

CRAWFORD, TEXAS

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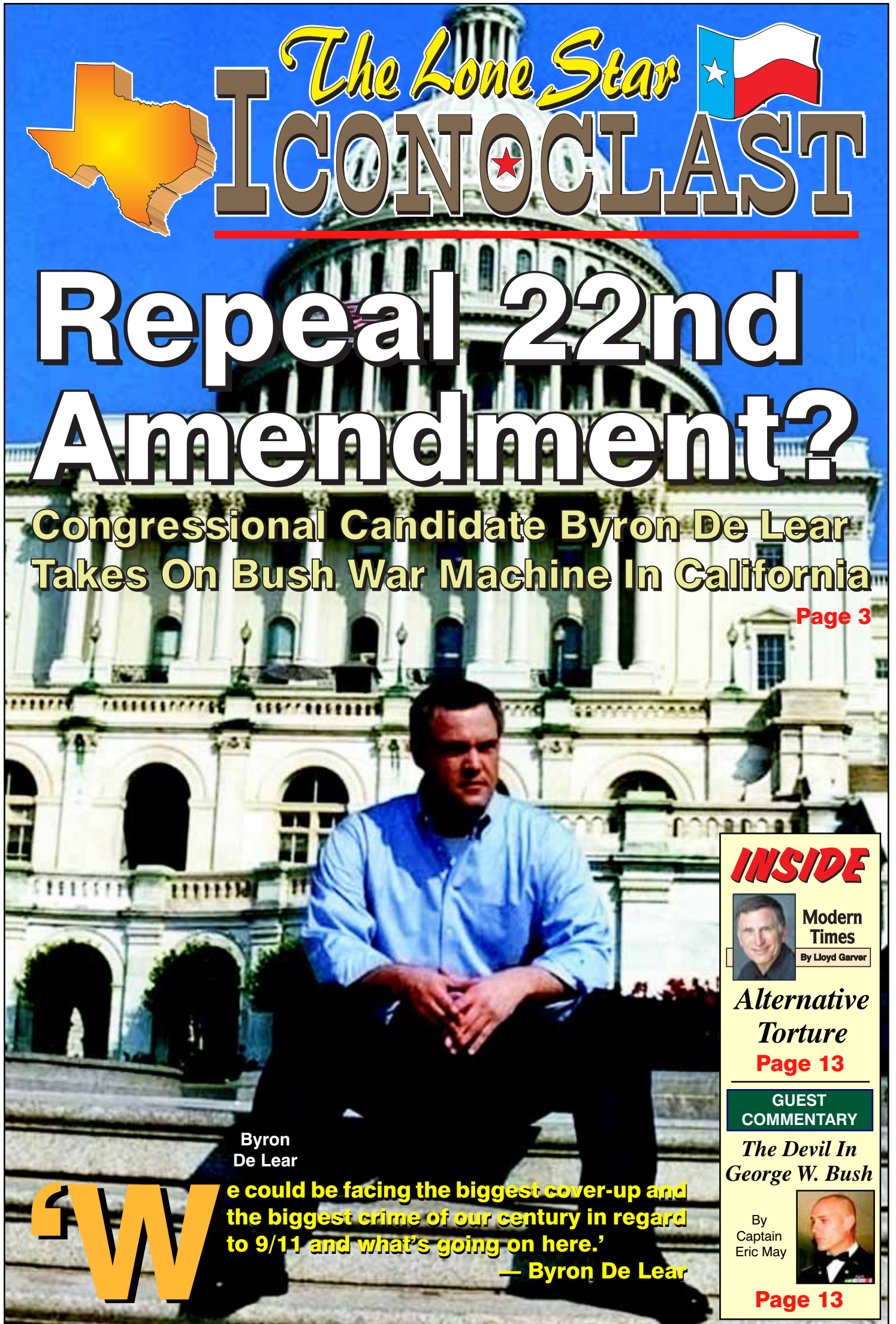
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# Hazardous Liquid Spill Causes Evacuations In Crawford

CRAWFORD — A train derailment that caused hazardous liquid to spill in Crawford led to the temporary evacuation of roughly half the city's popula-

tion last Tuesday.

The 300-plus of the 700 residents returned to their homes by 10 p.m. — four hours after the derailment occurred. No inju-

ries were reported, according to the railway's spokesperson.

At about 6:20 p.m., 23 cars of a southbound Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad freight

train jumped the track.

An initial report stated that the chemical was a vinyl acetate, a corrosive chemical used to manufacture other industrial

chemicals in paints, glues, and plastics.

However, in a later report, railroad officials said that the liquid was ethanalamine, a chemical found in herbicides, cosmetics, and textiles.

Regional hazardous-materials teams contained the spill, and through the clean-up process, the air quality was monitored.

Crawford residents have become used to disruptions to their smalltown life-styles in the years since President George W. Bush purchased on his nearby vacation ranch.

The president was not vacationing there when the accident happened.

Joe Faust, spokesman for BNSF Railway, said that corporate investigators were still studying the cause of the derailment Wednesday.

The crash site was also examined by state and federal environmental authorities.

## 'Iconoclast' Hard Copy To Go Monthly

CRAWFORD — Beginning soon, THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST, which began publication in the winter of 2000, will alter the frequency of its hard copy (print edition) to monthly, while at the same time expanding material of its online edition.

According to publisher W. Leon Smith, "More and more readers are going online to read THE ICONOCLAST, while fewer are reading the print edition, which has prompted this change. After analyzing our product and our reader-

ship, it is our feeling that the wave of the future on publications such as THE ICONOCLAST is with the Internet."

Smith explained that many readers who subscribe to the print edition also read the paper online, "because they don't have to wait sometimes two or three weeks to receive the hard copy in the mail. Once we post the latest edition online, it's available immediately," he said.

"We still want to maintain a hard copy presence, and there are some items that can perhaps best be handled with ac-

tual paper in hand," he said, "so we plan to revamp the content of the print edition, while at the same time increasing material to be consumed online. Too, this allows us to shift more attention to a product people will be able to access sooner."

The subscription price of THE ICONOCLAST print edition will be decreased to accommodate 12 issues a year while some content on the online edition will become fee-based to provide revenue to help pay expenses. Current subscribers of the print edition will

have their subscriptions extended in time to make up the difference in number of copies received, unless they request a partial refund.

"We look forward to providing additional postings, perhaps daily," said Smith, "which should make for a fresher product."

The newspaper's online edition can be accessed at <[www.lonestaricon.com](http://www.lonestaricon.com)>.

Smith noted that next week's ICONOCLAST will be the first monthly edition, for the month of October.

# Venezuelan President Refers To Bush As 'Devil' At U.N.

UNITED NATIONS — The president of Venezuela referred to the president of the United States as a "devil" and the U.S. as an "empire" during a speech before the United Nations General Assembly last Wednesday.

"The devil came here yesterday," Venezuela's Hugo Chavez said, referring to George W. Bush's speech on Tuesday. "He came here talking as if he were the owner of the world."

President Chavez added that he believed President Bush supported "a false democracy of the elite." He also suggested that the U.N. representatives consider reading a book by American leftist dissident Noam Chomsky called "Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance."

"The American empire is doing all it can to consolidate its hegemonistic system of domina-

tion, and we cannot allow them to do that," said Chavez. "We cannot allow world dictatorship to be consolidated."

Chavez continued called the 60-year-old U.N. system "worthless" because of the U.S. government's influence over it — a criticism echoed by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's speech to the assembly late on Tuesday.

"As long as the UN Security Council is unable to act on behalf of the entire international community in a transparent, just and democratic manner, it will neither be legitimate nor effective," Ahmadinejad said in a speech hours before Bush spoke.

Ahmadinejad also defended the nuclear energy aspirations of his country as peaceful. Iran is a member of the U.N.'s nuclear energy watchdog group, the International Atomic Energy

Agency (IAEA). Iran has enriched only 3.6 percent of its uranium-235, according to IAEA. Weapons-grade uranium must be enriched to contain at least 90 percent uranium-235.

In his speech Tuesday, President Bush defended himself, saying his Middle East policies were effective in marginalizing

terrorists and supporting democracy.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai said in his speech to the U.N. Wednesday that military attacks alone would not stop terrorists operating in his country. He also called for more international aid for Afghan farmers to curb to drug trade.

The presidents of Pakistan,

Afghanistan, and the United States are to meet on Sept. 27 to talk about how the three countries can work together, the White House said late last week.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and Afghan President Karzai have disagreed on how each country is dealing with Taliban militants on their shared border.

## U.S. Billionaires Pledge \$50 Million To Nuclear Reserves

VIENNA — U.S. billionaires Ted Turner and Warren Buffet have pledged \$50 million for the creation of an alternative reserve of enriched uranium for use by the international community.

The reserve itself is intended to prevent individual countries from operating their own enrichment processes which could fall into militaristic hands.

The Vienna-based nuclear

watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), is to run the proposed reserve.

The billionaires' donation depends on the agency's ability to attain \$100 million in credit or in low-enriched uranium from member states.

IAEA member countries have expressed support in the nuclear reserve, but say that the nuclear fuel market will still be controlled

by dominant powers.

Argentina, Australia and South Africa have plans to start their own uranium production. Iran has already done so to the chagrin of the United States and Israel.

Former U.S. senator and current head of the Nuclear Threat Initiative Sam Nunn said the reserve would be an important tool to increase global security from nuclear weapons.



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# Repeal The 22nd Amendment?

## Congressional Candidate Byron De Lear Takes On Bush War Machine In California

By W. LEON SMITH  
ICONOCLAST EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

STUDIO CITY, Calif. — As the November general election rolls near, some perplexed voters are attempting to ascertain the difference between Democrats and Republicans, especially in districts where the lines between the two are becoming blurred.

In Southern California, incumbent U.S. Rep. Howard Berman (D) has adopted much of the neoconservative policy that even some Republicans have come out against. Here, some deem Berman the Lieberman of the West.

According to the Green Party candidate for the 28th Congressional District of Southern California, Byron De Lear, his Democratic opponent has distanced himself from progressives by voting with Bush to block a timetable for troop withdrawal from Iraq, and even more telling, in 2005 co-sponsored legislation to repeal the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, which sets term limits on the presidency.

De Lear wants the Green Party to be represented in Congress — to clean up the problems deposited by unaccountable office holders of the two major parties.

“Never has a philosophy of a country shifted so radically as it has under George Bush who has championed the use of torture, secrecy, and military pre-emption. With the potential threat of nuclear war facing Americans today, a new voice of tempered reason is needed,” said De Lear, the son of an opera singer father and concert pianist mother who in 2004 quit his job in production for 20th Century Fox and founded Global Peace Solution, an organization committed to brokering peace resolutions throughout the Middle East.

De Lear’s television talk show, Global Peace Network, has been broadcast via satellite throughout North America, Europe, and the Middle East. Now, De Lear has shifted his focus to ending the war in Iraq, invigorating the American economy, and taking a “full court press” approach to tackling the ill effects of global warming.

De Lear says that the United States is headed down a path of destruction, but that the upcom-

ing mid-term elections can make a difference.

“As we move forward into the 21st century and embrace a newfound ability to foster cooperation with our global community in ways and means never seen before, a great many people around the world are talking transformation and change, making human rights, dignity and humanitarian ideals the primacy of good governance. It is imperative for America to take part in this change. On the other hand, George Bush is trying to set up an Imperial Presidency with unconstitutional actions such as unwarranted wiretapping of Americans, devious signing statements, and justifying torture. My opponent, Rep. Howard Berman, not only

crats down here. You’re well aware that Howard Berman has shown himself to be a real Bush supporter and supporting his agenda in the Middle East and voting to repeal the 22nd amendment to the Constitution, which would, of course, create a bit of an imperial presidency.

ICONOCLAST: I’m sure it would.

DE LEAR: Just inexplicable actions. He needs to be held accountable for them.

ICONOCLAST: I’ve worked up a list of questions. Would you like to give them a shot?

DE LEAR: Sure.

ICONOCLAST: Most of your campaign literature focuses on your battle with Democratic incumbent Howard Berman for the 28th California Congress-

**“Why shouldn’t our votes be counted as religiously as the I.R.S. counts our tax dollars?”**

— Byron De Lear

marches in lockstep with Bush’s war in Iraq, but has even co-sponsored legislation (H.J. RES 25) last year to repeal the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution removing term limits from the White House. It is time for the people to stand up and stop the dismantling of core American values before the coup is complete. We must act.”

De Lear agrees with the wisdom of retired military leaders John Murtha and John Kerry and calls for a responsible, phased withdrawal from Iraq. He understands that the Iraqi people cannot stand up until the U.S. military stands down. He adds, “While Americans have called for Congress to hold the Bush Administration accountable for crimes and abuses of power, Howard Berman has been silent.”

In an interview with ICONOCLAST publisher W. Leon Smith, De Lear explains why the federal government needs to be held accountable:

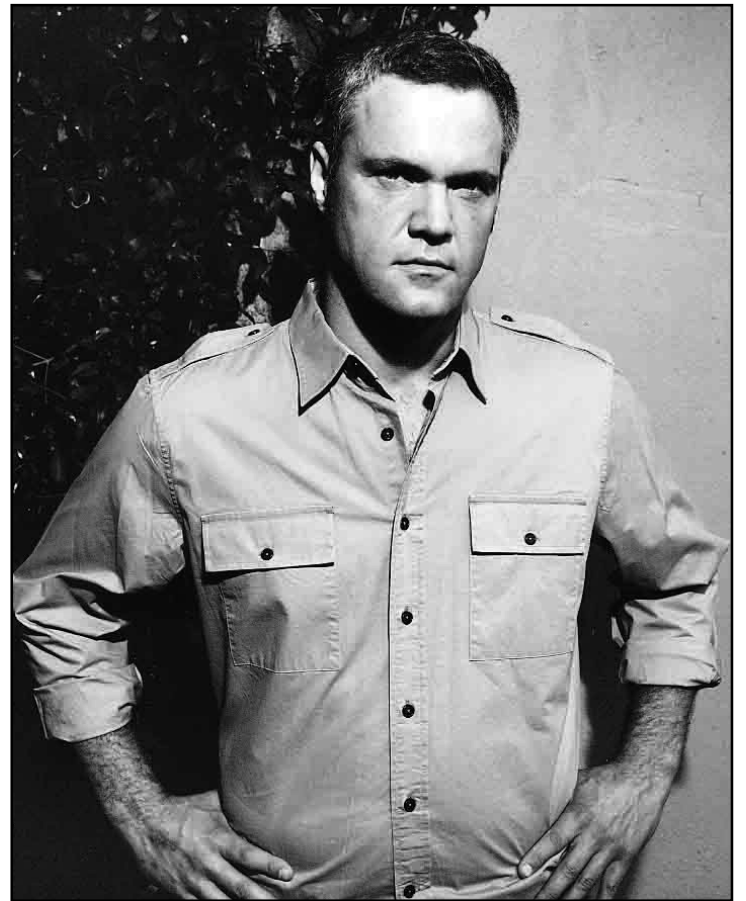
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ICONOCLAST: I’ve been reading a lot of your campaign literature and it looks very exciting.

DE LEAR: We’re running a real viable, green-blooded campaign and we’re working with a ton of the progressive Demo-

crats here. You describe him as the ‘Lieberman of the House.’ Do you feel that he is aligning himself with the President in order to stave off votes going to the Republican, Stanley Kesselman, in this race, or has he indeed moved into the neo-con camp?

DE LEAR: Well, in this district here in Southern California, the 28th Congressional District, it winds up voting about 75 percent of the time Democrat. I would consider him not necessarily to triangulate, if you will, with Stanley Kesselman. I think that Howard Berman has a personal pro-war agenda and I think he is forwarding the neo-con agenda in the Middle East and this is transparent in his voting record and vote after vote in regard to the over-militarized unilateralism that is being expressed in the Middle East. He has shown himself to be sitting where Lieberman was sitting, right next to Bush. Indeed, I remember hearing, recently, that there was an event in Washington D.C. I forget what the particular event was, but it was a Republican sponsored event and Berman and Lieberman were the only two Democrats at the event.

ICONOCLAST: Why do you



Byron De Lear

think he would advocate the abolition of the 22nd Amendment?

DE LEAR: This is a truly inexplicable event for him to want to repeal the 22nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The 22nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, of course, is the term limits on the White House. I think that Howard has a sense that this kind of an authoritarian or totalitarian expression out of the Executive Branch is tolerable. I consider this to be directly antithetical to progressive ideology. I think term limits is a necessary component, especially when you’re talking about the Commander-in-Chief of this nation.

ICONOCLAST: The words “progressive” and “Democrat” used to be generally regarded as somewhat synonymous, but we are hearing more and more how many Democrats are abandoning that descriptive term. Do you feel that the Green Party is in some ways expressing the values that the Democratic Party used to espouse?

DE LEAR: Yes I do. Yes I do. And I think that it really comes down to the fact that as Green Party candidates we do not take money from corporations. Now I take it even one step further. I identify with the Latin definition of the word corporation, *corpus*, meaning body. So I did not take

money from 527 tax. I did not take money from unions. And I do not take money from multinational conglomerates. But, increasingly, we’ve seen how the Democratic leadership is as just as corporate handled as the Republican leadership. Now, I consider this to be the preeminent issue for our nation to contend with. It is the compromising and polluting influence of big money in our corridors of power.

Recently there was an article that talked about how the money on K street — you’re obviously familiar with the Jack Abramoff scandal, how he had these Republican operatives going to Indian tribes and pulling money out of the Indian tribes in order to finance the Republican agenda. Well, I read an article recently that the money now is shifting on K street. The money now is not going behind Republican candidates, but rather, in anticipation of a Democratic success in the midterm elections. The money now has shifted to the other side of the aisle. We make the argument at Green, and I make the argument as a real progressive, that America should not have a K street.

ICONOCLAST: In the Green Party rebuttal to the 2006 State of the Union Address, you

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pointed to a need for accountability. You also went into economics, saying that the money spent in Iraq could have gone to guarantee Social Security and provide universal health care, and you blame Democrats for endorsing the war. Can you explain this further?

DE LEAR: I think that you consider the amount of money that is being spent in Iraq, it's between \$250 million a day to half a billion a day, depending on estimate you use. With half a billion dollars a day spent on a completely dysfunctional and non-sustainable policy, we are truly shortchanging the people here at home. The United State is the only industrialized nation that doesn't have universal health care and yet we spend twice as much on universal health care than any other nation. And, that's obviously getting back to the stranglehold that the pharmaceutical and medical industries have upon our political structure. So, we need to break that strangle hold and I consider this to be a trans-partisan issue and most Americans are aware that corruption has been institutionalized.

Now, in the case of the Iraq war, we've got a lot of big corporations that make money off of that war. In fact, the corporation that Dick Cheney used to be the CEO of, right, Haliburton. These are very well known concepts, but the idea is that instead of just complaining about it, and railing against it, we actually need a plan to sever those fiscal appendages that have attached themselves to our political system. A legislative, incremental step that gets us towards separation of buck and state — is what I like to call it — an incremental legislative step would be the clean money effort, which has come on-line in Maine, a blue state, and in Arizona, a red state.

So, you have this trans-partisan aspect where clean money has come on-line in Maine and in Arizona and in those states, 60 percent more women run for office; 40 percent more minorities run for office. It has completely shown itself to be a contribution to a reinvigoration of our democratic structures. What clean money provides for is public financing of campaigns. You don't have to go to corporations to get your money, but rather, you get it from the government because you've gone out and gotten like \$5 donations from like 2,500 people that you come to and they write



Green Party's Byron De Lear says Democrat is in league with GOP.

\$5 checks for you. What it does, the effect, is that it reattaches the politicians directly to the people.

ICONOCLAST: In Texas, the middle and lower income families are suffering financially, but we never hear the word recession anymore. According to our government, the economy is booming. There seems to be some sort of disconnect between the classes. What is the economic climate in California?

DE LEAR: Well, you hit it right on the head, Leon. It's a family feud is what's going on. And, outsourcing is a perfect example of that. They'll talk about the economy booming, but whose economy are they talking about? They're not talking about the middle and lower income wage earners, are they? They're talking about the fact that in the 80s, I believe, the ratio between a CEO and an average worker in a corporation was something like 40 or 50 to one. Now it's upwards of 600 to one, that a CEO is making 600 times what the average worker for that corporation is making.

You have Wal-Mart, who doesn't let the workers unionize there and 60 percent of every single American walks through Wal-Mart once a week. Seventy percent of the products in Wal-Mart are made in China by questionable labor practices, so we're being forced to subscribe to a system of consumerism that is making us buy products that are made by virtual indentured servants. This is something that we need to face. We need to face the music of this.

I mean, in California, for example, Howard Berman, my opponent, was a strong endorser of NAFTA. NAFTA has been an unmitigated tragedy for this na-

tion. California has lost more jobs to NAFTA than any other state in the union. And in addition to that, it put two million Mexican farm workers out of work, which has completely exacerbated the immigration situation. So, we have these trade agreements that are written by financial ministers or the folks that are sitting in corporate board rooms, authorizing these trade agreements and we're leaving the people behind. I think that outsourcing is an un-American activity. And, without a truly humanitarian and fair trade version of these international trade agreements, we're going to continue to fracture and pull our nation apart.

ICONOCLAST: If Neo-cons are run out of Dodge during the midterms elections, do you think that the issue of impeachment will become a dominant theme in the months that follow?

DE LEAR: If elected, I will forward the call for impeachment proceedings to begin because there is a laundry list of illegalities and unconstitutional actions taken by this administration, and, as I said in that state-of-the-union rebuttal, we have mechanisms to deal with politicians and their high crimes.

One of the high crimes that I talk about is the usage of depleted uranium as a weapons system. Depleted uranium is a toxic and radioactive ordnance. It's used to destroy tanks. It comes out of Apache helicopters. But, this is a waste by-product of nuclear power. When there is a depleted uranium spill in the United States, space suits come out to clean it up. And yet, we're spraying it indiscriminately over the Middle East un-

der the illusion that we're protecting ourselves against weapons of mass destruction. But, in the end, depleted uranium could be collected as a substance in the Middle East and redeployed on our own shore because it is toxic and it is radioactive. It causes birth defects. It causes cancers. It could be the ingredients of dirty bombs.

The reason why I bring this up, Leon, is because lack of foresight in the Bush administration is no excuse for what I would consider treasonous behavior if we ever saw this material redeployed on our own shore. That material could make the basic ingredients for dirty bombs and that would be cause for an impeachment as well. The reason why I just bring up the D.U. situation is because nobody ever talks about this.

ICONOCLAST: I was going to ask what are your thoughts on issues that are not currently in the public eye, such as depleted uranium poisoning and what many deem as a Federal Reserve System that caters to corporatism?

DELEAR: Yes. I was on the first military tour of Los Angeles, conducted by the Citizens for Social Responsibility. In that military tour, we went to several military sites. During the 50s and 60s, Los Angeles used to be the recipient of 10 percent of the entire Department of Defense budget for the United States because of all the military related industries in Los Angeles. We visited several of the sites here in Los Angeles and many of those sites are contaminated. Indeed, Los Angeles is home to the world's only uncontained partial nuclear meltdown. A Three-mile Island is right here in our backyard and nobody knows about it.

But, what we learned on that tour is that the Pentagon is the worst polluter on the planet. The Pentagon pollutes more, produces more hazardous waste, than the top five petrochemical corporations in the United State combined. The situation that we have is that the environmental impact of the Department of Defense is regulated by itself.

Now, I spoke with an EPA, Environmental Protection Agency executive, whose in charge of cleaning up sites — she wanted to remain anonymous, for obvious reasons, because the EPA operates under the purview of the Bush Administration, currently. She said that the solution is, and it's kind of a no-brainer, is to have the Pentagon regulated by an independent agency. Not to have the Pentagon regu-

late its environmental impact by itself. These are the kinds of broad-stroke changes that we are going to need to invest in and vote for in order to reconstitute our nation into a sustainable expression and more importantly, the kind of government of the people and for the people that the framers intended.

Right now, it's a government of the dollar. I'm not necessarily saying that corporate interests and the people's interests do not have some overlap, but increasingly, day by day, as we move forward into the 21st century, those interests are separating. I think it can be seen clearly, that when you have multi-national conglomerates that have offices in all the nations all over the planet, that that isn't necessarily the decentralized American interests anymore. It becomes an interest in an agenda that has transcended our sovereign interests as Americans. I believe that 98 percent of the politicians that get elected wield the largest campaign war chest. It's begging the question, why are we even counting votes anymore?

ICONOCLAST: That's another question, about the voting. You know that voting machines are being demonized as unreliable. Do you think that paper ballots ought to be used?

DE LEAR: Yes, I do. I actually have made the call for a constitutional amendment that the sacrosanct institution of our vote is the foundation of our Republic. It's a cornerstone of our Republic and it needs to be secured and protected. In the interest of securing the vote, we need to do two things, in my opinion. We need to provide for independent verification of ballot results, in other words, we need to know that what the ballot results say are verifiable by an independent means. Now, about a third of the votes cast in the United States are done on a voting machine and those voting machines are run by proprietary computer codes that are owned by private interests. They're owned by the corporation and we have no opportunity to look at that computer code. This is unconscionable. This is un-American.

In addition to that, voting standards are as wide and varied as the states are themselves. I've heard that in some circles, there's upwards of 13,000 different voting standards across the United States. When you're voting for various singular federal offices like in the form of the Presidency, why should you

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have such an unequal playing field? Why is it that African-Americans have to wait six hours in the rain in Ohio? And here in Sherman Oaks in California, I just go walk in and walk out and vote. Well, there needs to be an effort to level the playing field. We need to standardize the American voting experience.

Of course, that standardization also must be rigorously and independently implemented so that we can actually verify those votes. This is worthy of a constitutional amendment, Leon. Why shouldn't our votes be counted as religiously as the I.R.S. counts our tax dollars? Overnight, we saw how ATM machines and UPC barcode machine have completely proliferated all over the landscape and in our stores and in our banks and now we just accept them as an everyday feature in our lives. I believe that we should have the same kind of motivation that brought those devices and innovative technologies into our lives. We should have the same motivation to be applied to securing and edifying the American voting experience by providing for independent verification of ballot results and standardizing it nationally. When you buy a 2x4 in St. Louis, it's the same 2x4 in Los Angeles. A dollar in New York is worth the same dollar in Sacramento. Our vote is worth this kind of treatment to be protected and it needs to be protected by a constitutional amendment. The amendment to the Constitution should be protecting and securing this most sacrosanct institution of our Republic.

ICONOCLAST: Regarding 9/11, there is a big movement on right now to have an independent reinvestigation of what happened. Do you think that that should take place?

DE LEAR: Oh, absolutely. I found it shocking that in the commission report on 9/11 that we didn't find any substantive or detailed descriptions of what had occurred on World Trade Center building number 7. Now, if your readers or audience doesn't know, building number 7 was a 42-story office building that was a few blocks away from the Towers. In the afternoon of 9/11, this office building fell completely straight down into its footprint, exactly as



Byron De Lear (second from right) stands by rights at the South Central Farm, May 26, 2006, in California.

if it had been demolished. And yet, nothing had impacted on this office building.

Now, we heard that the reasons why it had done this completely symmetrical free fall at almost the rate of free fall as if you dropped a steel I-beam free falling just to the ground. I think it was just a little bit slower. In other words, the only thing that would created that kind of speedy free-fall would be an office building that had been pre-prepared with demolition. But, the reason why we heard that this building fell is because there was a fire on the 12th floor. And, yet in the history of the planet, we have never seen just a mere fire on the floor of a steel-enforced office building would cause it to fall. Especially in the manner in which it fell, which was straight down, symmetrically balanced, completely free-falls, as if it had been set up by demolition. So, that was the real smoking gun to me, Leon. When I realized that, I said that there is something odd here. There is no way that this building could have fallen in this manner. You can google it on the Internet and you can see the footage from many different angles of this building, how it completely fell just straight into its footprint.

When I realized that there was something odd in regards to building seven, then what cascaded and fell forth from that disconnect in the logic was that maybe these other buildings were prepared with demolition explosives as well. Then when you start to connect those dots, you realize that there are some serious holes in the investiga-

tion of 9/11. And, I think that the first thing that the American people deserve is a truly independent investigation. If it were up to me, I would focus on building number seven and explain why that building came down in the manner that it did. Certainly, on the day of 9/11, there was mass chaos going on and there is no way that workers could have gone into that building and prepared it for demolitions on that day. That obviously means that the building had to be pre-prepared.

That's my attitude on 9/11. We could be facing the biggest cover-up and the biggest crime of our century in regard to 9/11 and what's going on here. But, I'm not willing to make the assertion that this is the case. What I am willing to say is that we need to have that investigation reopened and like I mentioned earlier, I would have it focus on what is referred to as WTC7, or World Trade Center Building 7.

ICONOCLAST: Is there anything that you would like to add that I haven't asked you?

DE LEAR: We're interested in sending the first Green to Washington D.C. We think that this would be a huge boon for not only the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, but for planetary civilization. It would be a huge boon for everybody to break the kind of tweedle dee left, tweedle dum right partisans' rancor between the I'm right, you're wrong politics that are going on in D.C. today.

Please encourage support of our candidacy to help get the message out with campaign donations. As I mentioned earlier, we do not take money from corporations. So, we need the

people's help to send the first Green to Washington D.C. and we have a confluence of issues in this district that has put together this anti-war coalition made up of progressive Democrats; made up of Green; made up of community leaders that can get together the 50,000 votes or so that would actually succeed in sending the first Green to Washington D.C.

We always hear about the global war on terrorism. We always hear that this is the greatest threat right now to our nation. But, there are a great many intellectuals and scientists and academicians around the planet that know the truly most dangerous catastrophe looming on humanity's horizon is global warming and we need a new

breed of legislator to come online to tackle the ill effects of global warming on the scale of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's new deal. Our wartime mentality needs to be directed to that threat, not at the concept that our foreign policy in the Middle East for the better part of 80-90 years has caused this clash of cultures right now.

I think we need to redefine what our relationship is to the international community. Reattach ourselves politically to the internationally community and rise to the dream that the dreamers dreamed when they thought of the concept of America in the first place. I think that this is going to come from a new breed of legislator to get that done.

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# Chris Bell Speaks To Denton Democrats

By **STEPHEN WEBSTER**  
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

DENTON — On Saturday, Sept. 16, Chris Bell, Democratic candidate for Texas Governor, made a stop in Denton for the annual Donkey Festival, put on by the Denton County Democrats. The festival attracted a total of 225 people and offered home-style barbecue and refreshments, live music, dancing, and speeches from state and local candidates. It was the most well-attended, profitable fundraising event the Democratic Party has had in Denton County, a Republican stronghold, in over a decade.

Bell was not the only statewide candidate to stop at the event. Texas Attorney General candidate David Van O's, who has been on a county-by-county "Whistle Stop Tour" for the last eight months, gave a speech and served up brisket while a local country band crooned. Fred Head, running for Comptroller of Public Accounts, also spoke to the crowd, primarily addressing the issue of inflated home appraisals in the state.

"I'm making a pact with the people of Texas," said Bell during his speech. "The moms and dads who get up every morning just trying to make the lives of their children a little bit better. They need a governor who understands that a budget is a moral document. If you give me the bully pulpit and the veto pen, I will lead a new Texas revolution!"

"Rick Perry can run around the state saying he's proud of Texas until he's red in the face," continued Bell. "But until we make improving public school our number one priority; until we get serious about providing health care insurance for every young person growing up here; until we get serious about stopping the Trans-Texas Corridor, which is eating up our land and setting up a new toll system; Texas will continue to be morally out of balance."

Bell's speech went on for about 15 minutes, and he was regaled repeatedly with cheers from the audience. Afterward, he took time to speak with THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST about his campaign for the office of Governor.

\*\*\*\*\*  
ICONOCLAST: "Your former seat in Congress, in Houston, was eliminated by Tom DeLay's voter redistricting in Texas. How did you feel about that when it happened?"

BELL: "Well, redistricting was a very long, drawn out battle. It was bad for the state and unprecedented when it occurred. There had never been a mid-decade redistricting in our



Chris Bell, Democratic Party Candidate For Governor

history. It was bare-knuckle politics and I understood that. I've always sort of had an opinion that, if it is politics, law or sports, if you beat me fair and square, I won't like it, but I'll accept it. In that particular case, to come and find out that the deck was stacked before the game ever began, was incredibly upsetting. That is what lead to me filing an ethics complaint [against DeLay] about the way he conducted himself in order to set up that redistricting."

ICONOCLAST: "We're little more than six weeks away from the election. How do you feel about your chances?"

BELL: "I couldn't be any more pleased with the campaign so far. In the most recent state-wide poll, I am only five points behind Perry. We were hoping to be in second place by this point in the campaign, and we are. We're doing a lot better than we thought we would. I think everybody is waking up to the fact that Rick Perry is extraordinarily vulnerable. If we can keep the Democratic base united and bring over some disaffected Republicans and Independents, and there are a lot of them out there, we're going to win in November."

ICONOCLAST: "What is the number one issue for your campaign?"

BELL: "Education. If I'm elected, we will draw up a plan

to give Texas the best public education system in the nation within 10 years. I think it is a reachable goal, but only if you have a governor who is willing to lead. We need to move away from the high-stakes nature of standardized testing. Folks have had it with our over reliance on the TAKS test."

ICONOCLAST: "Do you want to get rid of it?"

BELL: "I don't think we can get rid of it entirely, but we can certainly get away from the high-stakes nature of the testing. It is not the test itself that is causing the problems; it is all the things that are tied to it. If it is a question of a child moving on through school, and how the school will be ranked, and teacher merit pay ... So much is riding on that test. Obviously, an overabundance of time is going to be spent drilling the kids on the test, not necessarily the subject matter."

"Nothing is going to change until you say, 'Look, we're not going to make all these decisions based upon the TAKS test any longer.' If it is just a standardized test that provides a snapshot of where these kids stand, I don't see any big problem with that. I don't think we have to be spending millions of dollars on the TAKS test. I think there are other standardized tests that will do the job. I also want to give teachers an across-

the-board raise of \$6,000. It is not much, but it is a good start."

ICONOCLAST: "How do you feel about the Trans-Texas Corridor; the plan to expand Interstate 35 and turn it into a massive toll road?"

BELL: "I oppose it. I want to see it brought back to the legislature. I think if it is, it will be voted down and will not go forward. I think it is a gross misuse of the Eminent Domain process, which is supposed to be used for the public good, not for the good of multi-billion dollar boondoggles that primarily benefit European contractors. Most people see it as a giant land grab, and it wasn't studied enough before it was voted on. A lot of my friends in the legislature weren't given enough information, and there wasn't enough time to study it. There is lots of secrecy shrouding the contracting process. The fact that the person who was representing the major contractor in the Trans-Texas Corridor cycled back onto the Governor's staff, to me, means the anger people are feeling about the project is very well justified in this case."

ICONOCLAST: "Recently your opponent, Kinky Friedman, came out in favor of legalizing marijuana to reduce prison populations. How do you respond to that?"

BELL: "I don't support the legalization of marijuana. I think you can lower the prison population by providing more treatment programs. I do think way too many people are in prison because they are addicted to drugs. I think we should be trying to treat those people for that addiction so that we won't be spending millions of dollars for those individuals to be taking up bed space. I think that is the responsible way to approach that issue."

ICONOCLAST: "You said you want to bring in disaffected Repub-

licans. How are you swaying them from voting for Carole Strayhorn, a former Republican?"

BELL: "First of all, I'm running as a Democrat. If Republicans are looking for common-sense leadership, I certainly invite them to check out my campaign. I'm the candidate who is out there trying to put common-sense solutions on the table. I think many Republicans will be looking at the Democratic column this election. Meanwhile, the Republican slice of the pie will be divided three ways. I think it is pretty clear that Kinky Friedman is trying to run to the right of [Strayhorn and Perry], and obviously Strayhorn and Perry are Republicans. I'm the only Democrat in the race, and I am the only one that stands for restoring common-sense to the Governor's office of Texas."

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## Edwards Supports Immigration Reform

WASHINGTON — U.S. Representative Chet Edwards today supported House passage of three immigration and border security bills HR 6094, HR 6095, and HR 4830 to deter illegal immigration and bolster border security. Many of the provisions in the bills passed today were taken from HR 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act which passed the House with Edwards' support in December of 2005.

"I believe these bills are a positive step in the right direction to protect our borders and to reduce illegal immigration by toughening penalties against smugglers, by making it easier to deport alien gang members and by clarifying the right of local and state law enforcement officials to work with federal officials on a voluntary basis on immigration cases," said Edwards.

HR 6094, the Community Protection Act, prohibits alien gang members from being admitted into the United States and allows certain gangs to be automatically eligible for deportation. It also allows longer detention of dangerous aliens and ensures the removal of criminal aliens. Its provisions are identical to parts of the House-passed immigration and border security bill, HR 4437.

HR 6095, the Immigration Law Enforcement Act, declares that state and local law enforcement officers have the "inherent authority" to voluntarily apprehend any illegal immigrants and transfer them to federal custody. The current law, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, supported by Edwards in 1996, already says that state and local police can choose to assist in the enforcement of federal criminal immigration laws. Edwards has also voted to end the policy of "catch and release" for illegal aliens under HR 4437 and voted to deport criminal illegal aliens under the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.

HR 4830, the Border Tunnel Prevention Act, creates new criminal penalties for constructing illegal tunnels under the U.S. border, and doubles penalties, up to 20 years imprisonment, for smuggling illegal immigrants, drugs, weapons of mass destruction, or other illegal items if done through an illegal tunnel. Edwards voted to establish the same criminal penalties for smuggling people

under HR 4437 last December, but this bill extends those penalties to the smuggling of drugs, weapons of mass destruction or other illegal items.

Edwards concluded, "I strongly believe that Congress should pass these measures into law this year and not postpone final action until next year. Securing our borders against unlimited illegal immigration and potential terrorists must be a top national priority, and we should work on a bipartisan basis toward that end."

Edwards is a member of the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, where he has been active in funding an increase of 1,500 Border Patrol agents and new border technology. In 2005, he led the fight to add \$16 million for work at L-3 Communications in Waco to prevent the grounding of the Customs and Border Patrol surveillance fleet of 16 P-3 aircraft.

## Quit Denying Climate Change, Say British Scientists To Exxon

LONDON — Britain's top scientific academy told the biggest oil company in the world to quit funding organizations that fight the majority of scientists whose evidence supports the idea that humans effect climate change.

The Royal Society scientists also chastised ExxonMobil in a letter to its UK branch for its "inaccurate and misleading" statements on global warming, including its own "corporate citizenship reports."

"These statements are not consistent with the scientific literature. It is very difficult to reconcile the misrepresentations of climate change science in these documents with ExxonMobil's claim to be an industry leader," states the letter.

ExxonMobil confirmed that it received the Society's letter on climate change, but refuted claims its reports were inaccurate.

The academy has reported that the Irving, Texas-based company last year sent almost \$3 million to about 40 groups to askew the facts over climate science.

However, the academy has never challenged a company on its scientific claims head-on before.

In related news, UK billionaire Sir Richard Branson pledged \$3 billion to fund renewable energy projects that global warming.

The money, Branson said, would be funneled from his five airline and train companies over the next 10 years. He said a conversation with former U.S. Vice President Al Gore and the \$1 billion in fuel costs his companies have paid over the last three years drove him to this new financial commitment.

Branson's announcement occurred during an annual conference of business and political leaders thrown by former President Bill Clinton, called the Clinton Global Initiative.

Branson isn't the only business owner concerned about global warming. The latest Vistage Confidence Index found that about two-thirds of American CEOs who run small and medium sized businesses fear climate change, too.

"The question is whether that concern will translate to the willingness to support legislation and regulatory requirements that impact their businesses," said Dan Barnett, chief operating officer of Vistage International, the world's largest CEO membership organization.



To The Editor:

Does this make any sense to you???

I have to have insurance on my car the government says, but I don't have to have any insurance on my child. (car worth more than kid?)

If I carry a switchblade knife I go to jail — buty carrying a gun is just fine.

At 18 I can enlist in the army and go overseas and get shot at. But at 18 I can't get a shot of gin.

The whole country will panic if a cute kitty falls down a well, but we don't seem to care when homeless live under our highways,

We will take vitamins and do power walks, and swim to stay healthy and in shape. Then we will get in our SUV, go on a cell-phone and yack while cutting thru traffic at 80 miles per hour.

We will get on the internet and talk to some person in Australia for 2 hours, then ignore our neighbor when they wave at us.

We will yawn and flip the channel when they are talking about Enron cheating the government out of millions, but get hot under the collar when someone gets \$75 too

much on welfare.

If that other president from the political party we don't like made a mistake we would shout shame on him from the highest rafters and demand action be taken. But if our guy messed up big time, it is just a mistake and no actions have to be taken. After all, no one is perfect.

We will not blink an eye when some politician says he wants to spend a billion bucks per plane so he can bring a few hundred jobs to his congressional district. But we go tsk tsk tsk when we read that our young military recruits are paid so low they qualify for food stamps.

We go ye-hahhaa when our high school football team gets a new stadium and locker rooms. But boy do we gripe when we get the tax bill from the School District.

We feel sorry for the poor, as long as they do not move close to us.

We watch TV and see an article about a Union and spend 5 minutes raving to our spouse about Unions being liberal and ruining America, then we go down to Walmart and buy a Chinese TV made in a Communist

Country.

We want to cut government spending down to nothing, but by golly our Social Security check had better be there by the 3rd.

We will go out to Las Vegas and loose \$500 on the crap table without raising an eyebrow, then walk 3 blocks farther to save a dollar on the buffet.

We will buy the kids off brand soda, and immatation orange juice, but spend \$4.00 at an ice house to get our brand of cigarettes, when you can get a package of "SMOKES" for \$1.49.

A lot of men will take care of their car perfectly, but put off going to the doctor when they have chest pains.

Some folks will tip a cocktail waitress \$10, but close the window when a street person tries to bum 50cents.

And where is the brains of a parent who dresses nice to go to a store in cold weather wearing a jacket and slacks, but is carrying a baby with no jacket and no shoes. And then they wonder why the little one comes down with "another cold"

And....am I the only person who ever wondered about them putting aspirin in a plastic wrapped child-proof bottle that old people cannot open, but then they put bullets in a paper box?

*Kennsabe*

Dear Editor:  
"Selling America Piece by Piece"

As our Federal Government moves us closer to bankruptcy, Americans would be shocked to learn that foreign organizations are buying our infrastructure at an alarming rate.

Recently a Spanish-Australian group paid \$3.8 billion for the rights to lease an Indiana toll road. This vitally important asset built by U.S. taxpayer dollars will now be stuffing the coffers of foreign interests. Indiana residents will be facing higher taxes to replace this lost revenue. Most likely, this will come in the form of floating public bonds.

Other states have participated in selling off infrastructure, for example, an Australian company's lease of a Virginia highway, and a Spanish-American partnership leasing a Texas toll road from Austin to Seguin. Americans were infuriated to learn of the Dubai ports deal, however, only six-months later congress allowed the Arab nation of Oman to operate U.S. ports. To learn more about this sell-out of America visit [www.thenewamerican.com](http://www.thenewamerican.com) and read the article "America For Sale" for more information on this dangerous practice.

We must immediately contact our representatives and demand they oppose this selling of infrastructure piece by piece.

*Lawrence L. Swanberg, Victorville, CA*

# Actual Costs, True Costs, Net Costs Of War

*In the fall the war was always there but we did not go to it any more.*

— Ernest Hemingway, "In Another Country"

BY BONHOMME RICHARD  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Congressman Chet Edwards swirled the ice cubes in his tea, glanced at the ceiling, and framed his next thought.

He behaved as if he could still hardly believe it, that which had happened in his latest re-election bid.

He spoke with incredulity of his latest opponent, neoconservative State Legislator Arlene Wohlgenuth.

"She just isn't smart enough to be a Congresswoman...Here she went to the state American Legion convention and told those people that if elected to serve in the House of Representatives, she would go after 'this bloated tax and spend Veterans Administration system.'"

He rattled the ice cubes again and took a quick gulp of the tea, glancing at the ceiling and its air conditioning ducts that were whooping frosty air over his sweat-soaked dress shirt. He looked at the people in this small Central Texas town that had contributed time and effort to his re-election bid two years ago, putting out signs, answering phones, stuffing envelopes.

They had gathered in a barbecue restaurant on Highway 6 to "visit" with the newly re-elected Congressman. Edwards shrugged again, looking as if he just couldn't believe that Wohlgenuth would actually approach the oldest and most powerful lobbying organization for veterans benefits in such a way.

Originally known as the Grand Army of the Republic, the American Legion members in Congress that had been wounded and maimed in the Civil War would stand in the well of the House Chamber and "wave the bloody shirt" while making their pleas for veterans pensions and health care. They would literally stand there with the bloody tunic or trousers they were wearing at Gettysburg or Shiloh, Antietam, or Manassas when they lost that arm or leg, long before the voters in their district sent them to D.C. to look after their interests, vote their consciences, serve on key committees, ride herd on the Federal budget.

Thus accoutered, they would wave, or simply hold aloft the bloody garment as they spoke of the need to augment, bolster, increase, authorize, or approve government spending to care for America's veterans that had suffered wounds and survived.

Hence, journalists and opposition members seeking to

bowdlerize, parody, or mimic their remarks often called their tactics "waving the bloody shirt."

Certainly, the reality of the Federal budget shows which side of the dispute won the contest. The VA enjoys the largest slice of the pie after the Department of Defense each year.

"Freedom isn't free," Edwards concluded, giving his shoulders a quick shake under the restaurant's busy air conditioning system, so taxed under the late fall conditions of near one hundred degree days that lingered and lingered and lingered, a system that made people shiver when they drank that ice cold iced tea after coming in parched and overheated from the world outside.

He could have been a merchant in a Broadway delicatessen or a grower in a big valley California coffee shop, a lumberjack in an Oregon tavern or coal miner in a Pennsylvania restaurant.

Here's a man that understands, and lives by, the numbers.

As a member of the key committee that writes the checks for VA budgets, a subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, he gave a quick and dirty explanation of the true costs of war. It's the kind of question that always comes up when those faced with the reality of making budgetary matters come true are asked how some complicated goal shall be accomplished.

How indeed? The money doesn't just fall out of the sky.

It's the old, old story of how much did it truly cost to put that glass of lemonade on the plank out front of the suburban Jones residence on that happy sum-

mer day when Billy and Susie had the lemonade stand.

Well, you know, they used Mom's sugar and lemons, Dad paid the water bill, the rent and property taxes, and, truth be told, he even mowed the lawn with a mower he bought at Sears and had furnished with gasoline. Then he turned around and edged the curb with a weed whacker he got at Ace Hardware, pruned the shade trees and watered the grass.

This is not to mention the intangible costs such as Dad's expertise with tuning the mower's engine, changing and gapping its spark plug, cleaning its air filter, and sharpening its blade, or Mom's ability to keep a clean kitchen with no roaches in spite of the use of granulated refined sugar with which to make lemonade!

After all, while Billy and Susie were playing lemonade stand, Mom and Dad were not getting any younger and they need health care as much as Billy and Susie.

They were playing with real money.

True cost for a 10-cent glass of lemonade: Twenty-five cents. Approximately.

So, his opponent had walked right into the haymaker, that perennial conundrum, that great equalizer that seeks its own level and puts reformers and crusaders both great and small in their places with aplomb.

It was one of many harbingers of the beginning of the end for that energetic crowd of neocon world beaters. There they went, shaking up a little dust in a blaze of glory, that new majority of the Texas Republican Congressional delegation. They left the Lone Star State

with a fire in their bellies and came back home, many of them, people like House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, Sugarland exterminator extraordinaire - a well known and self-admitted St. Andrews's Old Course golf enthusiast, with mud in their eyes.

Congressman Edwards's point was simple and straightforward on that day two years ago as he celebrated the good results of a tough campaign against a tough opponent.

If the major employer in town, the one that provides the best prospects of a career with retirement benefits, health care, and an opportunity for advancement on merit with no barriers erected by the vagaries of a corporate global market place, is to be the Armed Forces - and it is - then, "The potential recruits will be watching to see how the system treats the veterans of the Armed Forces."

Another quick rattle of the ice cubes and subsequent crunch by healthy molars in a thirsty mouth. He'd been riding and guiding, walking and talking all day long in his district up and down the Brazos River valley. He still had stops scheduled in Meridian, Cleburne, and Burleson. He had started with an early breakfast at Bryan near his old alma mater in Aggieland.

If the veterans are treated with dignity and respect, equitably and fairly, if their needs are met without a lot of problems and friction, then the potential recruits for military service will be motivated to take advantage of employment with that largest of corporations, the U.S. Department of Defense.

If not, Edwards concluded, shrugging and rattling the ice cubes again, glancing around the assembled crowd drawn up around the tables amid the napkin holders and ketchup bottles and barbecue sauce dispensers,

"Then you won't be getting the cream of the crop, to say the least."

And what of the back end costs of war?

One had best believe, if war is the major employer in town, that they are calculable and predictable, part of a cost of doing business, the casualties and fatalities to be regarded as industrial accidents.

According to the VA's own figures published on the internet, of 26 million veterans in the U.S., five million rely on VA Medical Centers for health care, up from 2.9 million in 1995.

That increase represents a whopping 58 percent growth rate - one that is explosive, to say the least.

In 2005, the VA forecasted a \$2.6 billion shortfall for meeting the growing healthcare needs of U.S. Veterans. "The VA's patient-to-doctor ratio has grown from 335 to 1, to 531 to 1, between 2000 and September 2004."

That ratio represents an even more explosive 63 percent growth rate of patients to doctors.

On any given night, there are an estimated 200,000 to 250,000 homeless veterans living on the streets, in their cars, public parks, river banks, creek bottoms, bayous, and national forests.

"More than 500,000 will experience homelessness over the course of a year." Seventy percent of these are chronic alcohol and substance abusers, 45 percent suffer from mental illness, and 56 percent are African American or Hispanic, according to the VA.

Reports of veterans living in tent cities in the public squares of Philadelphia, New York, and Washington that have appeared in THE NEW YORK TIMES and WASHINGTON POST represent

Continued On Next Page

## PERSONAL INJURY & WRONGFUL DEATH



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# Actual Costs, True Costs, Net Costs Of War

From Previous Page  
nothing particularly new.

After all, the graves of Continental Soldiers of the American Revolution form geometric patterns in the squares of Philadelphia. They were buried a few feet from where they died of their wounds, gangrene, or pneumonia. Similar graveyards and similar camps exist through the eastern U.S. Take a look. You will find them everywhere from Bunker Hill to Chattanooga, Vicksburg and New Orleans.

To be considered homeless by the VA, an individual must not have a roof over his head. This means that residence in a homeless shelter, Salvation Army or rescue mission, substandard housing such as a cheap hotel or motel, a camper shell, a barn, or a shed in the back of someone's property does not qualify as homelessness.

VA qualifies its analysis by stating, "Many other veterans are considered near homeless or at risk because of their poverty, lack of support from family and friends, and dismal living conditions in cheap hotels or in overcrowded or substandard housing."

Now, why would a veteran choose to live in a cheap hotel or motel?

They don't.

Society has made that choice for them. As a chronic alcohol or substance abuser, many are convicted of felony DWI or drug possession and sent to punitive "treatment" centers or state jails. Most big city landlord associations do background checks on prospective tenants and reject those applicants with felony records involving substance abuse. Most major profit centers, the ones likely to be paying enough of a living wage to attract a veteran to the work force, are located in major metropolitan regions, ergo...

"According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics 225,000 Veterans were incarcerated as of 1998," according to a website maintained by the National Veterans Foundation.

Who killed Cock Robin.

How has the Bush administration and the Republican majority Congress responded to these seemingly emergent conditions?

According to Rosemary Metrano, one of many counselors at the Benefits Section of the VA's ubiquitous toll-free number - 1-800-827-1000 - the purse strings were tightened considerably in 2003, the year of the Bushite Invasion, the year the Iraq War began in earnest

with the no-bid private sector assistance of Kellogg, Brown & Root, et. al.

Congress restricted income to \$32,285 for a married veteran and \$26,902 for a single veteran hoping to receive medical care benefits if they are not adjudicated "service connected" at a percentage level of zero to 100 percent with an injury or exposure to chemical agents.

"A recent study of inpatients at VA facilities indicates that nearly all have annual incomes of \$15,000 or less," according to the National Veterans Foundation website.

Today's veterans of the Iraq War are limited to two years of medical services, not a lifetime guarantee of a medical safety net, the kind Congress provided by public law to World War II, Korean, and Vietnam-era vets; after two years, veterans must re-apply for benefits.

The best strategy, then, is to make a claim for service connection.

That may be done at any time, but "It's better to do it as soon as he feels there may be something wrong," Ms. Metrano told THE ICONOCLAST.

One clue she offered is to get copies of one's service medical records and medical review board, if any, on the day of separation. These are often gold mines of information for those initiated in the significance of certain types of notations, things the veteran himself may not have understood at the time they were made.

Not everyone is in agreement with the figures provided by the VA, however.

Kirt P. Love, director of Desert Storm Battle Registry, an outfit founded in 1997 to coordinate Gulf War records, medical data, veteran advocacy, and deployment health, claimed in an interview at Camp Casey that homeless veterans now number in the neighborhood of about 300,000 each night.

A self-described "gadfly" of Congressional committees that has given interviews to every publication from *Time* to THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, LOVE now gives a Crawford address after six long years of living in Washington influencing the government's policies regarding the returning veterans of the mideast wars.

"I spent two years living in my Volkswagen beetle," he said at one point. "After six long years, I've come home. I'm going to continue to work, but I'm going to work from behind the scenes."

At Camp Casey?

That's what the man said.

His goal: To acquire about 250 acres of land on which to house veterans for their readjustment to society. Some would adapt readily, some would with a little help, and others would need to be allowed to "live in the back of the property for awhile, or maybe the rest of their lives."

In any case, this proposed triage would be allowed to work according to the rules of the ranch, or camp, or self governing veterans's community, however it may evolve.

One problem with the VA is that "They insist on a turnkey, finalized plan. Tentative plans or proposals are out of the question as far as the VA is concerned," Love said.

Love is a native of the Copperas Cove area, a veteran of the Desert Storm war, and an essentially no nonsense, humorless young man that defines VA and governmental policies in terms of the games people play.

"If they can make you angry, they can make you leave, either with security guards or by demand. Either way, you don't get their services."

He explained that the VA is one hundred percent open to extending its health services to veterans that will admit to mental problems or substance abuse addictions.

In the absence of anger, VA types perceive no threat of violence, and hence become much more open to providing services.

But at what cost?

In other words, those that will bear the stigma of these conditions - habitual drunkenness or drug addiction or both - are able to obtain assistance with little formal resistance. Nevertheless, the waiting time for an appointment for medical care at most VA Medical Centers is about six months due to the doctor-to-patient ratio traffic jam.

Is this dynamic relevant? According to a *New England Journal of Medicine* survey, 60 percent of those returning with symptoms of PTSD are unlikely to seek treatment "due to fears of stigmatization or loss of career advancement opportunities."

In any case, mental health spending adjusted for inflation has increased by 25 percent since 1999.

The end result of substance abuse treatment in a VA Medical Center, said Love, is rather underwhelming in some cases. After an extended stay in a domiciliary, the impaired veteran is sent out on the streets again to make his way.

He claims it's more of the same, by and large.

Clean? Sober?

Love is skeptical as to how long a vet can hold out under the conditions of homelessness and low pay.

Asked, then, if mental and substance abuse impairment is caused by homelessness, or if homelessness is caused by mental and substance abuse impairment, he looked puzzled, then responded with a sigh.

"I guess that after awhile a man gives up hope and his resistance to...Oh, I don't know. It's a tough question to answer."

How about Hemingway's double dicho, "Man can be defeated, but not destroyed; man can be destroyed, but not defeated."

"That one's a little bit easier to answer."

A present dispute, he says, is the VA's insistence that it will pay no more than seven dollars a night to shelters that accept veterans in their domiciliaries.

Yet the streets and highways, the bridges and river banks are not safe places for the veteran to stay.

Love insists that illegal aliens that are flooding the nation along the I-35 and U.S. 281 access corridors are often very criminal in their nature. He and his colleagues see a very real threat in the competition between illegal aliens and homeless veterans for available resources.

"They're drug dealers and drug smugglers. They will not hesitate to kill the homeless veteran, just in competition for a place to stay."

Another major dispute Love harbors for local VA policy is that the Waco VA Medical Center insists that PTSD patients must accept care for substance abuse, when they often feel no personal need for any such thing. Love claims those that will not admit to a drinking or drug problem receive little patience or cooperation from the center's administrators and medical staff.

After all, staff members run the place and they see it that way. They are backed by VA policies. They say they can't do much for those that won't get off the booze and the dope. Love says he doesn't see where that

is always the problem, that abstinence is offered as a panacea, a golden bullet, something that can't hurt, but often does little good in solving the root problems he sees among fellow veterans.

His plans for the next day include attendance at a seminar and panel investigation at Ft. Hood into the state of the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder problem among returning Iraq War veterans.

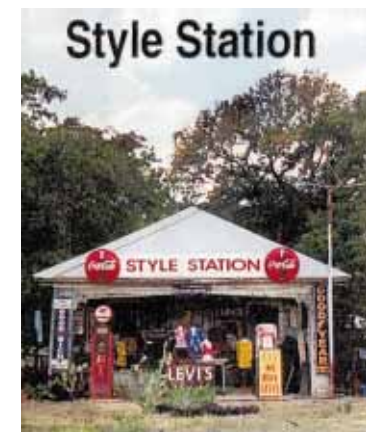
It's somewhat of a struggle to change public perception to an acceptance that PTSD is a combat injury, not a mental defect, though it is an injury of a psychological nature.

Men that are normal in all other ways still suffer the effects of survivor guilt, exaggerated startle effect, suspicion and hostility toward strangers, a reluctance to form personal relationships with the "new guy," difficulty maintaining a marriage or intimate relationship, and a seeming inability to hold down jobs when there are personality clashes with those in authority.

Does he know of any homeless vets that would be available to be profiled by THE ICONOCLAST?

He glanced around Camp Casey, its tents, its neat rows of crosses and freshly rolled creek gravel drives.

"If I see any, I'll send them your way."



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Congressman Chet Edwards (second from right) receives award.

## Record Number Of Hispanic, African American Students Enrolled At The University Of Texas

AUSTIN — A record high number of Hispanic and African American students are enrolled and attending classes at The University of Texas at Austin for the 2006 fall semester, according to a preliminary report by the university's Office of Institutional Research.

Total enrollment of all students of all ethnic groups this fall is 49,738, slightly higher than the 49,696 recorded for the 2005 fall semester. This total, based on preliminary figures,

includes 37,069 undergraduate, 11,361 graduate, and 1,427 law students, said Maryann Ruddock, associate vice president and director of institutional research.

Included in the 2006 total fall enrollment are the highest numbers ever recorded for Hispanic and African American student populations on campus - 7,453 Hispanics (15 percent of the student population) and 1,939 African Americans (3.9 percent of the student population). The

previous record high enrollments for these two ethnic groups were 7,289 Hispanics in 2002 and 1,911 African Americans in 1996.

The 15 percent Hispanic figure for the 2006 fall semester reflects a 6.3 percent increase over fall 2005, when 7,013 Hispanics accounted for 14.1 percent of the student population.

The preliminary fall 2006 figures show a 5.2 percent increase in African American students over fall 2005, when 1,843 African Americans accounted for 3.7 percent of the student population.

White students remain a majority on campus, accounting for 56.6 percent of the student population. The 28,132 white student enrollment total for fall 2006 reflects a 1.4 percent decrease from fall 2005, when 28,537 were enrolled. The 7,181 Asian American students enrolled this fall semester represent 14.4 percent of the student population, a 0.8 percent increase over fall 2005.

## Military Coalition Presents Award Of Merit To Rep. Edwards

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Military Coalition (TMC), an influential Washington, D.C.-based consortium of 36 military and veterans groups, presented its highest award on Sept. 14, to U.S Representative Chet Edwards who has championed the causes of health care and survivor benefits for military families. The awards ceremony was held at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Building on Capitol Hill.

Representatives Chet Edwards (D-TX) and Walter Jones (R-NC) received TMC's 2006 Award of Merit for sponsoring bipartisan legislation to protect military beneficiaries against large, unwarranted fee increases for military health coverage. Joe Barnes, also a TMC Co-Chairman and National Executive Secretary of the Fleet Reserve Association, praised Edwards and Jones for their role in convincing Congress to find other ways to reduce Defense health costs other than dramatic increases in beneficiary fees.

"They've set a great example in working closely together to highlight this as a bipartisan issue that's important for the country," said Barnes. "With recruiting, retention and readiness already at risk in this time of war, their efforts have helped Congress maintain perspective

on the reality that military families already pay large, up-front premiums in service and sacrifice for their health coverage - premiums far larger than any civilian will ever pay. Congress is now rightly examining options to contain military health costs without shifting so much of them to beneficiaries."

Edwards said, "It is a great honor to be recognized by the Military Coalition who fights everyday for our military and veterans. I believe our nation has a moral obligation to keep our promises to those who have kept their promise to defend our nation. We cannot attract the best and brightest to fight our war on terrorism in the years ahead if they see us breaking faith with those who served in years past. To win the war on terrorism, we must keep faith with our warriors."

TMC also presented its annual Freedom Award to Mr. John Conger, Representative Edwards' legislative director, for his work in promoting support for military benefits issues behind the scenes.

TMC represents the interests of more than six million members around the world, including active duty, National Guard, Reserve, and retired members and veterans of the seven uniformed services, plus their families and survivors.

## Perry Announces \$1.8 Million For Statewide Child ID Program

WACO — Gov. Rick Perry has announced the award of \$1.8 million to the Sheriff's Association of Texas to provide Child Identification Kits that will allow Texas parents to easily record and store their child's fingerprints, DNA and physical characteristics. This information can save precious time in assisting law enforcement authorities in the event that the child goes missing.

Through a collaborative effort with the National Child Identifi-

cation Program, the American Football Coaches Association and the Texas Association of School Administrators, Child ID kits will be disseminated across the state to K-6th grade students with a letter to their parents explaining the significance of the kit. Each kit will contain an inkless fingerprint card, two swabs to obtain a child's DNA from their saliva, and a laminated wallet card to keep an updated photograph and physical description of the child.

## Texas Landowners File Open Records Request

AUSTIN — Over 175 Texas landowners' Open Records Requests were hand delivered to the Texas Department of Transportation today demanding the release of the secret contract to construct the Trans Texas Corridor signed between TxDOT and the foreign owned Concesiones de Infraestructuras de Transporte, S.A. and Zachry Construction Corporation.

"If they are going to pave over my land, I have every right to know what's in that secret deal," said Carol Fox, a landowner in rural Williamson County.

On Tuesday of this week, over 125 landowners met in Jonah, Texas, to discuss a strategy to protect their land and their homes from being destroyed by the new super highway.

TxDOT and the Spanish company signed the agreement over a year ago. The Attorney General has ruled it is not protected information and must be released to the public, but both the State and Cintra-Zachry sued to keep it secret.

"We believe government should be transparent and anything they agree to do that affects our land should be made public, said Dan Byfield, one of the organizers of the

event in Jonah. "If they are going to condemn my land, I have a right to know," Byfield said.

For over a year, the AG and Cintra-Zachry have been in court battling over whether the contract is public information. On Oct. 10, there will be a hearing to decide that very issue. The landowners that have filed the open records request want to place themselves in that lawsuit so their interests are represented.

Construction for the new super highway, set to begin next year, will take up to 146 acres per mile and with 4,000 miles being built, that translates into 584,000 acres needed that will affect close to one million Texans. Most of those acres will be taken by condemnation placing thousands of Texas citizens in the position of having to go to court to fight the State.

Landowners are understandably upset. "I'm willing to fight the state on this because it's possibly my private property they're going to take," stated Fox. "I'll be there next month, if the judge allows it."

If allowed to intervene, Fox's legal fees will be paid by Stewards of the Range and the American Land Foundation, two private, nonprofit groups that support private property rights nationwide.

Nearly 800,000 children go missing every year across America, most of whom are teenage runaways.

Since it was founded in 1997, the National Child ID Program has distributed more than 15 million ID kits throughout the United States, making it the largest program of its kind and the only Child ID program to gain the backing of the FBI.

The grant, along with private

donations, will support the distribution of 2 million kits to parents and guardians of school aged youth from Kindergarten through the 6th grade. These funds are awarded under the State Criminal Justice Planning Fund and are distributed by the Governor's Criminal Justice Division. The funds support programs that enhance the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

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# Presenting A New Version Of Rocky Horror

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "Lawmen interrogate you. Outlaws just beat hell out of you."

The disconcerting thing about being a writer is, there's a chance you'll never die.

At least your work won't.

And some of it needs to die.

In fact there's a large body that ought to be shot.

That's usually the stuff that lives forever, and your children read it when you grow old, then say in disillusioned, whispered tones among themselves, once you've gone to bed, that you are a moron.

I realized that this week while the Congress of my native land debated just how much torture was enough.

Essentially our benevolent leadership decided that we can only torture a little; you can't kill the suspect, but you can make him wish he were dead.

But, if you accidentally do make him dead, it's okay.

Just don't do it again.

If you can help it.

And for this John McCain is a hero?

It is, indeed, strange to be a lonely voice crying in the internment camp, trying to point out that if the enemy thinks he will be well treated, well fed and well rested, that he will be restored to the safety and comfort he knew before he faced the perilous distress of war, he might, just might BE MORE WILLING TO SURRENDER, YOU SLACK-JAWED, HAM-HANDED, BEETLE-BROWED, GAP-TOOTHED, RIB-GNAWING, IMBICILIC THUGS!

But if he's going to be subjected to greater horrors than the face of war, why not, Kipling-like, simply go to his God like a soldier?

Who elects these mad clowns, anyway?

The monthly meeting of Idiots Anonymous?

"High there. My name is George, and I'm an idiot."

"Hi, George . . . uh . . . that's 'idiot,' George. But that's okay. Nobody here can spell, either, Gorge."

Second, there was neighbor Bush's embarrassing babble before the U.N.

(No, Hugo. He's not the devil. The devil is a lot smarter than that.)

We are not at war with Islam? But Islam is definitely at war with you, George.

Considering how he's managed Iraq, he doesn't seem to think he's really at war with anybody.

Look, you don't get to pick who goes to war with you.

Just ask Pope Hindenburg I. It's not how you meant it; it's

## Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



how they took it.

And it just may be that no one believes that you harbor no Witicisms of Mass Destruction.

I swear, that boy must have been wormy when he was a child.

All this reminded me of my first post-World Trade Center attack column, and what a naive prophetic dunce I was when I said.

### Kill them all.

I know you are too decent to say it, even though you might feel it.

But I can say it for you.

You pay me to say the things you would not ordinarily think. I am not a nice guy.

So . . .

If they would make of us Rome, let us be Romans.

Crucify them.

From Kabul in the east to Tripoli in the west, let the fires of their burning cities and towns illuminate our banquets. Leave not one stone standing upon another; sow the earth with salt. Boil their armies in flaming oil and harry their widows and orphans into the desert wilderness so nothing remains but their bloody footprints etched across the endless sands to their bleached white bones.

Show neither mercy to the guilty nor compassion to the innocent.

Tear the pages from their libraries, bring down their places of worship and obliterate their seats of learning.

Then rip out the tongues and hack off the thumbs of those who speak and write their languages, so that a generation hence, passing strangers will stand amazed at the desolate wastes that were once their homelands and wonder to themselves, "What men were these?"

But we won't.

Thank God.

We know better, I hope, than to make manifest the evil that those hateful broadcast images dredged from our souls' darkest places, and we will push them back into our nightmares.

The gentle reason that holds such thoughts at bay will demand again that we be better than our enemies, and our hearts will emerge from the bitter crust where we would like to encase them.

We know better.

We will pity the oppressed countrymen of our enemies, and when the war is over, we will give them succor.

We will do as decency demands.

If they had the capabilities to do as I have suggested, they would. We have those resources in abundance, but we won't. At least I hope we won't.

Not for their sake: for ours.

Whether they know better, we do, and that makes all the difference.

It is my fervent prayer that we will not let them win. That for the most part, we will go on, saddened, but essentially unchanged; our society will remain open, mobile and free. Our style, our attitudes, our way of life will not be diminished.

And they will continue to envy us.

We will treat those responsible as they are: criminals, psychopaths no different than the neighborhood gun thug who shoots down an unarmed convenience store clerk for a handful of change. We will find them, arrest them, try them and treat them no less decently that we treat any other criminals.

We will even defend them.

Because we are not the people they believed they were attacking.

We, those they so contemptuously hurled from the broken skies, are their sole appeal from an unimaginable agony. We will contain ourselves and continue offering a reasoned defense, even from ourselves.

Unless they have pushed us beyond the brink of the decency we live by.

Then we will bomb Hiroshima; we will eviscerate Nagasaki; we will rain hell itself on Hamburg.

For the sake of their children, they should pray we do not forget who we are.

Yeah, pretty stupid, hunh?

Those who say everything changed after that day are right.

September 12, 2001, dawned on the birth of a cringing, vicious cowardice, of a moral and spiritual decline from which we may never recover.

But on that day, when I wrote the above column, I was still hopeful.

It never occurred to me that five years hence we would be debating whether the Geneva Convention was a good idea.

That mere suspicion should consign the noble aims of Locke, Jefferson, Franklin, Madison to the garbage heap of a pitiful history.

That we would usher in a new Inquisition in the name of the

Prince of Peace.

That we learned nothing from Bataan or Burma.

That a former guest of the Hanoi Hilton would compromise on the ethics of torture.

That the collective voice of the Democratic Party would be thankful that, thanks to this capitulation of Republican reason, they do not have to take a stand on the morality of torment for fear of losing an election.

I may seem strange to quote

the "Rocky Horror Picture Show" at this point, but the final verses of that farcical comedy have been going through my head all week.

*And super heroes?  
Come to feast?  
To taste the flesh  
?Not yet deceased?  
And all I know?  
Is still the beast is  
Feeding*

— Richard O'Brien



## Declare Peace — For Crying Out Loud!

The majority of Americans want their troops out of Iraq in a safe, timely fashion.

Despite its unwillingness to bring them back home, the U.S. government has the power to do so.

The main obstacle for troop withdrawal has been the Bush administration and its Republican allies in Congress.

The administration's argument for keeping troops in Iraq is that civil war would immediately break out there once our forces leave, and overtime, terrorists would use this crumbled Middle Eastern nation to launch more attacks on us and our allies.

So the choices President Bush gives us are we either "stay the course" or "cut and run."

But who does he think we are? Are we not adults?

Why must policy choices always be between two violent, cynical options?

No, the real choice is between the death process and the peace process.

The death process continues a war that destroys Iraq quickly and the United States slowly.

The peace process, on the other hand, rebuilds Iraq and the United States through more responsible, fair, and secure means.

The latter choice has been strongly championed by the Declaration of Peace, a nationwide campaign calling for Congress to take a stand for a more humane policy toward Iraq.

According to its website, the plan Declaration of Peace has brought to the table includes:

— Establishing an Iraqi-led international peace process to create a roadmap to peace and security;

— Bringing U.S. troops home and closing the U.S. bases;

— Reconstruction and reconciliation in Iraq; and

— Creating a peace dividend by diverting funding for war to meeting human needs at home and abroad.

The Declaration of Peace's non-violent campaign kicked off with candlelight vigils across the 350 U.S. communities last Thursday on the International Day of Peace.

For the last seven days, the campaign which boasts 400 religious groups as members has seen its participants host meetings, mass bicycle rides, dances, nonviolence teach-ins, fund-raising dinners, congressional lobbying, and civil disobedience.

Organizers say that so far, the "Declaration of Peace" document has received over 12,000 signatures online and thousands more from signers in person. Eight Democratic members of Congress but no Republicans have signed on to the pledge.

The organizers also say that if by Thursday, Sept. 28, Congress fails to establish a plan to end the U.S.-led occupation in Iraq, more nonviolent actions will resume.

And when this peace movement succeeds, it will join the good company of other nonviolent power movements such as those in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, Beirut, and Bolivia.

However, real success depends on sustaining this peace paradigm worldwide over the long haul.

Let us hold steady this light of hope, and declare peace — for crying out loud!

— Nathan Diebenow

# How Lucky Can One Buffalo Hunter Be?

Billy Dixon and his four surviving companions waited for help on Sept. 13, 1874, or the return of the huge war party, whichever came first.

For the second time in three months, the 23-year-old West Virginian was up to his ears in Indians. Buffalo, not frontier immortality, was Dixon's game, but he had an uncanny knack of winding up in death-defying dilemmas.

By the winter of 1874, the northern tip of Texas was swarming with buffalo hunters eager to collect the four-dollar bounty for every shaggy hide. Old Adobe Walls, site of a fierce fight with five tribes a decade earlier, sprang to life with a general store, blacksmith shop, and saloon.

This alarming activity attracted the attention of Quanah Parker, the Quahadi Comanche war chief who grasped the strategic significance of the High Plains. If the white intruders were not evicted immediately, it was only a matter of time until the prized hunting grounds were lost forever.

Parker rallied the same affiliated bands that had driven the Kit Carson-led column back to New Mexico in 1864. To boost the braves' morale, the clever chief supplied them with the bullet-proof war paint recently perfected by his medicine man.

At the crack of dawn on June 27, 1874, 700 Indians struck Adobe Walls intent on slaughtering the hated hunters in their sleep. But most of the 29 transients had been up for hours fixing a roof that collapsed during the night. Booming volleys from their 50-caliber Sharps repelled the attack and held their own casualties to three men trapped in a wagon.

Rather than risk a second all-out assault, the Indians resorted to hit-and-run raids for the next two days. Superior fire-

## Crawford Students Graduate From MCC

WACO — Three former Crawford High School students were among the Summer 2006 graduating class of McLennan Community College.

Students with a 4.0 Grade Point Average graduate with highest honors, those with a 3.8 to 3.99 GPA graduate with high honors, and those with a 3.5 to 3.79 GPA graduate with honors.

The Crawford High School graduates completing degrees at MCC included Terri M. Bukowski, who graduated with High Honors, Jicky L. Reich, and Eric R. Vlam

## This Week In Texas History

By Bartee Haile



power and abundant ammunition enabled the prairie marksmen to keep them at bay without suffering so much as a scratch.

During a lull in the siege, Billy Dixon fired the most amazing shot in the annals of the Old West. He aimed his "Big 50" at a human target on a distant bluff, squeezed off a round, and was as surprised as everybody else when the bullet hit the mark. The fantastic feat later measured 1,538 yards — nearly nine-tenths of a mile.

The outgunned Indians departed a couple of days later and took out their frustration on innocent settlers across New Mexico, Kansas, Colorado, and western Texas. Meanwhile, the coincidental comrades at Adobe Walls, including a dandy named Bat Masterson, went their separate ways.

Running low on hard cash two and a half months later, Dixon agreed to blaze a trail across the Panhandle for an army expedition. From a camp southeast of modern Pampa, he set out on Sept. 11 with fellow scout Amos Chapman and four troopers to deliver dispatches to a fort in the Indian Territory.

Shortly after sunrise the next morning, a war party of 125 Comanches and Kiowas came upon the tiny contingent a few miles south of the Washita River. Scanning the flat terrain for cover, the whites retreated to a depression called Buffalo Wallow, where passing bison frequently frolicked in the soft soil.

The Indians concentrated their fire on the horse tender killing him on the first pass. The animals scattered to the four winds with the entire supply of food and water.

The battle raged into the afternoon as wave after wave of warriors pressed the attack. Careful not to waste a single precious bullet, Dixon and his comrades held their own while sustaining at least one wound apiece.

Realizing their most effective weapon was thirst, the Indians patiently withdrew to allow nature to take its agonizing course. Sooner or later the whites would make a break for water, and that would be the end of them.

But nothing is more unpredictable than West Texas weather. Storm clouds appeared out of nowhere and drenched the battlefield with a heavy

downpour. In a matter of minutes, water was ankle-deep in the wallow, and the parched defenders drank their fill.

The lightly clothed Indians shivered in the cold rain. Deciding five sharp-shooting trespassers were not worth catching their death, the warriors moved on after dark in search of easier prey.

Without any means of transportation, Dixon and his men

had no choice but to wait for rescue. They cleaned their wounds to ward off infection and tried not to think about food.

Seventy-two hungry hours later, help finally came. Except for the soldier slain while holding the horses, the rest had endured the harrowing ordeal.

For their trouble as well as their heroism, the five survivors were awarded the Medal of Honor. The nation's most cov-

eted combat citation was presented to Billy Dixon in a ceremony at Adobe Walls.

Eighteen seventy-four was a year the lucky buffalo hunter would never forget.

*Bartee Haile welcomes your comments, questions and suggestions at [haile@pdq.net](mailto:haile@pdq.net) or P.O. Box 152, Friendswood, TX 77549. And don't forget to visit [www.twith.com](http://www.twith.com).*

## Time To Change The Course Of U.S. History

The majority of Americans should be unhappy with our nation's growth and evolution — or, if you believe it — intelligent design.

It doesn't matter if you're Republican, Democrat or Independent. It's of no importance if you're middle class or poor, religious or atheist. As Bob Dylan sang during the 1960's, "You don't need a weatherman to tell which way the wind blows."

On the national, state and local levels generations of Americans will have to struggle to change the last decade of harm generated by wealthy special interests and the elected officials they have placed in their pockets.

Most Americans, individuals and families, are hurting — big time!

To achieve vast wealth and power, generations of our children have been placed on a back-burner. They and their grandchildren will continue to pay the price for our folly, which was to permit leaders to squelch or circumvent constitutional laws to gain more profits. The American people have been deceived. Here is a list of some of the ways:

- Started a needless invasion and war with Iraq
- Sent our children on missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, which were ill conceived and absurdly planned with no victory in sight
- Cut taxes for the rich, while spending more than \$3 Trillion on war costs
- Determined many U.S. policies and actions behind "closed doors"
- Providing false and/or misleading information and intelligence to the American people
- Eliminating urgently needed social programs for children and poorer citizens
- Doing little to prevent the diminishing quality of public education



## Texas Commentary

By Peter Stern

- Permitting increased health care costs despite eliminating "frivolous" medical lawsuits
- Permitting astronomical costs of fuel — gas, oil, electric
- Permitting increasing costs of tuition for higher education via deregulation
- Outsourcing millions of American jobs and services without providing new opportunities for American workers
- Lying to the people of New Orleans and for NOT providing the emergency financing and services during the Katrina fiasco in a timely manner
- Selling off American public lands and ports for special interest gains
- Permitting only special interests to bid on lucrative service contracts
- Permitting the "sale" of American government to the highest special interest contributors
- Privatizing the Medicare programs recklessly and irresponsibly for special interest gains
- Pushing to privatize Social Security for special interest gains
- Increasing cases of voter fraud and lack of voting machine integrity manufactured by special interest campaign contributors
- Cutting financing for public education during the past decade and diverting those tax dollars to other interests
- Promoting irrational and unneeded toll road plans to generate more profits for special interests
- Freezing gas taxes, which build and maintain roads, and/or diverting gas taxes to other

special interest needs

- Permitting loose or no enforcement of immigration laws and policies

- Illegal spying and wiretapping by the U.S. government on private citizens.

The list goes on. These are criminal and/or reckless irresponsible actions by U.S. elected officials against the American people. There's a Connecticut "cowboy" in the White House who needs to be "lassoed and reigned-in". The Bush administration has failed the American people, families and children. It has done so unabashed and without a conscience.

It is time for the American people to take back their nation from irresponsible and lackluster special interest motivated elected officials. Impeaching top members of the Bush administration may be in order.

It is time to create stronger campaign laws with enforcement capabilities that tell billion dollar corporations they no longer can purchase "the best government money can buy."

*America has become a rogue nation and is distrusted by the world and many of its own citizens.*

The Bush administration cannot be permitted to operate as some sort of religious zealots and blatant imperialists.

America must be managed as the nation of, by and foremost for American citizens!

Where, oh where, has America gone?

*Peter Stern of Driftwood, Texas, a former University Professor and Public School Administrator, is a political writer well-known and published frequently throughout the Texas community and nationwide. He is a Disabled Vietnam Veteran and holds three post-graduate degrees. You may contact Peter Stern at: [<psstern@austin.rr.com>](mailto:psstern@austin.rr.com).*

# The Devil In George W. Bush

BY CAPTAIN ERIC H. MAY  
GHOST TROOP COMMANDER

Hugo Chavez wasn't the first brave person to say that George W. Bush is a devil, nor, I pray, will he be the last. The Venezuelan president was stating simple truth when he described Bush as a leader whose geopolitical aims always translate to imperial war profiteering, and whose twisted character make him an ideal pick for leader of a world war conspiracy.

Chavez wasn't altogether theological in his accusation, he was also psychological. He called Bush a sick man, an alcoholic with mental problems. For this bit of truth Chavez has been widely reviled by the U.S. media — and widely applauded worldwide. Just ask any recovering alcoholic, whether he was right, though, and you'll hear that it is always the demons inside that drive a man to pick up the demon of drink.

In short, Chavez adduces two arguments: the theological one is that Bush is demented because he is a devil; while the psychological one is that Bush is a devil because he is demented. Bush is a devil in either case.

## The Devil and His Demons

When Bush gives his press conferences and interviews, he routinely labels those who oppose him abroad as evildoers, and those who oppose him at home as traitors. When this kind of dementia afflicts someone in our families we seek clinical help for them, and don't hesitate to call them sick — or possessed.

Bush regularly rails against those he calls "conspiracy theorists" across the Middle East and around the world. He cautions them not to believe that the U.S. is cynically conducted a new crusade for oil and Israel; he warns them not to state that the Israel Lobby has a strangle-hold on U.S. public discourse through control of the media, and through the accU.S.ation that anyone who questions the Israel Lobby is an anti-Semite.

He knows very well, of course, that the Neocons who brought him to power and direct him are made up of the oil-and-Israel interests. After 9/11 they had a couple of revealing jokes. One was that what became Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) should have been named Operation Iraqi

Liberation — an abbreviation for OIL. Another was that the road to Jerusalem led through Baghdad — in other words, the answer to Israel's woes was the domination of Iraq, and the consequent submission of a terrorized Middle East.

Bush considers his domestic opponents enemies when they say that his "global war" was a clever propaganda substitute for a "world war." He accuses them of helping his enemies abroad when they say he has plunged U.S. into quicksand in the Middle East, or that his media misled U.S. to war by parroting one Bush League lie after another.

He utterly abhors U.S. "conspiracy theorists," which is what he and his media call the growing third of the public who believe he was behind 9/11 — and who agree with Chavez that he is the devil. To them, 9/11 was mass murder, used to justify war crime, and was an utterly diabolical plan. They point out that in 2000, just before the Bush ascent to power, the Neocons published the New American Century plan, stating that only "a new Pearl Harbor" — exactly like 9/11 — push the U.S. into a Middle East war.

## Unleashing Hell on Earth

To Bush these voices of dissent at home and abroad are all part of a vast conspiracy to undo him and his New American Century. Accordingly, he has turned to threaten all parties who are against him, and has recently turned his Beelzebub of a vice president against them.

Many remember that Dick Cheney sounded like Darth Vader the weekend after 9/11, when he told Tim Russert on Meet the Press that the U.S. would have to turn to "the dark side" to oppose its post-9/11 enemies. Many shuddered on 9/10/06, the day before the fifth anniversary of 9/11, when Cheney winked at the same Tim Russert on the same Meet the Press and said that the next attack against the U.S. might involve a nuclear attack that could kill a million, or biowarfare that could bring on a plague.

Russert took it all in stride without asking a single question as to whether the U.S. public is being set up for an attack. In an era of "don't ask,

## GUEST COMMENTARY

don't tell" ethics, the media doesn't mention that the Pentagon is regularly practicing nuclear attacks against U.S. cities and citizens out of Ft. Monroe, Virginia, or that it is practicing biowarfare attacks against U.S. cities and citizens out of Ft. Dietrich, Maryland. It doesn't mention that such an attack would allow Bush to initiate nuclear war abroad and lock up disruptive conspiracy theorists at home — all for the good of the U.S. public, of course. It doesn't mention that the only way forward in the quicksand world war the Bush League has started is to mobilize the economy and initiate the draft.

No one mentions any of this — that is, of course, except George W. Bush himself. He has said it all, in one way or another, since 9/11. Just after he was elected he said that dictatorship would be fine with him — if he could be the dictator. Recently, he said that he needs enhanced power to torture and spy on his enemies to wage his global war. For years he has promised that this war is going to be a generational war, requiring the sacrifice of a generation to execute.

Give the devil his due, all along he has been telling U.S. what he means to do, and that he will use us to do it. Don't blame him when he smirks in press conferences as he talks about how "terrorists" are to attack U.S. again and thereby enable him to keep his devil's bargain with the Neocons. The U.S. media has served its devil well. They have dressed the wolf in sheep's clothing — and they are helping him to lead us all like lambs to the slaughter.

##

*Captain May is the commander and founder of Ghost Troop, a 300-strong cyberintelligence unit comprised of active and veteran armed forces members, police officers and citizen activists. His 9/23 interview, "Ghost Troop salutes Hugo Chavez," is currently posted at Cloak and Dagger international internet radio: <<http://www.cloakanddagger.de/>>. The Lone Star Iconoclast recently published "Ghost Troop - The Art of Info-War" about him and his unit: <<http://www.lonestaricon.com/abso lutem /anmviewer.asp?a=402&z=52>>. To join Ghost Troop, go to <<http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/ghosttroop/>>.*



Captain Eric May

# Alternative Torture

President Bush has been at odds lately with some people from his own party regarding what is and what is not okay to do to terrorist suspects while questioning them. He advocates "alternative interrogation practices." He seems to feel that Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions — which bars "outrages upon personal dignity" and "humiliating and degrading treatment" — ties the hands of American interrogators instead of tying the hands of the person being interrogated.

The President refuses to say what he means by "alternative interrogation practices," but should he be attacked just because he wants to keep a secret?

There seem to be two main issues that those who oppose the President raise: The first is that experts say that torture is ineffective — the guy being tortured generally just says whatever he thinks the torturer wants to hear. The second point is that if we feel we don't have to stick to the wording of the Geneva Conventions, other countries won't feel that they have to abide by those rules either. Senator John McCain, certainly an expert on torture, feels that this would put future American captives at great risk. Someone even removed the gag from Colin Powell's mouth, and he wrote in a letter to McCain that, "The world is beginning to doubt the moral basis of our fight against terrorism. To redefine Common Article 3 would add to those doubts."

Many of the people who oppose the President's position believe that when he says American questioners should be able to use "alternative interrogation techniques," he means "torture." In fact, the President's latest bill specifically would prohibit torture, so I don't know why people are so suspicious just because the President won't tell us what he means. Has he ever tried to deceive us before?

Maybe he means the captive has to answer the question in the form of a question — like on "Jeopardy." Maybe he means all the questions have to rhyme. Maybe he means the interrogator has to mispronounce "nuclear."

There are countless possibilities as to what he means by "alternative interrogation practices." It's quite possible that Mr. Bush and his people have some very creative methods in mind, but they just don't want to tip their hand. There are many things besides torture that could break down a captive's resistance and get



## Modern Times

By Lloyd Garver

him or her to talk. For example:

They could take the suspect to the movies and seat him in front of a guy who talks throughout the film. That suspect will soon reveal all he knows if it will shut up the obnoxious talker.

Other ways to make the suspect say, "Okay, I give up. I'll tell you everything" include:

Having him call a software company for support, and being put on hold and having to hear over and over again that "your call is important to us" until he agrees to confess.

Making him drive behind a car whose turn signal is on, but the driver never turns.

Putting him in a coach on a cross-country flight in between two people who feel a need to tell "funny" stories about their jobs.

Having him take a shower, and then turning off the water right when he gets soaped up.

Having him watch a great basketball game that was recorded earlier. When the game is tied and is just about to go into overtime, all the interrogator has to do is say that he'll announce who won if the suspect doesn't reveal all he knows.

Forcing him to go to a third grade production of "Rent."

Having him show up at a friend's house for a dinner party only to learn once they open the door, that the party is not tonight, but *next* Saturday night.

So let's not jump to conclusions about President Bush on this issue. Let's not assume that he has something dark and mysterious in mind that anybody concerned with treating people in a humane way would oppose. But I wish they'd get this thing resolved. I don't think I can listen to too many more speeches in which the President declares that anyone who disagrees with him just doesn't understand what's necessary to protect the country. Listening to those speeches has become real torture.

*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](mailto:lloydgarver@yahoo.com)*

# That Which Thinking People Fear

I had a rare occasion to have a conversation with Leon recently.

That would be the one and only Mr. W. Leon Smith, the farsighted, open-minded and, dare I say, peerless writer and impresario of this wonderful gutsy publication. (Did I get it right, Chief?)

Anyway, Leon and I don't get enough opportunities to actually engage in one-on-one discourse. There's a little barrier known as the "time-space continuum" which makes putting our heads together a might difficult.

The regular reader knows that I labor in a place called Normal, smack in the middle of the Land of Lincoln. Not only is this region about as far from normal as one might imagine, any resemblance to Lincoln's legacy has been scrubbed away and covered up with the white-wash of Neo-con, UberChristian fanaticism.

Meanwhile, Leon is surrounded by a similarity of small-mindedness some 950 miles (give or take) to the southwest of our meager 95' X 200' spread.

Through the modern miracle of satellite communications and cellular technology we are able to jaw with each other every now and then.

Let's face it, at \$3.25 a gallon for gas — or even the new Dark Lord the Dick Cheney pre-arranged bargain price of \$2.45 a gallon — the commute is a bit on the pricey side.

Not to mention that I'd be hard pressed to make it home at a reasonable time for dinner.

Well, at one point Leon asked me about people's attitudes up here in Illinois concerning their level of fear.

My immediate response was that here in the great "Red Zone" midsection of this Blue State the good folks don't seem to be concerned much about al Qaeda killing their families and all of King George's fear jabberwocky.

I've lived and worked in a lot of different places, from huge metropolises like Chicago to small towns that were less populated than my high school graduating class (1,250, give or take); on the Continents of North America, Asia and Europe. This "Twin City" community of Bloomington/Normal is comprised of 100,000 or so of the most insulated individuals I have ever seen.

The conventional wisdom around here is our location



## Out Of The Blue

By Jerry Tenuto

120 miles south of Chicago means we're in not just in another state, but a wholly separate nation. Some even function under the delusion that that horrible city full of sinners is on an entirely different planet.

Many of the people from the Middle East that have settled here are into the second and third generations of their families. They own businesses and property; their children have acclimated to American ways and just fit in at school along with everyone else. The women drive and many have Anglo, African-American or Asian friends.

I told Leon that most of my friends and family in the Chicago area aren't really too concerned with or filled with dread from an onslaught of Middle Eastern hordes, either.

And, most people don't even talk about terrorists or bombs or anything or the sort.

He did start me thinking, though.

When it comes to the folks around the Twin Cities, as a group they are collectively brain dead.

Sure, they don't worry about al Qaeda, or gangs, or drugs, or even basic everyday crime like robbery and violence.

Nevertheless, the majority of them will vote for the Republican candidate simply for no other reason than he or she happens to be the Republican candidate. Issues to most people around here are not an issue.

Too many of my neighbors have been programmed to buy the lie that whomever is running under that GOP umbrella is morally superior to any opponent, be it Democratic or Independent, because Jesus is the official God sponsor of the Republican Party.

They pay no attention to voting records of Republicans in office; personal behavior is even less of a concern. There is but one newspaper in the region, and its editors make sure all Democrats are either portrayed as bad or get as little press as possible, while Republicans are given copious

print space with nary a disparaging word.

The good folks around these parts are so full of themselves being good folks it has flown right by them that they really aren't all that good. When all you concern yourself with is the status quo, and vote without paying any attention to whom or what you're actually voting for, then you cause your own democratic society to take a major downturn.

When you allow your community and county to run election after election with nothing but Republican candidates on the local ballots from U.S. Representative on down, you are putting a stranglehold on the entire concept of free and open elections.

I've lived here since 1995, and it wasn't until 2004 that the neighboring district had a Democratic candidate for Congress (Dr. David Gill); this is the first time we'll have a Dem in our district (John Pavich).

We have absolutely no choice for Democratic or Independent representation at the state or local levels.

"Taxation without representation!" was one of the rallying cries upon which our Nation was founded... I'd go toss a buttload of tea into Lake Bloomington if I didn't think the local constabulary would arrest me.

Basically, around here as long as those in power aren't dirty, stinking, Godless, Liberal Democrats — especially that soulless Hillary, flip-floppin' John Kerry, and Crazy Al Gore — and they've got enough money to keep leasing their soccer-mom status symbol garishly chromed SUVs, the locals will keep voting Republican.

Praise the Lord.

With the exception of a very few friends and relatives, whom I can count on less than both hands, the people I consider loved ones are not afraid of an attack from al Qaeda. They're smarter than that.

What concerns us is a combination of the Fascists in control of all our governmental agencies, and the religious extremists who have united into the most dangerous voting bloc in U.S. history.

College students who are old enough to claim independence still receive Pell Grants and low interest loans largely due to programs put in place during the presidency of William Jefferson Clinton, a real Man of the People.

Younger people will not be the

recipients of such benefits as a result of total Republican control without any checks or balances.

How will the younger group of individuals pay for college costs, which increase by leaps and bounds every fall semester thanks to Federal rollbacks? The way I did: Enlistment.

It's a time-honored Republican plot — keep the public school system financially floundering, thus middle- and working-class students won't be college ready. Raise university expenses arbitrarily high by cutting funding; those who are neither privileged nor able to score a scholarship can't afford to attend anything better than community college.

The frustrated youth of America will do what I did back in 1970 when faced with the prospect of no money for college and a dead-end working future — get a higher education through military service.

Providing it's possible to stay alive, or at least in one piece.

No, my friends and family — and I know this extends to clear thinking people not just across America but all around the World — do not fear al Qaeda or Hezbollah or Hamas.

What we fear are Herr Oberst Karl Rove and his playbook based upon tactics utilized by the Third Reich.

We fear the power and secrecy of Dark Lord the Dick Cheney and his oil cronies, his Halliburton cohorts, and their treasonous behind closed doors energy plots.

We fear the lies spread at every diplomatic meeting by Condoleezza Rice, who has acted not as an ambassador of goodwill for Americans but as a shill for King George's policies of bombastic global arm-twisting.

We fear Donald "Rummy" Rumsfeld, who has wasted the finest military machine in World history to satisfy his own egomaniacal schemes, while forcing the best commanders to leave our services, and putting in charge politicians in uniform who couldn't find a battlefield with both hands if it were up their asses.

We fear the people who vote the way they're instructed to vote by the pulpit, no matter what the cost to our Nation and our precious freedoms.

We fear, more than anything, the megalomaniac who was illegally placed in office as the most powerful person on the planet. There can be no denial it was an incompetent person wrongly elevated into that position by a handful of individuals who considered their own righteousness supercilious to the rights of not just all Americans, but of everything the United States of America had stood for 224 years prior to December, 2000.

I can't even bring myself to call King George XLIII a man.

What do you think George sees when looking into a mirror?

To all Jewish people today is Tishrei 1, 5767 —

LShana Tova!  
Happy New Year!  
LShalom, my Friends!

*(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](http://illinoiscentral.blogspot.com))*

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## Cosmetic Surgery — Boldly Going Where No One In Their Right Mind Has Gone Before

Today, we will be talking about an important milestone in the field of cosmetic surgery. Why? Because on my desk this morning was a press release with the following headline:

At long Last! Buttocks Enhancement Surgery available in U.S.!

So, as you can see, I really had no choice.

Especially since, as a professional courtesy, one of my fellow journalists had taken the time to write "Urgent!" across the top.

(And, yes—these are the kinds of things that regularly cross my desk.)

As you might expect, buttocks enhancement surgery is just like other cosmetic procedures in that the sole purpose is to improve the physical attributes



**Life Is A Funny Place**

By Ned Hickson

*Siuslaw News*

of a person. This is accomplished by either enlarging or reducing the size of said attribute.

Which can be singular or plural.

And we'll just leave it at that.

In this case, however, we're talking about enlarging the buttocks. While many people, such as myself, prefer to achieve this naturally through a program of rigorous eating and lack of exercise, there are others who don't want to wait for the holidays for a larger rear. For these

people there is Dr. Mark Jewell, vice-president of the National Aesthetic Society, which is currently offering this procedure here in the U.S.

The enhancement procedure can take place one of three ways. The first is to inject fat directly into the gluteus muscles, which may SOUND gross, but...

Okay, yeah — it's actually pretty gross.

The second is to go with plastic implants that are inserted directly behind the gluteus muscles. This technique, according to Dr. Jewell, is supposed to look the most natural.

That is, as long as you don't plan on going swimming.

If you do, the natural buoyancy of the plastic implants will add a whole new meaning to the term "bottoms-up."

The final option is for the surgeon to make an incision directly in the skin surrounding the buttocks, and then stretch it up much like a face lift. The main difference being, of course, that too many of these, and you'll permanently suffer from the world's worst wedgie.

This brings us to our next segment:

Face transplants.

This is exactly what it sounds like — surgically replacing someone's entire face all at one time. This is obviously a vast improvement over replacing someone's face over the course of many years, which, as you know, was first pioneered by Michael Jackson.

According to a report in Britain's *The Daily News*, plastic surgeon Peter Butler says he

plans to carry out a full-face transplant as early as next April. Butler says the experiment will be performed at London's "Royal Free Hospital"—which is the perfect place since, if something goes wrong, his patient will be royally...

Well — you know.

As you can see, we have a lot to look forward to when it comes to the future of cosmetic surgery. Yet, I'd suggest against going in for buttocks enhancement surgery and a face transplant all at once.

Unless you're willing to risk finding out that hindsight really is 20/20.

(You can write to Ned Hickson at the *Siuslaw News* at P.O. Box 10, Florence, Or. 97439, or visit his website at [www.nedhickson.net](http://www.nedhickson.net))

## Taken With A Kiss

An acquaintance of mine passed away last week. I didn't know her well, but she was always upbeat and pleasant. She often told me how fond she had been of my father, what a wonderful man he was, how much he was missed. When I returned to Texas, she tried to make me feel welcome, even though I didn't remember her from my childhood here. This woman was probably in her 70s, but vivacious, energetic, and seemingly in good health. She was on a trip to England with friends when she met her tragic fate. She was there to see shows, visit museums, and generally to have a good time.

Coming out of a show, laughing and talking, she stepped off a curb into the path of an oncoming motorcycle. As she jumped back to avoid disaster, the surprised driver swerved in the very same direction in an attempt to miss her. There was a terrible collision resulting in a head injury. It's always amazing to me how one's life can change (or end) in an instant,

as a complete surprise to all concerned. Sometimes I marvel that any of us survive even to adulthood, considering all the pitfalls.

Everything possible was done to save this woman, but to no avail. When her head hit the pavement, there was too much damage, and she passed away despite attempted surgical intervention. The shock of her death has been difficult for her friends and family to accept, as accidental and unexpected deaths usually are.

I was trying to console one of this woman's friends last week, even though there's usually nothing one can say to ease the pain of such a loss. Only time can help. But I wanted to share with her something I was told when my own mother passed away suddenly, almost 20 long years ago.

"God took her with a kiss" I was told, by a woman with tattooed numbers on her arm. She was a Holocaust survivor who had lost her parents, her husband and her young child in the concentration camps of the Nazi's. She told me, "You can-

## Rustic Ramblings

By Dr. Gene Ellis



Gene Ellis, Ed.D. is a Bosque County resident who returned to the family farm after years of living in New Orleans, New York and Florida. She is an artist who holds a doctoral degree from New York University and is writing a book about the minor catastrophes of life.

not understand this now, grief-stricken and as young as you are, but we all make the same journey, and there are much worse ways to pass from this life." Although her words didn't comfort me much at the time, I appreciated the attempt.

I've come to understand, as I've grown older, that there are indeed worse ways to go than suddenly, "with a kiss." Although there is no opportunity for last goodbyes, there is also no lingering, no languishing, no pain, no mental and physical suffering. If we live our lives so that we have few regrets—if we make our apologies as needed and have our affairs in order as much as possible, if we tell those we love often and heartily—then perhaps we can depart this life leaving as little anguish as possible for our loved ones, even if we do so with no notice. Life can be so uncer-

tain. (As my mother always said, "No one has a contract, Gene".)

Rarely are we able to choose when or how we go. Suicide isn't the method of choice for most. (If euthanasia ever becomes legalized, perhaps this will change. I'm not making a recommendation, only mentioning the fact.) With medical care and extraordinary lifesaving measures as advanced as they are these days, there are living wills and powers of attorney for major health decisions if we are unable to make these for ourselves. We can control only so much, (and we should). But we cannot control everything. No one knows his or her own fate.

I always wonder, when someone goes unexpectedly, whether perhaps he or she would have been diagnosed with a terminal disease the very next week—or month—or year. Perhaps such a person might have spent future years in a nursing facility with an unknown quality of life. Perhaps he or she might have lived with pain or developed Alzheimer's disease and not known his or her own name. Perhaps a person who departs suddenly has been saved from a burden no one could foretell.

When a person is blessed

with good health, life can be so good at any age. So we strive to prolong it. When I asked my 97-year old father (in remarkably good health, a year before his death) to tell me one true thing, he answered, "There's never enough time." This was a man who loved life. He suffered a lot of mental anguish when he was forced to face his mortality at 98, in his relatively rapid decline. I believe it would have been much easier for him if he had been "taken with a kiss," although the shock of it would have been horrific for me. I could not have chosen one way over the other for him. I guess there's simply no good way to lose a loved one.

It's very difficult to say goodbye—even to a pleasant acquaintance I would have been happy to know better if time had permitted.

I couldn't help thinking that even though this lovely, lively woman went too soon, how many of us will be blessed to go laughing?—to know nothing more at that moment than that we are enjoying life and having a wonderful time? Perhaps God did indeed take her with a kiss.

## Investigators To Look Into Buried FCC Reports

WASHINGTON — The chairman of the Federal Communications Commission last week ordered an independent investigation into why two FCC media ownership reports were withheld from the public.

The first study found that local and total news content on a 30-minute television broadcast both increase by about six minutes each when ownership of television stations remains local. Top officials ordered this study destroyed.

The second report explained

that while the number of commercial stations had increased by about six percent, the number of radio station owners dropped 35 percent after media ownership rules were loosened by the 1996 Telecommunications Act.

Timothy Karr, campaign director of Free Press, a media reform organization, told *Democracy Now*, "In most cases you had very large corporations like Clear Channel buying up more and more of these local stations."

Both reports were leaked to

Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), the latter of which during the re-confirmation hearings for FCC Chairman Kevin Martin the week prior.

Despite the independent investigation, the Senate panel approved Martin for another 5-year term as chairman. The full Senate must vote on his confirmation. The 39-year-old served an FCC commissioner since 2001 and became chairman in March 2005.

FCC Chairman Martin and former Chairman Michael Powell have denied seeing the reports.

Karr called the chiefs' denials "absurd" and said both men are "more interested in protecting their political legacy than they are in actually getting to the truth of the matter. Fortunately, we do have this investigation. We hope that it will be thorough."

The media watchdog group Fair and Accuracy In Reporting said that in recent years, the FCC's handling of publically-funded studies has raised a few red flags.

In the run-up to the loosening of media ownership rules in 2002, the FCC released 12 studies that said media consolidation fails to

harm diversity and localism. The next year, the agency approved the rules change; however, an appeals court overturned them.

The public has until December to comment on the FCC's new proposed media consolidation rules. In 2003, over 97 percent of the comments were against media consolidation.

The first of the six public hearings on media consolidation is scheduled for Oct. 3 in Los Angeles, Calif.

For more information, visit the Stop Big Media website. **INFO** [www.stopbigmedia.com](http://www.stopbigmedia.com)

# Volunteer Training Class To Be Offered In Waco

WACO — Family Abuse Volunteer Training/Awareness Session, Saturday, Oct.

7, at 9 a.m. to 4. p.m., open to the public at no charge, at the First Baptist Church of Waco, 5000 Webster Ave, in the Activities Center.

those planning to attend are encouraged to bring a friend or family member to help share the information.

Dinah Husbands at the Family Abuse Center, Inc. at (254) 772-8999 or email at <[volunteer@familyabusecenter.org](mailto:volunteer@familyabusecenter.org)>.

This session serves as a resource for community service credit, college and high school course requirements, service organization projects, and church group projects.

Speakers will include Success stories, A Father's Story, Batterers' Counselor; Waco PD detectives, Victims Counselors, A.A.'s Office, and programs and volunteer opportunities.

Also, a continental breakfast and lunch will be provided at no cost. There will be door prize drawings, with no purchase required.

Dress is very casual and

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