

CRAWFORD, TEXAS

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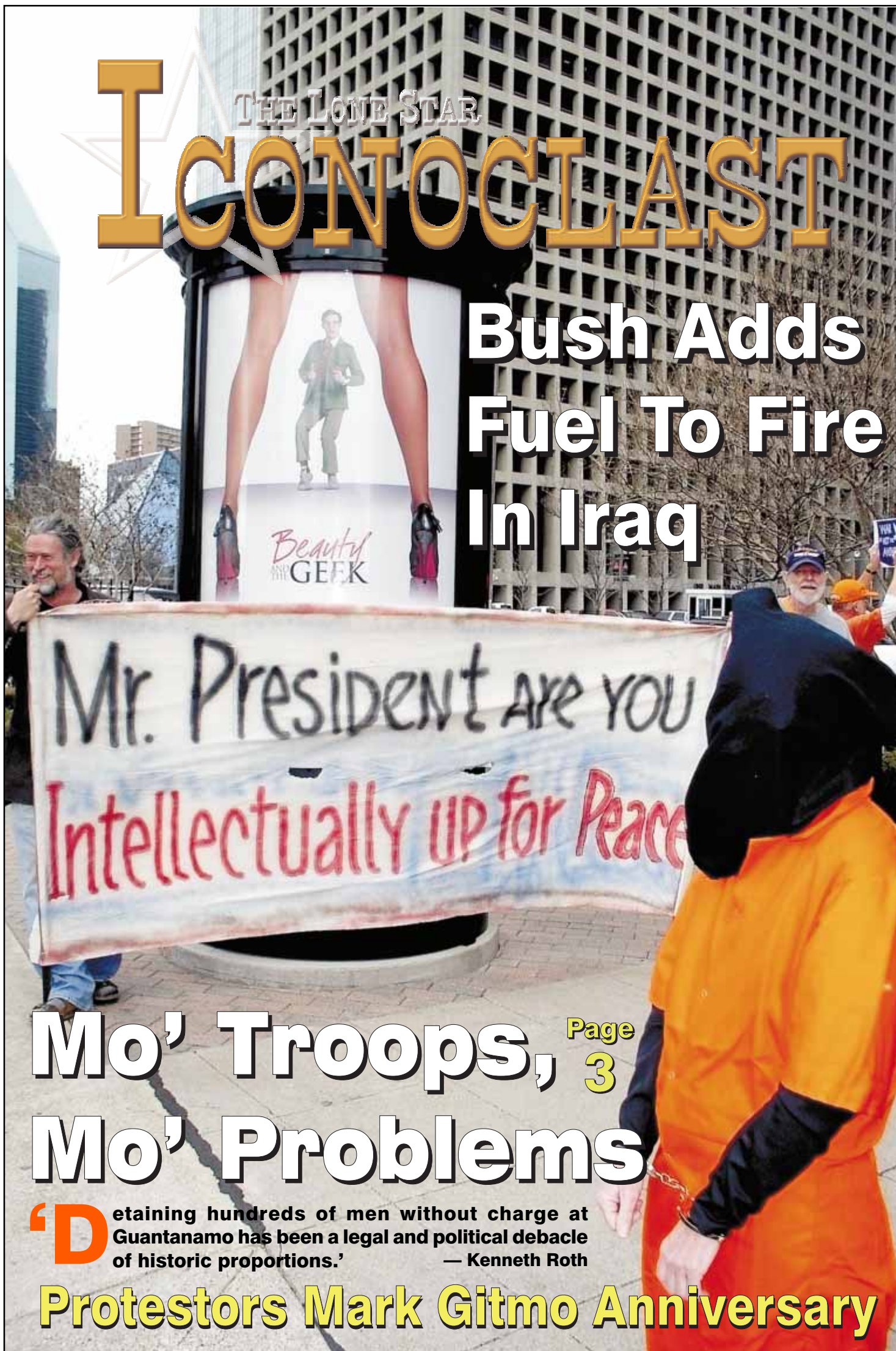
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— Kenneth Roth

## Protestors Mark Gitmo Anniversary

# Bunker Buster Bomb Blast Back?

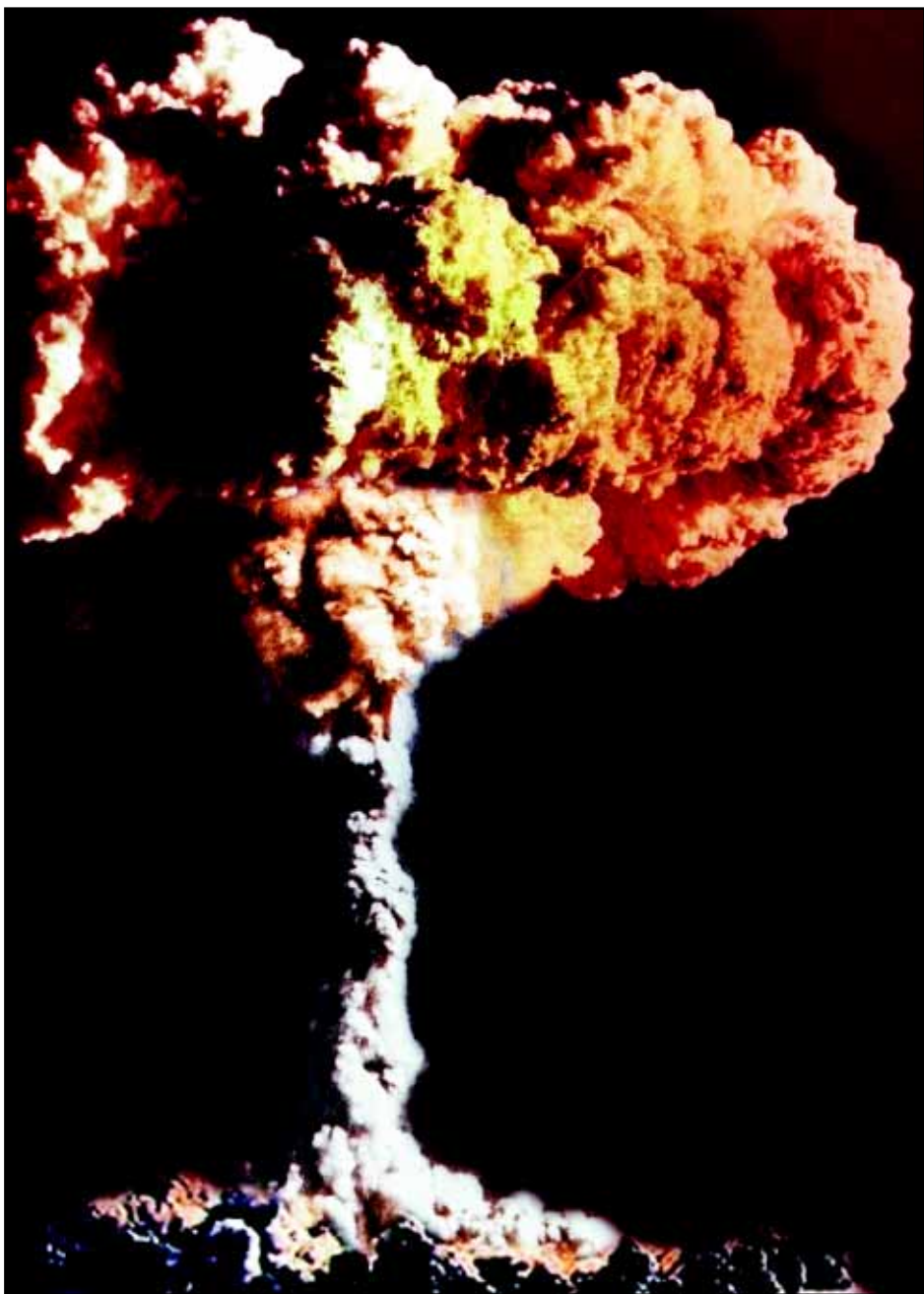
## Divine Strake Hearings Set For Jan. 18, 24

— Agency Error Extends Comment Deadline —

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — Utahns will have more time to comment on Divine Strake, an proposed explosives test planned to occur at the Nevada Test Site.

Two state-sponsored public hearings have been set for Jan. 18 in St. George and Jan. 24 in Salt Lake City.

Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. called the



hearings after learning that the National Nuclear Security Administration's "public information" sessions that would not take oral testimony from the public.

Nuclear watchdogs groups — who described the NNSA's meetings as a "dog and pony shows" — fear that this new 700-ton nonnuclear test blast would throw radioactive particles from past atomic experiments to Utah and other states downwind.

Moreover, the public is upset that the federal government reneged on promises for more public hearings on the blast in Nevada, Utah and Idaho. Only three hearings are scheduled, the other of which in Las Vegas, Nevada.

"The public has never had a voice in Divine Strake," says Salt Lake City downwinder Mary Dickson. "Just like during the 1950s, our government is clearly not listening to the public. Where is our democracy?"

According to the Utah governor's press release: "Huntsman will make introductory remarks at the state-sponsored Salt Lake City hearing on Jan. 24. A court reporter will transcribed the comments from that

hearing and one in St. George. The remarks will be enclosed in the state's comments to the federal agencies behind Divine Strake."

The two Utah hearings will take place on Jan. 18, 5 - 8 p.m., at Dixie State College Dunford Auditorium, Browning Building 225, S. 700 East St. George and on Jan. 24, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m., at Utah State Capitol, West Building, Room 135, 450 N. State Street, Salt Lake City.

Due to an error made by the Department of Energy's NNSA, written com-

ments will be accepted through Feb. 7 on its environmental assessment for the test blast.

The mistake happened when 10 pages of the NNSA's draft environmental assessment were "inadvertently omitted." The information in the pages identified agencies and consultants alined with the test as well as definitions of technical terms and references.

Defense Department budget documents show that the Divine Strake test is designed to identify the smallest

**Critics worried blast in U.S. will send nuclear debris throughout country, causing sickness, death.**

proper nuclear yield necessary to destroy underground targets. Despite the federal government's denials, citizens insist that the blast's only purpose is to usher in the next generation of nuclear weapons.

The Divine Strake blast would be equal to the lowest yield of the B61 nuclear bomb — which is 50 times larger than the largest conventional weapon in the U.S. arsenal.

"Politics is about protection, not just pork," said Vanessa Pierce, the director of Healthy Environment Alliance of Utah

**Blast would equal lowest yield of B61 nuclear bomb... 50 times larger than the largest conventional weapon in U.S. arsenal.**

(HEAL Utah), a citizens' alliance against nuclear and toxic waste.

Utah's congressional delegation has remained at odds with the federal agency in charge of the test.

Recently, Rep. Jim Matheson (D-Utah) said that his request was declined to have the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the Department of Energy accept public comments at the hearings scheduled in Utah and Nevada.

Rep. Matheson added that he remains skeptical of the agency since he and Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) expected that "Utahns would have a chance to present their views."

**INFO**  
HEAL Utah  
[www.healutah.org/](http://www.healutah.org/)

THE LONE STAR  
**ICONOCLAST**

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# Mo' Troops, Mo' Problems



## Bush Adds Fuel To Fire In Iraq

STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS from Metroplex-area colleges and universities participated in last Thursday's afternoon rally in downtown Dallas. About 80-plus people protested there against President Bush's decision to escalate U.S. involvement in Iraq by sending additional 21,500 troops to the battered nation.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

## Protestors Mark Gitmo Anniversary

By NATHAN DIEBENOW  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

DALLAS — President George W. Bush announced an escalation to the U.S. involvement in Iraq last Wednesday night at the White House.

This plan which increases troop levels in the most violent parts of the war-torn country quickly came under fire from the Democrats who control both houses of Congress as well as those from within his own political party.

About five U.S. brigades, or 21,500 U.S. troops, will be deployed to the Iraqi capitol of Baghdad and the Sunni-dominated al-Anbar province.

Except for strong words for the Iraqi government to stand up for itself, Bush's plan calls for no timetable for U.S. troop withdrawal and no benchmarks with which to gauge progress in the region.

In his televised address that over 45 million American watched, Bush admitted to

making mistakes in the Iraq war. However, advice from top military brass and the Iraq Study Group (ISG) — the bipartisan, Congressionally-appointed task force — went unrealized in his plan.

Recommendations included a phased withdrawal of all combat forces from Iraq in 15 months, aid given to the Iraqi government on conditions that peace among the sectarian forces, and an olive branch to Syria and Iran in partnership to secure Iraq.

Republicans and Democrats agreed that a political element was required for the sectarian violence to stop among the Sunni and Shia in Iraq. This element was also left out of Bush's plan.

### Public Reaction

The American public met the president's announcement with deep concern.

An Associated Press-Ipsos poll released Thursday found that 70 percent of Americans were against deploying more

troops to Iraq.

President Bush's own approval rating fell to a new low (32 percent) in this specific poll.

The job approval rating for this new Democratic-controlled Congress rose a bit to 32 percent from 27 percent, according to the AP-Ipsos poll.

The Iraq war also gained percentage points — up from 24 percent three months ago to 38 percent — as the most important problem facing the United States, according to the public in the poll.

This four-year-old conflict has killed over 650,000 Iraqis, according to a Johns Hopkins University study, and over 3,000 U.S. soldiers, according to government records.

The poll was conducted via telephone during the three days before Bush explained the troop increase on television.

### Democratic Reaction

The Democratic Party reacted strongly to the president's troop escalation. However, it

members in Congress have yet to stand as a united front to cut off funding for military operations in Iraq.

The newly-elected Speaker of the House, Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), said her party backs boosting the size of the military but refuses to clamp spending for U.S. troops still deployed.

In the Senate, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) submitted legislation to stop funding to increase troop level contingent upon a congressional vote.

Potential and intentional presidential candidates from the Democratic Party in 2008 took shots at Bush's plan but none — save Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) — have yet to offer solutions of their own.

"Democratic leaders well understand we regained control of the Congress because of the situation in Iraq," Kucinich said early last week. "However, two months later, the Congress is still searching for a plan."

Instead of shifting funds to

slow military operations in Iraq or initiating a new vote on authorizing the war, the Democratic leaders are planning to hold a symbolic vote on the issue.

Under the Constitution, Congress itself is unable to force the president to operate under its own military strategy. The legislative branch's power lies only with appropriating funds to the various agencies.

So far, Congress has okayed \$500 billion for military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.

The White House wants \$10 billion more to be spent, which would be the largest call for military funds ever.

### Republican Reaction

To a certain degree, the Democratic leaders have allies in the Republican Party who have huge problems with Bush's troop deployment. This GOP faction includes Bush loyalists.

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# Mo' Troops, Mo' Problems

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Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), for instance, called Bush's speech "the most dangerous foreign policy blunder carried out since Vietnam."

The comment made by this Vietnam War veteran came Thursday as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee grilled Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice over the plan.

Bush has even received criticism from radical right-wingers on talk radio.

In his syndicated column, Ret. Lt. Col. Ollie North wrote that members of just about every branch of the military havetold him that a troop escalation beyond the current 140,000 already deployed in Iraq is not the answer to U.S. success there.

"Not one of the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Guardsmen or Marines I interviewed told me that they wanted more U.S. boots on the ground. In fact, nearly all expressed just the opposite. 'We don't need more American troops, we need more Iraqi troops' was a common refrain. They are right," he said.

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) seems to be one of the only Republicans who back boosting

troop levels there indefinitely. The favorite among GOP circles for the party's presidential hopes had called for such a move over a year ago in order to secure the area.

Neo-conservatives see this troop escalation as perhaps the last thrust of their agenda in transforming Iraq into a democracy.

### Military Reaction

A new poll by THE MILITARY TIMES found that one in three officers and enlisted service-members back Bush's war.

Almost 75 percent of those polled thought the military is already stretched too thin.

U.S. soldiers training Iraqi forces for action, however, have said that more American troops won't fix Iraq.

Lt. Col. Jody Creekmere told McClatchy Newspapers that when the U.S. forces leave the region, the Iraqi government would figure it out.

"It may be ugly. It may be very ugly. But they will figure it out," the trainer said.

For Pfc. Odom Walker, the mission might have worked had more troops been deployed before now.

"We could have done the job right. Now it might be too late," Walker told THE CHICAGO TRI-



**SHAMEFUL ANNIVERSARY** — A demonstrator wearing an orange prison uniform and black hood stood on the corner of Griffin and Commerce Streets in downtown Dallas to mark the fifth anniversary of the opening of U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The prison now holds about 400 "enemy combatants" with alleged ties to international terrorist groups.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

BUNE.

Other soldiers are more optimistic about Bush's escalation.

Ret. Marine Sergeant Major Juan Duff said Iraqi security forces need to fight off the insurgents more for the plan to work.

"My concern is what the Ira-

gis are doing," said Duff. "Are they stepping up?"

Stateside military trainer Lt. Col. Chris Beckert told the TRIBUNE there first needed to be a clear mission.

"I needed more intelligence, not more soldiers," Beckert said.

### Anti-war Reaction

A banner displayed outside an anti-war rally in Dallas last Thursday had similar words on intelligence for President Bush.

The banner read, "Mr. President, are you intellectually up for peace?"

The two-hour Dallas rally was one of many that sprang up in Texas and around the country in response to Bush's escalation of the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

These activists are also upset that the Democratic leadership in the House had refused to defy the Bush administration head-on by de-funding military operations concerning the so-called "war on terrorism."

The U.S. occupation of Iraq was one of the main deciding elements that swung control of Congress to the Democrats in the November election.

So, keeping the feet of the congressional Democrats to the fire, anti-war groups have stepped up their own hell-raising tactics to pressure for complete troop withdrawal.

In one instance, a small group of protestors disrupted House leaders during their first news conference by shouting "De-escalate, investigate, troops home

now!"

Anti-war bloggers retaliated against Sen. Henry Reid for an interview in which he said he would consider increasing troops. Days later, Reid retracted his statement on a prominent anti-war blog.

### Texas Protests

In response to the continuation of the "war on terrorism" and the fifth anniversary of opening of the Guantanamo Bay detention center, several anti-war rallies were staged across the world, including some in Austin, Denton, and Fort Worth.

In Dallas, for example, 80 or more people participated in an event that called for the closing of the U.S. military naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

At the base, roughly 400 inmates have been held indefinitely without any legal rights to due process in U.S. courts. The inmates are said to have ties to international terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda, though many of past prisoners have been released without charge.

About eight of the Dallas demonstrators took turns dressing in orange prison jumpsuits and black hoods in solidarity with the Gitmo detainees.

The other participants of the downtown rally held American flags and signs that read "Torture Wrong!" and "Stop the War"

Jackie Overmeyer, 51, traveled on her own from Mesquite to the protest. She stood on the sidewalk on Griffin Street not a

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**CHANGING ROOM** — Demonstrators look for and try on orange jump suits at the Dallas rally against President Bush's escalation of U.S. involvement in Iraq Thursday. The participants included (from left) Carrie Dove of Fort Worth, Richard Sevens of Dallas, Daniel Williams of Dallas, Louise Chandler of Richardson, and Jonathan Caceres of Fort Worth.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

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block away from the Earle Cabell Federal Building.

"I don't think the president is right. It's not a war we should be in. We need to get out of it," she said, holding the American flag. "I'm hoping that once we withdraw, they can solve their problems on their own."

Garth Hill took time during his lunch break to demonstrate with his co-workers from the nearby Dallas Community College. They held up long canvas banner that read, "Bush made a big mistake going to war in Iraq."

"Wherever there's oil we're going to send bombs, and I'm against that," said the 37-year-old clerk and family man. "It feels good to be out here. There's a lot more support on the street than I was expecting."

The relatively silent peace rally — while attracting such occasional disgruntled drivers as one who waved his middle finger and yelled "faggots" at the demonstrators — earned numerous noises of support from oncoming vehicle honks.

"Here we are in the reddest state of all maybe, and quite a few people are signifying that

they're against this surge, this war," said Randy Conine, an English teacher at El Centro College standing to the left of Hill.

Conine said that he was "re-joining the effort" on the street that day after a long hiatus. He attributed his rejuvenation to his students, current events, and the Peace Studies program at Richland College.

## Continued Struggle

For Chicago-native Elaine Sullivan, Thursday's rally was a continuation of her involvement in the anti-Vietnam War marches on the campus of the University of Wisconsin in the 1960s and the anti-nuclear weapons campaign in Dallas in the 1980s.

"I think it's more urgent than ever before that people stand in the streets," said the retired faculty member at Richland College.

"I bet you if we had a draft next week, and you did this protest two weeks from now, we'd see huge amounts of people who don't want their sons and daughters to go to war," she added, "but as long as it's the minorities and the poor predominately (going to war), we could be very *liaise faire* about it."

Juana Byrd, 46, of Arlington



**POINTING TO THE FEDERAL BUILDING** in downtown Dallas, protestors led by Crawford Peace Center co-founder Hadi Jawad (right) yelled, "This is what hypocrisy looks like!" The demonstrators expressed their displeasure at President Bush's decision to escalate U.S. involvement in Iraq and refusal to close the detention center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba last Thursday.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

said she had no expectations about attendance at the noon-time rally and gave no grief to those who were unable to participate.

"People are working. People are trying to earn a living, and not everybody can afford to

come. I'm fortunate enough to come. Right now (President Bush is) not doing anything for jobs, and people have to keep what jobs there are. People have to put food on the tables," said Byrd, who heard about the event via MoveOn.org.

One of the demonstrators in an orange jumpsuit said that the billions of dollars being spent on the make-believe "war on terrorism" should be spent to upgrade American communities.

"That's my basic argument. We have problems and situations here in America — we're spending billions of dollars to supposedly upgrade a situation across the world for people who don't really want the help," said the man who would refer to himself only as "Guantanamo Prisoner #1."

"It's really an economic thing," he added. "Our government that spends hundreds of billions of dollars on war, but won't spend the same amount of money on healthcare or education for the general populous. I think it's a hypocrisy."

## Gitmo Anniversary

Demonstrations Thursday also occurred outside the Guantanamo Bay detention center, coinciding with the fifth anniversary of the complex opening to imprison suspected terrorists.

One of the participants was a former Guantanamo detainee, the first of ex-inmates to return to the site of his imprisonment.

Asif Iqbal was released without charged after being held for

three years at the U.S. naval base in Cuba.

"Every time it appears on TV, I remember the people in Guantanamo," said the a 25-year-old British national.

Iqbal told reporters during a press conference in Cuba that he was tortured to confess he was a member of al-Qaeda.

Eight of the nearly 400 inmates in Guantanamo are British residents, according to the British Broadcasting Corporation.

One of them Bisher al-Rawi, 35, has been held there for four years, has a hernia, and is going insane which may lead to a permanent disability, according to his lawyers.

Another inmate Jamil el-Banna is losing his eyesight and having leg pains because his poor prison diet has inflamed his diabetes. He has also never met the youngest of his five British children.

Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, said in a prepared statement that the center should close its doors and cease operations.

"Detaining hundreds of men without charge at Guantanamo has been a legal and political debacle of historic proportions," he said. "The Bush administration should either charge or release the detainees trapped in a nightmarish limbo."

In last year's Military Commissions Act, Congress erased all legal rights of the prisoners

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**DECLARING PEACE** — Mehri Cornett of Iranians for Peace and Justice spoke at a rally in Dallas Thursday about her wish for peace between Iranian and the United States governments. Five hours after President Bush declared an escalation to the Iraq war, five members of an Iranian consulate in Iraq were reportedly taken into custody by U.S. forces.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

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on the base. Only 10 Gitmo detainees have been charged with crimes.

The worldwide day of protests against Guantanamo center was organized by human rights organizations and activists, including Amnesty International and the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Anti-war activists, including Col. Ann Wright, Medea Benjamin, and Cindy Sheehan, also participated in the demonstration outside the naval base. The Cuban government says the U.S. military has illegally occupied the base for over a century.

Up to 100 protestors in orange jumpsuits were arrested for entering a federal courthouse in Washington, D.C.

## Iranian Consulate

Five hours after President Bush announced this troop escalation, the U.S. military raided an Iranian consulate in Arbil, Iraq.

The military detained five Iranians and took all the computers and documentation in their office.

The U.S. government said Friday that the men captured were part of the Iranian Republican Guard cell planning attacks on U.S. forces.

The regional Kurdish government condemned the raid, the second against Iranians in the last month.

The Iranian embassy in Baghdad requested the men to be released.

The Iranian consulate in Arbil was set up last year out of an agreement between Iraq and Iran.

# Israel Denies Plan To Use Tactical Nukes Against Iran

JERUSALEM — Israel denied that it had secret plans to use tactical nuclear weapons against Iran's uranium enrichment facilities.

Instead, Israel wanted to exhaust diplomacy first, according to Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev.

"The focus of the Israeli activity today is to give full support to diplomatic actions and the expeditious and full implementation of Security Council resolution 1737," said Regev. "If diplomacy succeeds, the problem can be solved peaceably."

According to the British newspaper *The Sunday Times*, the secret plans state that low-yield nuclear "bunker busters" would be used on an enrichment plant in Natanz.

Conventional bombs would also be deployed on a heavy water plant at Arak and a uranium conversion plant at Isfahan, said the newspaper.

Both the Israeli Prime Minister and the Minister of Strategic Threats declined to comment.

The newspaper went on to say that two Israel Air Force squadrons had recently simulated the 2,000 mile round-trip to the Iranian targets by flying to Gibraltar.

Israel, though, would use nuclear weapons only when plans for conventional attacks are nixed and when the United States fail to stand in the way, according to *The Sunday Times'* sources.

The Bush administration has consistently backed Israel, saying that it would employ military force should diplomacy break down. In an interview with *The Jerusalem Post*, incoming House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Maryland) said the Democratic Party backed the president's position.

Israel might consider a preemptive attack on Iran not unlike when it destroyed Iraq's atomic reactor.

However, military analysts say that Israel may have revealed its secret plan as a signal to Iran to stop its uranium enrichment project. At the same time, Israel won't be able to eradicate Iran's facilities by itself, according to the analysts.

The United Nations has sanctioned Iran for not stopping this enrichment project, which Iran denies would be used for military purposes. UN officials say that Iran might have the capa-

bility to create a nuclear weapon in 10 years.

It remains unclear as to whether Israel possesses nuclear weapons. Jerusalem denies having such arms, but Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has suggested otherwise recently.

In 1986, a former employee of the Dimona research plant, however, leaked information about Israel's nuclear capabilities. The story was first reported by *THE SUNDAY TIMES* newspaper.

The employee Mordechai Vanunu was jailed in Israel until his release in April 2004.

# Afghan Heroin Traffic Increases In U.S.

WASHINGTON — The United States may have crushed the Taliban regime five years ago, but it hasn't stopped heroin from Afghanistan into the United States.

Drug enforcement officials deny any such increase has taken place, though the level of heroin has remained the same from Afghanistan since the Taliban's expulsion.

But Afghanistan officials and internal drug-enforcement reports say that more heroin is being imported and seized inside the United States.

U.S. politicians have also stated that law enforcement officials have told them privately that Afghan heroin is pouring into the American market.

"More heroin is definitely coming in from Afghanistan," said Rep. Mark Steven Kirk, a Republican representing the suburbs north of Chicago. "The

problem is the official reporting lags as to what we're actually seeing in the streets."

Rep. Kirk visited Afghanistan as a reserve naval intelligence officer. He blames the Bush administration for being slow to respond to the jump in the heroin market.

Last year, Afghanistan produced more opium than ever before, up 50 percent. In fact, the Asian country tops the world in poppy production at about 90 percent. The prime shipping lane for Afghan heroin to the United States is through Europe.

While Mexico and Colombia exports more heroin into the United States than Afghanistan, the DEA reports that heroin seizures grew by six percent between 2003 and 2004. Figures from 2005 have not been released. Undercover agents, though, found a slight increase in U.S./Afghan heroin trade in 2005.

## Rally Set Feb. 4 For Troops At Fort Hood

FORT HOOD — Austin-area activists plan to rally outside Fort Hood the day before the first commissioned U.S. officer to refuse deployment to Iraq faces a military court martial.

The rally set for Sunday, Feb. 4, will be located at the gas station near the East Gate from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The activists will pass out literature about the GI Rights Hotline and the court case involving U.S. Army Lieutenant Ehren Watada.

For refusing to participate in an illegal and immoral war, Lt. Watada is facing six years in prison and a military court martial on Monday, Feb. 5.

The Austin activists intend to leave at 10 a.m. for Killeen, Texas where they will meet up with activists from across the state.

For more info about Lt. Watada, visit his website, and for more information about the rally, email CODEPINK Austin.

**INFO**  
Lt. Watada Website  
[www.thankyoult.org](http://www.thankyoult.org)  
CODEPINK Austin  
[info@codepinkaustin.com](mailto:info@codepinkaustin.com)

# California Enters Debate On Universal Health Care

LOS ANGELES — The state of California is entering the debate for a new statewide healthcare system that provides coverage to all of its 36 million residents.

Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger announced his proposal, a mixture of partnerships with the state government, private insurance companies, and employers to the tune of \$12 billion.

"Everyone in California must have health insurance,"

Gov. Schwarzenegger said during a press conference last Monday.

Specifically, the governor's plan calls for the creation of a fund for the working uninsured that would be filled with four percent of the total Social Security wages from businesses with 10 or more workers that are not insured.

The state's Medicaid program, Medi-Cal, would also gain funds from the revenues of doctors (two percent) and

hospitals (four percent) under the proposal. In return, doctors and hospitals would see a \$4 billion increase in annual reimbursement.

Medi-Cal currently serves only adults with children as well as children who are residents whose family income is 250 percent above of the poverty line. Undocumented residents would still not be allowed Medicaid service, but they would be given access to state and county hospital care.

Insurance companies under the governor's proposal would not be allowed to deny coverage to citizens due to their age or health. Eighty percent of the companies' profits must also be directed to health care services.

Members of Schwarzenegger's party are already grumbling over the proposal due to the tax measures aimed at doctors and hospitals.

California, though, leads the

nation in population without health insurance, about 6.5 million people total or one-fifth of its population.

This comes at a time when fewer employers are offering health insurance across the country.

Three other states — Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont — already offer near universal health coverage to its citizens. New Jersey is also considering expanding its state insurance coverage.

# Edwards Supports 9-11 Commission Reforms

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congressman Chet Edwards recently strongly supported H.R. 1, legislation that imple-

ments vital 9-11 Commission recommendations to keep Americans safe from terrorist attack. Major provisions require 100 percent scanning or screening of sea cargo and cargo shipped on passenger flights, improved emergency communications for first responders, and homeland security grants for states based on risk. The bill passed 299 to 128.

“There is no higher priority for the federal government than protecting

Americans from terrorist attack,” said Edwards, a member of the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee. “This bill includes a number of the 9-11 Commission’s common-sense bipartisan recommendations that are long overdue and will help make America safer from terrorists.”

The bill also includes provisions to help prevent nuclear materials and weapons of mass destruction from fall-

ing into the hands of terrorists and rogue states. Edwards is a recognized leader in Congress in the fight against nuclear terrorism. He helped secure \$84 million in 2003 to install radiological detectors at the busiest foreign ports to detect nuclear materials before terrorists can get them to targets in America.

“Since less than 5 percent of the cargo coming into U.S. seaports is currently inspected, we simply must improve security screening as soon as possible. This bill is an important first step forward and members of Congress must continue to work together in a bipartisan manner to protect Americans from those who seek to destroy our way of life.”

## H.R. 1

### Homeland Security Provisions

- Increase share of state homeland security grants provided on the basis of risk
- Create stand-alone grant program for communications for first responders
- 100% inspection of air cargo carried on passenger planes over the next 3 years
- Quickly accelerate installation of explosive detection systems for checked baggage
- 100% scanning of U.S.-bound shipping containers over the next 5 years

## H.R. 1

### Weapons of Mass Destruction Provisions

- Improve U.S. efforts to safeguard unsecured nuclear material
- Create a U.S. Coordinator for the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism and a blue-ribbon commission to recommend further reforms
- Strengthen efforts to eliminate nuclear black-market networks

The House also considered legislation, H Res 35, creating a Select Intelligence Oversight Panel within the House Appropriations Committee that would strengthen the oversight process for intelligence funding. The bill passed 239 to 188.

Edwards serves on the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee.

## TFB Wins Awards For Excellence

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — The Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) scored a perfect five out of five in “awards for excellence,” presented at the American Farm Bureau Federation annual convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, Tuesday night.

The five categories in the awards for excellence included Education and Agriculture Promotion, Leadership Development, Member Services, Policy Implementation, and Public Relations.

Texas Farm Bureau President Kenneth Dierschke accepted the awards, which also included a Presidents Award, the AFBF’s “best of the best” designation for Member Services. TFB was also selected for a Navigator award honoring membership achievement.

Also at the AFBF convention, former Texas Congressman Charlie Stenholm received the organization’s highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award for lifetime achievement in service to agriculture.

## Edwards Supports Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Representative Chet Edwards today strongly supported HR 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act, which requires the federal government to use its immense bargaining clout to negotiate lower prescription drug prices for seniors under the Medicare prescription drug program. Current law prohibits the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) from doing so. The bill passed 255-170.

“This bill will save seniors and American taxpayers billions of dollars by lowering the cost of Medicare Part D drugs,” said Edwards. “This bipartisan bill is an important first step forward that puts the needs of our seniors above the interests of the drug company lobbyists.”

In 2003, Edwards introduced legislation similar to HR 4 to negotiate lower prescription drug prices under Medicare. As Chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, Edwards has seen firsthand how the VA uses its bargaining power to negotiate lower drug prices for veterans. Those negotiated prices are 58 percent lower on average than those under the Medicare prescription drug program.

“It makes absolutely no sense that Medicare is prevented from bargaining to reduce prescription drug prices for America’s seniors as the VA does for our veterans,” said Edwards. “Studies show that prices for the top 20 Medicare drugs were 58 percent higher than VA prices.”

Prices charged by Medicare drug plans are rising at more than twice the rate of overall inflation. A Families USA study shows that, over a 6-month period, the median drug price increase among Medicare drug plans for the top 20 drugs prescribed for seniors was 3.7 percent - which translates into a 7.4 percent increase over a year. The study concludes that, “The Medicare drug plans are not containing drug price inflation.”

Edwards believes that passage of H.R. 4 can not only help lower Medicare prescription drug prices for seniors, but protect the Medicare system by lowering the overall cost of the program.

“Soaring drug prices put Medicare benefits at risk in the future by growing the cost of the program enormously. If Medicare drug prices are lowered, the cost of the Medicare program is reduced for taxpayers. That’s a win-win,” said Edwards. “Why should seniors and taxpayers pay the highest drug costs in the world for American made products? They shouldn’t and this bill is a bipartisan, common-sense step forward for our seniors.”

Numerous organizations have endorsed this bill, including, AARP, Families USA, Consumers Union, National Community Pharmacists Association, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, Center for Medicare Advocacy, Medicare Rights Center, National Council on Independent Living, American Nurses Association, and many others.

## Edwards Statement On President’s New Iraq Proposal

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Representative Chet Edwards released the following statement on the president’s new Iraq proposal:

“As a father of two young sons, I will hope and pray that the president’s new plan will bring stability to Iraq, but my primary concern is whether the Iraqi government has the will and competence to crack down on militias and to bring about a political reconciliation between Sunnis and Shiites. If the Iraqi government doesn’t fulfill its commitment to this new plan, then no amount of U.S. troops can solve problems of sectarian hatred and conflict in Iraq.”



Chet Edwards

## Minimum Wage Increase Jumps First Hurdle

WASHINGTON — An increase to the federal minimum wage jumped its first hurdle last Wednesday.

With over 80 Republicans in tow, the Democratic-controlled House voted 315-116 in favor of bringing the minimum wage up to \$7.25 an hour.

The Senate now has the opportunity to vote on its own version of the House bill which raises the wage floor by \$2.10 over the next two years.

While labor groups are pushing the wage increase on behalf of the working poor, business groups still want the final version of the bill to include measures friendly to them.

The White House said it was against the House bill because considerations

for small businesses were left out.

Democratic senators replied they would be willing to change their version for the benefit of small businesses.

About 5.6 million Americans would benefit from the minimum wage increase, according to the Economic Policy Institute. The wages of another 7.4 million workers would be indirectly increased, EPI said.

The national wage floor last increased under President William J. Clinton and a GOP-controlled Congress in 1997.

In the last decade the Republicans have controlled Congress, their party has refused to back any increase to the minimum wage.

## ‘911 Mysteries’ To Play In Austin Jan. 26

AUSTIN — The Austin Citizens for 9/11 Truth group is sponsoring a special screening of the acclaimed 9/11 film “911 Mysteries Part 1: Demolitions.”

The event, which is free to the public, will be held at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin in the Sanctuary at 7 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 26.

This 9/11 Truth film is being hailed as among the very best produced to date investigating the destruction that occurred in New York City on Sept. 11, 2001. It makes the case for controlled demolition of the World Trade Center that fateful day.

“No one can see this film and walk away believing the government’s story regarding what happened to those buildings,” according to a spokesperson for Austin Citizens for 9/11 Truth group.

In addition to screening this important work, George Humphrey, acclaimed 9/11 author and film-maker, will introduce the “911 Mysteries” and speak beforehand. Following the film, Humphrey will lead a discussion with the audience.

The goal of this evening is to explore both the unanswered questions concerning 9/11 and the implications for today’s world, say the sponsors.

DVDs of the film will be given away while supplies last. Donations will be accepted.

For more information, visit the website for Austin Citizens for 9/11 Truth.

## INFO

Austin Citizens for 9/11 Truth  
[www.ac911t.org](http://www.ac911t.org)

## Texas Independence Day Celebrations Planned

WACO — Plans are advancing for the big March 2, celebration of Texas Independence Day at the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame.

The public is invited to come to the monthly planning meetings on the first Thursday of each month at the First United Methodist Church, 4901 Cobbs, Waco.

Sam Maverick, a man who never branded his cattle and thus was the origin of the term maverick, actually earned his living as a real estate developer and businessman. He and his wife, Mary, lived in seven different houses and their five children were all born in a different place.

The Maverick's were among the Texas pioneer families who helped to shape the Republic of Texas.

These and many other inter-

esting facts were presented by Kenneth Hafertepe, Baylor professor in museum studies at the January meeting of the Sterling C. Robertson Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Professor Hafertepe's slide presentation showed quite a lot of the history of the town of San Antonio over the years. Daughter of the Republic of Texas chapter president Ronita Miller pointed out areas of the Alamo that are in need of repairs and told about the extensive project that the Daughter are spearheading.

For more information about the celebration, call Miller at 254/848-4713. For more information about the Daughter of the Republic of Texas, contact Amelia Bogard at 108 Sunny Lane, Gatesville, Texas, 76528-1851.

## Hearts And BARK's Gala Ticket Sales On

CLIFTON — January started off with a bang for members of Bosque Animal Rescue Kennel (BARK) who are involved in the production of the annual fundraiser for Valentine's day, Hearts and BARK's Gala. Letters were sent out and already a wave of eager sweethearts have purchased tickets for the life-saving event.

This year's gala will be held at the popular and elegant Tin Building Theatre. Featured is a meal of roasted pork loin with raspberry chipotle, roasted beef loin with horseradish sauce, homemade bread, desserts, and har-

monious sides.

Also on tap is the ever popular and totally jazzy Sonny Mac Blues Band. Last year's event was a howling success due to the band's high energy entertainment. Attendees screamed for more, so at the close of the 2006 event, the band was scheduled back for the following year.

Interested party goers should call Roger Mitchell at 675-6693 for their tickets. This event, at its new venue, promises to be festive and glittery and a sure thing for those celebrating their love of animals.

## Bipartisanship Reigns Supreme Over Internet Bill

WASHINGTON — Advocates for keeping the Internet superhighway free from tolls welcomed a bipartisan piece of legislation introduced in the Senate last Tuesday.

The bill known as the Internet Freedom Preservation Act of 2007 would enshrine the pervading principles on the World Wide Web that have prevented Internet service providers from limiting access to information for online consumers.

Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.), who with Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) introduced the bill, said that protecting "Network Neutrality" means guarding the economic well-being of all Americans and the democratic nature of the Internet.

"The Internet became a robust engine of economic development by enabling anyone with a good idea to connect to consumers and compete on a level playing field. The marketplace picked winners and losers, not some central gatekeeper," Sen. Dorgan said. "That freedom — the very core of what makes the Internet

what it is today — must be preserved."

The legislation mandates that broadband service providers operate the network in a nondiscriminatory manner. The providers, though, would remain free to manage the network to protect the security of the network or offer different levels of broadband connection to users.

The telecom companies must also offer consumers the option of purchasing a "stand alone" broadband connection that is not bundled with cable, phone or Voice Over Internet Phone (VoIP) service.

The debate over network neutrality erupted last year. At the time, a number of chief executives of companies that sell broadband service spoke freely about splitting the Internet into different speeds and limiting access based on a fee scale.

As a result, thousands of Internet businesses, consumer groups, consumer groups, labor and education groups, and religious organizations came out in support of net neutrality.

"The American public has an

overwhelming interest in seeing this bill pass into law, ensuring that the online marketplace of ideas remains open and vibrant," said Ben Scott, Policy Director for Free Press.

Both Sens. Dorgan and Snowe offered similar legislation in the previous Congress as members of the Senate Commerce Committee. The senators said the legislation could have passed had it not been for Senate leaders not allowing it to come to a vote.

The cause for net neutrality gained ground three weeks ago when telecom giant AT&T agreed to keeping to Net Neutrality intact with its \$35 billion merger with BellSouth. Net neutrality supporters hope Congress extends the terms of merger agreement to the rest of the telecom companies by passing this new legislation.

"The legislation is the first step towards a national policy that will ensure that all consumers, not just the most affluent, have affordable access to high-speed Internet services," said Jeannine Kenney, Senior Policy Analyst, Consumers Union.

## Land Office To Hold First Geothermal Lease Sale

AUSTIN — Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office, will attempt to break new ground next week with the state's first-ever lease sale for geothermal energy.

Geothermal energy refers to methods that create electricity from tapping into the earth's own heat. Along the Texas coast, this can be done by drilling into warm geologic strata, running liquid through a closed loop and using the earth's heat to warm the liquid and create steam. That steam can then turn turbines and create electricity.

On Tuesday, Jan. 16, Patterson will make more than 11,000 acres of state-owned submerged land in seven counties available for geothermal energy production. The lease tracts range from 1,174 to 2,480 acres and are in Jefferson, Galveston, Chambers, Calhoun, Jackson, Nueces, and Kleberg counties.

"We're finally making the Texas heat pay off," Patterson joked. "This geothermal energy lease, like our wind energy efforts, shows Texas is committed to renewable energy. And if I have my way, it will not only generate clean energy but make money for Texas schools."

Patterson made history in 2005 when he signed the nation's first-ever lease for offshore wind power. In 2006, he signed the nation's second -

and biggest - lease for offshore wind energy development. All proceeds from lease sales, as well as a percentage of the energy-revenue that's produced from them, goes into the state's Permanent School Fund, which helps pay for the state's share of public education.

The geothermal lease sale will take place as part of the regular winter oil and gas lease sale held by the School Land Board. In the quarterly lease sales, oil and gas firms typically submit sealed bids for the right to drill for hydrocarbons on Permanent School Fund lands. The Permanent School Fund earns 20 to 25 percent royalties on any oil or gas produced on the leases.

Last year, the Land Office earned more than \$90 million for the Permanent School Fund from lease sales alone, including a record bid of more than \$6.3 million for the right to explore a 720-acre area in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Jefferson County.

In contrast, the minimum bid for the geothermal tracts is just \$2 an acre. "It's not a lot of money, yet," Patterson said. "But when it comes to Texas school kids, every dollar counts."

The lease sale and School Land Board meeting will be Webcast live, beginning at 10 a.m. The Webcast may be viewed at [www.glo.state.tx.us/news/webcast.html](http://www.glo.state.tx.us/news/webcast.html).

## TSU To Host 5th Collegiate Forum

LOCKHART — On Saturday, Jan. 27, college students and high school juniors and seniors are invited to the campus of Texas State University in San Marcos for the 5th Annual Collegiate Forum hosted by the Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas and Texas State University.

The Collegiate Forum will kick off at 9 a.m. in the Texas State University Agriculture

Building with a welcome from ICA State President Bruce Dopslauf and Texas State University Agriculture Department Chairman Dr. C. Reed Richardson.

Agriculture industry experts are slated to speak, including Richard Wortham of the Texas Beef Council, Dr. Bob Hillman of the Texas Animal Health Commission, and Dr. Joe Harris of the Southwest Meat Association.

From the Office of the Governor, Economic Development Advisor Mark Ellison will speak.

There is no charge to attend the Collegiate Forum, but seating is limited, so interested participants should register for the event by contacting the ICA office at 512-620-0162 or logging on to [tica@icatexas.com](mailto:tica@icatexas.com).

A complete schedule can be found at [www.icatexas.com](http://www.icatexas.com).



## Farmers Union Announces 105th State Convention Plans

DALLAS — Texas Farmers Union announced plans for the 105th State Convention, set Jan. 26-27, at the Holiday Inn Select North, Dallas.

The convention will begin Friday Jan. 26, 2007 at 1 p.m. Attendees will board buses to commute to Point, Texas, and there tour the National Monument of the Texas Farmers Union founders. Rains County Farmers Union members will host a reception for all the members, and guests will return to the hotel by 5 p.m.

The reception will start at 6 p.m., and organizers will be inducting a new "Pioneer in Agriculture." Brittnee Lee, winner of the 2006 "Rural American Idol," will open the convention with singing of the National Anthem. Entertainment will follow with other winners from the

## Cattleman's Clinic Set For Jan. 23

MERIDIAN — A clinic for beef cattle producers has been slated for Tuesday, Jan. 23, at the Meridian Livestock Commission Company on Hwy. 6, north of the intersection of Hwy 6 and 22. Speakers will address Foreign Animal Diseases and Potential Occurrences; Beef Market Outlook; Calf Crop Value; and Bull Selection.

This event is hosted by Extension Livestock Committees in Bosque, Hood, Johnson, and Somervell Counties. Registration will begin at 5:30 p.m. A meal will be served at 6 p.m. and the program begins at 6:30 p.m.

A highlight of the program is sure to be when a panel of speakers uses calves sold that day at auction and explain why the calves sold at varying amounts. The panel will also use this time to explain how order buyers categorize calves and why that impacts the price of animals.

Medium/large (#1) calves top the market each week, and another panel of speakers will discuss how to select bulls based on a cow herd to produce this type of calves.

"Since a meal will be served, attendees are asked to call and let us know they will be coming so we may get an accurate head count and have enough food," said David Winkler, County Extension Agent in Bosque County.

To reserve a meal, or for more information, contact Winkler at 254/435-2331.

2006 "Rural American Idol," Loris Galloway III and Brittany Richardson.

The President's Breakfast will start the Saturday agenda, with the following morning session to include a number of topics to be brought by various speakers. A legislative luncheon will be held at noon. Leading off the afternoon session, Harwood Schaffer from the University of Tennessee's Agricultural Policy Analysis Center will present a seminar on the new Farm Bill.

Texas Farmers Union Policy Drafting will be held Saturday afternoon, with the highest priorities being the 2007 Farm Bill; Disaster Assistance; Implementation of Country of Origin Labeling; Dairy Policy; and restoring funding for the Conservation Security Program.

The convention will culminate with the evening awards banquet and other entertainment. National Farmers Union President Tom Buis will be the featured speaker and a charity auction will follow the banquet.

More information can be found by logging on to <[www.texasfarmersunion.org](http://www.texasfarmersunion.org)>.

## 2007 Texas Transportation Report Ready

AUSTIN — The Texas Transportation Commission is authorized by law to make recommendations to the Texas Legislature on "statutory changes that would improve the operation of the department."

The commission spent much of 2006 seeking public comment on issues it thought the Legislature should consider during the 2007 session. The results are ready, and have been compiled in a report titled "Meeting the Texas Transportation Challenge."

The full report can now be viewed on-line <[www.txdot.gov/services/government\\_and\\_business\\_enterprises/meeting\\_challenge.htm](http://www.txdot.gov/services/government_and_business_enterprises/meeting_challenge.htm)>.

## Child Care Funds Are Now Available

CLIFTON — The Heart of Texas Workforce Child Care Services now has funds available to assist with child care for people who are working or going to school.

For more information or to request a packet, call 254/753-0331 or 800/772-2269.

## 2007 Texas Water Plans Delivered To State Officials

AUSTIN — The Texas Water Development Board recently delivered the 2007 State Water Plan entitled Water for Texas 2007 to high-ranking state officials.

Texas water law requires that the state water plan shall provide for the orderly development, management, and conservation of water resources, and preparation for and response to drought conditions, in order that sufficient water will be available at a reasonable cost to ensure public health, safety, and welfare; further economic development; and protect the agricultural and natural resources of the entire state. The state water plan will be a guide to state water policy.

The 2007 State Water Plan is the second

plan adopted that incorporates regional water plans developed under Texas Water Code, Section 16.053 between January 2001 and January 2005.

Volume I is an executive summary that includes statewide water resource information and the TWDB's legislative policy recommendations.

Volume II includes details of the state's planning process, the 2006 Regional Water Plans, and other water resource information.

Volume III is a digital version of the 16 regional water plans and a database of water planning information for each water user group in Texas.

The plan is available on-line <[www.twdb.state.tx.us](http://www.twdb.state.tx.us)>.

## U.S. Corps No Longer Issuing Golden Age, Access Passports

FORT WORTH — A new discount program, the America the Beautiful Interagency Pass, is now in effect. The program replaces the Golden Eagle Passport, Golden Age Passport, Golden Access Passport, and the National Parks pass.

There are three types of The America the Beautiful Interagency Pass:

- The Annual Pass is available to anyone, is valid for a 12-month period, and costs \$80.
- The Senior Pass is available to citizens or permanent

residents of the United States who are 62 years of age and older. It is valid for the lifetime of the holder and costs \$10.

The Access Pass is available to permanently disabled citizens and permanent residents of the United States. It is free, and valid for the lifetime of the holder.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will not accept the America the Beautiful Annual Pass nor will they be sold at Corps facilities. However, Corps-operated parks will accept the America the Beautiful

Senior Pass and Access Pass.

Existing Golden Age and Golden Access cards will still remain valid and may be used to receive discounts until they are lost, stolen, or wear out. Replacement Golden Age and Golden Access Passports will not be available.

For more information about the passes, visit the website <[store.usgs.gov/pass](http://store.usgs.gov/pass)> or call 888-ASK-USGS. A list of recreation sites accessible with the passes can also be viewed on-line <[www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov)>.

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Ron Paul

## U.S. Rep. Ron Paul Files GOP Presidential Papers

LAKE JACKSON, Texas — Nine-term Texas Congressman Ron Paul filed incorporation papers last week to create a presidential exploratory committee allowing him to collect funds on behalf of a potential bid for the presidency.

Paul, who was the Libertarian nominee for president in 1988 has filed as a Republican.

Known as a lone wolf among GOP powerbasers,

Paul has long advocated limited government and low taxes, in keeping with the Libertarian philosophy. He has been a strong supporter of keeping the integrity of the Constitution and was the lone Republican congressman to vote against Department of Defense appropriations for fiscal year 2007, at which he explained his opposition to the war in Iraq.

### Rep. Ron Paul To Receive 'Defender of Habeas Corpus Award'

ALVIN — U.S. Representative Ron Paul will be presented with "The Defender of Habeas Corpus Award" by a group of his constituents at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 20.

This award recognizes Rep. Paul for his work in protecting citizen's constitutional liberties, and particularly his vote against HB 6166, known as the Military Commissions Act of 2006.

This bill fails to protect due process, eliminates habeas corpus for many detainees, and undermines enforcement of the Common Article 3 of Geneva Conventions.

The legislation also gives a "get out of jail free card" to senior officials who authorized or ordered illegal torture and abuse that is backdated nine years and immunizes U.S. officials from prosecution for torturing detainees who the military and the CIA captured before the end of 2005.

The vote in the Senate was 65 yeas to 34 nays, with one not voting. In the House, the bill passed with 250 yeas, 170 nays with 12 not voting.

Ten congressmen from Texas are among the defenders of habeas corpus.

The award presentation will be held at Knights of Columbus on Hwy. 6 at CR 146 in Alvin, Texas. A town hall meeting will follow.

Attendees will have the opportunity to discuss the latest issues with the congressman and ask him questions on any subject of concern.

The topics may include, but are not limited to: Iraq, Iran, the Trans-Texas Corridor, Veteran's benefits, and environmental concerns.

This meeting is intended to help Rep. Paul learn more about the issues impacting his constituents.

For more information about the town hall meeting or the award, contact Margaret Davis.



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The advertisement features a photograph of two horses, one dark and one light, harnessed together and pulling a wooden beam. A speech bubble on the right contains the text "Ads In The Iconoclast Pull, Too!". Below the speech bubble, the text "GIVE US A TRY!" and the phone number "(254) 675-3634" are displayed in bold. At the bottom right, the logo for "THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST" is shown, with "THE LONE STAR" in a smaller font above the word "ICONOCLAST" in large, stylized letters.

## USDA Taking Rural Business Opportunity Grant Applications

TEMPLE — USDA Rural Development State Director Bryan Daniel has announced that the agency is accepting applications for the Rural Business Opportunity Grant Program for Fiscal Year 2007. Applications will compete nationwide for the funding.

The primary objective of the RBOG Program is to improve the economic conditions of rural areas. Assistance provided to rural areas under this program includes technical assistance for business development and conducting economic development planning. The grants are available to public bodies, non-profits, federally recognized Tribal groups, and cooperatives.

Applications for the RBOG

non-earmarked funds will not exceed \$50,000 (\$150,000 for multi-state projects). Completed applications must be submitted to the Texas USDA Rural

## Rural Economic Development Loan, Grant Applications Accepted

TEMPLE — USDA Rural Development State Director Bryan Daniel has announced the agency is accepting applications for the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program until Sept. 30.

USDA Rural Development Business Programs administer loans and grants designed to strengthen the economy and infrastructure of rural areas. The purpose of the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant

Development Office, 101 South Main, Suite 102, Temple, TX 76502, by March 30.

Applications will be tentatively scored by the State Office,

Program is to provide grants and zero-interest loans to electric and telephone companies that are USDA Rural Development borrowers not delinquent on any Federal debt or in bankruptcy proceedings.

The entity establishes a revolving loan fund that can be used for community facilities and infrastructure. The funds support financing job creation projects and economic development within rural areas. Prior-

with the two highest scoring project applications being considered for funding and submitted to the National Office for final review and selection.

For more information or an application package, contact Danny Torres at (254) 742-9780 or log onto the website <[www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov)>.

ity is given to projects that are physically located in rural areas having a population of less than 2,500 people.

For more information, contact Danny Torres (254) 742-9780 or log onto the website <[www.rurdev.usda.gov/tx](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tx)>.

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## TDA To Host Capital Fund Workshop

AUSTIN — The Texas Department of Agriculture will host a workshop for non-entitlement communities and counties in Texas to help community leaders apply for Texas Capital Fund awards.

The workshop will be from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 8 in Austin. It will be held at the Stephen F. Austin state office building, 1700 N. Congress Ave., in Conference Room 1003A on the 10th floor.

The workshop will allow applicants to meet with Texas Capital Fund staff, who will be able to answer questions about financial and application requirements.

The Texas Capital Fund is a part of the federal Community Development Block Grant program. About \$10.5 million in competitive awards are provided by the Texas Capital Fund

each year to boost the economic development of small Texas cities and counties. Administered in cooperation with the Office of Rural Community Affairs, the program is housed under TDA's Rural Economic Development Division.

The fund provides funding for infrastructure, real estate, main street and downtown development.

Non-entitlement cities or counties do not receive direct funding from HUD and typically include cities with a population of less than 50,000 and counties of less than 200,000. There are more than 1,200 eligible cities and counties in the state.

The workshop is free, but space is limited to the first 30 who register. For registration, call (512) 475-0885 or e-mail <[finance@agr.state.tx.us](mailto:finance@agr.state.tx.us)> by Jan. 22.



# THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST EDITORIAL

## The Window Is Closing

As Congress and the Senate contemplate President Bush's new Iraq war plan of escalation, the window of opportunity to get out of Iraq is closing. Bush himself is trying to push down the sash, as is crystal clear by his speech last week and the ensuing actions at the Iranian embassy in Iraq the next morning.

Saudi Arabia wants us to go to war with Iran, and the Saudis and Bush are blood-brothers.

It's all about oil. Private partnerships have been converted into governmental partnerships, what with the White House becoming drenched in oilmen.

To pull it off has been the creation of wealth for well chosen corporate partners, who have become facilitators.

Their quest, as puppets of the Saudis, is control of the oil spigot in Iraq, not necessarily to provide more oil, but to control it, governing down production so that, for the consumer, the price of oil remains as high as possible.

The Saudis have controlled America's foreign policy since the days leading up to 9/11, and they control it yet today, at least through the Executive branch and a House and Senate that has stood by silently — for fear of retribution by the President's henchmen who until recently controlled public opinion.

Odds are the U.S. would already have invaded Iran had it not been for a few solid Americans who were able to stop the Divine Strake bunker-buster test last summer, buying time. But now, Divine Strake is again being scheduled, to test new devastating weaponry in Nevada's nuclear fallout dump that was credited with killing many Americans back in the 1960s.

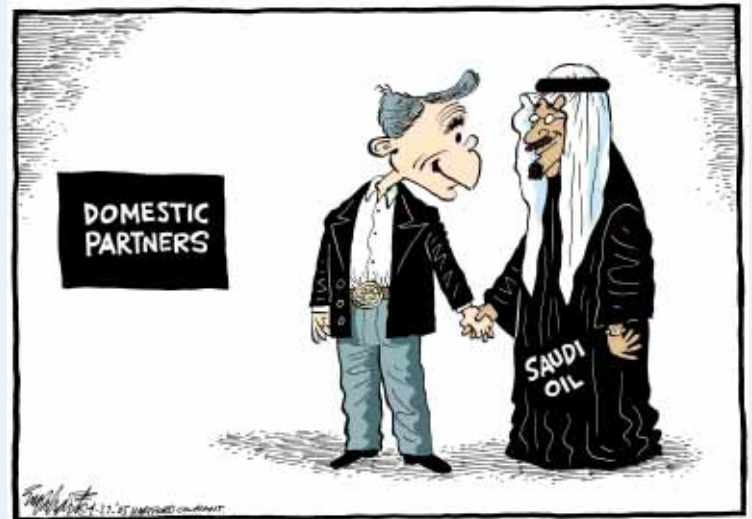
Bush might hope that admitting that mistakes were made regarding the war will absolve him of accountability, but it won't.

His only hope now is to pull off a big win — one that will blind the public to the truth, which makes the actions of prolonging the war even more precarious.

During a Senate hearing featuring Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice this past week, it was said that America supports its troops with the best equipment possible, but that is a lie.

The U.S. military machine has time and

again fallen short of providing for its troops. A case in point are anti-tank missile systems that are available now but not provided. It's all a matter of government contracts — which good-old-boys get them for future development, hang the immediate needs.



The race is on between the Executive and Legislative branches of government to make a crucial move.

It's about time the Legislative branch unshrouded the hidden agenda that has haunted America since Bush's ascendency to power and set things straight.

There are bullet holes in our Constitution.

There are black holes in our pocketbooks.

And competent foreign policy has fallen into a vacuum.

We don't need another cooked-up war. Neither does the world.

You can have globalization without shifting hard-earned dollars from the middle and lower classes into the hands of mega-corporate monsters. Profits and incomes can be derived without resorting to destruction.

Instead of the new century built upon construction, brotherhood, and decency, the screws have been turned in the opposite direction. Getting the rich richer, the poor poorer, destroying the little guys, destroying their infrastructures, decimating hidebound laws, destroying freedom, and glorifying a house of lies.

We let it happen. We trounced on the principles that made us great.

Now, the greatest sin will be to let it continue.

— W. Leon Smith

# Laura Recovery Center Foundation Brings Resolution For Families

BY MELINDA PILLSBURY-FOSTER  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Ricky Holland went missing July 1, 2005. Police credit keeping his image before the public with eventually finding the seven-year-old boy's remains. Less than a month after the billboard went up near the family home in Williamston, Mich., policed received a call from the boy's family and Ricky's adoptive father led them to Ricky's body, murdered by his adoptive mother. The family said that seeing Ricky's image, day after day, made silence impossible.

The faces on milk cartons, flyers, and flashed on huge screens as part of the Sunset program sponsored the Laura Recovery Center Foundation out of Texas have brought resolution for families and the public. The resolutions sometimes bring forward a witness who knows when the child died; sometimes the child is found. But in every case, according to Bob Smithers, whose daughter Laura disappeared on April 3, 1997, and whose body was found 17 days later after a search that involved the entire community, it is better to know.

The Laura Recovery Center became a central mission for Bob and Gay Smither after their daughter's body was found. Bob, an engineer, said that in the immediate aftermath of the search for Laura they were contacted by dozens of families who had also lost children. By becoming a resource for families facing the same need he and Gay feel that they have channeled the pain that losing Laura left. The Laura Foundation grew from there.

Keeping the pictures of children before the public has proven to be the most effective tool for finding missing youngsters, according to Dawn Davis, Senior Case Manager of the Laura Center. Those at the Foundation are always innovating, finding new ways to ensure that the public keeps looking that include signs on shopping carts and flyers that go out with pizzas in the communities where children are missing.

In the case of Ricky Holland the billboard sponsored by the Laura Recovery Center Foundation brought resolution to all involved. The Laura Recovery Center was also involved in the

## GUEST COMMENTARY

Elizabeth Smart Case. Bob Smithers and his wife, Gay, founded the Center as part of their own recovery process after their daughter's body was discovered; Bob was on site in Utah the day after Elizabeth Smart disappeared, helping that community learn the essential lessons that make a successful search possible. Bob noted that keeping awareness alive in the public eventually resulted in Elizabeth's return to her family. This is the mission that the Laura Recovery Center continues to pursue today.

Nearly 10 years later they have also begun to focus on educational work; the Laura Center has educated over 100,000 people in law enforcement over the past 10 years and also offers SKATE, a class designed to keep kids safe.

In those 10 years many things have changed, according to Bob Wolcutt, Executive Director of the Laura Recovery Center. Organizations across the country have come together to form a national coalition. The Association of Missing and Exploited Children Organizations, or AMECO Inc., provides a central nexus point for organizations working on the problem according to Dawn Davis. Ms. Davis arranged for

the billboard that broke the Holland case in Michigan.

The Smithers, along with other families, have learned the hard way that law enforcement efforts are limited. Police stop actively looking in just a few days. For efforts to continue, families and communities must be involved.

According to Bob Smither, a successful search depends on effective cooperation among law enforcement, the family, and the community.

The Smithers and the employees of the small but effective organization located near Dallas call this, The Triangle of Trust.

On the Laura Recovery Center site an array of readily avail-

able tools that are used constantly. Among these are a template to generate a flyer and a manual that provides invaluable advice on how to begin a search, what to look for, and the pitfalls.

The manual includes nitty gritty advice and can be downloaded and used without crediting the Foundation.

They will continue to work, said Bob, until all children are safe.

*Melinda Pillsbury-Foster is a prominent activist, author, poet, and commentator. She is founder and president of the Arthur C. Pillsbury Foundation and hosts a radio talk-show program, The Spiritual Politician, at <BBSRadio.com>.*

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# My Letter To The Democrats In Charge

By ROBERTA KELLEY  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Dear Speaker Nancy Pelosi,  
Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid,  
House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer,  
and Senate Assistant Democratic Leader Richard Durbin:

*"Those who can get you to believe absurdities can get you to commit atrocities"*

Voltaire

Alcoholics are more able to convince people of things than anyone can ever believe. That is, until the person who has been fooled by the alcoholic again and again realizes that the risk of trusting this person who is clearly an active alcoholic or worse, a wet brained alcoholic, and in this blind faith is such that one's life or the life of another's is in danger. Or worse, people are killed by the recklessness of allowing an alcoholic to be in control especially while driving an automobile - it is inevitable and I know I do not need to prove my point because it has already been seen in this American suicide of our respectability, globally.

Dick Cheney and George Bush are late stage, chronic alcoholics, neither of whom have been treated for the condition. This behavior is demonstrated in their delusions of Full Spectrum Annihilation by way of nuclear war. This kind of thinking is due to a serious imbalance in brain chemistry and you all know it. So do the rest of the sentient beings on the earth; just ask Helen Caldicott, M.D. who as I am sure you know is a spokesperson for nuclear non-proliferation globally. It is her diagnosis that Bush is a "late stage alcoholic." Cheney shooting his friend in the face and then hiding for 18 hours gave us all the proof we need in his case. Unfortunately, Bush has lived most his life in his confused state of mind.

But this is how it is with the addictive personality - it can convince most all of the people most all of the time of almost anything to get its drug of choice - as we have now experienced.

Dick Cheney's and George Bush's drugs of choice are obvious - oil and war. They pretend they are going to save America from the decline of our way of life; this was in Cheney's speech in London 1999, regarding "where the prize ultimately lies." But if this were so, we would know them by their fruits and thus far, I do not see Dick Cheney providing the funds for R&D in the alternative energy direction.

## GUEST COMMENTARY

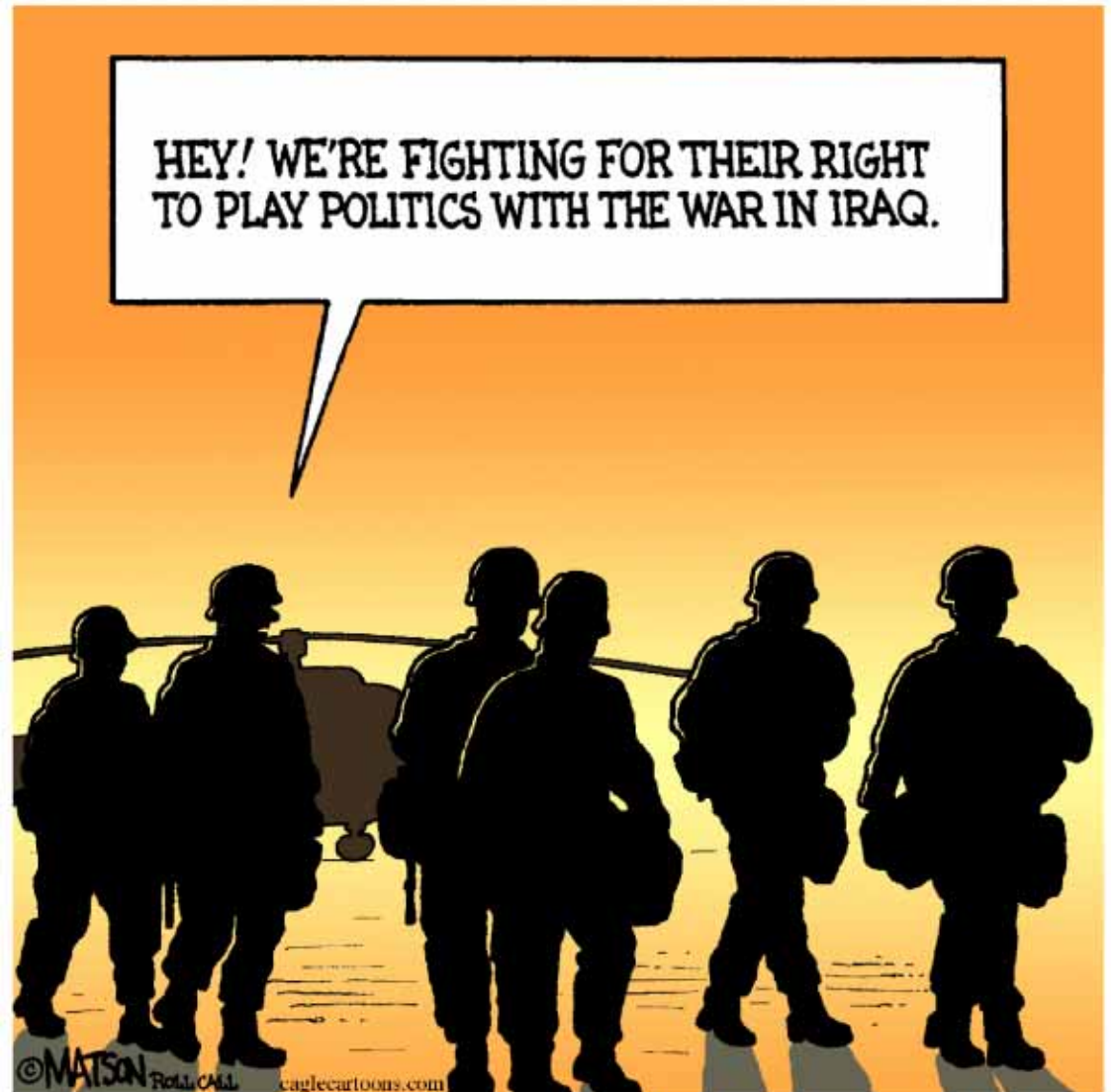
The most heinous aspect of the "Cheney Presidency," is how it has used "extremism" to be the rationalization for these two traitors taking America to war in the Middle East - these two, who are the real extremists. Their contempt for humanity is now manifested in numbers that stagger the imagination.

In the middle to late 1800s, illegal opium smuggling into China went under the guise of selling tea, but underlying the British and American "tea" concessions were the same "free trade" notions espoused by Reagan, Clinton and both Bushes. Prominent among the American opium traders was one Captain J. Prescott, represented by his friend and agent in Hong Kong, F.T. Bush, Esq. The intermarriage between these two families produced the Bush dynasty, and this is the genesis of the Bush family fortune, which, parenthetically, increased significantly during WWII through investments in the German war machine.

The realities of the economic depredation that was the opium trade collapsed the infrastructure of China, because the poor wretches spent all their silver for their opium and had nothing left for taxes. This, ultimately, was the reason the Chinese accepted Communism. Does it not make you think about how the Chinese must feel with the Bush Family in charge again and trying to run an "end-game" on the Middle East, Russia and China?

And now we learn that Gary Webb was absolutely correct. The CIA has indeed been a drug smuggling operation. Furthermore, we have also learned that the CIA is a direct arm of the Bush Family and the truth is stranger than fiction, as the saying goes. How much longer do we wait until another "dirty bomb" shows. Just how did anthrax get from one of our very own military bio-weapons labs into the mail of two of our Democratic senators?

Perhaps it would have been wise to have chosen energy sources other than just oil, when in 1955, M. King Hubbert discovered the peaking of oil production and because he had a conscience he told the oil companies that they needed to conserve petroleum. He also told the oil companies how to extract the oil without all the waste in "gushing." But no, the oil companies would not listen;



they preferred to demonize Mr. Hubbert to the point of destroying his career and ultimately, his life. Sounding familiar?

Looking into the future at that time would have required human beings who were humanitarians, those who have the art form of altruism mastered. They needed vision to see and know that such things as solar energy, water, wind - "renewables" - would be mandatory in the 21st Century.

And more important, it would have required the peddlers of flesh to rethink their lust for a military industrial complex. The unbridled waste of America's natural resource, oil, on the imperial thrusts of war has been criminal at best and now we know it is criminally insane as well, and the truth of our nation's suicide in the ability to be modern is upon us.

No more despot lunatics in charge, because this is where we end up.

The United States of America had its chance to be the true steward of the planet and could very well have been the greatest nation ever recorded in the history of time.

Not now. No, we have shamed ourselves by allowing the Bush Family to influence American policy for well over 100 years, skulking around through the halls of power. This family of robber barons have used the American taxpayer, the same as they used the Chinese taxpayer, so as to join the ranks of those who would be rulers of the world.

The answer to this man who is *not* the legal President of the United States is a resounding NO.

His family with the support of the Neo-Nazi agenda committed a *coup d'etat* on America in 2000, and should you people who are our 110th Congress not step up and get your sanity back, this country will crash and burn, the whole world shall be a global genocide, and you know it.

Do your job, please. Send more troops to Iraq? This would be in complete opposition of what was said to you, our representatives, in November 2007 - NO on Iraq. We should never have gotten to this place. All of you who were complacent in allowing the Supreme Court in 2000 to betray their vows to the Constitution of the United

States to further this Bush Family's agenda were traitors. The members of the Supreme Court that voted to stop the counting of votes in Florida need to be impeached. Those on the Supreme Court that were groomed to be there and purposely chosen by an illegal despot must be impeached immediately, as it is done in any third world country once the restoration of law has occurred.

We are a debtor's nation. We are a net importer. This means we are not a superpower and soon we have no choice but to swallow the medicine - we are a third world nation. You now have your opportunity to prove you are not traitors and to do the job that you were elected to do.

This war criminal, who is still being allowed to step into the limelight and lie, is truly a reflection of everything dark, selfish and shameful in the American psyche, and I will not have it, nor shall 90% of the country - in spite of the rigged numbers by Fox News. Furthermore, 100% of the international citizens (this percentage does not recognize all of the "elite" international inves

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# LETTER TO CONGRESS ... From Previous Page

tors in the peddling of flesh and counterfeiting of money) of planet Earth will not have it either!

Heap no more shame onto our nation. This is not a monarchy nor is it a democracy made for the super rich; it is a Republic first and foremost. These evildoers must be brought to justice for the insanity of their plans. They must be tried for their war crimes; otherwise we are a nation of hypocrites and no one should trust us, not even ourselves. We must find within us the courage and decency to honor, respect and obey the Constitution and its laws.

Cheney/Bush is about infinite lawlessness for the benefit of themselves and their *supra-rich* cabal. The agenda they have for commoners or anyone who does not support the imperial dictate is clear - torture, oppression, assassinations, unlawful executions, mass genocide - Katrina is the on our own back porch reminder of how these people think, as well as the many vile actions committed again and again in the name of "democracy," globally. Shameful!

"Don't get fooled again."

There should be a law that no person can govern without psychological profile testing, drug testing and ongoing physical examinations, to discern the sanity of someone who has the power to declare a war, most especially a nuclear one. This is where both Cheney and Bush fully well intend to go and they will not stop until they are stopped.

What have these people done? Have their spies collected such dark and dirty secrets on everyone to the point of blackmail? Otherwise, why would you "Democrats" not exercise the courage to immediately take back America, 100%. Remember November 7, 2006 and why you are in power again. When our voting is unobstructed, the ruling elite learn who truly rule and it is still WE THE PEOPLE! Even bankers cannot line their pockets should consumers stop making the flow of money happen.

We are bankrupt as a country due to the betrayal of the Constitution by past presidents and the agendas they pushed through by way of secret deals and "treaties." Cheney/Bush and their billionaire mobster cabal fully well intend to further hasten the collapse of this nation, and that is insane. Forced into the role of the warrior nation for more than 100 years by those who believe they are the "ruling elite" has caused Americans to be a people who are strung out on "antidepressants"

and now we are bankrupted as well. The so-called "investors" who are profiting from this war have no intention of putting any money back into the infrastructure other than for their own profits, as always.

You people have said: "In the days ahead, Congress will exercise its Constitutional responsibilities by giving the President's latest proposal the scrutiny our troops and the American people expect. We will demand answers to the tough questions that have not been asked or answered to date. The American people want a change of course in Iraq. We intend to keep pressing President Bush to provide it."

Do you see why Voltaire said what he did? Knock off the nonsensical rhetoric! You people are continuing to call these men "our President," when indeed Cheney is definitely not the President of the United States and yet we are living the Cheney Presidency, and everyone who has even one brain cell working knows it. But what is worse is that the Bush Family was allowed to hijack the Constitution and now their Manchurian Candidate, a poly-addicted drug addict, has destroyed as much of it and our Bill of Rights as he could.

Time for a cosmic reality enema to cleanse our minds.. Then we need to look at how retarded the American "Statesmen" have been in allowing this *coup d'etat* in the United States to happen "on their watch."

The Cheney Presidency has every intention of using nuclear weapons in Iran. They are desperate, blood thirsty supremacists, and by the level of corruption we have witnessed it is clear that it takes a lot to "get them off" - nuclear bombs are the ultimate high, or call it their sexual fantasy, at its most exploding orgasm.

That is how it really looks, folks, in the realm of reality: Beyond grotesque. But even uglier is our support of the State of Israel to the detriment of all other human beings in the Middle East.

Do we support Israel because it is our 51st State? This is what the international community says.

Is it true? And if so, why should Israel be a state of America?

No one gets to point a finger at me and make accusations of antisemitism, because my mother's maiden name is Marx. What I have to say about all this Jewish bull is: Stop it. Stop allowing these Neo-Nazis to call themselves Jewish and use the Jesus pill to get people to swallow, hook line and sinker, their imperialist crap.

Watch what happens when the drug addicts are told no. It is this for which we must prepare: The "blowback" that they will most certainly create. In fact, America is hated by these people because they can only love the "New World Order." American citizens are no more than fodder to these criminals.

We are living in the fantasies and nightmares of the Cheney Presidency and We the People did not vote for this - not in 2000, 2004, and not in November 2006.

As Nancy Reagan said: "Just say NO." No more soma for America.

It is long past the time that every man, woman and child in this country open their eyes and see the elephant in the middle of the room with no control over its bowels - this is the truth of the Cheney Presidency. We must become a mature nation immediately and stop behaving as though we are big kids on the playground and we are just having fun. Bullies are never fun and fun is only fun when it is fun for everyone.

Prove to We the People that our trust in you people is respected and help us restore the dream of our founding fathers

because it is within your power to do so. Please do not commit any further harm to the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights. To not reverse what these Neo-Nazis have done is to be a co-conspirator with their treacherous acts, all of them.

Today we are on the cliff, which cannot be mistaken as a high place from which we can jump or fall. The choice is ours and may we leap empty handed into the void, ass up and elbows down, to choose life, liberty and justice for all. Our forefathers' did; why not us?

The time has come for the Cheney/Bush/Neo-Nazi Presidency to end and for every war criminal to be brought to justice. There is no room for cowardice on this day of reckoning. Thomas Jefferson's cure for these kind of people is my choice too - what is your choice going to be?

We the People are watching.

Welcome to the true America.

**Footnote:** ". . . Concerning the proposed 'surge' by the Bush administration of 20,000-plus U.S. troops into Iraq, this requires further authorization by the U.S. Congress under the terms of the War Powers Reso-

lution. Section 4(a)(3) makes it quite clear that the War Powers Resolution is triggered ... 'In the absence of a declaration of war [which we do not have for Iraq], in any case in which United States Armed Forces are introduced ... (3) in numbers which substantially enlarge United States Armed Forces equipped for combat already located in a foreign nation....' We currently have about 140,000 troops in Iraq. Sending in an additional 20,000-plus would 'substantially enlarge' those forces. Therefore, the Bush administration would require further authorization from Congress for this euphemistic 'surge,' which is really a substantial escalation. Failure to obtain additional authorization from Congress for this substantial enlargement of U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq would constitute an impeachable offense under the terms of the United States Constitution for violating the Constitution's War Powers Clause."

Professor of international law at the University of Illinois, Francis Boyle is Author of *Destroying World Order: American Imperialism in the Middle East Before and After September 11*



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## Open Contempt For Those In Better Shape Is The First Step To A Healthier You

Like millions of Americans, I recently stripped down, prepared myself for the worst, and stepped onto the scale. Soon after, I retrieved the scale from the front yard and accepted the fact that, yes — it was probably defective. At my daughter's suggestion, I tried our neighbor's scale. This led to the discovery that, of the 23 scales I tested within a five-mile radius of our home, every single one was off by exactly 11 pounds. Being a journalist, I had to wonder: Was this a widespread problem? Were we being duped into needless exercise by faulty scales?!

I immediately brought this to the attention of my editor, who, realizing the implications, told me to stay out of his candy drawer.

The truth is, I have no one but myself to blame for putting on these extra pounds. This is why, every year around this time, people just like me make a commitment to start going to the gym. I know this because I recognize most of these people from last year. We all have the same expression: grim determination mixed with a sense of purpose in knowing that, afterward, there's a KFC right across the street. We come dressed with headbands and towels over our shoulders even though we spend most of our time wandering around the gym looking for water bottles.

After making this realization, I was motivated to do things differently this time. Never again would I splash water on my face, then stand close enough to someone to appear as though we are workout partners. It was



### Life Is A Funny Place

By Ned Hickson  
Siuslaw News

time to get serious about fitness by accepting the fact that the closest I'll ever get to having buns of steel is if I happen to leave the bread box open overnight. I'm 40 and have two children; what do I need washboard abs for when I know perfectly well that women are more turned on by a man who does the laundry?

With these things in mind, I put together a list of goals that will motivate me because they're actually achievable.

First, buns of steel are out. Instead, I will settle for buns of aluminum foil; as long as they can hold their shape and don't leak, I'm happy.

Second, I understand that my metabolism is slowing down and that, as a result, my body's fuel-burning efficiency is similar to a Humvee. Unless I'm careful, I will also weigh as much as a Humvee and require a government subsidy just so I can fill up with gas.

Third, I will no longer waste my time comparing my body with anyone else's, especially if theirs is better. This should make my workouts twice as productive since I will be avoiding eye contact with everyone else at the gym.

And finally, I will stop using the scale as my measure of success.

What's the point, really? They're all wrong anyway.

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

## Texas Ag Forum Friday, Feb. 23

AUSTIN — Renewable energy and issues surrounding the upcoming farm bill debate will highlight the 2007 Texas Ag Forum scheduled for Friday, Feb. 23, in Austin.

The forum, which will be held at the Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark, will feature Rep. Collin Peterson (D-Minn.), incoming chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, as the keynote speaker.

Dr. Joe Outlaw, co-director of the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M University and an economist with Texas Cooperative Extension, along with a group of Texas commodity leaders, have organized the forum. New Congressional leadership, budget uncertainty, and ongoing trade discussions have left many Texas producers unsure as to the direction of agricultural policy, Outlaw said.

Other speakers include energy experts from the U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Department of Agriculture, university policy and trade specialists, Outlaw said.

Additional information is available on-line <[agforum.tamu.edu](http://agforum.tamu.edu)>.

## Anger Management

Before writing this week's column, I did something that is not among my standard ritualistic preparations...

I actually left the house.

A couple of minor errands were in need of attention, and anyone else who might tend to them was either on the way to or returning from Chicago.

Thus, it became necessary to break my predisposed rhythmic brain exercises in lieu of a venture across the Twin Cities.

As I considered the depth of madness which had descended upon us just the previous evening, it seemed a bit of cooling off might be in order prior to slamming with animalistic rage upon my keyboard. With that in mind, I decided to take an unnecessarily circuitous route.

My goal was to put into practice the sage advice expressed by Don M. Fisher in last week's "Call To Mind," *The Non-Column*. The suggestion Don professed was to never write your column when angry, because it comes across as mean and the argument is lost right from the start. Time and sunlight seemed like good insulators to put between my animosity and written words.

However, the sheer joy incurred while trying to steer clear of the onslot of 3-ton Tahoes and larger tanks, piloted one-handed by 120-lb. soccer moms with cellphones surgically implanted onto their ears as they aggressively terrorized sedans, forced me to race through the errands and escape to the safety of home as rapidly as possible.

Once securely within the walls of my castle, I tried to watch television. It didn't work; I was still too peeved.

I suspect this particular state of being aggravated is going to last for some time to come.

Without a doubt, George Walker Bush simply does not get it.

He did not get what the voters mandated from all corners of our Nation on Nov. 7, 2006.

We said loud and clear that the largest portion of us are fed up with his personal war.

So, two months later the Little Dictator has decided to increase combat military personnel back to the 2004 level.

He's like the neighborhood bully, sticking his tongue out at the rest of the kids and saying, "It's my ball, and we're gonna play by my rules." This is just Phase 1 of Lame Dubya's retribution for taking a thumpin' in November.

Georgie just doesn't comprehend that the ball belongs to all of us, not him.



### Out Of The Blue

By Jerry Tenuto

Again and again Fearless Leader says these kinds of decisions should not be made for political purposes, but by military necessity. As if he has ever made any move for any reason other than its political ramifications.

When we consider military necessity, senior officers who formally stated additional U.S. ground troops would unnecessarily stir up the hornets' nest have been replaced by Bush loyalists, promoted after telling Li'l Georgie precisely what he wanted to hear. It's the same selectively approved "mix-and-match" type of data mining the War President used when he needed to con approval for the invasion of Iraq.

Once again, Fearless Leader has taken all the advice of the experts along with those most knowledgeable in matters of World Politics... and completely ignored their expertise.

Damn any attempts at diplomacy! Dark Lord Cheney never negotiates!

There was absolutely nothing in Lame Dubya's dictate of Wednesday, Jan. 10 that might even be remotely construed as new, constructive or creative.

It was what we called in the Army SSDD — "Same Shit, Different Day."

Except that he wants to give Iraq an extra \$1.6 billion of our money for "reconstruction."

What we got was precisely as we expected: A spoiled brat providing a fantasy revelation of the scenario he hopes will come to pass, primarily to save his own ass.

George W. Bush does not care one scintilla for those brave Americans who are fighting his private war, dying and being maimed for life, scarred emotionally with wounds no one can ever see or comprehend.

To him they are just numbers on data sheets, points to be played with like so many dots on a map.

How can our Nation swallow the insistent pandering of a chickenhawk with virtually no military experience, certainly no tactical training, who hid from the war of his generation, when he says he has the plan to fix the four-year disaster he himself started based upon lies?

The guy hasn't been honest

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# TENUTO

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with us for 30 seconds at a stretch since 2000!

The worst part about all of this is that Congress can't stop the troop movements. Some of the units are already in motion; others will be on their way before saner heads can prevail.

With the exception of his hardcore base, and the most hawkish of warmongering Conservative Americans who are well beyond the age of combat duty, nobody in this Country wants the Iraq mess to continue.

Prior to the Wednesday night edict some 61% of Americans were against the war; following Lame Dubya's dictate polls indicated a range of 70-75% against increasing troop levels.

George W. Bush is a scowflaw. He has a history of such behavior that dates back at least 30 years; his disdain of law continues with the illegal invasion of Iraq, and warrantless wiretaps, readings of e-mail, and now ground-based mail.

George W. Bush is as defiant as the five-year-old brat who pitches a screaming tantrum when the babysitter tells him it's time for bed. He defied the Constitution in the course of stealing the 2000 and 2004 elections, and has defied, defiled or shredded it at every juncture since. The Little Dictator has defied the citizens of the United States with every insidious plan that has been hatched in the West Wing. His countless hundreds of "signing statements" attest to his defiance of Congressional powers.

He continues to defy the people, and our duly-elected Democratic representatives in Congress and the Senate.

We want an end to his war; Li'l Georgie insists on escalating it to feed his own ego.

All of us are aware of the polite adjectives attributable to George W. Bush: Arrogant; spoiled; specious; stubborn; ill-equipped; uncompassionate; distant; aloof; mule-headed; megalomaniac; spurious; the list just goes on and on...

The one description of this schmuck who twice stole the Oval Office that we all need to be most aware of is - *Dangerous*.

Li'l Georgie has proven himself to have a fascination with killing living creatures of the multi-cell variety, eventually graduating from toads to human beings. He was fortunate enough to have an opportunity for on-the-job-training by killing humans one at a time as Governor of Texas.

That OJT led to his use of weapons of mass destruction against the people of Afghani-

stan (as practice) and Iraq. The latest estimate of deaths among Iraqis is 650,000.

Way to go, George! It'll take the terrorists and insurgents, even at their best efforts to get organized (which is never going to happen), about 325 years to accomplish what you've done in less than four!

If you think George W. Bush cares about you, then you really do have my sympathy.

He's run the United States into the ground, by doing nothing to improve conditions at home while squandering our treasury and all semblance of goodwill in every corner of the World.

Should you need more proof that George Walker Bush is the most dangerous man on the Planet, and is not concerned with your well-being or future, visit [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov) and read the complete text from Wednesday's dictatorial edict, or download a video feed.

Here's a much more constructive and positive use of our resources: Lame Dubya sends the 21,500 troops to the Gulf region. The \$1.6B for reconstruction gets redirected to same. Then, instead of making war those U.S. troops get busy rebuilding our Nation.

How's that for Nation Building?

I'm so mad right now I could eat nails!

The Madness of King George XLIII continues...

The 110th Congress must put a stop to this madness.

Shalom.

*(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))*

# THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor:

*Putting a Band-AID on a hemorrhage:*

Unless and until the 110th Congress addresses the inequities in our tax system, we'll continue to further plunge into the abyss of what is becoming irreversible national debt. It appears that this Congress is merely poised to put a Band-Aid on a hemorrhage.

Tax-avoidance schemes have been growing faster than the IRS' ability to crack down on them.

Many billions of tax dollars are lost through 'legal' outsourcing of jobs to other countries. The number of companies leaving the United States each year is accelerating at an alarming rate. The huge loss in tax revenue is becoming almost incalculable.

According to a December 2003 report, the IRS had identified over 400,000 taxpayers who are involved in tax-evasion strategies that are likely illegal. Earlier that year, the IRS had estimated the number at 131,000. It's clear that the IRS (and Congress) doesn't have a clue as to how much revenue is being lost — but it is enormous. Now, three years later, the problem is only getting worse.

The IRS tax code has become so complicated and incomprehensible that virtually nobody can understand it, leaving it subject to broad interpretation.

Whatever happened to the Democratic concept of progressive taxation — i.e., taxation according to the ability to pay? The IRS Tax Code needs to be completely revamped. Tax loopholes for 'special interests' must be eliminated. Taxes on unearned income should have been increased — not decreased.

So, what has the Bush Admin-

istration done to solve the problem? They have declared that outsourcing of jobs is good for America, tax cuts will reduce the deficit, and have slashed the number of IRS auditors (charged with auditing the tax reports on multi-million-dollar incomes) in half!

Paul G. Jaehnert, Vadnais Hts., MN

Dear Editor,

"Surge" is another word for "escalation"; "Iraq" is another word for "Vietnam." After successfully invading Iraq, the incompetent Bush-Cheney administration has botched winning the peace for four years. Every opportunity for success has been squandered; unrepairable damage to our cause has been self-inflicted, repetitively. Bush's so-called "new strategy" is more of the same. Compulsive denial has blinded their ability to make rational correction. This is the last-ditch desperate act of an obsessive gambler. The stakes are more American lives; yet, since Abu Ghraib, the game has already been lost. There are no aces in the hole; no magic bullets; only delusion.

For four years, the Republican-led Congress failed to oversee and prevent this catastrophe. To be fair, it took time for the depth of incompetence to become fully apprehended. Now, Democrats have Congress and the opportunity to restrain further madness.

Yours truly,

Bruce Joffe, Piedmont, CA  
To The Editor:

In spite of America's voice in the recent election and in polls, the loss of the 3,000th American in Iraq, the troops who have already had their Iraq tours extended and re-extended, and the Iraq Study Group Report, Mr. Bush has decided to ignore us

and escalate his fiasco in Iraq.

His naive notion of throwing good lives after lost ones cannot stop the ages old Sunni/Shiite blood feud. Nor, as we've seen, can terrorism be defeated by military means. Escalating the war would only cost more of our troops their lives and promote more anti-American terrorism.

Has Mr. Bush earned our trust and our confidence? Now, like an alcoholic who says he only wants one more drink, Bush claims that sending 21,500 more troops to Iraq - many to injury or their death - will satisfy him. Yeah, right.

Are we willing to speak up to defend our troops, our security, our honor, and our economy from Bush's bloody blundering? Please tell your members of Congress that it is more important to save our troops' lives than to save Bush's face.

Sincerely,

Doug Long, Rio Rancho, NM

## Secondhand Smoke Harms Loved Ones

COLLEGE STATION — Secondhand smoke, the smoke that comes off of a cigarette or other tobacco product, can make a smoker and their children sick, according to Courtney J. Schoessow, MPH, Extension Program Specialist - Health, of the Texas Cooperative Extension.

Schoessow said that children who live in homes where people smoke get sick more often with coughs, breathing problems such as asthma, and ear infections.

"Secondhand smoke is also bad for adults. It can cause lung cancer, and it is also bad for the heart. It can even cause death," she continued. Schoessow said that smokers who bring smoke into the home are being selfish.

"Protect your family. Make your home and car smoke-free. Take your smoking outside and away from your loved ones," she advised.

Schoessow said that poisons from smoke linger in the air for up to seven days, exposing people to dangerous poisons even if they are not present while smoking.

She also said taking smoking outside can be a first step toward quitting entirely. For more information on how to quit smoking, visit the American Cancer Society <[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)> or contact the National Cancer Institute 1-877-44U-QUIT.

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# New Commodore Takes Helm Of Texas Navy

By Jan. 8, 1836, Capt. Charles Edward Hawkins, new commodore of the rebel navy, was patrolling the coast of Texas and ready to fight the Mexicans on sea as well as land.

Unhappy with the slow pace of peacetime promotions, Midshipman Hawkins quit the United States Navy in the mid-1820s. Following in the footsteps of an equally disgruntled superior, he sold his services to newly independent Mexico. He prowled the Caribbean preying on Spanish shipping and distinguished himself in a major battle off the coast of Cuba.

Hawkins returned to the U.S. in 1828 and for several years piloted a steamboat on the Chattahoochee. Again answering the call of adventure, he took part in the doomed Tampico Expedition of 1835, an escapade he was fortunate to survive.

In December 1835, Hawkins presented his credentials to Gov. Henry Smith, head of the transitional rebel regime. Impressed by his maritime record, Smith referred Hawkins to the agents shopping for used schooners in New Orleans with the recommendation that he be given the first available command.

Hawkins' arrival in the Crescent City coincided with the purchase of a retired revenue cutter called "The Ingram." The agents gladly entrusted the vessel, renamed "The Independence," to the experienced sea dog.

The next addition to the Texas Navy was "The Brutus," brought from the Allen brothers, the real estate promoters that founded the town of Houston. The command went to William A. Hurd, who had earned his nautical stripes with the daring capture of two Mexican ships. He set sail from New Orleans aboard the Brutus in late January 1836.

"The Liberty" and "The Invincible" rounded out the revolutionary fleet. The former was a privateer previously commanded by Hurd, while the latter was a former slave ship. The captains were the Brown brothers, William and Jeremiah.

While Hawkins, recently put in charge as commodore, cruised the coast between Galveston and Tampico, William Brown slipped into the Mexican port of Sisal on the night of March 3, 1836. After fierce hand-to-hand fighting which left seven enemy sailors dead, the crew of the Liberty made off with the schooner "Pelicano."

Gen. Sam Houston paused in his frantic retreat after the fall of the Alamo to praise the spec-

## This Week In Texas History

By Barte Haile



tacular feat in a special proclamation. "Captain Brown with one of our vessels has taken a Mexican vessel with 420 barrels of flour, 300 kegs of powder, and other supplies for the army."

In spite of his heroics, William Brown was stripped of his command following a spat with Commodore Hawkins. He remained in the navy until his death from natural causes in the summer of 1838.

Keeping the rest of the fleet in Matagorda Bay, Hawkins sent the Invincible south to Matamoros to investigate a reported flurry of enemy activity. At the mouth of the Rio Grande on April 3, Jeremiah Brown was greeted by the heartwarming sight of the Mexican warship "Bravo" dead in the water with a broken rudder.

To verify that the vessel was disabled and not a tempting trap, the Texan raised the U.S. flag and dispatched an aide wearing the uniform of an American officer to the Bravo. Thinking along the same lines, Brown's adversary ordered Thomas M. Thompson, the notorious English mercenary, to determine the true identity of the Invincible.

Capt. Brown instantly recognized the colonists' old nemesis, who for years had delighted in making their lives miserable. As soon as Thompson was securely in irons below deck, Brown gave the order to open fire.

Neither side sustained serious damage in the spirited exchange, which was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of the American-owned "Pocket." Brown turned his attention to the intruder, whose crew offered no resistance to a boarding party.

A preliminary search of the Pocket uncovered contraband cargo destined for Santa Anna's army as well as a number of American and European recruits for his officer-poor navy. With his prize and prisoners in tow, Jeremiah Brown set a course for Matagorda Bay.

But the Liberty, Brutus, and Invincible had moved onto Galveston, where most noncombatants had fled in advance of the Mexican march across Texas. Capt. Brown dropped anchor at the island just in time to hear the astounding news from San Jacinto.

After three salutes from his cannon to celebrate the victory,

Brown restrained his jubilant crew. "Hold on, boys, or old Hawkins will put me in irons again!" he shouted half-jokingly in reference to an earlier episode in which he had incurred the commodore's wrath.

The Revolution was over, but the Texas Navy would sail the

troubled waters of independence for the decade-long Republic. Sadly none of the original four ships nor their captains would complete the historic voyage. The Brutus, last of the quartet, sank in a storm near Galveston in October 1837, and Jeremiah Brown was the sole

skipper to live beyond 1838.

"Outlaws & Lawmen" - "Best of This Week in Texas History" Vol. VI is \$10.95 plus \$3.25 postage and handling from Barte Haile, P.O. Box 152, Friendswood, TX 77549 or buy on-line at [www.twith.com](http://www.twith.com).

## I'll Have A Clone-Burger With Hybrid Fries



### Modern Times

By Lloyd Garver

Recently, the Food and Drug Administration said that eating food from cloned animals caused no health risks. They don't even anticipate a need to label cloned food as "cloned food." I understand what they're saying: These animals will be exact duplicates of the animals they are cloned from, so why should they be any more dangerous than the original? This makes sense, but I guess I haven't been reacting to this logically, and emotionally eating food from cloned animals is hard for me to swallow.

I'm a pro-science guy. When the late Dolly was in the news as the first cloned sheep, I thought it was exciting. I'm all for stem cell research. I think it would be great if animal cloning or genetic research leads to curing human diseases. This is perhaps one of the few areas in which I don't feel paranoid. I'm not worried about the alleged "slippery slope" that calls up images of scientists in darkened basements eventually grinding out "xeroxes" of humans. And yet, eating a burger from a cloned steer seems a bit weird to me.

I know we've been eating vegetables that have been "genetically engineered" for decades. There have been hybrids that produce bigger and tastier vegetables. Some plants are being bred to resist the effects of herbicides or disease. And I imagine that agricultural experts can produce two identical rhubarbs if they want to. So, why doesn't science messing around with nature bother me when it comes to plants?

For the same reason that it doesn't bother most people — because we aren't plants. Even in this age that has somehow produced people

who don't believe in evolution, most folks feel a closer affinity to animals than to plants. That's why an organization like PETA exists, but there is no "People for the Ethical Treatment of Plants." It's not just because PETP makes a bad acronym. It's because even though vegetables are living, breathing things, eating them or experimenting with them doesn't cause the same reaction in even the most radical thinkers. You don't hear about pro-vegetable people interrupting the Secretary of Agriculture, and protesting by dumping fertilizer over him.

For some years now, there has been a voluntary moratorium in the agriculture and food industry on selling cloned food. Despite the FDA's finding nothing wrong with food from cloned animals, they didn't urge an immediate lifting of the moratorium. They said a more definite report would come out in the near future — maybe in a few months, maybe in a year. If their scientific evidence found nothing wrong, why didn't they just say, "Farmers, start your cloning?" My theory is because, as with me, it just seems a little weird to them. And it's going to take time for many of us to get used to the idea.

I think we'll have that time. With the current technology, cloning is very expensive. A cloned calf can sell for as much as \$82,000, which is about \$81,000 more than a typical non-cloned calf. All kinds of genetic science has to

come into play to make a cloned calf. To make a regular calf, all you need is a male, a female, maybe some romantic music, and a little moonlight over the barn.

I assume the price tag of cloning will come down. Most technological things do. Look how cheap computers are today compared to, well, the day before yesterday. And once the cloning price comes down, I understand how helpful this scientific advance may be to the world.

A single cow may produce enough cloned offspring to give milk to a large needy area or even to an entire country. A rancher will be able to keep his Blue Ribboned prize steer, providing the best possible meat for consumers — over and over again.

In fact, consumers will be able to buy precisely the cuts of meat that they like best. Soon, you'll be telling the butcher things like, "I'd like a pound of ground cloned steer #167 and some #617 chops, please." And they'll taste just like the last 167 and 617 you bought.

So by the time cloning is practical, I'm sure I'll get used to the idea. I guess we all will. But we'll probably also have to get used to kids — and other family members — saying things like, "Not again. We had the exact same thing for dinner last night." And they'll mean, the exact same thing.

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 can be reached at [lloydgarver@yahoo.com](mailto:lloydgarver@yahoo.com)



## Peace Intervention

### The Rubber Cement Index

By Nathan Diebenow



I ain't partying anymore with anti-warriors.

I thought I could look past their bad behaviors, but I had to quit once I read Cindy Sheehan's column "A Mile of Flags."

In it, she described a scene in which her new neighbor in Crawford allegedly threatened to shoot her shotgun if anyone from Camp Casey placed American flags near her property.

Against the neighbor's wish, the flags were installed to commemorate the 3,000 U.S. soldiers who died during the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

The neighbor's threat turned out to be hollow. Instead, she broke the flags outside her house later that night, the column explained.

On the surface, this scene might seem like a minor spat, but added together with another time Sheehan infuriated a gun-toting citizen of Crawford, a troubling pattern emerges.

Back in August 2005 when Sheehan first invaded Crawford, her neighbor adjacent to Camp Casey discharged his firearm out of frustration of her antics.

And this guy was against President Bush's policies even before her soldier-son Casey died!

Having not learned her lesson since then, she has further alienated her allies and potential allies alike.

While rationalizing her rude behaviors, Sheehan went on to lash out at the people of Crawford by calling them all blasphemers in her "Flags" column.

"We already knew that many people in Crawford hate the sight of crosses, but we thought that the American flag would be a safe symbol that all of us, being patriotic Americans every one, could agree upon," she wrote.

It's true that one man drove his truck over a bunch of crosses at Camp Casey that memorialized dead American soldiers, but one man does not represent an entire city.

Besides, isn't that what you get when you use this kind of watered down, Americanized "folk Christianity" as a propaganda weapon? Christ died for a lot more people than U.S. soldiers, remember?

Moreover, Sheehan's finger is pointing the wrong way in her column. The "Peace Mom" is the real blasphemer here since she obviously believes that patriotism has more power over people than God.

At this very point, I broke from Sheehan and the anti-war movement. I mean, if she abuses the Almighty like this, then what's next? How far will her delusions take her?

I would hope she doesn't wake up one morning and think, "Gee, I should get a sex change. All Bushites respect penises, so if I get one, they'll finally respect me!"

It wouldn't be smart to follow in the bomb-happy footsteps of the Weather Underground either.

God forbid she joins the self-immolation club that attracts the likes of Malachi Ritscher, Kathy Change, and Thich Quang Duc.

It's tempting, though.

Being a human fireworks display before a live television audience at a college football bowl game would definitely get the attention of the "Sports Fan-in-Chief."

But it would also tarnish the reputation of the peace movement.

Sadly, Sheehan has already turned into the very thing she most despises.

Her so-called "Peace Surge," for instance, employs the same militaristic arrogance, self-centered attitude, and addiction to power that President Bush values.

See, that's the difference between the anti-war and peace movements.

Peaceniks make it their life's work to facilitate healing among those in conflict. They make an honest commitment to treat the human addiction to power and violence responsibly.

And for this reason, peaceniks respect dissidents. Part of their job in settling disputes peacefully is to educate people by encouraging many different voices to speak.

Ask Sheehan to share the stage, though, and a circular firing squad will surface to defend her honor, as if her voice was the only one worth saving.

So before sending me any hate mail, consider this: Make peace with God first. Heal yourself spiritually, and then consider making a longer-term investment in peace.

Employ "circular financing squads" that fund the healing arts and sponsor more interventions for power addicts.

In essence, support a peace-industrial complex.

Nathan Diebenow is an Associate Editor of the Lone Star Iconoclast newspaper by day and a political satirist by night, except on Sundays when he re-reads his "Doom Patrol" comic books.

# Re-Vote on Toll Roads Phase II Next Month!!!

Why isn't the newspaper, radio and TV media telling people about this?

Wednesday, Jan. 17, is the final public hearing for public feedback on Phase II Tolls.

Jan. 26th is the last day for public feedback via email phone or fax for Phase II Tolls.

Feb. 12th is the scheduled Re-Vote.

Phase II includes 290W, 290E, 71W, 71E, 183S and Loop 360.

Phase II Tolls includes 100% tax funded roads to be tolled.

People can just lay down and let the toll road tsunami wash over them, OR, they can contact their elected Senators, House Representatives, TxDOT and members of CAMPO to tell them to vote "NO!" on the re-vote!!!

Isn't it interesting how so little is depicted in the media regarding this urgent issue.

Makes you wonder what is in it for the media to let it go.



### Texas Commentary

By Peter Stern

So, if you don't want to pay an additional \$1,000 minimum per year on toll taxes then contact officials and let them know that you don't want more toll roads:

**Texas House of Representatives:**  
<<http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/welcome.php>>

**Texas Senate:**  
<<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/senate/Members.htm>>

**Texas Dept. of Transportation:**  
<[http://www.dot.state.tx.us/contact\\_us/](http://www.dot.state.tx.us/contact_us/)>

**CAMPO:**  
<<http://www.campotexas.org/contact.php>>  
If we Texans don't step up to contact officials and let them know we don't want toll roads, they will see to it that our children's children will continue to pay toll roads forever!

We can stop the toll road craziness, but we have to work QUICKLY to stop Phase II *before* the final public feedback on 17th of January!!!

Do your part!  
Peter Stern of Driftwood, Texas is a political writer well-known and published frequently throughout the Texas community and nationwide. He is a Vietnam-era Disabled Veteran and holds three post-graduate degrees.

## Tolls For TxTag Owners Remain Free Until Jan. 31

AUSTIN — Tolls for owners of TxTag stickers in Central Texas will remain free until Wednesday, Jan. 31.

Tolls will become half-price for TxTag owners during the month of February, and then switch to the permanent rate in March, which will be 10 percent less than the cash toll rate.

Tolling officially started for vehicle owners without TxTags on Jan. 6.

In addition the TxTag sticker and the cash payment option at

toll booths, drivers will now be able to elect "open-road" tolls.

Open-road tolls assess tolls in a monthly invoice to the vehicle's registered owner.

Drivers using this option will not need to stop at toll booths along the route, but the cost will be about 33 percent over the basic cash rate.

According to the Texas Department of Transportation, the fastest and most cost-effective way to pay tolls remains the TxTag.

The TxTag is a sticker

mounted on a vehicle's windshield that sends a signal to receivers along the tollway.

With a tag, drivers can avoid toll booths, drive full speed, and can enter or exit ramps without stopping.

For more information or purchase tags, contact the TxTag customer service center or visit its website.

**INFO**  
TxTag Center  
[www.txtag.org](http://www.txtag.org)  
(888) 468-9824

# Double Exposure: The Many Lives Of Figure Skaters

## Event Coming To Dallas Jan. 28

DALLAS — For the past 20 years, Olympic Champion and figure skating icon Scott Hamilton has thrilled audiences with *Smucker's Stars on Ice*. As

part of its 21st season as America's premier figure skating tour, the *Smucker's Stars on Ice* tour will visit the American Airlines Arena on Jan. 28, for a

4 p.m. performance.

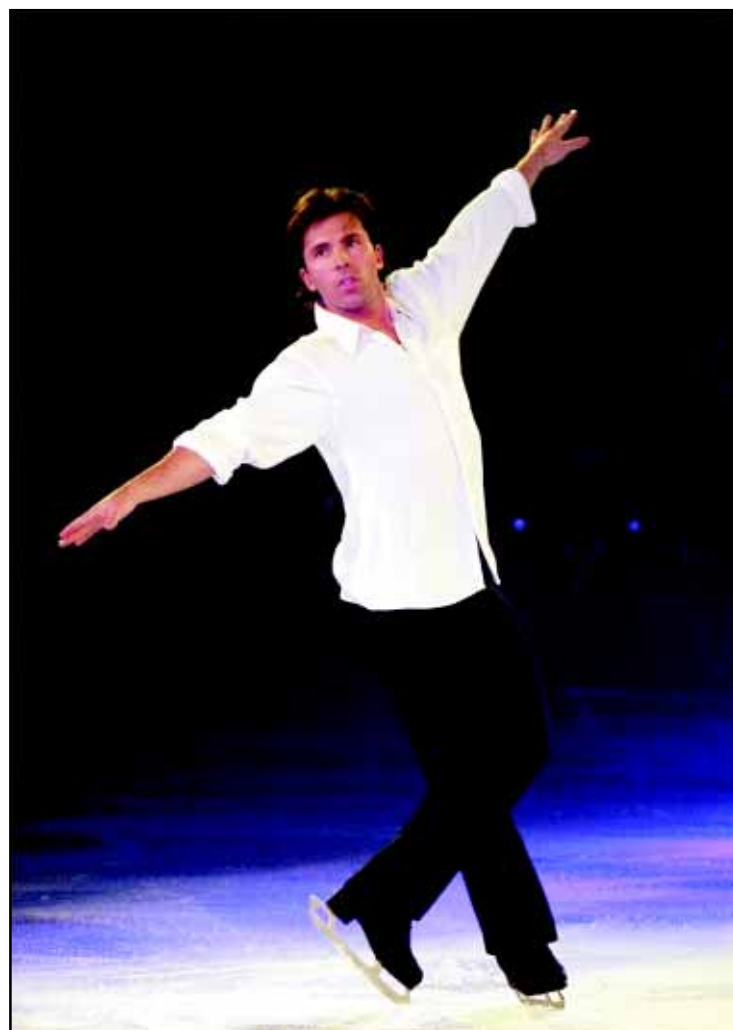
The all-new production titled *Double Exposure: The Many Lives of Figure Skaters* will be co-headlined by the world's most distinguished skating stars including 2002 Olympic Pair Champions Jamie Salé & David Pelletier; two-time Olympic Gold Medalist Ekaterina Gordeeva; 2002 Olympic Men's Champion and four-time World Champion Alexei Yagudin; World Champion and six-time U.S. National Champion Todd Eldredge; World Champion and two-time Japanese National Ladies Champion Yuka Sato; World Bronze medalists and three-time U.S. National Pair Champions Kyoko Ina & John Zimmerman; eight-time British National Men's Champion Steven Cousins; two-time U.S. National Pair Champion Jason Dungjen; six-time Canadian National Ladies Champion Jennifer Robinson; and celebrating his first year with the tour, two-time World Bronze Medalist and three-time U.S. National Men's Champion Michael Weiss.

The Dallas performance will also feature a guest appearance by Olympic Gold Medalist Ilia Kulik.

In the 2006 season of *Smucker's Stars on Ice*, Hamilton took audiences backstage to learn everything there was to know in "A Show ... About the Show." In *Double Exposure*... he pulls back the curtain even further to reveal the lives of the skaters themselves.

Enhanced by a broad spectrum of popular music, intricate lighting, dynamic choreography and state-of-the-art technology, audiences will be witness to the skaters' secret wishes, personal goals and ultimate dreams in a candid and quick-witted format etched to be nothing less than the epitome of cool.

A portion of the proceeds from each tour ticket sold will be donated by *Smucker's*



Michael Weiss



Angela Nikodinov

## Oprah's School Creates 'New Elite:' ActionAid

WASHINGTON — Oprah Winfrey's heart is in the right place, but her vision has narrowed around improving education for only a few elite girls in poverty, according to an international development agency.

The American television talk show host hand-picked 150 girls from households in poverty to enroll in her own boarding school, a \$40 million investment in South Africa. The complex opened earlier this month.

While the number of students is expected to increase to 400, the educational environment remains foreign to over 40 million girls, said David Archer, Head of Education at ActionAid International.

"Oprah's \$40 million could have benefited many more girls by challenging discrimination and violence and by improving the quality and accountability of existing schools," said Archer. "Creating a new elite will be less

effective than improving the system for all girls."

The day after the school opened, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown renewed his pledge to make universal primary education a key foreign policy goal, should he succeed Tony Blair as prime minister.

However, the International Monetary Fund stands in Brown's way, said Archer. The Fund has imposed public sector wage bill caps in over half of the 22 African countries Brown intends to support. Archer called for the Chancellor to use his voice to cancel the caps to increase teacher employment.

"One of the main effects of these caps is to limit the number of teachers that governments can employ," he said. "Unless these caps are removed, more aid for education will not translate into more teachers."

*Stars on Ice* to Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

Tickets for the performance in Dallas may be purchased at the American Airlines Center Box Office, Ticketmaster Outlets, by logging onto [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com), or by calling 214-373-8000.

The J.M. Smucker Company is the leading marketer and manufacturer of fruit spreads, peanut butter, shortening and oils, ice cream toppings and health and natural foods beverages in North America.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America had its beginnings in 1860 by es-

tablishing its first club in Hartford, CT. By 1906, 53 "federated" member organizations had been formed to mark the start of a nationwide movement.

However, it wasn't until 1990 that the national organization's name was changed to Boys & Girls Clubs of America, recognizing the fact that girls were also a part of its cause.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America has grown to serve some 4.6 million youth annually in 3,900 Boys & Girls Clubs in all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands plus domestic and international military bases.

## Crawford Sales Tax Rebates Begin Year On Positive Note

AUSTIN — Last year saw drops in sales tax rebates to the City of Crawford, but 2007 is beginning on a positive note, with the first payment of the year up 5.95 percent over last year.

According to State Comptroller Susan Combs, Crawford will receive a \$4,366.32 check in January, up from \$4,121.05 last January.

Statewide, the state collected \$1.67 billion

in sales tax revenue in December, up 6.7 percent compared to December 2005, which translates to local governments receiving \$417.8 million, up 4.2 percent compared to January 2006.

December state sales tax collections and January allocations to local governments represent sales that occurred in November.

The Comptroller's next sales tax allocation will be made on Friday, Feb. 9.