie awards.

As part of the acquisition agreement, Shepard will offer future material to the University of Texas Libraries to augment the collection.

Fine Arts Library staff members have begun processing the materials and the archive is expected to be available for use by students and scholars in summer 2007, the same time that a renovation of the library's reading room will be completed. A collection of items from the archive is on display at the Fine Arts Library.

Baylor Theatre Takes Fresh Approach To Timeless Tale

WACO — When a Peter Jackson fan gets hold of one of Shakespeare's most famous scripts, new life is breathed into an already timeless story. The Baylor University Theatre will bring William

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to the Mabee Theatre Sept. 26 through Oct. 1. Tickets are on sale now for this energetic, innovative production.

Nate Records directs Baylor's production of *Ham-*

let as his Master's thesis project. Records wants to make the somewhat familiar story of *Hamlet* new for the audience.

For tickets or more information, call 254-710-1865.

Panda Ethanol To Build Plant In Sherman County

Cattle Manure Used To Fuel Plant

DALLAS — Panda Ethanol Inc. has announced that it intends to build a 100 million gallon per year ethanol plant in Sherman County, Texas. The facility will annually refine approximately 40 million bushels of corn and milo into a clean-burning, renewable fuel for the nation's transportation needs.

The Sherman plant will generate the steam used in the ethanol manufacturing process by gasifying more than 1 billion pounds of cattle manure a year. Once complete, it will be one of the most fuel efficient ethanol refineries in the nation and equal in size to Panda's Hereford facility which is the largest biomass-fueled ethanol plant in the United States.

Panda's Sherman refinery will be located on a 1,200 acre site three miles northwest of Stratford, Texas. Construction will take approximately 18 months.

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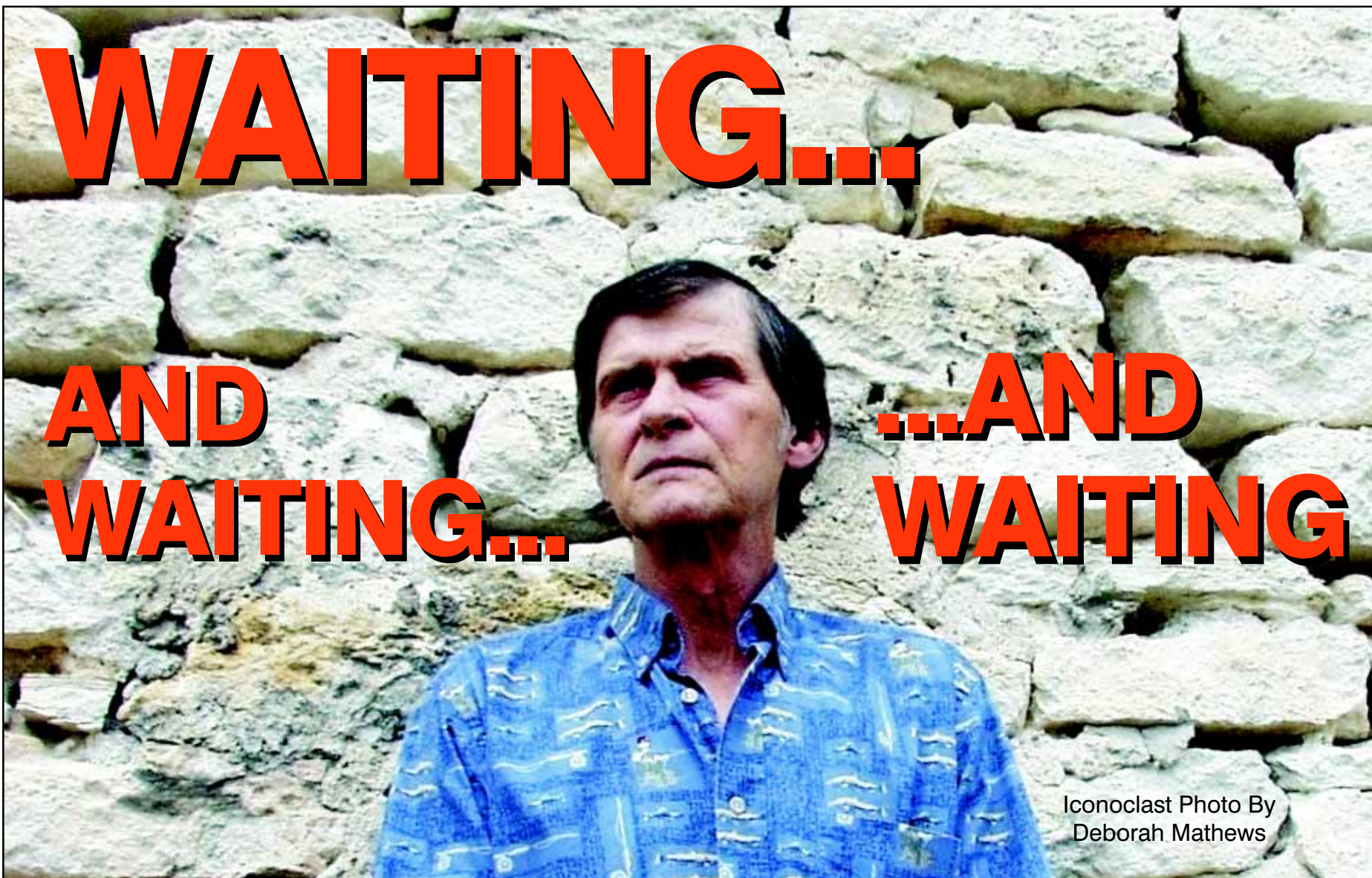
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Iconoclast Photo By
Deborah Mathews

A victim of Agent Orange in Vietnam, Tim Hix waits for the U.S. Government to honor its soldiers with needed medical attention.

Shot By A Gun That Didn't Make Any Noise

BY BONHOMME RICHARD
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

CRAWFORD — How did a kid of 18 wind up on a sleek greyhound of the sea in 1966? How did he become exposed to a deadly toxin without even knowing it until nearly 40 years later?

Ask Tilden "Tim" Hix, a Kansas man that lives near the Western White House at Crawford and works for little more than minimum wage with no health benefits in a metal fabrication plant making custom pickup bumpers at Clifton, Texas.

Though the U.S. Navy's methods were a bit different than the Royal Navy's ancient impressment methods, nevertheless, Mr. Hix was impressed into the Naval service by his local draft board at the direction of President Lyndon B. Johnson in a Wichita Armed Forces examination station, packed off to boot camp at Great Lakes Naval Training Center 40 years ago, in 1965. He wound up serving in the Gearing Class Destroyer

Dennis J. Buckley, DD 808, until her return from a second trip in three successive years to the waters offshore of Vietnam between 1966, 1967, and 1968.

Pick one, Army, Navy, Marines, or Air Force. Hix found a "home and a feeder" in the Navy.

"I knew it would be safer than walking on the ground. I thought it was. It was safer from the bullets...but, like you say, this was a bullet that didn't come out of a gun."

He is one of a few proud sailors and Marines to share that status, that of a civilian impressed into service by the U.S. Department of the Navy.

The indisputable record shows that he served with honor and distinction.

Hix is part of that rare breed, a greyhound sailor, a tin can China hand with numerous crossings of the Pacific on a rolling dance floor that spent a lot of time underwater.

All hail the mighty Dennis J. Buckley!

In that time, Hix saw the Western Pacific from the Gulf of Siam to Yankee Station, an imaginary spot on the water off Haiphong harbor near Hanoi where American aircraft carriers launched jets and unleashed hell from above. Destroyers served as "plane guards," standing by to rescue pilots that were unfortunate enough to miss the flight deck and topple into the ocean.

But it wasn't that duty that bought Hix his present problems. Yankee Station was almost a hundred nautical miles from the shore.

It was the onshore bombardment of "unfriendly villes" in what was known as III Corps, the Mekong Delta area of South Vietnam, where Hix was exposed to the dreaded defoliant, Agent Orange. The Navy called it the "gun line," a line on the chart that showed a minimum depth of navigable fathoms.

Ships like Buckley ran that line firing at will at targets pinpointed by as many as eight co-

ordinates. Her automatic twin 5-inch guns would follow their coordinates through automatic radar-directed fire control systems, no matter which way the ship may have turned.

At the time, the dioxin compound was used to defoliate the jungle vegetation surrounding these villages. Something no one knew at the time, dioxin proved to be very toxic over the long term.

As a result of the defoliation, airborne forward observers could then see precisely where to direct Buckley's five-inch "automatic 38" gunfire, which consisted of air burst high explosive, fragmentation and white phosphorus rounds that left the enemy little comfort or shelter in their aftermath.

The objective was to destroy the capacity to store that most important of commodities produced in the delta region of Vietnam, rice, something produced in huge quantities in the area. A secondary mission was to disrupt the flow of arms and muni-

tions.

How close did Buckley come to the shore?

Within 12 miles, something considered in international law to be "coastal waters"?

Closer.

Within three miles, something considered in international case law to be the coastal waters in terms of pollution cases, toxic spills?

Closer than that.

The truth is that *Buckley* and her sister ships came much closer than that.

Hix says he remembers being able to see people on the banks of the rivers, the beaches, to distinguish buildings and small vessels plying the wide waters of river tributaries, that the vessel often steamed into the brackish waters of the hundreds of estuaries of the Mekong Delta on her firing missions.

On one secret mission, Buckley steamed around an island for several days. The importance of surveying Paracell

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Shot By A Gun That Didn't Make Any Noise

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Island was deemed important enough to be classified. Hix remembers spending several days at the task.

Throughout these experiences, he served in his general quarters role as a "phone talker," one of a crew of men manning a sound-powered communications system that connected the departments of the ship and their battle stations - engineering, weapons, communications, operations - to the Captain on the bridge. Solely powered by the vibrations of the human voice, these phones are not subject to the vagaries of electrical supply. They continue to function when generators, fuses, and wiring fails. In his regular job, Hix was an Interior Communications specialist. He kept the phones and intercoms in Buckley in top repair.

Most phone talkers are from the midwest and mountain states. Their flat, unaffected, pronunciations and lack of regional drawl or unusual regional accents makes their skills at delivering vital information to the bridge very good.

Quite simply, Hix and his shipmates were within yards of the planes spraying Agent Orange on their enemy.

What's more, he can prove he was there. There is no dispute about that. In fact, at least one shipmate that served in *Buckley* when Hix was a member of her crew is receiving full benefits as a veteran one hundred percent disabled through service connection. All of his prescriptions, medical procedures, shoes, dental care and eyeglasses are provided by the VA.

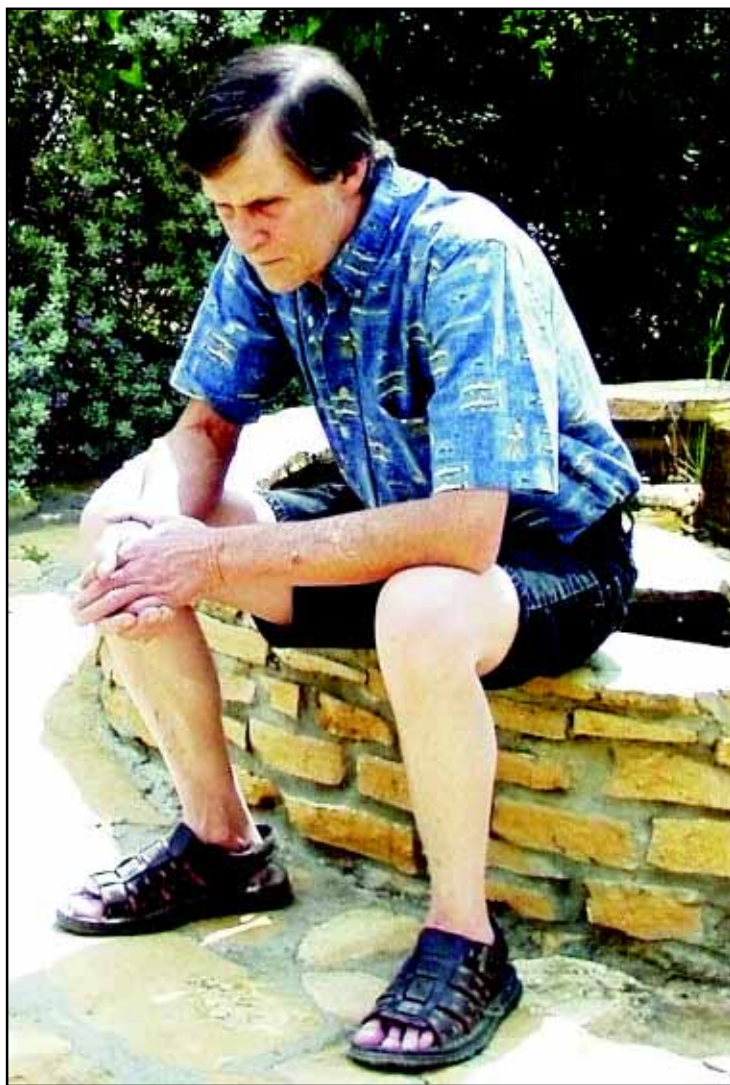
Hix's brother, who also served in *Buckley*, was awarded a similar settlement from the manufacturers of Agent Orange in a class action lawsuit, which class has been closed by the Federal Court.

What is the difference between their claims and Tim Hix's?

They made them before George W. Bush was elected President of the United States.

Because Hix made his claim after the ascension to power of the Bush administration, he has been denied all benefits, as have all other sailors that did not set foot in Vietnam, though the substantive Congressional public law guarantees such benefits to them.

What of the conditions that persisted when she steamed around blasting rounds at the shore and taking underway replenishment of more rounds and powder casings, fuel, gro-



BUSH ADMINISTRATION policies have left Vietnam Vets out in the cold, says Tim Hix, who suffers from the effects of Agent Orange.

— Iconoclast Photo By Deborah Mathews

ceries, spare parts and mail?

She needed "feed water" to supply her twin boiler and turbine engine rooms. Buckley was a Gearing Class destroyer launched in 1944. Capable of top speeds of 30 knots, she was a thirsty consumer of desalinated, condensed sea water produced in evaporators to feed those boil-

ers. Aside from water to drink and with which to cook, that need was a top priority.

Showers and washing skivvies, dungarees and shirts came way down the list.

Buckley's crew often went without fresh laundry and showers for extended periods. It's a fact of life, nothing uncommon

in terms of shipboard routine, especially in small vessels.

Meanwhile, airplanes continued to spray Agent Orange on the jungles surrounding the Buckley's various targets.

The ship was a product of the 40s, a World War II design that had seen service in a number of conflicts since then.

Her namesake lost his life in a skirmish that reads like a sea story from the days of wooden ships and iron men.

Dennis Joseph Buckley was born April 22, 1920, in Holyoke, Mass.. He enlisted in the Navy Sept. 30, 1940. Fireman First Class Buckley was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for displaying exceptional courage in attempting to board and salvage a blockade runner which had been intercepted by his ship *Eberle* (DD-430) on March 10, 1943. The blockade runner's crew planted a booby trap.

Fireman Buckley paid with his life.

Eberle had sailed for South Atlantic patrol, based on Recife, Brazil. When she intercepted the German blockade runner *Karin*, sailors from *Eberle* boarded. The demolition charges set by the Germans exploded, killing half the 14-man boarding party outright. The remaining seven persisted in their heroic efforts to save the *Karin* and obtain information until fire and further explosions forced them to abandon ship. They and 72 prisoners were picked up from the water by *Eberle*.

Dennis J. Buckley (DD-808) was launched Dec. 20, 1944, by Bath Iron Works Corp., Bath, Maine. She was sponsored by Mrs. D.J. Buckley, mother of Fireman First Class Buckley; and was commissioned March 2, 1945, Commander K. C. Walpole in command.

Hix was not injured by an explosion or a bullet. He was not burned or blasted, cut or scalded.

Hix was shot with a gun that didn't make any noise at the time.

Forty years later, Tim Hix is afflicted with prostate cancer and diabetes, two of the numerous terminal illnesses - incurable soft tissue cancers and skin diseases chief among them - deemed presumptive evidence of exposure to Agent Orange. Veterans Administration doctors have performed radical prostate surgery on him, subjected him to enough radiation therapy to leave burns on his lower back and upper buttocks, and are studying the feasibility of prescribing chemotherapy.

The result so far has been that the constant bills Hix receives from the VA have resulted in his bankruptcy.

What of civilian medical benefits he may have earned as a civilian aircraft worker at Cessna and Lear Aircraft in his native Kansas after his service

Continued On Next Page



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Shot By A Gun That Didn't Make Any Noise

From Previous Page

in Vietnam?

He was laid off. New management took over. The jobs moved overseas. He had earned pension benefits working for Lear. When the company was sold to a Canadian corporation, Hix and his fellow workers lost their money.

He receives no benefits from the VA, even though Congress enacted a public law guaranteeing service-connected disability status to all those exposed to Agent Orange in the Republic of Vietnam or its coastal waters. In fact, all those who suffer from these diseases are presumed to have been exposed to the deadly toxin.

The burden of proof that they were not so exposed rests on the government.

But Hix has been billed for surgery, therapy, prescriptions and the like. He also receives no travel pay and is billed for his hospitalizations in the domiciliary facility at the Dallas VA Medical Center while he has taken radiation therapy.

The net effect, at the end of the day, a day with increasingly lengthening shadows for Hix, is that the Bush administration changed the code of federal regulations by moving one comma several places and modifying its adjudication policy manual to exclude sailors and airmen that did not set foot on land in the Republic of Vietnam. This was done unilaterally at the direction of the General Counsel of the Veterans Administration.

The policy was reversed and remanded in mid-August by the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims in *Jonathan L. Haas v. James Nicholson*, a case that is directly on point with the Hix case and many others. Haas served as a boatswain's mate on an ammunition supply ship replenishing supplies of ammo and other items for small ships such as *Buckley*. The ship in which Haas served never anchored or moored in Vietnamese ports because of concerns about sabotage of her explosive cargo.

THE ICONOCLAST: So, Tim, your representatives at Vietnam Veterans of America in Washington say that all the claims of blue water sailors with conditions caused by exposure to Agent Orange are "on hold." Is that because of the reversal of the case of Jonathan L. Haas last month?

HIX: I think one hundred percent, it is.

THE ICONOCLAST: How does your claim compare to Mr. Haas's claim?

HIX: I would say it's exactly the same at Jonathan Haas's, except my initial claim was for cancer, but I added a claim for diabetes.

THE ICONOCLAST: What had you been told by the Board of Veterans Appeals? What was their ruling?

HIX: Their ruling was that they need more evidence, which I have waived my right to introduce any new evidence. I feel that any rational person could make a decision based on the evidence I have given them.

THE ICONOCLAST: Why do you think that your claim has not been addressed?

HIX: I just think they don't want to pay the sailors. I think they want to get out of it. I think that's why they changed the M-21-1 (adjudication) Manual.

THE ICONOCLAST: Have you received any therapy or prescriptions for diabetes?

HIX: Not at this time. They haven't deemed it necessary.

THE ICONOCLAST: Nevertheless, have you been diagnosed?

HIX: Yes.

THE ICONOCLAST: How much does the VA claim that you owe them at this point?

HIX: Right now, it's...I'm not positive, but they take any money I'm supposed to get back on income tax refund goes to the Treasury Department. The bulk of all my surgery and everything was included in the bankruptcy. That went away, so I don't owe it. But it sure as hell messed up my credit.

THE ICONOCLAST: What about your wife's income tax refund?

HIX: We file jointly.

THE ICONOCLAST: What are the VA's reactions when you are unable to pay?

HIX: They just keep sending me bills, adding interest.

THE ICONOCLAST: How much interest do they charge?

HIX: I'm not really sure.

THE ICONOCLAST: How long has your claim been pending?

HIX: Since June of 2002.

THE ICONOCLAST: Have your representatives at Vietnam Veterans of America been able to give you any time frame of when your claim might be addressed?

HIX: At this time, no.

THE ICONOCLAST: Anything you'd like to add?

HIX: I'd like to have a bumper sticker printed. "Vietnam. Served with distinction. Returned with disillusion."

THE ICONOCLAST: Would you consider adding "We were winning when I left"?

(Laughter)

Bush Combative At Press Conference

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A combative President Bush said last Friday during a press conference that he would not send troops to Pakistan to hunt down Osama bin Laden.

"Pakistan is a sovereign nation. In order for us to send thousands of troops into a sovereign nation, we've got to be invited by the government of Pakistan," he said.

He noted, however, that a different tactic will be taken for the U.S. to "stay on the hunt until we bring him to justice, and we're doing it in a smart fashion."

Bush lashed out at critics, some within his own Republican Party, as he fielded questions about rules for interrogating and prosecuting terrorists. The day before, a bill sponsored by Sen. John McCain was passed that would require intelligence officers to abide by the Geneva Convention's ban on "outrages against personal dignity."

He defended his administration's policy, noting that it has yielded important information that has prevented terrorist attacks on United States soil.

"And the reason we need those tools is because the enemy wants to attack us again," he said. There are two vital pieces of legislation in Congress now that I think are necessary to help us win the war on terror.

"The first bill will allow us to use military commissions to try suspected terrorists for war crimes. We need the legislation because the

Supreme Court recently ruled that military commissions must be explicitly authorized by Congress.

"So we're working with Congress. The Supreme Court said, You must work with Congress. We are working with Congress to get a good piece of legislation out.

"The bill I have proposed will ensure that suspected terrorists will receive full and fair trials without revealing to them our nation's sensitive intelligence secrets.

"As soon as Congress acts on this bill, the men our intelligence believed helped orchestrate the 9/11 attacks can face justice.

"The second bill before Congress would modernize our electronic surveillance laws and provide additional authority for the terrorist surveillance program.

"I authorized the National Security Agency to operate this vital program in response to the 9/11 attacks. It allows us to quickly monitor terrorist communications between someone overseas and someone in the United States, and it's helped detect and prevent attacks on our country.

"The principle behind this program is clear.

"When an al-Qaida operative is calling into the United States or out of the country, we need to know who they're calling, why they're calling and what they're planning.

"Both these bills are essential to winning the war on terror."


Bush Changing Mind On Global Warming, Say White House Insiders

WASHINGTON, D.C. — According to White House insiders, President Bush is preparing to change his policy on climate change and the emissions of carbon dioxide. They report that after years of denying the issue of global warming, he is drafting plans to control emissions of

carbond dioxide and boost the use of renewable energy sources.

According to Phil Capp, president of the National Environmental Trust, "The very fact that Bush would reverse his position will liberate many Republicans to vote for meaningful pollution cuts."

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RATING, RUNTIME, REVIEW

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This film follows the heroic survival and rescue of two Port Authority policemen who were trapped in the rubble of the World Trade Center on 9/11 after they went in to help people escape. But it also is a human-interest story about the family life of these individuals and other rescuers involved. The story shows how the best in people rose above the tragic events of that day.

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The Lone Star ICONOCLAST

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor:

Terrorism: Clinton/Bush

In an attempt to counter the fabric of misinformation which, along with fear-mongering will be Bush's and the GOP's attempt to manipulate the mid-term elections, and to correct the misinformation contained in a partisan ABC fake docudrama, "Path to 9/11" a few facts are called for:

In 1996, Clinton proposed \$1.097 billion omnibus anti-terror package only to have the GOP Congress whittle it down to next to nothing. When Clinton tried to ban American companies from doing business with banks laundering al Qaeda money, he was thwarted by the GOP, who called the measures "totalitarian." Clinton reached an agreement with 20 nations to close tax havens used by al Qaeda, but upon entering office, Bush immediately withdrew US participation in that agreement.

According to Roger Cressy, National Security Council senior director for counterterrorism in the period 1999-2001, "Mr. Clinton approved every request made of him by the CIA and the U.S. military involving using force against bin Laden and al-Qaeda"

The outgoing Clinton administration strongly warned the incoming Bush administration that terrorism should be their top priority. On January 25th 2001, only a few days after Bush took office, terrorism czar Richard Clark sent a memo to then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice "We urgently need ... a Principals level review on the al Qida network... al Qida is not some narrow, little terrorist issue..." No meeting was held until Sept. 4, 2001. The FAA received at least 52 warnings of threats against airlines, mentioning Bin Laden, Al Qaeda or both. The administration did nothing.

Additionally, according to Ron Susskind's book "The One Percent Doctrine," not only did Bush receive the Aug. 9th PDB "Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US" but also in August panicked CIA analysts flew to Crawford to intrude on his vacation with face to face alerts. The President was unconcerned. He said "All right, you've covered you're a—es, now," and sent them on their way.

The world backed our inva-

sion of Afghanistan, and Al Qaeda was effectively broken, but Bush let bin Laden go at Tora Bora, and his unjustified invasion of Iraq so angered the rest of the world that Bush became the best recruiting agent bin Laden ever had. al Qaeda expanded to more than 60 countries.

Iraq, which had no terrorists before the invasion is a breeding ground for terrorists now thanks to the incompetence and hubris of Donald Rumsfeld and G.W. Bush.

This is what *Nicholas Przybyla* (involved in the initial invasion of Afghanistan, 2001-2002) had to say about it: I have this on my truck along with what some other Iraq veterans said and say.

"I'm here to stop the war I guess trying to put an end to it and let people know what's going on is total bullshit. I had a top secret clearance and every day we would receive intelligence briefings twice a day, and it came down towards the end of our deployment that we had killed about twenty suspected terrorists, members of the Taliban.

We got about seven hostages onboard and the total deaths of civilian casualties was about three thousand—most of them were children—, and I just don't think that's a good way to fight a war just to blow the shit out of a country, kill a bunch of innocent people, and then charge into another country that has nothing to do with it... the intelligence briefings that we got said that the 13th Marines had

Osama bin Laden and all his buddies cornered in the Tora Bora Mountains, and it was only a matter of time before we uncovered them. After we were relieved, we were relieved by the (Bomb Homer Shard) Amphibious Ready Group. They went in and did the same thing that we did, have him even more cornered and.. *they just let him go.*

All the troops were pulled out and sent to Iraq over bullshit when the real person that was responsible for September 11th was set free. That's a fact... my personal opinion is that I think the Bush administration wanted bin Laden to go free so that they could scare the rest of the country and just keep them scared and move into Iraq and not be questioned about it. I joined the military and now like I said before sometimes I get people that come up to me and say thank you for your contribution thank you for protecting us and I think that's kind of stupid because we weren't protecting them at all.

Our National Guard is gone. America's weaker than it's ever been on a home front attack, and it's completely pointless to go to Iraq and die over something that serves no purpose. It's completely insane.

John Ford

To The Editor:

A few questions keep popping into my head. For instance, what would happen if Saddam were allowed to run in the Iraqi elections and pulled out that old standby of asking the voters if they were better off today than four years ago?

As for the Lebanese, who has been, in that same period, responsible for the deaths of more women, children and non-combatants, Hezbollah or the U.S.?

The Afghani's agricultural economy has blossomed of late after years of suppression by the Taliban. Is this a good thing?

Speaking of economies, ours seems to be a bit out of whack with the market up and real income down. What's with that? Why is it that min. wage pays 42 cents an hour when compared to the buying power of the \$1.25 I made in the '60's?

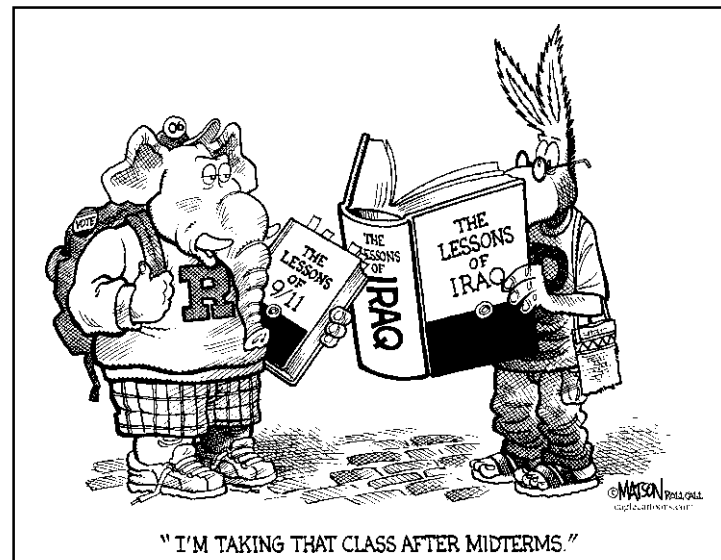
How is it that the populace of the supposedly wealthiest country on the planet is repeatedly told that any programs that would benefit the working man (be it health care, wage, retirement...) are unaffordable and will be as far as the eye can see thanks to the national debt? Is it just me or is debt not a good thing? Really, shouldn't the riches derived from endless war be a boon to America's

Everyman, those who's blood, sweat, and tears make it all possible?

If we accept this condition as the new reality shouldn't we demand a much, much larger slice of the pie? Should we accept this as the new reality, or would a more equitable distribution of the Earth's bounty calm the waters?

And finally, suppose a thorough search was made of the inventory in the basement of the Smithsonian and the crystal ball of Orwell and Eisenhower were to turn up, would we have the moral fortitude to use it? Just wondering.

Alan MacFarland,
Tallmadge, Ohio



Kinky Says Legalize Marijuana

AUSTIN — Kinky Friedman, who is running as an Independent for Texas governor, last week said he favors the legalization of marijuana in order to keep nonviolent users out of prison. He says he would also consider releasing those already in prison for the offense in order to provide more space

for violent criminals.

He said the war on drugs is not working, with drugs more available and cheaper than ever.

Friedman is running against incumbent Republican Gov. Rick Perry, Democrat Chris Bell, Independent Carole Strayhorn, and Libertarian James Werner.

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State Board Turns Math And Science Courses Into Canned Sardines

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "A school Board is an amazing animal. It's the only critter with no brains and seven assholes."

"The State Board of Education tentatively approved a rule implementing the Legislature's mandate that students following the recommended graduation plan earn four credits in both math and science. Students now must earn three credits in those subjects

Texas will be one of the few states with that requirement."

—Jane Elliot

September 15, 2006
Houston Chronicle

The Texas State Board of Idiotics, straight from a night of tweaking on ether deep-fried school lunch mystery meat and Sysco's Black Molly ripple pudding cups, elected to torment Texas school children with moron math and silly science classes stuffed to the blackboards with musicians and English majors.

Never mind that there are more snow plows in Texas than math and science teachers, that the Legislature cut public schools funding and that a future Bob Wills is fiddling a lonesome blues tune somewhere out on the prairie because he doesn't want to grow up to develop better Styrofoam in a windowless, unheated Houston laboratory, hoping someone will put another logarithm on the fire.

"What a good idy mite it bee," burbled Geraldine Miller, the State Broad Chair (a wing-back, unless I miss my *entendre*), "was wee all too bee mathymaticians follorin' the wayes of alchemy, horoscopy and divers other scientificall endeavours."

"Goshamightywhatagrandideaweshouldmakeallthekidstakeallthematmandscienceonearth!" squealed out Vise Chair Don McLeroy as he gave his chair screw another turn.

An amendment was offered to create the two thousand mythical math and science teachers required to require two additional credits to graduate high school in Texas. (The board tried to force me to use numeral 2's in that sentence.)

Millerchair accepted the offering, quickly tying it to the Formica dais and cutting out its heart with a slide rule.

"Ho! Haven't seen one of those since NASA was outsourced to India," blurted out Sandy Kress, Neighbor Bush's five-and-dime education prosecutor, on hand to make sure all the appropriate strings were still attached, especially to the wrists and ankles.

She pointedly pointed out that India and China both have rich math'science reserves, where

Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



Exxon and Haliburton have announced the opening of a major refinery next year that will produce an estimated 10 million barrels of light, sweet techocrats per day.

She dismissed questions about the millions of Chinese and Indi-

ans who are living under BMW's outside the Forbidden Citibank as "irrelevant as a baby floating down the Yangtze."

"It's those gooks who answer more math and science test questions than we that we ought to frighten our children with," she said. "Frankly those other millions don't count, because they can't."

She illustrated her point by beating an oboist into submission with an oil painting of Blaise Paschal.

Of course there was no further room for discussion when bored members pointed out the irrefutable argument for more math and science courses, saying that the state's whole plan didn't add up, and wouldn't hold water, the simplest of chemical compounds.

"Does ye wishe thy whelps to be turnt into the world as bone ignernt as wee folke?" Millermath asked rhetorically, even though the board eliminated the study of rhetoric last year.

So shoehorn your way into those new classes, kiddies; children in China are starving, and they stand on Beijing street corners with hand-lettered cardboard hung around their necks reading, "will do calculus for food."



Editorial

On The Brink Of A RECESSION

"Recession." It's a nasty word you never hear anymore.

Governments adopt an economic model based upon the gross domestic product (GDP) to determine whether a country is in a recession, so with that definition intact, the U.S. is, officially anyway, not in a typical recession.

But ask the owners of the mom and pop shop around the corner, or families where the adults work multiple jobs and still can't make ends meet, or ask Ford Motor Company and you would likely get a different answer.

The overall neo-conning of the economy has shifted tax cuts to the wealthy and put an added strain on those with poor and middle-class incomes. Although gasoline prices have dropped some in recent days, they are still insanely high. Big Oil continues to reap ungodly profits, which are paid for by the masses at the pump, disrupting profits and break-even scenarios for the rest of us.

Economists in China are closely watching the American economy and have predicted that it's only a matter of time when the housing bubble bursts, when personal debt explodes well beyond savings, and fuel prices rise to the point that reality in the form of red ink sets in. They predict that when this happens the United States will suffer a major recession or a borderline depression. Add to this the war in Iraq, funded by American taxpayers far into the future, and just how long will the royal definition of "recession" stay off the books?

Allocating "recession" nowadays is a slippery slope.

It's a matter of "whose recession?"

With the wealth of the country being shifted away from the mainstream populace, many are already in their own personal recessions and do not understand why, if the economy is supposedly so good, they are suffering.

They don't understand why the dollar buys so much less.

They don't understand why households require both spouses to hold down multiple jobs in order to survive, when this was not the case just a few years ago.

They ask, "Who is stealing from us the American dream?"

Actually, it is not a matter of stealing. It is a matter of forfeiting.

This was forfeited when voters became apathetic and too trusting of the neo-conservative New World Order, of Globalization as a model, and of believing that a compulsive liar in the White House would best serve their interests.

This was forfeited when Americans became scared....really scared, and wholeheartedly ditched reverence to the U.S. Constitution by embracing those who would shred it.

It is questionable whether one should voice that a full-blown recession is in our cards. Questionable, since even suggesting it might prompt the populace to adhere to that idea and make it happen. But the indicators are there. And the Fed's inability to enforce tight credit is there.

Try this.

Ask yourself if you are better off financially than you were four years ago.

Recession?

It depends upon who you are.

— W. Leon Smith



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The Price We'll Pay For Countenancing Presidential Omnipotence

The ground rules have again been set for another Holy Crusade that may take generations to resolve in a peaceful manner.

I suppose now that President Bush has limitless power, a.k.a., *the power of God*, the rest of us must cower before his countenance? Voters and Congress permitted the President to circumvent the U.S. Constitution for that omnipotent power, and of course we're all paying for that decision now—with compounded interest.

George Walker Bush is a man who acknowledges the aspect of that potent power yet dismisses several of God's other assets—compassion, humility, truthfulness and kindness to all creatures.

After the tragedies of 9/11 the Bush administration, based on false or misleading intelligence and with the approval of Congress and the American people, began to wage a "Holy War" on terrorism. We did so against the advice and feelings of many world nations. The administration has created havoc in the Middle East at the cost of thousands of Iraqi and American lives, including those of many civilians.

In truth, America, "the land of the free and the brave," has become "the loathsome and the feared." We have scalded the hands of our friends, while perpetrating wars and violent acts against those with whom we disagree. The representative republic of our forefathers lies in shambles, while our leaders plot an assault on other adversaries. *Will the Bush administration ride on to smite the infidels of Iran?* Only time will tell.

The democracy of our forefathers lies in shambles, while our leaders plot an assault on other adversaries. *Will the Bush administration ride on to smite the infidels of Iran?* Only time will tell.

History informs us that the Christian Crusades lasted almost two hundred years, from 1095 until 1291. Pope Urban II was responsible for assisting Emperor Alexus I of Constantinople in launching the first crusade. He made one of several influential speeches calling on the Christian princes in Europe to go on a crusade to "rescue" the Holy Land from the Turks. *Were the Crusades successful?*

According to Williston Walker, et. al., *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons) p. 284, *Viewed in the light of their original purpose, the Crusades were failures. They made no permanent conquests of the*



Texas Commentary

By Peter Stern

Holy Land. They did not retard the advance of Islam. Far from aiding the Eastern Empire, they hastened its disintegration. They also revealed the continuing inability of Latin Christians to understand Greek Christians and they hardened the schism between them. They fostered a harsh in-

tolerance between Muslims and Christians, where before there had been a measure of mutual respect. They were marked, and marred, by a recrudescence of anti-Semitism...."

Apparently, humans have difficulty learning from their history lessons. The ground rules have again been set for another Holy Crusade that may take generations to resolve in a peaceful manner. Already the repercussions of our folly caused by invading Iraq is creating a U.S. nation split and tarnished. Almost completely we are living under a corporate/

military oligarchic government.

Currently our leaders are contemplating another Holy Crusade into Iran. Our Constitution is in jeopardy and our leadership is evolving rapidly—or, according to the "theory" of Intelligent Design, "emerging" into a Despotic Monarchy. Our King George, as did many monarchs before him, has embarked on a tragic path. It will fail most assuredly as did the Crusades many years ago.

American voters would do well to learn their history lessons quickly, before the democratic government they have long held in esteem has gone

the way of the dinosaur. We do not want generations of American children learning about our lost democratic heritage via word-of-mouth from community storytellers.

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: [<pstern@austin.rr.com>](mailto:pstern@austin.rr.com).

The FBI Wants You

Last week, I thought about joining the FBI. This was not just an idle musing of mine. It actually came about because of a direct appeal from the FBI to me.

I was driving in bumper to bumper traffic, and noticed a big ad on the back of an L.A. city bus that said, "Today's FBI. It's for you." Then it said there were job openings, and if I were interested, I should go online to fbijobs.gov. I immediately started to wonder if putting an ad on the back of a bus was the best way for the FBI to find the best people for the job.

This naturally led me to think about the various FBI firings and resignations in recent years. Is it possible that the FBI people who had messed up had joined the Bureau after seeing a similar ad on a bus? Had they joined in the same way that others had responded to ads for teeth whiteners, lawyers for those hurt in motorcycle accidents, and bilingual lessons in computer science?

When I got home, I went to the FBI website. Within a matter of

seconds, a wave of anxiety began to pour over me. It was because I figured that just by logging on, the FBI would know who I was and where I was. (And I knew that if this knowledge ever came to light, the President would explain to the public that it was necessary for the government to know the identity of any curious columnist who happened to check out the website).

I was interested in knowing how successful the bus ad campaign had been in my area. So, I typed in my zip code in the appropriate box, knowing that those simple keystrokes could possibly send the FBI to my house before dinnertime. The next page gave me the address and phone number of my local FBI office. I called them. (By this point, I figured I had nothing to lose. They were probably already going over my high school transcript and my most recent grocery receipts).

Unfortunately, a human didn't answer the phone at the FBI. It was one of those "press one for this, press two for that" menus. I



Modern Times

By Lloyd Garver

pressed the appropriate button and left a message identifying myself and saying that I was interested in learning how successful their back of the bus ad campaign had been. Then I left my home phone number. (I know, I know).

Nobody from the FBI ever called me back. I'm sure they have more important things to do than return phone calls from a guy who wants to write a column about their recruitment methods. So, I went back online and read more about the Bureau.

The more I read, the more interesting it sounded. I started thinking that maybe today's FBI really was "for me." I wasn't tempted to give up writing, but I thought maybe they could use some part-time help. I didn't think I should be out there shooting at people and having them shoot at me, but I thought I could handle an office job. I could be the guy who sticks the pins in the map, or tells the other agents, "Why don't you look for this guy at his mother's house?"

But then I saw something on the website that disappointed me. To be an FBI Special Agent, you have to be at least 23 and not more than 37 years old.

I met the "at least 23" requirement with no sweat, but the "not more than 37" was another story. This didn't seem fair to me. There are plenty of smart, capable people over the age of 37, and maybe the FBI could use some of us with more life experience. (And how did they arrive at the number 37, anyway)?

But I wasn't that upset. That's because I know that those of us over 37 may apply to many other

jobs that don't have age limits. And if this advertising campaign of the FBI's works out, all of us in that age category may soon see an ad on the back of a bus that will read, "Want a good paying job with excellent healthcare benefits? Just apply to IwanttobePresident.com."

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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It's Time We Make The Momentum Work

I'd like to think the worm has finally turned. It would really be nice to have enough faith in the good people who are taxpayer-funded for taking four months or so out of each year to burn sound bites on Capitol Hill finally cut the Bush Regime off at the knees.

I truly hope the attempted reversion of our government into one of *Fuhrerprinzip* at an impasse.

It would seem that King George XLIII is standing upon an uneven slab that's teetering precariously atop the acute pinnacle of a lofty rocky mountain. Picture Wile E. Coyote in those old Road Runner Warner Bros. Cartoons — both you and the Coyote know there's nowhere to go but down, far and fast.

Save for the usual Senate and Congressional Bush Automations, ain't nobody gonna make any effort to catch his sorry ass when it falls, either.

Even with approval ratings lower than whale feces, this White House refuses to perform the will of the American people.

When a Federal Jurist, Anna Diggs Taylor, with more than 45 years of legal expertise denounced the Bush Regime's warrantless wiretapping scheme as illegal, every member of the cabal without a law degree cried out that she was wrong. Despite an order to cease, they're still listening in our conversations and reading private e-mails while awaiting an appellate court decision.

At the personal insistence of King George, the most hardcore of RoveBushCheney lapdogs on the Hill are trying desperately to circumvent the opinion of Judge Taylor. As of this writing they're not getting a lot of support.

After the Supremes decided that the basic Constitutional ban against "cruel and unusual punishment" applied to captured terrorist suspects, as did Common Article III of the Geneva Convention, extending such prisoners proper tribunals, the Regime sought methods of reversal. On "Meet the Press," Dark Lord the Dick Cheney professed to know more about law than Justices Stevens, Souter, Ginsburg, Breyer and Kennedy. In his opinion, they were wrong while the three dissenters — Bush's boy Alito, Scalia and Thomas — were correct.

How much more corrosive could a vice-president get? The guy never spent any time in the military, so he has absolutely no concept of the actual weight of the Geneva Convention, or the



Out Of The Blue

By Jerry Tenuto

perpetual impact ignoring this 57-year-old treaty would have on America's fighting forces. No, the Dick just doesn't give a damn.

Apparently, neither do the three dissenting Supremes, not one of whom was a military man, yet all of whom made a purely political decision.

So, King George proposed a law to override more than 200 years of existing laws, and an international treaty dating back to 1949.

Three of the most high-powered Republicans in the Senate have led the charge against the Bush tribunal bill that would allow what is tantamount to "torture" and "cruel and inhuman punishment" of prisoners — John Warner (VA), John McCain (AZ) and Lindsey Graham (SC). The White House and intelligence leaders want a law that gives them and field operatives enough latitude to do whatever they want without fear of personal legal reprisals, and to hell with how it comes crashing down upon the common soldier.

Former Secretary of State Colin Powell weighed in on the issue, agreeing with the Supremes' majority decision and letting the Regime know it was backing the wrong horse. The Senate rejected the Bush bill.

King George is insistent that the overly abrasive John Bolton be our Nation's ambassador to the United Nations. This is a schlemiel who treats his Harvard- and Yale-educated staff as though they're serfs; a clown among diplomats who publicly expresses his utter disdain for the U.N. Bolton is a tactless clod, and at the U.N. he would be like a bull in a china shop, a fact the Senate was well aware of.

So, His Excellency waited until the lawmakers were away and forced Bolton down the world's throat. It turned out precisely as we had all expected — he managed to piss off the entire body in less than two weeks. Now that the time limit is up on John-boy's unmerited promotion the Senate continues to refuse his nomination. Yet, the King is looking to do another end run to keep him at the U.N.

A bipartisan Senate investigation has concluded that the Re-

gime colluded with intelligence agencies, re-arranged facts and even concocted fables (well, the Persian region has always been known for its wonderful fables) — in short, King George flat out lied to the American people and the entire Planet — to justify an invasion of Iraq. Yet, the RoveBushCheneyRummyRice Fascisti continue to plod along as though we haven't figured out the entire bunch continuously spew manure.

Now, they're attempting to feed us the same garbage wrapped in fear about Iran. Again, the U.N. inspectors are strongly disputing the White House fallacies about Iranians having nuclear weapons.

Read my lips, evildoers in the West Wing: "No new wars!"

It's a relative surety that Herr Oberst Karl Rove, along with Katherine Harris, engineered a "victory" in Florida for George back in 2000. I wish Big Al Gore could have fought it a bit harder, but once the Rehnquist Federalists illegally declared a GOP win he was pretty well stopped dead in his tracks.

There's also no room for debate that Diebold Corporation and Ken Blackwell, in conjunction with Florida, conspired to recapture the White House for Herr Rove in 2004.

With their slick misappropriation of our government, these folks have rammed their version of what our "democratic" way of life should be right down our throats. And they're trying to shove it up the asses of the Muslim portion of the World with guns and grenades.

All the while, Fearless Leader keeps telling us: "These people want to kill your families."

Of course they do — he's killing their families!

Over and over again Dark Lord the Dick "Five Deferment" Cheney reiterates the mantra that if we quit it shows the enemy that Americans "don't have the stomach for the fight" (he used it at least three times last Sunday on "Meet the Press"). Mighty tough talk for an old fart who didn't have the balls for the fight circa 1965 through 1970...

I noticed that the Army has finally put together a new playbook to deal with insurgents. They now realize that the more you throw at these guys, the less you accomplish. The way to counter the insurgency is with smaller, stealthier maneuvering.

D'oh! I said that a long time ago. Observation of the usual Israeli and British ways of dealing with terrorists basically in-

dicates the patient, quiet approach. (Hezbollah suckered Israel into that last "war" mostly to gain a public relations advantage — they've got some good marketing skills.)

The chances of Islamic jihadists coming over here to kill our families en masse' are relatively slim. There are too many of us, and we're spread out way too far and wide. Besides, the vast majority of peace-loving, property-owning Middle Eastern immigrants who have settled here and assimilated into the American way of life would ostracize these schmucks in an instant — they'd have too much to lose.

Were the bulk of our military back home where it belongs we wouldn't have to concern ourselves with terrorists in our streets.

It seems to me there's a real good chance most of the hatred toward America might just dissipate were the current West Wing cabal to go away.

Has it ever occurred to anyone that the only people who actually pinned blame for 9/11 on Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda have been George W. Bush, the Dick Cheney, Donny Rumsfeld, Condoleezza Rice, Herr Karl Rove and the rest of the White House Fascisti? The FBI has never added it to the list of crimes on Osama's wanted poster. They've always been assumed to be the culprits because we've never been offered anyone else as the evildoers.

That leaves those in control of the government, at the highest

levels, who needed an excuse to start a war.

Not to mention a way to demonize the Democrats and Liberals.

More often than not, when the case is cold the perpetrator's probably hiding in plain sight — shouting the loudest while pointing a finger at somebody else.

It's time to set the record straight, and move as many of those Republicans out of their jobs in Washington, D.C. as possible. Here in Illinois we can knock out GOP Congressional Representatives in the 6th District with injured Iraq veteran Tammy Duckworth; John Pavich in the 11th District; and in the 15th my good friend, Dr. David Gill.

There are a lot more where they came from. The momentum is with us across the Nation — be sure to vote.

If for no other reason than the memory of Ann Richards, the first major officeholder to fall victim to Rovian sidwinder tactics.

Shalom, Y'all...

(Jerry Tenuto is an erstwhile Philosopher and sometime Educator. A veteran with seven years of service in the U.S. Army, he holds a BS and MA in Communications from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Depending upon your taste in political stew, you can either blame or thank Jerry for his weekly "Out Of The Blue" feature in THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST. Visit his blog BLUE STATE VIEW at illinoiscentral.blogspot.com)

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End Of The Road For 'King Of The Road'

NBC gave Roger Miller, the hottest solo act in show business, an hour a week of prime-time television on Sept. 12, 1966.

The Depression baby was still in diapers when his father died in his twenties from spinal meningitis. Miller's mother passed out her three sons like door prizes, one each to a trio of brothers, and disappeared from her children's lives.

That was why Roger Dean Miller grew up on a farm in western Oklahoma instead of his birthplace, Fort Worth. He never felt at home with his adoptive family, which treated him like an extra pair of cotton-picking hands.

The lonely youngster's only friend was Sheb Wooley, a local lad 15 years his senior and a cousin by marriage. Wooley, best known for the novelty hit "Purple People Eater," taught the boy how to play the guitar and bought him his first fiddle.

Miller ran away from the unhappy home the summer before his senior year of high school. Before long he was behind bars, arrested for stealing a guitar. Given the choice of jail or the army, he picked military service.

The day he was discharged, Miller caught a bus for the capital of country music. The ex-soldier found a job as bellhop in a Nashville hotel. Anyone trapped in the elevator with him instantly became a captive audience for his latest lyrics.

Miller eventually got his foot in the door as a fiddler for Minnie Pearl's road band. Soon after that, he met George Jones at a radio station, and the established star graciously listened to several of his creations. The fellow Texan liked what he heard and arranged an audition for Miller with Mercury-Starday Records.

The music executives were impressed enough to schedule a recording session in Houston. On the car ride to Texas, Jones and Miller collaborated on a number of songs, including "Tall, Tall Trees," which Jones cut in the spring of 1957.

Married and with a baby on the way, Miller reluctantly decided to put his dream on hold. But even in Amarillo, where he worked as a fireman, destiny tracked him down. In less than a year, Ray Price hired him as tour singer for the Cherokee Cowboys.

Back in Nashville, Miller wrote "Invitation to the Blues" for Price, which shot up to No. 3 on the country-music chart. In short order he turned out Top Ten hits for Ernest Tubbs, Faron Young, and Jim Reeves.

But as the 1950s drew to a close, the successful songwriter was far from satisfied. He wanted to perform his own material, and RCA agreed to help him to do exactly

This Week In Texas History

By Bartee Haile



that.

However, except for "When Two Worlds Collide," No. 6 in 1961, the Top Ten was off-limits for Miller. RCA dropped him in late 1963, about the same time as his marriage self-destructed.

Miller took the setback in stride because he already had taken a different career path. — television. A guest appearance on the "Tonight Show," courtesy of substitute host Jimmy Dean, had left millions of viewers in stitches. America, it seemed, could not get enough of his off-beat sense of humor.

Miller needed cash in a hurry in order to move to California, and a pop-music subsidiary of Mercury Records answered his prayers. Smash Records offered him \$100 a song for 15 cuts to be recorded

in two back-to-back sessions.

That historic songfest on Jan. 10-11, 1964, produced "Dang Me," written in four minutes in an Arizona hotel room, and "Chug-a-Lug." Within six months, the former conquered both the pop and country charts, and the latter repeated the unusual feat that fall.

On Nov. 3, 1964, Miller recorded his signature classic. "King of the Road" was released in early 1965 and took the music world by storm, staying atop the country chart for five weeks and peaking at No. 4 on the pop list. By May it had sold a million copies.

The previous month, Miller won five Grammys, the musical equivalent of the Oscar. He proved he was no flash-in-the-pan by adding six more in 1965 for a career total of 11.

In September 1966, Miller's postponed wish came true with a variety show of his own on network television. But he could not get the hang of the small-screen format, and NBC canceled "The Roger Miller Show" after 13 weeks.

A fresh challenge brought Miller out of semi-retirement in the early 1980s. A college professor talked him into writing the score for a musical based on the Mark Twain character Huckle-



Roger Miller

berry Finn.

"Big River" was, according an admiring critic, Miller's "crowning achievement." The Tony he received for best score was the first ever awarded to a country-music artist.

While on a comeback tour in 1991, Miller was diagnosed with lung cancer. He put up a good-natured fight but succumbed to the disease the following October.

Before his premature death at

the age of 56, Roger Miller said he did not care how he was remembered. "I just don't want to be forgotten." With so many devoted fans, there is no danger of that ever happening.

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Nowadays, The Womb Is No Place For Slackers

Parents used to be satisfied with sonogram images of their child developing in the womb, even though, for all we knew, we were actually watching video footage of a school of mackerel on a depth finder.

"And if you look closely, you can see your baby ... right ... about ... whoops! It's gone. Something must've scared it."

The doctor would then print copies of these images, which we carried in our wallets to share with family, friends, and anyone unfortunate enough to make brief eye contact. At the end of nine months, the only real expectation any of us had for our child was that they come out headfirst. Laughably, we actually felt it was enough for them to grow from a microscopic egg into a full-fledged human child within nine months!

Those babies, of course, were total slackers.

Thankfully, today's fetuses are on the fast track to success with the help of new "Prenatal Education" Systems. These products are specifically designed to "maximize" a child's time in the womb — time which, until now, was frittered away on eating, growing, and using Mom's bladder for step aerobics. The philosophy behind this new trend is best summed up by the makers of the BabyPlus prenatal educational system,



Life Is A Funny Place

By Ned Hickson

Siuslaw News

whose official marketing slogan is: You're never too young to learn. In fact, you don't even have to be born.

As a parent who learned of this opportunity much too late, I say why even TAKE THE RISK of stunting your child's intellectual capacity by wasting valuable time and waiting until you're actually pregnant? I suggest you start reading a thesaurus to your ovaries right now. Think of the pride you'll feel when your child emerges from the womb and, with full command of the English language, announces to everyone: Slap my behind and I'll sue you.

The above scenario may be an exaggeration. But it illustrates an important point, which is that our entire judicial system could eventually collapse under the weight of frivolous lawsuits brought on by talking babies.

It's not that there aren't obvious benefits to exposing your child to sounds while it's still in the womb. Like many parents, I too placed headphones on my sleeping wife's abdomen to see if our baby re-

acted to Pink Floyd. I feel the exposure broadened his musical appreciation, even though my wife still blames me for causing our son to cover his ears and inadvertently prolong her pregnancy for an extra week. However, accidentally frightening your unborn child with rock music is one thing. Enrolling them in a 16-week "Prenatal University" program is another.

This program, which was developed by a California-based obstetrician, promises to intellectually enrich fetuses using a special microphone and strict conversational regimen aimed at stimulating the developing brain.

I don't know how long this program has been available, but, from what I can see, so far it hasn't had much of an effect on California.

The truth is, at the rate my 11-year-old daughter is learning, she's still going to be smarter than I am by the time she's 12.

The bottom line is that I'm not sure how smart our children really need to be before they come into the world.

Maybe there's a reason the umbilical cord doesn't come with an intercom system?

(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)

Bush Threatens To Halt CIA Interrogation Program

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Bush has issued a threat to the Senate.

On Saturday, he said that he will close down the CIA interrogation program that he credited with thwarting terrorist attacks if the Senate passes a proposal regulating detention of enemy combatants. Legislation approved by a Senate panel last week to conform U.S. practices with the Geneva Conventions

has prompted Bush to cry foul.

"The professionals will not step up unless there's clarity in the law," Bush said. "So Congress has got a decision to make: Do you want the program to go forward or not? I strongly recommend that this program go forward in order for us to be able to protect America."

Several noteworthy Republicans have rejected the Bush proposition claiming that it

would set an example to other countries to utilize less respect for basic human rights in their interpretations of the Geneva Conventions. Sen. John McCain, a former POW himself, said in a written statement, "This puts our military personnel and others directly at risk in this and future wars."

Bush is pressing for legislation endorsing his leadership against terrorism, including

warrantless surveillance of overseas telephone calls, military commissions to try enemy combatants and expansive rules permitting tough interrogations.

Key debate centers around how Geneva Conventions should apply to U.S. intelligence officers, who captured, held and questioned terrorism suspects in secret overseas CIA prisons for years until the last 14 detainees were transferred recently into

military custody at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

A recent Supreme Court ruling held that U.S. detainees fall under the Geneva Conventions, which require that wartime captives be "treated humanely" and bans "outrages upon personal dignity."

Former secretary of state Colin L. Powell wrote in a letter last week that reinterpreting the Geneva Conventions would encourage other countries to "doubt the moral basis of our fight against terrorism," which Bush called "flawed logic." He accused Powell of equating U.S. tactics with those of terrorists, even though Powell's letter made no such comparison. "It's unacceptable to think that there's any kind of comparison between the behavior of the United States of America and the action of Islamic extremists who kill innocent women and children," Bush said.

Medicare Rate Hike Planned, Says Bush

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Bush Administration announced last week that Medicare premiums will be going up again, and could carry a new monthly premium in which most elderly and disabled people on Medicare

could see their premiums rise to \$93.50 a month, a 5.6 percent increase.

Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) who is challenging 12-term Republican Rep. Nancy Johnson has warned that unless Democrats win, Medicare premiums

will continue to rise. He predicted that the proposed new tax on seniors "will affect millions of Americans, and thousands of people in Connecticut."

"My opponent, Nancy Johnson, deserves part of the

blame," said Murphy. "She wrote the confusing Medicare law in 2003. She is also one of many Republicans who opposes allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices — a Democratic idea, and more importantly, a good idea."

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