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INSIDE



Molly Ivins

Farewell, Molly

Page 2

EDITORIAL

Rick Perry, The 'Decider'

Page 14

Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



Tricky Ricky Unveils New Hire Education Rathole

Page 14



Out Of
The Blue

By Jerry Tenuto

More Republican Shame

Page 15

THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST

Righteous Brightness

Interview With Anais Mitchell *Folk Singer ... New Album*

Page
3



Anais Mitchell

Americans Not Too Concerned About Global Warming: Report

— U.S. Scientists Say White House Stifled Climate Findings —

LONDON — The country that produces the most greenhouse gases in the world also has the most people who are not yet convinced global warming is linked to human activities, according to a new report.

That country is the United States of America.

An ACNielsen survey of more than 25,000 Internet users found that U.S. poll participants were not as concerned about global warming as the survey participants from 46 countries.

Just 42 percent of the Americans surveyed rated global warming as "very serious."

The survey also discovered that 13 percent of Americans have never heard nor read of global warming.

The United States produces a quarter of the world's greenhouse gases, which scientists say causes the world to become hotter as they trap heat inside the earth's atmosphere. These gases are made when fossil fuels are burned.

The survey found that the Latin American respondents were the most worried about global warming. Ninety-six percent of these Latin Americans had heard of global warming; 75 percent of them rated it "very serious."

Respondents from China and Brazil were the most convinced of global warming's link to human activities.

Overall, 57 percent of the respondents considered global warming a "very serious problem." Another 34 percent rated it a "serious problem."

A United Nations report released late last week said that there is a 90 percent chance humans have been the cause of global rise in temperatures over the last 50 years.

Most industrialized nations have backed capping emissions of greenhouse gases through the ratification of the U.N.'s Kyoto Protocol.

The United States government, however, under President George W. Bush has refused

pass this 2001 protocol which calls on factories to curb emissions.

Stifled Scientists

A day after the ACNielsen poll was reported, U.S. scientists told a congressional committee that their findings on global warming were edited to favor the White House's worldview.

Rick Piltz testified that he resigned his post as a U.S. government scientist in 2005 over pressure to doctor his work by

Phil Cooney, the former chief of staff at the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

Cooney, an ex-lobbyist for the American Petroleum Institute, required documents on climate change to have his personal stamp of approval before publishing, said Piltz.

"His edits of program reports, which had been drafted and approved by career science program managers, had the cumulative effect of adding an en-

hanced sense of scientific uncertainty about global warming and minimizing its likely consequences," he said to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Cooney resigned in 2005 to work for oil giant ExxonMobil.

But a watchdog group said that the problem of political pressure to perform remains systemic.

A survey by the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) re-

corded that 150 climate scientists were influenced to change their work over the last five years.

"Nearly half of all respondents perceived or personally experienced pressure to eliminate the words 'climate change,' 'global warming' or other similar terms from a variety of communications," said Francesca Grifo, UCS Senior Scientist and Director of the Scientific Integrity Program.

Humorous Political Columnist Passes Away

AUSTIN — The Bush administration lost a funny thorn in its side last Wednesday night when liberal-leaning political humorist Molly Ivins passed away at her home in Austin.

Ivins, 62, who had fought at least three bouts with breast cancer over the last seven years, was known for delivering her opinion with a rapier wit and downhome sensibility, especially later in life through her bi-weekly syndicated columns.

The Houston-reared California-native was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 1999 and endured two years of chemotherapy and a mastectomy. At the time, doctors had given her a 70 percent chance to stay cancer-free for five years.

Last year, the cancer returned for a second time, causing her to undergo more treatment which prevented her from writing her column regularly.

Her last column called on Americans to speak out against President George W. Bush's escalation of U.S. involvement in Iraq and to make every effort to stop the Iraq war and bring the troops home.

"Raise hell," she wrote, endorsing the peace march on

Washington that occurred on Jan. 27. "Think of something to make the ridiculous look ridiculous. Make our troops know we're for them and are trying to get them out of there. Hit the streets to protest Bush's proposed surge."

Mary Tyler Ivins began her own earthbound hell-raising stint on Aug. 30, 1944, in Monterey, Calif., later transferring with her parents to an elite section of Houston, Texas.

Following in her mother's footsteps, Ivins gained a journalism degree at Smith College in Massachusetts in 1965. She honed her skills as a police reporter for the Minneapolis Tribune.

Later, she covered Texas-state politics in Austin as co-editor of the liberal newspaper, the Texas Observer, before reporting on New York-state politics in Albany for the New York Times. The Times soon after made her chief to its Rocky Mountain bureau in Denver.

Missing Texas' spicy food, weather, and politics, Ivins came back to Austin in 1982 to write a column for the Dallas Times-Herald. When the paper folded, The Fort Worth Star-Telegram gave Ivins' column a home until 2001. Her nationally syndicated column was found in over 400 newspapers.

During her life, Ivins gar-



Molly Ivins

nered two degrees, a myriad of awards for journalism excellence, fourth books, and three-misses at achieving a

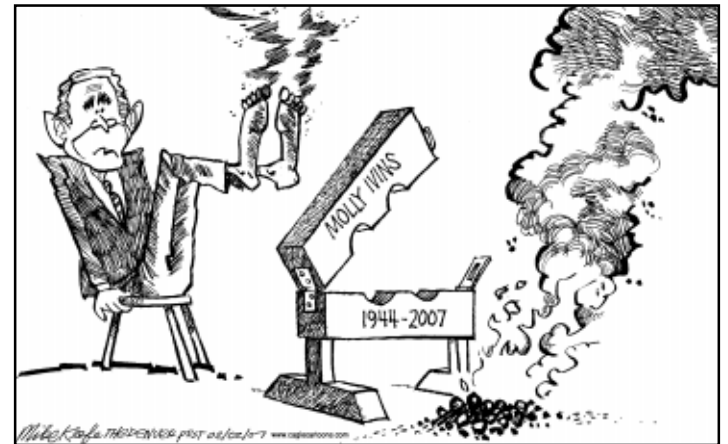
Pulitzer Prize.

However, she regarded her ban from the campus of Texas A&M University and an insult by Minneapolis police (they named their mascot pig after her) among her greatest honors. At the end of her life, she was the proudest of dying sober.

Ivins was single and had no children, though her two siblings gave her a large extended family.

Funeral arrangements were pending.

Tax-deductible contributions in her honor may be made to The Texas Observer, 307 West Seventh Street, Austin, TX 78701 or the American Civil Liberties Union, 127 Broad Street, 18th floor, New York, NY 10004, www.aclu.org.



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Righteous Brightness

Interview With Anais Mitchell Folk Singer ... New Album

By NATHAN DIEBENOW
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MONTPELIER, Vermont - If you want to know what time it is, listen to Anais Mitchell's new album, *The Brightness*.

Time is all over the place.

One minute, she's singing train-hopping hobos to sleep. The next minute, she's in Bethlehem caught between the birth of Jesus Christ and present-day. Then, she's transported to a scene among lovers in a pre-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans.

But make no mistake, this 25-year-old singer/songwriter has come a long way in her brief, five-year career.

If you're into politics, humor, and music, you were probably wowed by Mitchell's tongue-in-cheek George Orwell-inspired love song, "1984."

In one song on her new 11-song album, she sort of turns the "1984" concept on its head, so instead of being at the wrong place at the right time, she's in the right place at the wrong time.

"I've got this lingering feeling/It's like I've slipped between the fingers of the century/I know you know what I mean," the Vermont-native sings on the ballad "Of A Friday Night."

There was a time, in fact, that Mitchell considered missing the boat of her own music career in order to pursue a different craft.

"I used to tell people I wanted to be a journalist. There is a lonely egotism and self-composure to journalists. Not unlike artists, they're always traveling, always writing, loving their loneliness, feeling somehow that they have their finger on the pulse - worshipping the truth and trying to render it legible," she said.

Still, Mitchell kept at it. On her own, she released her now out-of-print debut *The Song They Sang When Rome Fell* in 2002 after recording it in Aus-

tin, Texas.

Texans took a liking to her at the Kerrville Folk Festival, honoring her with the prestigious New Folk award in 2003.

Not too long after, Mitchell released her second album, *Hymns For The Exiled*, in 2004, with producer/collaborator Michael Chorney and Chicago-based Waterbug Records.

Now, with Chorney and other Vermont musicians, she's making her debut on Ani DiFranco's label Righteous Babe Records with the release of *The Brightness* on Feb. 13.

"If you knew what Ani DiFranco meant to me as a young woman and a young songwriter ... well, I was simultaneously elated and in total disbelief," Mitchell told a Vermont reporter after joining the label. "It seemed too good to be true."

THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST'S Nathan Diebenow caught up with Anais (ah-NAY-iss) Mitchell on the phone to talk about her new album, her inspiration, her side projects, and her "spirit icon."

Here is that interview:

.....
ICONOCLAST: I read the liner notes to your album and I found that you recorded it in the Independent Republic of Vermont, so I'm going to have to refer to you as Ambassador Mitchell for this whole interview.

ANAIS MITCHELL: (laughs) I love it. That's great.

ICONOCLAST: So can you tell me about the Independent Republic of Vermont? What's that all about?

MITCHELL: Well, it's the state I grew up in. There's kind of a kinship, I feel like, with Texas in kind of a weird way. (laughs) It's a pretty fiercely independent state. There's a strong local culture and a commitment to create local politics and a local economy that are sustainable. I didn't expect

I would end up settling here, but I do live in Montpelier now, the capitol of the republic.

ICONOCLAST: (laughs)

MITCHELL: It's a really great town. There's a lot of young people and artists. Very small but there's a pretty vibrant scene happening. I'm not sure what else to say about it. I mean, were you curious about the independence movement itself or what it's like to live in Vermont?

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, I had heard there was an independence movement, but I didn't know if you were making any — are you a part of that movement or was the mention of it tongue-and-cheek?

MITCHELL: I don't know. It's tricky. It's definitely a real movement. I'm not plugged into the meetings or anything. I think a lot of people like the idea of it because they feel culturally like Vermont is its own place. As far as ceding from the union, I don't really see it happening any time soon, but it's definitely great to have a culture where people are committed to the local and the small. I have a bumper sticker on my car that says, "U.S. Out Of Vermont."

ICONOCLAST: (laughs)

MITCHELL: But it's sort of like you can joke about it, but there's a real value behind it, and it's not like anyone has to smash the state for it to happen. It actually already exists. It's already separate - in the same way as Texas is. It's a very proud state.

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, we're so big we have our own marketing campaigns directed toward us. Like our beer commercials, for example, are very Texified.

MITCHELL: I know! Like the Lone Star stuff. (laughs) Yeah, actually, isn't Lone Star beer created only for Texas.

ICONOCLAST: I don't know. I'm not a definitive expert on our beer culture. I don't go to



Anais Mitchell

their meetings.

MITCHELL: I used to drink Shiner Bock when I lived in Austin.


ICONOCLAST: Right on. Good brand. I wish they would advertise with us. Maybe they will now that you brought it up. Well, going back to your record, what's the biggest difference between this new record and the two previous ones - other than that you're on Righteous Babe Records?

MITCHELL: The first record is out of print. That was called *The Song They Sang When Rome Fell*. I sort of think of it as a demo at this point. The way I made that one was I was just living in Austin, and I had 12 songs that I liked and went into a studio and just laid everything down as quick as I could in one afternoon. That's sort of a collector's item at this point.

ICONOCLAST: (laughs)

Continued On Next Page


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Righteous Brightness

From Previous Page

MITCHELL: But the last record I made was made in the same studio that I made *The Brightness* and working with the same producer. It's almost a surprise to me that I ended up working the same way on the second record. I kind of went across the board with how I wanted to make *The Brightness*. I thought about making a bigger sounding thing, going into some big studio, and ultimately, what I wanted was to capture the intimacy of these songs and to give them some pretty sparse arrangements a la the *Hymn for the Exiled*. The studio we worked in is a beautiful converted grain mill. The ceiling is full of these convex honeycomb shapes, and the sound in there is really special. It's like a spiritually tuned room. Michael is this guy I worked with on *Hymns for the Exiled*.

I'd say that the biggest difference between this record and the last record is the time we spent. When we made *Hymns*, I was actually still in school. I really had no idea if I would have a music career or not. I think we were doing a rush job because we wanted to finish the record in time for Kerrville which (laughs), you know, was the biggest musical experience I could fathom at that point. So there was something momentous and quick about the way we went about that one. There were a lot of snap decisions, and this one, you'll hear a lot of similar instrumentation - the out of tune guitars and some other pretty traditional instruments - we definitely spent a lot more time not necessarily in the studio but in between sessions. We would record some stuff and I would go on tour and then come back and record some more.

The album evolved a great deal during the time we were making it. At the beginning it

was actually going to be an EP (laughs) It was going to be sort of this concept record - all these unrequited love songs about this one particular character, but once we rolled up our sleeves and kind of got into the process, we realized we wanted to make a full-length. Also, when we started making the record I was living in an apartment above the studio, so it was very convenient. I could go down in my socks or whatever.

ICONOCLAST: Just your socks? I mean, that's pretty cool. (laughs)

MITCHELL: I mean, yeah, I had some clothes as well, you know. Pajamas. (laughs)

ICONOCLAST: I was just making sure the press release was correct - that you were wearing pajamas.

MITCHELL: Yeah. (laughs)

ICONOCLAST: You know, even though you're a Yankee, I like the way you sing, the way words like "shadow," "moon," and "worker" roll off your tongue. You have a way with vowels.

MITCHELL: You're talking about my accent?

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, yeah, the way you sing. I like the vowels you emphasize, but I was wondering about your topics and images. For instance, I liked hearing the phrase "cable bill" in your song, "Santa Fe Dream." It's kind of weird because I never really hear about cable bills in anyone else's songs. But then the next song threw me for a loop. I mean, we're living in 2007, and we're still talking about hobos? What's your fascination with hobos all about?

MITCHELL: (laughs) Well, I'd say that it just comes out of the folk tradition that I grew up with. That song is a re-write of this "Hobo's Lullaby" song. Do you know that one?

ICONOCLAST: I figured it was a cover song or a re-write of something I had never heard.

MITCHELL: There are two songs on the record. One is that "Shenandoah" song. The other is "Hobo's Lullaby." They take inspiration from these old folk tunes, but they definitely go on a different direction. And hobos? I don't know. It's just a rich subject. I guess it's romantic. I think about this sometimes: how many trains show up in people's songs? There's always a train that represents all this stuff for us, and people don't really ride trains anymore. Some people do, but it's an archaic idea almost, but it's got all this resonate power as a poetic image. I think the hobo represents a lot of things for me. One of them is freedom. There's this idea that you could just take off. You don't need any money. You can hop a train, and end up somewhere that you have no idea where. It calls to mind some Jack Kerouac and Woody Guthrie — a lot of stuff that I sort of romanticise from the old days, the '30s. I supposed it's bound up in some other political history and ideas about the Depression and to work or not to work.

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, the Depression seems to come up in folk music a lot.

MITCHELL: Yeah, it's true. It's a fun world to navigate because of like that cable bill. It's interesting that you brought up that line because a lot of people have mixed reactions to that line. They're like, "Man, that song is perfect except for the cable bill. It comes out of nowhere and suddenly you're in the present moment. It could have been an archetypal song but now it's stuck in the present. I actually recorded a couple of different versions of it, but I found that that was the version I liked better. I find it a very fruitful process - this sort of reckoning with the past — in light of the present moment. Like, are you a Gillian Welch fan at all?"

ICONOCLAST: A little bit. I'm

familiar with her work.

MITCHELL: I'm like a stupid Gillian Welch fan. I love her work — this one record, especially, called *Time (The Revelator)*. She made it like a bunch of records in a row. They're all really old-fashioned. People were like, "Who are you? You think you're like this Dust Bowl person?" And she's actually from California, but this was a form she was all about - the whiskey, the still house... and at the *Time (The Revelator)* album, she started to blend the old symbols that really resonate with people with some new ones. She made these amazing songs that I would definitely recommend. She had this one that starts out, "When the iceberg hits they must have known God moved on the water like Casey Jones, so I walk downtown on my telephone. I took a lazy turn on the red eye zone." It's like she went through so much history in that one stanza.

ICONOCLAST: I was also thinking that you chose hobo because it was easier to say than "illegal alien."

MITCHELL: (laughs) That's true.

ICONOCLAST: You're so good with vowels and syllables.

MITCHELL: That's funny. I definitely feel that vocally, the past couple of years have really been instructive for me. I'm learning more and more. I hope I continue to learn about using the voice in a way that the sound feels good coming out of my mouth and my throat. Vowels are a big part of that.

ICONOCLAST: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. The thing that caught my ear was on "Out of Pawn." It sounded so much like you were singing or channelling Leonard Cohen.

MITCHELL: Aww, I love that.

ICONOCLAST: Can you tell me about that? What were you doing there?

MITCHELL: Wow! Well, I'm

also a stupid Leonard Cohen fan. (laughs) I really love his work and I think I cited him in the liner notes. There's one song on the record that I actually sort of wrote with the intention of — I mean I wrote it to write it but I also was like, "If I ever meet Leonard Cohen, and I ask him to play a song, this is what I'm going to play for him." (laughs) And it's the second song on the record. It has the title of the album in it. "Of a Friday Night," it's called.

ICONOCLAST: Oh, yeah.

MITCHELL: It's kind of a long story, but I could tell you about it if you want.

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, go for it. Indulge me, please.

MITCHELL: Well, it started as an EP and moved into another direction, but ultimately why I called the record *The Brightness* is that there's this re-occurring theme of the feeling that you have. Say you arrive on a scene or in a city where there used to be a flourishing cultural moment, you know. There's plenty of them that I romanticize. The hobos I suppose are part of it, but also Greenwich Village 1961 or Laural Canyon in the '70s or Paris in the '30s and the Beats (in the '50s). And just like the feeling of arriving on the scene and you miss the boat. That kind of feeling. By the same token, the lover — maybe you're looking at him or you swore there was a flame there, but, man, it's gone now.

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, you were definitely channelling Leonard Cohen. (laugh)

MITCHELL: Well, that's the reason why I thanked him in the liner notes. This is why it's a long story. That second song is about this old poet who lived in the city of Alexandria in Egypt and his name is Constantine Cavafy. Then a few decades later there was this writer Lawrence Durrell who wrote a series of books called the Alexandria Quartet. They were basically books about that city and they talked about Cavafy, but they also talk about an ex-patriot writers community - everybody is falling in love and making art all the time. There was one of these flourishing moments, and that was gone as well.

Somehow I've always associated Leonard Cohen with Lawrence Durrell and also with Cavafy. I think a part of it is that he lived in Greece for a while in this ex-patriot kind of thing, and he wrote this beautiful song called "Alexandria Leaving" which is on his "Ten New Songs"

Continued On Next Page

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Righteous Brightness

From Previous Page

record. It's a retelling of this Cavafy poem, which is also a gorgeous poem. So I just like this idea of these artists reaching across the abyss of time toward one another and almost like lighting a cigarette off another cigarette, you know? So I guess I was extending my cigarette towards theirs.

ICONOCLAST: Awesome. The other thing I wanted to ask you was more business related. I'm a blog reader. I'm also a MySpace addict, and I read your blog there about lead singers and bands and sexuality.

MITCHELL: Yeah, the whole androgyny thing. (laughs)

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, but I wanted to ask you about this corporate music industry thing. Where do you draw the line? I mean, you're on Ani DiFranco's record lable Righteous Babe now, and is that not a corporate model?

MITCHELL: Sure, it's a corporation, you know? I don't think of it as the corporate

model in the music industry just because it's so unlike other labels, and because it's an independent label. It's not owned by one of the majors. I mean, I'm a big admirer of Ani DiFranco, obviously, and I think what she did at the time she did it was unprecedented. Nowadays, it's almost the exception to the rule to follow the corporate model. What I mean by that is to sit around waiting to get discovered by somebody and then basically selling your soul to the company to make or break you as an artist. It seems as though there's the volume of people who are going the independent route and putting out records on their own or on their own independent label or with a bigger indie seems to be the model now. But I think Ani DiFranco was at the forefront of that — the explosion of independent music.

ICONOCLAST: So you didn't have any druthers to create your own label? I mean, you just wanted to sing songs?

MITCHELL: Yeah, well, the

first record that I made — the one that is out of print now — was sort of like a demo at the time. That was technically on my own label. I hadn't assigned it to anyone else. I was the one who was sending it around. Then the *Hymn for the Exiled* album was on Waterbug Records which was really tiny, sort of a cooperative label where they do a mailing but it's not as comprehensive as the Righteous Babe deal is.

So, yeah, I've got to say that I just want to make art. I definitely slugged it out for a long time booking myself — you know, manufacturing the CDs myself and doing a lot of stuff on my own. I think it was a valuable thing to do, and I love to know that I can do that because it means I can do it anytime. When I'm 40 and nobody wants to buy my records, (laughs) I can hit the road in my station wagon. But at this point, I feel so grateful for the help that I'm getting and to have a team of people to work on the business, so I can just wake up and write

songs, play piano or whatever it is. I want to go as far as I can.

ICONOCLAST: Then let me ask you about "whatever it is." What's up with Sputnik? Your '80s cover band. Can you explain how that happened?

MITCHELL: (laughs) How did it happen? Well, I bought myself a synthesizer. I think the rationale at the time was that I didn't have a piano and I wanted to learn the keys, so I was like, "I need to get something cheap." And I got the synthesizer, which is a pretty sweet little thing. It's called the Alesis Micron. It's small but it packs a lot of punch and different sounds. And then, actually my husband is in the band as well. He plays electric bass, and we just started getting into '80s music. It's so fun to play. There's a lot of great music, first of all. I will stand behind it any day, but it's also really fun to do something totally unrelated to Anais Mitchell songs.

ICONOCLAST: Because she can get kind of boring, huh?

MITCHELL: Yeah, well, I

mean, I won't say boring.

ICONOCLAST: (laughs)

MITCHELL: I will say you don't get the experience of seeing a bunch of people thrashing in the audience at a folk club.

ICONOCLAST: Yeah, that would involve a lot of brown-colored stains and milk on the floor.

MITCHELL: That's true. (laughs)

ICONOCLAST: And people screaming, "My latte!!!"

MITCHELL: Right. Let's not go there.

ICONOCLAST: So can you do any Madonna impressions?

MITCHELL: I'd say that my spirit icon is more like Cindy Lauper than Madonna, although I'm a big Madonna fan.

ICONOCLAST: I know Al Franken used to be a Cindy Lauper fan. He thought that Cindy Lauper was going to go further than Madonna.

MITCHELL: Well, that's curious. I mean, she had a good run there. I wouldn't say she did shabbily or anything.

Continued On Next Page

Voyager's Dream

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Righteous Brightness

From Previous Page

ICONOCLAST: No, she's still around. She's still singing that True Colors song. Wasn't it a big Kodak song for a while?

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MITCHELL: Oh, yeah, totally. Speaking of the whole androgyny and women's sexuality thing, I really respect Madonna and Cindy Lauper for the way they were able to be these cultural icons and be really sexy and also retain their own unique character and keep changing things up. There's something so much more empowering about that kind of imagery than a lot of the pop singers that are — not even though I know who they are. I guess I'm thinking of Britney Spears. I'm kind of out of that loop, but I respect that era.

I mean, you could be a pop icon and you could also be fucking weird, you know? You could say weird things and weird people out and that was part of the thing. And if you watch the vintage music videos of the 1980s, that's the vibe that I get. If you're a rock star, you get to be weird and that's not the same as being a supermodel. And I think everything's got a little bit safe and a little bit pretty nowadays in the mainstream anyways.

ICONOCLAST: So what's on the horizon for you? Are you going to be going into rehab like Lindsay Lohan any time soon?

MITCHELL: (laughs) I'm not planning to.

ICONOCLAST: So, you're going to keep your addiction? You're still in denial.

MITCHELL: (laughs) My addiction to caffeine maybe. I guess I'm going to get busy touring with this record in the spring. I'm excited to get around the country, but then on the horizon for me, I've got this folk opera that I've been working on for a long time. I put up a version of it in Vermont last month. It was kind of a big affair. There was a five-piece orchestra, five main



Anais Mitchell

singers, three-piece chorus, lights and sound and all this stuff.

It was wicked fun and exciting for me. I'm not an actress,

and I don't tend towards theatre usually, but this was a really cool project. Now I'm working on expanding the show and writing more songs and editing the ones

Crawford Native Earns Academic Honors At HPU

BROWNWOOD — Thomas Ellisor, was recently named to academic honor lists for the 2006 fall semester at

Howard Payne University. Ellisor, a Crawford native, was named to the President's List. He is the son of Tom and Pattie Ellisor.

Students must earn a 4.0 grade point average to be named to the President's List.

Brewer Makes Dean's Roll

OXFORD, Miss. — Former Crawford High School student, Jessica Taylor Brewer, achieved the honor of being listed on the Dean's Honor Roll at the University of Mississippi for the fall 2006 semester.

A grade point average of from 3.5 through 3.74 is required of full-time students carrying at least 12 semester hours for listing on the Dean's Honor Roll.

that I've got. I really want to make a record of it and put it on again in some capacity.

ICONOCLAST: You going for Broadway?

MITCHELL: Oh, you know, a girl can dream. Then there's the great beyond. I want to make a ton of records and make them in different ways, different sounds, different songs, different outfits. (laughs)

INFO

Anais Mitchell's Website
www.Anaismitchell.com

Nuclear Power is Not 'Renewable': Groups To Bush

WASHINGTON — Over a hundred organizations have denounced President George W. Bush's claim that "nuclear power is a renewable source of energy."

This rebuttal came after the president told Juan Williams on National Public Radio last Monday:

"Well, if you're really interested in global warming and climate change, then it seems like to me that we ought to promote technologies to advance the development of safe nuclear power. It's a renewable source of energy, and at the same time has no emissions to it."

Bush has repeatedly portrayed nuclear power as "renewable" in numerous venues as an advocate for nuclear power and the building of new nuclear power plants.

In response, 108 groups comprised of environmental, business, consumer, faith-based, and energy policy organizations sent a scathing letter to the White House.

"Please be advised that nuclear power is neither a renewable nor a clean source of energy," the letter reads. "For that matter, oil, coal, and natural gas are also not renewable or clean sources of energy."

"Nuclear power and fossil fuels are environmentally polluting and non-renewable sources of energy that produce long-term radioactive wastes and/or greenhouse gas emissions," it added. "The primary renewable sources of energy are biomass (e.g., biofuels, biopower), geothermal, solar, water (e.g., hydropower, tidal, wave, ocean currents), and wind."

The President has attempted to re-define nuclear energy as "renewable" to have nuclear plants fall under a future federal Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard.

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Air America Finds Possible Buyer

— Star Host Al Franken To Announce Senate Bid —

NEW YORK CITY - Things shook up the nation's first liberal talk radio network last week.

Air America Radio found a possible buyer to bail it out of bankruptcy, and the network's star host will be announcing his bid for Senate soon.

The buyer Stephen L. Green

is the chairman of a real estate investment trust specializing in office buildings.

The announcement of the tentative sale came days before sources in Minnesota admitted that the network's star host, Al Franken, has been privately telling congressional Democrats in his home state that he would be

running against Republican Sen. Norm Coleman in 2008.

Franken had promised his listeners that he would officially announce his candidacy on his show when the time came. His last broadcast is scheduled for Feb. 14.

Air America, though, was prepared for Franken's departure since the former television comedy writer had openly pondered on his show over the last few years.

Optimism is, in fact, prevailing at Air America as the new buyer's brother, Mark Green, pointed out that management would likely focus on expanding its broadcasting distribution through the use of the Internet and



Al Franken

podcasts. Mark Green is a former New York City public advo-

cate and past candidate for mayor and state attorney general. While his brother Stephen has provided financing to aid the fledgling network in the past, Mark has hosted his own programs on it.

The details of the purchase agreement were not given, though Green's company, SLG Radio L.L.C., expected to own majority stake in the network, while the current owner the Progressive Radio Group L.L.C. will have the minority stake.

A federal bankruptcy court must still make the final decision to approve the deal.

The deal would relieve some of the burden from the three-year-old, money-plagued talk radio network.

Avoid Fried Foods At Burger King, McDonalds For Now: Group

WASHINGTON — The Center for Science in the Public Interest recommends that the public avoids eating fried foods at restaurant chains Burger King and McDonalds for now.

The reason for this avoidance is that these chains still use partially hydrogenated oil in their cooking processes.

This specific oil has been linked to tens of thousands of fatal heart attacks annually, according to a statement from

Michael F. Jacobson, CSPI Executive Director.

Burger King said last week that it had begun in-restaurant testing with several trans fat-free cooking oils and expects to start using trans fat-free cooking oils in only its locations in U.S. and Canada by late 2008.

In a separate development last week, McDonalds announced that it had finally picked a new trans-fat-free oil for its french fries, though the company refused to say

when all of its restaurants would use the new ingredient.

Restaurant chains in New York City have until July 1 to comply with a new city ordinance banning the artificial fat.

Burger King and McDonalds,

however, are well behind other restaurant chains in eliminating trans fat as an ingredient. Wendy's switched to a healthier frying oil. KFC and Taco Bell will eliminate trans fat from most of their foods by May.

Jacobson said he was "disappointed" at the slow progress of

Burger King and McDonalds, but suggested a compromise that would tell consumers of the hidden dangers in their foods.

"The trans-fat laggards should at least inform their customers through notices on menus and menu boards which foods contain trans fat," he said.

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Anti-War Demonstrators Gather Outside Congress

WASHINGTON — About half a million anti-war protestors demonstrated outside Congress on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. two weekends ago.

The activists gathered from across the country in what was perhaps the largest rally against

the U.S. occupation and war in Iraq to date.

Among the speakers were the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson, actors Jane Fonda and Sean

Penn, feminist and veterans groups opposed to the war, and members of organized labor.

The group was united in its cause to bring U.S. troops back from Iraq in order to end the

military involvement in the war-torn country.

Many of the speakers and participants showed their angry and frustration at the Democratic Congress' refusal to not

fund the continuation of the U.S. occupation.

Members of Congress, as of late, have been tossing around various drafts of non-binding resolutions against President Bush's latest escalation in the so-called "war on terror."

However, a half dozen antiwar Congresspeople also participated in the demonstration organized by United for Peace and Justice, an anti-war umbrella organization.

The president said the day prior to the demonstration that he wanted the public to give his plan to send 21,500 more troops to Iraq another chance.

"I'm the decision maker. I've picked the plan that I think is most likely to succeed... I know there is scepticism and pessimism and that some are condemning a plan before it's even had a chance to work," said Bush.

Over 50 demonstrations were held around the U.S., including some in Dallas and Denton, Texas, on the same weekend as the Washington protest.

The first commissioned officer to face prosecution for refusing to serve in Iraq - 1st Lt. Ehren Watada - spoke to 1,000 people at a Seattle rally.

As a sign of disenchantment with the war, the anti-war veterans group Iraq Veterans Against the War said that their membership has quadrupled in the last year.

Also, over 1,000 active duty U.S. soldiers have petitioned Congress asking for U.S. troops to be quickly withdrawn from Iraq.

More Marches

To commemorate the 4th anniversary of the start of the invasion of Iraq, thousands of people are expected to gather at the Pentagon on Saturday, March 17.

This march will also honor the 40th anniversary of the historic 1967 anti-war march to the Pentagon during the Vietnam War.

This event organized by the A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition will assemble at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Constitution Gardens) at 12 noon in Washington, D.C. and march to the Pentagon.

The initial endorsers include Macrina Cardenas, Mexico Solidarity Network; Ramsey Clark, former U.S. Attorney General; Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit; Ron Kovic, Vietnam Veteran; Kay Lucas, director of the Crawford Peace House; Malik Rahim, founder of the Common Ground Collective, New Orleans; Alice Walker, Pulitzer prize-winning author; Maxine Waters, Congresswoman; Howard Zinn, author; and more.

Feingold Bill Brings Most U.S. Troops Out Of Iraq In Six Months

WASHINGTON - Sen. Russ Feingold introduced a bill last week that would remove most of the U.S. troops from Iraq in six months by stopping funds from being used to continue operations after its enactment.

However, the Iraq Redeployment Act of 2007 allows for specific operations to continue in Iraq beyond six months, including counter-terrorism efforts, protection of U.S. personnel and infrastructure, and training of Iraqi security forces.

"By passing my legislation, Congress can respond to the will of the American people and force the President to safely bring our forces out of Iraq," Feingold said.

"With the President set on pursuing his failed policies in Iraq, Congress has the duty to stand up and use its power to stop him," he added. "If Congress doesn't stop this war, it's not because it doesn't have the power — it's because it doesn't have the will."

Feingold is no stranger to opposing the president's Iraq policy. He opposed the authorization to use force in Iraq and was the first senator to propose a timeline to end to U.S. involvement in Iraq.

During a Judiciary Committee hearing last week, constitutional scholars testified that Congress does indeed have the power and authority to end a war.

The new Democratic majority in Congress has been reluctant to de-fund the war effort for fear of appearing as if they were betraying U.S. military forces still in Iraq.

Feingold's legislation, however, does not prevent any U.S. troops from receiving salaries, equipment, training and other resources.

Anti-war groups, however, say the Democrats' election wins were a referendum on Bush's handling of the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

In the last 40 years, Congress has used its constitutional authority to stop U.S. military entanglements overseas in at least four cases: Cambodia, Vietnam, Somalia, and Bosnia.



SUSAN G. KOMEN FOUNDATION recently awarded \$239,500 in grants in Central Texas to several area facilities in the fight against cancer.

Susan G. Komen Awards \$239,500 In Central Texas

TEXAS — The Susan G. Komen for the Cure organization recently announced that they awarded this year's grants to several worthy Central Texas health care facilities, helping in the fight against cancer.

Those receiving grants from the foundation include:

- Family Health Center (Formerly Family Practice) \$25,000.00 This will help approximately 25 patients. They are in collaboration with the American Cancer Society whose grant funds the mammogram and this grant funds the follow-up diagnostic/biopsy. They are projecting that they will see approximately 1600 female patients & of those 900 will be over 40.

- Providence Health Center \$22,500.00 Providing compression bandages and compression garments, and/or home-based sequential pump. This grant will help 10-20 women who suffer from some degree of lymphedema and they will provide education programs to an additional 25-50 women. Covers women in six-county area.

- American Cancer Society \$25,000 Breast Screening Initiative 268 mammogram's. Working in collaboration with Family

Practice Center. American Cancer Society grants funds the mammogram and Family Practice.

- Community Cancer Association \$25,000 Chemo/Treatment Prescriptions Grant will help 40-45 patients.

- Planned Parenthood of Central Texas, Inc. \$20,000 Abnormal Mammography Follow-up Diagnostic Testing Provides appropriate follow-up testing when initial screening mammogram suggest it. Diagnostic Mammography & Additional Views, Bilateral Diagnostic, Ultrasound Bilateral, Ultrasound Unilateral, and Ultrasound-guided Biopsy, and Stereotactic guided biopsy. Last year 51 women used their services for the follow-up diagnostic testing. Covers six-county area.

- Community Cancer Association \$25,000 Financial Assistance to Needy Breast Cancer Patients for Symptom Management, Prescriptions, Medical Supplies, Travel/Lodging Projected income for eligible breast cancer patients is \$15,000 for one person and \$20,000 for two or more persons in the household. Grant will help 40-45 patients.

- Planned Parenthood of Cen-

tral Texas, Inc. \$25,000 Mammography and Awareness - Early Detection is the Best Protection Provides approximately 268 mammogram's. Target is women 40 and over, uninsured, low-income and underserved who have had a recent gynecological exam. Covers women in the six-county area.

- Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center \$25,000 Screening Mammograms for Underserved Women. Provides basic mammogram's to approximately 250 women. Grant covers all six counties in the Central Texas Affiliate and is available to women who are underserved and/or uninsured.

- Greater Killeen Free Clinic \$22,000 Breast Cancer Prevention Project. Screening mammogram's for approximately 200 women and 25 diagnostic mammogram's.

- Scott & White Center for Cancer Prevention and Care \$25,000 2006 Fall Cancer Screening. 20 mammogram's in residuals for diagnostic testing, 6-month follow-up mammogram's, ultrasounds and adjuvant treatment for the uninsured population in Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, McLennan and Milam Counties.

Crawford To Receive Grant For Local Park

AUSTIN — The City of Crawford is to receive \$300,000 in new funds to expand and restore facilities at its historic city park.

These funds come from an allocation of roughly \$4.5 million to 14 Texas communities from the Texas Parks and

Wildlife Commission.

Projects for Crawford's Tonkawa Falls Park include renovations to its CCC pavilions and RV campsites and the additions of a nature trail and volleyball courts.

TPWD staff used a competitive scoring system to select

the top projects from those submitted by 32 sponsors. The system was based on site visits and project analyses of the projects.

Of the 14 community projects chosen, the City of Hempstead was awarded the state's only indoor recreation grant.

The \$375,000 matching grant will help fund construction of a 9,100-square-foot recreation center in the east part of Hempstead.

The grant program was authorized in 1993 to help political subdivisions in Texas in providing basic public recre-

ation facilities.

The program's revenue - derived from a portion of the state sales tax on sporting goods - is dedicated solely for park funding and does not come from funds earmarked for hunting and fishing purposes.

Florida To Get Voting Systems With 'Paper Trails'

TALLAHASSEE - The state of Florida should receive a whole new batch of voting machines ahead of the next presidential election.

The new governor has called for thousands optical scanners that would count paper ballots to replace controversial touch-screen voting machines.

Gov. Charlie Crist, a Republican, had worked out a deal with Rep. Robert Wexler, a Democrat of Boca Raton, to spend at least \$20 million on optical scanners for the 15 counties with touch-screen machines.

The arrangements are to be included in Crist's proposed budget to the state Legislature.

Prior to the join announcement with the governor, Wexler's chief of staff Eric Johnson praised the governor's decision while criticizing ex-governor Jeb Bush.

"This is a huge step," he said. "Not only is he endorsing a paper trail, which are two words Jeb Bush wouldn't use together, but he is saying money needs to be spent toward them."

The deal will put individual counties financially ahead because only one optical scanner might be required in each precinct instead of multiple electronic voting machines.

One optical scanner which records the markings on paper ballots costs up to \$5,500,

in Florida, compared to up to \$4.4 million for an e-voting machine. Palm Beach County alone has 769 precincts.

The American Civil Liberties Union praised the deal but urged that the rights of disabled and non-English speaking voters be respected during the process.

Florida has been at the center of nationwide controversy over voting systems since the 2000 presidential election that pitted Gov. George W. Bush - Gov. Jeb Bush's older brother, and Sen. Al Gore.

At the time, the state held a recount when the results of the election were put into question by a lack of regulations regarding punch-card ballots.

While the presidential race was handed to Gov. George Bush by the U.S. Supreme Court, Florida's election troubles failed to end.

For the 2002 elections, 15 Florida counties tried to solve their punch-card problems with paperless electronic touch-screen machines; however, critics were quick to point out that the new machines could not verify the vote since they had no paper backups and could be easily hacked.

Rep. Wexler entered the controversy on behalf the paper trail advocates, and served with Crist in the state Senate in the 1990s.

Efficiency, Renewables Can Cut Global Warming By 80 Percent: Report

WASHINGTON — By increasing the use of energy efficiency and renewables alone, Americans can reduce U.S. global warming emissions by 60-80 percent by 2050, according to a new report.

The peer-reviewed report, "Tackling Climate Change in the U.S.,"

authored by the American Solar Energy Society, was jointly unveiled last week on Capitol Hill by the Sierra Club, Congressional chairmen and representatives, and the nation's top climate scientists.

Climate scientists agree that Americans need to stop producing greenhouse gases immediately in order to prevent the most catastrophic effects of global warming. They say that fossil fuel use - the leading cause of these gas emissions - should be reduced by three-quarters.

"This report moves the discussion from *whether* we can achieve the necessary reductions in global warming pollution with energy efficiency and renewable energy in this country to exactly *how* we should do it," said Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director.

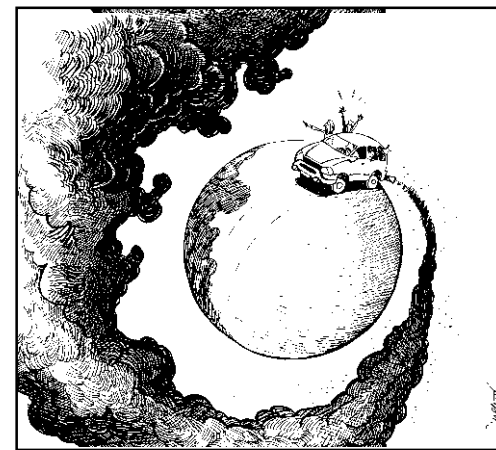
"We already have the best, cheapest, and cleanest solutions at our disposal; now we just need the market and our political leaders to put them to work," he added.

This new ASES roadmap - now the official Sierra Club global warming strategy - identifies the renewable energy resources available across the U.S. that can be used to transition away from the dirty, old energy economy toward the clean energy technologies that will save money and lives tomorrow.

It says that carbon emissions could be cut by 1,100-1,200 mil-

lion metric tons annually by 2030 with aggressive deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy alone.

The plan would achieve the U.S. share of reductions required to stabilize atmospheric CO2 levels at 450-500 parts per million and limit additional av-



erage temperature rise to 1°C above 2000 levels

"Dollar for dollar, these clean energy solutions are the best choices for America," said Dave Hamilton, Director of the Sierra Club's Global Warming and Energy Program. "If we want to build a new energy economy based on clean energy and new, good-paying manufacturing jobs, this is the road to get there."

Attending the report's unveiling were Rep. Henry Waxman, Chairman of the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee; Sen. Jeff Bingaman, Chairman of the Senate Energy Committee; Rep. Christopher Shays; pre-eminent NASA climate scientist James Hansen; Carl Pope; Dr. Chuck Kutcher, ASES member, renewable energy researcher and editor of the report; and Brad Collins, ASES executive director.

For more information on the report, visit the website for the American Solar Energy Society.

INFO

ASES

www.ases.org/climatechange

Ag Secretary's Farm Bill Proposals Not Bad: Group

WASHINGTON — An environmental advocacy group praised the proposals on a new farm bill set forth in the report from U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns.

"Secretary Johanns has helped to lay the groundwork for farm and food policy reforms that will ensure that the next Farm Bill helps meet America's pressing energy, health and environmental challenges," said Scott Faber, the Farm Policy Campaign Director for Environmental Defense (ED).

Faber stressed that the federal government should not ignore the 50,000-plus farmers and ranchers willing to share the cost of clean water, clean air, and wildlife habitat because of misplaced spending priorities.

He pointed out that Secretary Johanns' proposal to increase spending on voluntary USDA conservation programs by \$7.8 billion over 10 years was right on the money, so to speak.

"We also welcome any proposal to restructure our farm safety net to link income support to stewardship, to place reasonable limits on sub-

sidy payments, and to deny income support to producers who plow up grasslands to plant crops," said Faber in a press release.

Faber's group also praised Johanns for increasing USDA investments in renewable energy development on U.S. farms and ranches and to focus these investments on cellulosic ethanol.

Faber, though, downed any moves to allow the production of energy feed stocks on lands enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, the nation's most successful conservation program.

"Secretary Johanns' proposal is a step in the right direction, but Congress must go much further to make farm and food policies work for many more farmers, consumers, communities and the environment," said Faber.

Environmental Defense has released a dozen ideas for farm and food policy for Congress on its website.

INFO

Environmental Defense

www.environmentaldefense.org/go/farms/

WAR CRIMINALS GET HANGED



WHO IS WILLING TO HANG BESIDE GEORGE BUSH

Saddam Hussein and his henchmen were hanged for committing crimes against humanity - a war crime. George Bush has committed war crimes in Iraq by attacking and destroying that sovereign country and causing the death of hundreds of thousands of children, citizens and soldiers on the basis of lies.

Now Bush and his cohorts are contemplating more war crimes against Iran. They are preparing for an unprovoked, aggressive war, as in Iraq, which is called a "crime against peace." This is the most serious crime of all - the same crime for which Nazi leaders were hanged.

They have drawn up plans to use nuclear weapons against Iranian nuclear power facilities. The Geneva Conventions prohibit the bombing of such "inherently dangerous" targets because the fallout can kill millions of innocents. Moreover, international jurists have ruled that any use of such weapons is a crime against humanity because of the indiscriminate horror, death, destruction and fallout they cause.

Bush has repeatedly stated that all of these criminal options "are on the table," yet it is much more than that. He has ordered Patriot missile batteries and aircraft carriers groups to the region. He has raided Iranian diplomatic compounds and arrested their diplomats. He has accused Iran of supporting the Iraq insurgency and then stated that he would "seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry and training to our enemies in Iraq."

Bush prepares for nuclear war while he rejects all calls for diplomacy. He refuses to listen to the American People, the Iraq Study Group, his own generals, our allies abroad, or the members of Congress.

In the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy confronted a real and imminent threat, defused it and preserved the peace and the strength of America. Now Bush concocts a false and distant threat, rejects rationality and fans the flames of nuclear war.

Congress Members and Generals, if you don't act to stop Bush's dangerous and reckless conduct, you will be accomplices to war crimes. History will judge you harshly. You cannot wait and impeachment will take too long. You must follow the Watergate precedent - go in force to the White House and tell Bush that the jig is up and that he and his warmonger staff must resign immediately or face criminal prosecution.

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Bosque Conservatory Now Open Saturdays

CLIFTON — Bosque Conservatory is pleased to announce that The Conservatory is now open every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. All areas of the Conservatory will be open, including the gift shop, photography gallery, and art gallery.

The addition of new part-time staff members Martha Erickson and Judi Boston has made this possible. Erickson works in the office part-time, joining current staff members Jane Scott and Sara Irvin. Boston is the new "Event Supervisor" overseeing after-hour Conservatory events.

Erickson was born and raised in Clifton, graduating from Clifton High School and Texas Lutheran University with a major in education. She taught school for three years before "retiring" to raise her family and work in the family business. She loves music and has been the organist at Trinity Lutheran Church for the past 17 years. She has also directed the adult and children's choirs. Erickson says, "I enjoy people and think that the Bosque Conservatory is a very exciting place for promoting and encouraging the

arts, and I am happy to be a part of that."

Boston grew up in Dallas and lived there until 1992, when she moved to Cranfills Gap. She owns a business, Sonnen Productions, with long-time friend and Gap resident, Anne West. Boston has also bred and shown Giant Schnauzers. Since serving as assistant director for the children's play *Rudolph* in December 2003, Boston has worked on every TBT production in some capacity. She will be playing the part of Lucille in the upcoming play *The Cemetery Club* and will also be directing the spring play *Nunsense*.

Boston says, "Theatre is my main interest in the many facets of the Conservatory. However I majored in art while in college, and although I did not complete that education I have appreciation for all of the arts that are promoted by the Bosque Conservatory. I am pleased to become a small part of the Conservatory staff and hope I will be able to help with the events that are on the calendar for this beautiful facility for the arts and the pleasure of our community."

DPS Does Not Solicit Donations

AUSTIN — Private organizations claiming to be with the Texas Department of Public Safety have been calling Texas residents in various parts of the state, claiming to be raising funds to help the families of a Texas State Trooper recently killed in the line of duty.

Officials with the DPS warn that the agency never solicits financial contributions from private citizens.

"DPS advises you not to give money to these groups, as the funds are not likely to go to the causes that are claimed. DPS does not receive any of these funds, even if the telemarketers say that

DPS does," said a spokesman.

Some groups include in their names the terms "Texas Rangers," "State Troopers," "Texas Highway Patrol," or "Department of Public Safety." But these organizations are not affiliated with the DPS — they are private associations raising money to fund their own programs, only some of which may benefit officers and their families.

Persons who have been contacted by an organization that they believe is misrepresenting itself should contact the Texas Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at (800) 621-0508.

Governor Proposing \$50 Million Disaster Contingency Funding

AUSTIN — Gov. Rick Perry recently proposed the creation of a \$50 million Disaster Contingency Fund to ensure that state and local governments have the ability to forcefully respond in times of great public emergency.

"As we have learned from disasters like hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as well as recent wildfires and floods, we can never be too prepared," Perry said. "The Disaster Contingency Fund will allow state and local government to respond with all the necessary resources in the face of a disaster and better manage the cost to taxpayers."

The Fund will be used to pay costs associated with pre-positioning state resources in

anticipation of disasters; reimburse local jurisdictions for disasters that do not meet federal disaster declaration standards; provide up-front funding to smaller jurisdictions that lack the necessary resources to conduct large-scale emergency operations; and pay the federal matching fund obligations that are required for reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Various disaster situations would merit the allocation of these funds.

If approved by lawmakers, these funds will be available Sept. 1 for the 2007-2008 biennium, and will be distributed by the Governor's Division of Emergency Management to eligible applicants.

TPWD Proposing To Adjust Texas' Spring Turkey Season

AUSTIN — A proposal presented to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission's Regulations Committee would open the South Zone season for Rio Grande turkeys two weeks earlier than in recent years and close the North Zone two weeks later in the 2007-08 season.

TPWD Wildlife Division Director Mike Berger said the proposed change would increase hunter opportunity by allowing hunters to take advantage of peak gobbling activity, which varies annually across Texas depending on weather conditions.

"Since the spring Rio Grande hunting season is limited to only male birds (gobblers) there is little potential for harm to turkey production, given the way landowners manage turkey hunting in the spring," Berger went on to note.

"Varying the opening date will allow hunters a longer window of opportunity to be in the field when peak gobbling occurs."

In addition to the spring turkey season adjustment proposal, wildlife officials are

seeking public input and commission guidance on several other recommendations.

Complete details of the proposed changes are available on TPWD's website.

Former VP Al Gore Nominated For Nobel Prize

OSLO, Norway — Former Vice President Al Gore has been nominated for the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to illuminate the spectre of global warming to the public.

Nobel officials say that Gore has made a difference in the environmental movement by putting climate change on the agenda.

During his eight years serving with President Clinton, Gore

supported the Kyoto Treaty and has, since that time, campaigned heavily for attention to the problems posed by global warming. His documentary called "An Inconvenient Truth" has been nominated for an Academy Award.

Traditionally, the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize is announced during October. The prize is named after its creator, Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel.

'Greater Tuna' Auditions Slated

WHITNEY — Lake Whitney Arts invited anyone interested to audition for their next production, "Greater Tuna," by Jaston Williams, Joe Sears, and Ed Howard. The play calls for two males in the lead roles, but the fast-paced action, costume changes, and scene changes requires quite a bit of backstage help.

"Lake Whitney Arts hopes to

involve as many members of the community in their productions, and thus encourage anyone with even an inkling of an interest to come out let us know how they would like to be involved," said spokesman James Hoffman.

Greater Tuna will be directed by Cindy Parks, and auditions dates have been set for 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 19,

and at 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25. The show will be performed in early May.

"As always, no experience is necessary, just a desire to become involved," Hoffman said.

For more information, contact LWA by e-mail <info@lakewhitneyarts.org>, contact Hoffman at (254) 479-0631, or visit the website <www.LakeWhitneyArts.org>.

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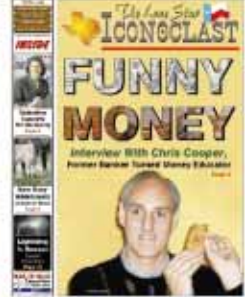


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Tricky Ricky Unveils New Hire Education Rathole

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "The folks who think they know the most is them that ain't never been taken nowhere n'r learnt nothin'."

The Mermadons of inanity who run Texas are determined that this state remain America's State of Confusion, by act of the Legislature.

Higher education is one of the few learning systems in this country that work. Students from all over the world sell their siblings to get into American colleges.

Tricky Ricky Perry, the Lying Governor Texas Didn't Want, thinks we ought to change that. First, he wants another standardized test.

Thanks to the TAKS test, Texas' \$60 million per year no-pass, no-future high school graduation exam, two-thirds of the state's public schoolers drop out.

Those are the smart ones. About three-quarters of the rest have been turned into gibbering idiots who can't get through a home pregnancy test unless it's multiple choice.

Two-thirds of the teachers and all of the honest research show that high-stakes testing is a disaster.

Now the Achilles of Ineptitude would do the same for colleges.

Coming soon to a former college near you, a level of intelligence previously only known in lead smelters and the Texas Legislature.

Tricky has found the secret to oblivion when it comes to caltroping higher ed: money.

College administrators are addicted to it.

They have lots of it. They want more.

Lots more.

They will sell co-eds on e-Bay to get it.

And do they want money for better students?

No, they want better fountains.

And statues.

And buildings.

With college presidents' names on them.

Some brick-lined walkways with elaborate flower beds would be nice, but only if the bricks with donors' names on them are sold for obscene contributions at lavish dinners where students aren't allowed unless they are intellectually neutered Presidential Scholars who can suck two corporate-sponsored convocations and a seminar through a 50-foot garden hose.

Therefore, with one simple dangle of the executive carrot, Tricky poisoned Socrates and

Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



cut through ten centuries of academic freedom.

For a mere \$711 million, you can rewrite history, endow the blessings state-sponsored ideology on ourselves and our posterity and altogether eliminate those pesky free-thinking humanities that have long kept our college campuses enslaved to new ideas.

First, you kids gotta take a test that will insure you've got your minds right.

Wa-a-a-ay right.

No more thinking up your own dangerous egalitarianism or untelevised analysis.

Now that we've got the high schoolers good and stupid and all that teaching stuff under control, we give scholarships to those who know what we want 'em to know.

And we reserve a big chunk of the pie for engineers, nurses and computer geeks.

People who'll do what the boys upstairs tell 'em to do, instead of coming up with their own notions, like gittin' paid more'n a Walmart cart geezer..

Maybe somebody should tell Tricky's Tribe that it's "higher education," not "hire ed."

Nah! Doubt they could handle the subtlety.

Oh, yeah, and no more of this taking your own sweet time to get a degree.

Four years and out.

Pesky peasants working their way through are taking up space that ought to be reserved for the right people's children.

Let's examine a quote from the Dallas Morning News:

"In Texas, 43 percent of college students fail to graduate within six years. The long matriculation means fewer students are educated, the state subsidizes education of students longer and there is a delay in graduates entering the workforce and adding to the economy."

No, that's not a quote it from some TEA bureau-drawer check stub that got an education degree before discovering that it hated teaching.

The News proclaimed it, not as an editorial, but as a flat statement in a news story like some kind of indisputable theorem sprung fully formed from the brow of John Dewey or something.

I wish there were a nice way to point out the absolute

idiocy of that statement.

Actually, no I don't.

Not to overstate the obvious, but education is not a race.

Let's even put aside the fundamental educational premise that has been the keystone of learning since Plato: The purpose of education is not to make you a better wage earner; it is to make you a better person.

Educate for money's sake, and you get Tricky Ricky Perry, the allegedly late Ken Lay and Closet Karl Rove.

Want your children to grow up like one of those chicken pluckers?

The majority of those in college right now have to work for a living.

They have time, not money.

That fabled 43, if it really exists outside the mind of some Austin organic bean counter, represents those who find 15 hours on their registration form and 40 on the forklift don't add up.

Some drop out for a semester or two. Some can only afford six hours this spring because the textbooks last fall cost as much as their tuition. Some can't give away that much time because it rightfully belongs to their kids. Some just can't make it.

They are not forgotten in Austin; The Statuh Texas doesn't even know they exist, because those who live out their quiet desperation under the big pink pimple have not yet snapped: College is no longer only for daddy's little boy and girl who don't graduate on time because they're busy attending MLK's Birthday frat parties.

But then bear in mind that Tricky Ricky's college days were wasted during an era when hazing, verbal abuse and sodomy were as essential to an Aggie's education as brown shirts and busted windows.

Right now, college is filled with the poor, stupid working class slugs whose parents work too hard to make too much money to qualify their children for financial aid or scholarships, exactly the people whose college admission slots Tricky wants to crowd out with this new bribery list.

This whole elitist scheme is geared toward cutting working people out of the mix and reducing the threat of thought.

It trades the American Dream for cheap labor and corporate profits.

It is one more mouthful of our seed corn.

ICONOCLAST EDITORIAL Rick Perry, The 'Decider'

Parents in Texas must be idiots.

Therefore, Gov. Rick Perry has become the "decider" for Texas families in order to remedy their shortcomings.

While at the same time repaying a campaign contribution debt.

On Friday, George Bush's shadow issued an executive order to the Health and Human Services Commission requiring all girls age 11 and 12 to receive the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine prior to entering sixth grade, effective in September 2008.

The three-shot \$360 regimen, known as Gardasil, the highest priced vaccine to date, will be paid for by taxpayers. The vaccine is made available by Merck & Co., a drug company that contributed to Perry's re-election campaign and has been lobbying heavily for the mandated vaccination.

Interestingly, one of the lobbyists happens to be Mike Toomey, Perry's former chief of staff.

Ohly Perry or a successor can rescind an executive order, so he has circumvented interference from the Texas Legislature.

Wouldn't want to bother the Legislature that happens to be in session, for surely this is a dire emergency.

Just like school reform was awhile back, when the cut of cheerleader uniforms took priority over education.

It seems this vaccination measure could not wait the 30 to 60 days that it would take to get a bill passed . . . unless debating this idea in the public eye might somehow get it killed.

Just as the Trans-Texas Corridor was an executive decision that no sane Texan wants.

Maybe the drug is good and maybe all women should take it. But shouldn't that be their choice?

Not Rick Perry's?

The drug does not have a distance track record.

Count the number of wonder drugs that have failed, from methadone to thalidomide.

Or, if you have been on a Mars mission for the last year: Vioxx, Merck's osteoporosis drug Fosamax, Mifaprex, Viagra (linked to vision loss), Bextra, Accutane, the Ortho Evra birth control patch, the heavily TV advertised Celebrex, Effexor, Oxycontin, Paxil, Prozac, Serzone, Seroquel, Trasylol, Zoloft and Zyprexa all have been found to have previously unreported side effects and have either been taken off the market or their use more heavily restricted by the FDA.

Some have been on the market and doing damage since the mid-1980s.

Perry's potion hasn't existed long enough. But Perry doesn't care. Merck, still paying off its Vioxx and Fosamax disasters, has hungry stockholders to feed.

Perry is letting the rush to profits override any caution. His goal is to reward Merck, first and foremost.

The authority of parents no longer prevails in Texas. A would-be dictator does, one who has interjected himself into our homes. It is now his decision as to what's best for the little girls in Texas. It is he who has decided to shoot 'em up with drugs, and if one of his favored drug companies bags profits in the billions, who cares?

The new-wave propensity for governance, both federal and state, is this:

Orders now flow from the top down.

With corporate lobbyists writing the laws for Governors to sign.

Yes, Texas parents are idiots.

Why else would they have saddled our state with another corrupt, intrusive "decider?"

— Written By W. Leon Smith and Don M. Fisher

More Republican Shame

On Monday, Jan. 29, a dedication ceremony to open the Center for the Intrepid took place in San Antonio, Texas.

The Center for the Intrepid (CI) is a brand new, beyond state-of-the-art rehabilitation facility designed and built primarily for combat veterans who have given a limb or limbs, as well as those who incurred brain and other debilitating injuries, in service to us, their fellow Americans.

Since establishment of the Veterans' Administration the wounded GI has been relegated to essentially a series of haphazard treatments, forced to move from one hospital to another depending upon the status of his or her recovery process. Most hospitals within the system are less than capable of handling all contingencies.

This seemingly random approach to long-term care also left the patient open to a revolving door of doctors and nurses; no medical professional or team stayed on the case from beginning to end, or even stage-to-stage.

For some severely wounded vets, such as double-leg amputees, the treatment and rehab phase might consist of 18 months and movements between as many as five or six facilities.

One very important factor never given full consideration in the recovery process was that the injured might wish, or need, to have their families nearby. This was reserved for those persons of rank and privilege.

In March, 2003 when the current Regime decided to illegally invade Iraq Lame Dubya, the Dick Cheney, Rummy, Paul



Out Of The Blue

By Jerry Tenuto

Wolfowitz and the rest of the Fascisti thugs didn't give a rat's buttocks about the extreme cost, whether in human lives, suffering or money.

The very last thing any of them would have considered – and apparently not one of them did – was improvement in the VA and military hospital systems.

What the Regime and its rubber-stamp Republican Congress did was precisely the opposite; funding for medical care of our returning troops was actually reduced. The GOP and its K Street Mafia were too busy filling orders for pork to worry about heroic GIs.

In July, 2005 solicitations began going to Americans for donations fund the CI. I must have received one at least every two months.

Without going into great detail, it's absolutely amazing what facilities are to be found at the Center, available under one roof for the most seriously debilitated of our heroes. An amputee, for example, can get all of his needs – from counseling to new limbs to physical rehabilitation – taken care of on a single floor, instead of separate buildings (or cities), as was often necessary before.

The military and VA have given every effort to make the CI the new World's Standard in rehab medicine. To think that it all came together in just 18 months, on schedule, is some

sort of remarkable accomplishment.

Adjacent to the rehab center is an apartment complex where the recovering can actually get real world experience learning to live with their new challenges; there are adequate facilities, of course, for families.

This sort of honor to those who have given so much to our Nation has been far too long in coming.

I've been in several VA hospitals and they are not usually pretty. The smaller ones in less populated areas aren't too bad; the two located in and around Chicago, however, are depressing hellholes, bloated by an overflow of patients with no private healthcare. These are made all the more miserable by an apathetic staff comprised of individuals who know they can't be fired from a Government job.

The shame of the United States of America, the richest and most powerful Nation on Earth, the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave, our utter disgrace is that an elected Congress, in the 21st Century, could not scrape together a measly \$50 million to pay for this Center.

We are forced to piss away billions every week on a wholly unnecessary war in Iraq, to satisfy the whims of the treasonous madman George W. Bush and his treacherous overlord, the Dick Cheney. Yet, the Commander-In-Chief, "the Decider," can't pony up a scant \$50 mil for those poor schlubs he sent into harm's way, who came back bearing less yet more than that with which they left home.

(Never has anyone referred to himself, or been referred to

by party loyalists, as Commander-In-Chief so often as has Fearless Leader.)

The funding for the CI came from 600,000 patriots, not from the tax coffers.

That's disgusting.

Don't get me wrong, it's *fantastic* that so many good folks dug into their pockets and contributed to this important effort.

However, we pay taxes. We shouldn't have to pay extra to properly care for those who return with honor.

There's absolutely no reason our wounded military should have to depend upon "charitable donations." Let Blanche DuBois rely upon the kindness of strangers – when our sons and daughters signed on the line and took the blood oath, we promised them medical care.

Then, the RoveBushCheney Fascisti Regime and a rubber-stamp Republican Congress reneged, as they have on so many promises and basic ideals of what makes America America.

While the campaign was ongoing to collect \$50 mil for the CI, the sickness that is the George W. Bush Regime came out in all its ugly, egomaniacal imbecility. It was announced that the Little Dictator would be seeking \$500 mil in private donations to erect his own presidential library and think tank!

The price tag for Li'l Georgie's personal glorification and the "scholarly" perpetuation of his misguided theocratic ideologies exceeds all previous presidential libraries combined... and those guys could all read, write and speak English! Hell, most of them even wrote books.

That's so far beyond anything one could even consider remotely scrupulous as to show nothing but contempt for the regular, everyday Joe and Jane Citizen, especially those return-

ing wounded war vets.

It seems to me the whole search for contributions was backwards to begin with. Funding a worthy project such as the CI with \$500 mil – or, say, a number of such facilities and upgraded VA hospitals – and give our war weary what they've earned.

George W. Bush can't possibly have enough papers that he wants exposed to real people to even fill a \$50 mil library.

Geez, he can't even pronounce the word.

Before signing off, let me pay a most humble tribute to Molly Ivins. I began reading Molly over a decade ago, and she never failed to entertain, enlighten and spur me on to action – all at the same time. She always wrote 'em as she saw 'em, never minced words, wasn't afraid to put her shoulder into the tackle.

Molly, although we never met you were an inspiration to me; I know many Americans who read you more regularly than their church bulletins. Most likely she was more honest than many church bulletins.

There was something about Molly, and America was better for her keeping an eye on things. Gone much too soon at 62, there shall be no one to fill her column.

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)

Gov. Perry To Require HPV Vaccinations For Girls 11-12

AUSTIN – Gov. Rick Perry today issued an executive order directing the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to adopt rules requiring all girls age 11 and 12 to receive the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine prior to entering sixth grade, effective September 2008. The executive order also directs HHSC and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to make the vaccine immediately available to eligible young females through the *Texas Vaccines for Children* program for young women ages 9 to 18, and through Medicaid for women ages 19 to 21.

"The HPV vaccine provides us with an incredible opportunity to

effectively target and prevent cervical cancer," said Perry. "Requiring young girls to get vaccinated before they come into contact with HPV is responsible health and fiscal policy that has the potential to significantly reduce cases of cervical cancer and mitigate future medical costs."

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted disease in the United States. Today, approximately 20 million people in the nation are infected, including one in four 15 to 24 year olds. Certain strains of HPV cause most cases of cervical cancer. Texas has the second highest number of women suffering from this devastating disease in the nation. In 2006, there were 1,169 new cases and nearly 400

deaths from cervical cancer in the state.

Parents may choose to opt out of mandatory vaccinations for reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs. The governor's executive order directs DSHS to ease the opt out process by providing exemption request forms online.

By using an executive order that bypassed the Legislature, Perry avoided criticism from his usual religious right supporters who generally prefer promoting abstinence over sexual behavior. Perry has said he is a conservative Christian, opposing abortion and stem-cell research using embryonic cells. Perry's action makes Texas the first state to mandate that schoolgirls get vac-

inated against the virus.

Gardasil, which was approved by the FDA in June 2006, could generate billions of dollars, at \$360 for the three-shot regimen – for Merck & Co. The New Jersey drug company is promoting efforts to pass state laws across the country mandating Gardasil for girls, having doubled its lobbying budget in Texas. One of the drug company's three lobbyists in Texas is Mike Toomey, Perry's former chief of staff. His current chief of staff's mother-in-law, State Rep. Dianne White Delisi, is the state director for Women in Government, another lobbyist group supporting the executive order. Perry received \$6,000 from Merck's political action committee during his bid for re-election.

Perry's executive order will be effective until he or a successor changes it, the Legislature having no authority to repeal it. Some critics of the move say that this should have been a legislative matter, that there was no emergency, and that the Legislature is in session. Other argue that this is another case where the state is interfering with parents' rights to make medical decisions for their children.

The public has become wary of new vaccines and drugs, due to recent cases where it was later learned the long-term effects of certain drugs caused more problems than they solved, and data is unavailable on the long-term consequences, if any, of this vaccine.

Jiggers! It's The Cops!

For a long time, I've been wondering if I'm the only person who's bothered by the fact that there is a device that is sold legally whose sole purpose is to help people evade the law. I'm talking about those radar detectors for your car that let you know when police are nearby so you can slow down to the legal speed limit, and then speed up again after you're away from the cops.

I'm not a goody-goody. I've certainly gone over the legal speed limit in my driving career. A couple of years ago, I foolishly got a speeding ticket at a very well known "speed trap" near my house where the limit is 35, and it seems there's no reason to go under 50. But that's the law. When I got the ticket, I didn't run out and buy a radar detector/scrambler to help prevent me from getting another ticket. I kicked myself for being so dumb.

It's not like this radar thing is a device whose aim is to make a noise whenever you're driving too fast to remind you to slow down. We already have that device — it's called "the spouse." No, this thing's purpose is to help people break the law, and it's sold and purchased without any outrage. I don't get it. If there were electronic devices sold to bad guys to let them know when the police are close enough to catch them robbing a liquor store, I guarantee people would not be so blasé about them.

I'm not a stickler for people obeying every single law. I don't care if you rip off that tag from your mattress. I'm not upset that you deducted that dinner you had with your old fraternity brothers as a business expense. I don't even care if you marry your first cousin. (Just don't ask me to explain it to your parents). But this is about speeding, and speeding kills a lot of people. Yet we don't seem to take it that seriously.

One reason is because almost everybody speeds. Official estimates are that 90% of drivers sometimes go over the speed limit. Very often, the posted speed limit just seems absurdly low to us, and since "everybody else" is speeding, why shouldn't we?

Most people feel that they are the greatest drivers in the world. The thinking is, "Maybe those stupid drivers need to go that slowly, but I can handle a car at a much faster speed."



Modern Times

By Lloyd Garver

And maybe you can. Maybe you really are the greatest driver in the world. But if you're speeding, it's much harder to avoid one of those stupid drivers — or pedestrians or animals — than if you're going slower. If you end up in an accident, it's going to be a much more serious accident if you were speeding than if you were going slower. For those of you who understand math, "the forces experienced by the human body in a collision increase exponentially as the speed increases. The crash varies with the square of the impact speed." For those of us who don't understand math, what that means is, slow down.

Being in a hurry is part of our culture today, but it doesn't always make that much sense in a car. Road rage is one of the few rages that I don't have. What's the difference if I get wherever I'm going a few minutes later? It's very rare that I have to drive as fast as possible because it's a life or death situation in which I must deliver an emergency quip. And I'll bet you find yourself in just as few urgent situations in your car.

Obviously, the people who buy these devices don't think that owning one increases their risk of getting into an accident. And I assume that the people who sell them don't think they are possibly contributing to serious accidents and even deaths. But that is the reality, even if it's unintentional.

If you disagree with me and think I'm way off base on this, let me know. But you don't have to tell me right away. And whatever you do, don't feel you have to email me using your laptop or Blackberry while you're speeding in your car on the way home. I can wait until you get there. What's the rush?

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

Using Venus To Find Uranus



Stargazing

By Paul Derrick



Have you ever seen the planet Uranus — not just a picture, but the real thing? Probably not, but you can change that the evening of Feb. 7, using the easy-to-find Venus as your tour guide. And while you're at it, you can spot Mercury, another elusive planet most people have never seen.

With a diameter four times that of Earth, Uranus is huge, but it's also distant, making it difficult to see. It's nearly two billion miles from the Sun, twice the distance of Saturn.

Being a gas planet, no astronaut will ever stand on Uranus, yet someday one will surely stand upon one of its moons. And when that astronaut looks back toward our Sun, she or he will see only an unusually bright star — not the blindingly bright small disk we see from Earth.

Planets don't make light — they only reflect sunlight. At Uranus' vast distance not much sunlight reaches it, thus it shines so faintly it is generally not visible to naked eyes as seen from Earth.

So break out your binoculars, or borrow a pair from a friend, and get ready for a new experience. Once you've seen Uranus, you'll join the tiny fraction of humans who have ever viewed our distant solar system neighbor which wasn't discovered until 1781.

Feb. 7, an hour after sunset, face west where the Sun went down. Venus easily outshines everything else at about 10 degrees above the horizon — the width of your fist held at arm's length. Most binoculars have a field of view of about seven degrees, so place Venus near the top of the field. Uranus, looking like a faint, possibly bluish tinted star, will be just to Venus' right. Below Uranus will be a star, Lambda Aquarii, a bit brighter and perhaps appearing slightly reddish.

Further to the lower right, near the bottom of the field, look for Mercury, appearing brighter than Uranus and the star but not nearly as bright as Venus. Situated about half way between Venus and the horizon, Mercury might be visible without binoculars. Tiny Mercury is not much larger than our Moon yet it far outshines the much larger Uranus because, as the innermost planet, it is nearer the Sun and nearer to us.

Once you've spotted Uranus and Mercury, you can check them on your stargazing life list, but don't wait too late, as they set two hours after sundown.

February Sky Calendar

- Saturday, Feb. 10 — The Moon is at 3rd quarter.
- Sunday (morning), Feb. 11 — The crescent Moon is to the right of Scorpius' brightest star Antares low in the southeast.
- Monday (morning), Feb. 12 — The crescent Moon, Antares,

and Jupiter form a triangle with bright Jupiter to the upper left and reddish star Antares to the upper right.

- Wednesday (morning), Feb. 14 — A thin crescent Moon is to the right of reddish Mars near the eastern horizon an hour before sunrise.

- Saturday, Feb. 17 — The Moon is new.

- Monday (evening), Feb. 19 — A thin crescent Moon is above Venus low in the west at dusk, creating a beautiful sight.

- Saturday, Feb. 24 — The Moon at 1st quarter.

Naked-Eye Planets

The Sun, Moon, and planets rise in the east and set in the west due to Earth's west-to-east rotation.

The early evening features Venus, the brilliant "evening star" in the west with Mercury below it; each evening Mercury climbs a bit closer to Venus, but never quite reaches it, coming closest Feb. 4 before sinking back into the Sun by month's end.

Saturn, at opposition Feb. 10, rises soon after sunset.

Morning stargazers see Saturn setting in the west with Mars rising in the east southeast and brighter Jupiter higher in the southeast.

Astro-Milestones

- Sunday, Feb. 4, was the 101st anniversary of the birth of American astronomer Clyde Tombaugh (1906-1997), discoverer of Pluto.

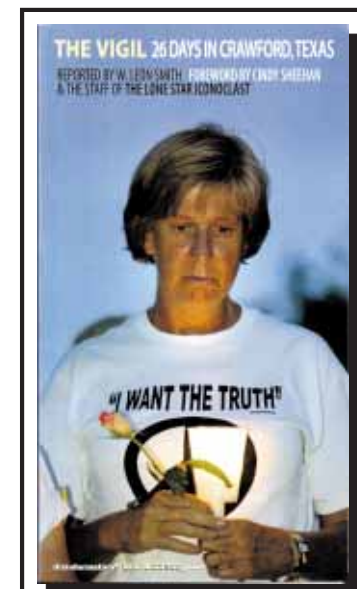
- Thursday, Feb. 15, is the 443rd anniversary of the birth of Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564-1642).

- Sunday, Feb. 18, is the 77th anniversary of Clyde Tombaugh's discovery of Pluto on photographic

plates taken Jan. 23 and 29, 1930, from Lowell Observatory near Flagstaff, Arizona.

- Monday, Feb. 19, is the 534th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), Polish astronomer, Polish astronomer whose thesis that the Sun rather than the Earth is at the center of the universe revolutionized scientific and theological thinking in the western world.

Stargazer appears monthly. Paul Derrick is an amateur astronomer who lives in Waco. Contact him at 918 N. 30th, Waco, 76707, (254) 753-6920 or paulderrickwaco@aol.com. See the Stargazer Web site at stargazerpaul.com.



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No Question Is Out Of Line For Dick Cheney: Civility Is For The Civil, Not For Criminals

By MELINDA PILLSBURY-FOSTER
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Babies are a good thing; they are the hope of the world, the perpetuation of the human adventure; the soul healing delight that transforms girls into mothers.

And while we cannot fault Dick and Lynn Cheney for their expressed delight that their daughter is about to give birth to a child, their own movement would characterize as an abomination the recent exchange between Wolf Blitzer and Dick Cheney that does point to the contradictory practices and standards of those we know as NeoCons. Their actions send a message about their real agenda; that is what has been operating under the cover of rhetoric since Dick Cheney was a high school cheerleader, courting his far more political girl friend, Lyn.

Why should Blitzer have allowed Dick Cheney to determine what questions Cheney, a public employee, should have to answer? Cheney and Bush are not our employers, nor does their behavior give them a right to deference.

The assertion that Cheney or Bush or any of those who we know as NeoCons should be accorded respect continues a mistake Americans have been making for a long time. It is time to change that. According respect to individuals who occupy positions of truth through deceit empowers deceitful behavior. Instead of respect they should be shunned. The mistake of according such deference itself is a continuation of the mistake we made in extending the trappings of 'aristocracy' to such as Bush.

Bush is no aristocrat; he is the offspring of generations that made their living from sucking the tit of government.

America is a nation established to refute the idea of elitism; the Revolution was in large part capitalized by people who rejected the idea of a 'natural aristocracy' or one established through the acquisition of wealth when that wealth was not viewed through a lens that judged how it was accumulated. We are not British. America's mission statement affirms the absolute ideal of equality.

Americans do not bow or curtsy to kings. Each of us is in our own right sovereign, holding that standing not by government but as enunciated by

GUEST COMMENTARY

Thomas Jefferson in America's Mission Statement, "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*" —

Americans should accord respect only to those whose actions affirm accomplishment by means that extend the cultural capital of cooperation through doing the right thing. No Robber Baron deserves our respect; no PR agents for Robber Barons do either.

The slow, steady displacement of respect accorded to those who accomplished financial well being and social justice through going right, replaced with just how high the dollar signs are piled, has taken its toll of American culture. Today, behavior that would make barnyard animals blush is excused in celebrities of all kinds. Today, wealthy Mafiosi are accorded respect; money in large amounts is all that matters. Bill Gates is courted to donate to charities although most of us know that his wealth came from the worst kind of predatory behavior, carried out by skirting the law and ignoring simple decency.

The same pattern played out in the aftermath of those earlier generations of Robber Barons. Taking money and favors from the Federal government, these opportunists risked not their own wealth but the wealth entrusted to government by the people. The tendency to see wealth entrusted to government as up for grabs has been going on for a long time. The Big Four, and their Eastern cronies, including Rockefeller, were despised by people whose own values reflected a belief that wealth earned by deceit, corruption, and violence carried with it no social credit. When met with social ostracism they bought their way in. That was not their mistake, it was the mistake of those who let it happen. That the names of Stanford, Doheny, Mulholland, Carnegie,

and others carry a patina of aristocracy is a mistake that has proven to be more expensive than we could have imagined.

Today both Left and Right in America cozy up to those holding ill-gotten gains, in obvious hopes that the ooze of stolen money will rub off on them. It is a sad sight and continues the deterioration of real American values.

Cheney's wealth is the accumulation of money 'earned' through carrying out the agenda of large corporations, whose income stream depends of limiting the market choices of Americans, keeping them on the grid of dependency. The correct way to treat him is to turn your back and ignore his presence. Treating him with deference is itself despicable and offensive. Cheney is an employee of the American people. He deserves no more respect than an auto mechanic who does phony repairs on your car. In justice, the auto mechanic is less toxic and does not usually expect us to bow or curtsy.

This Cheney grandchild is being born within a lesbian relationship and outside of marriage. Personally, I would not judge mother or child. It is Mary Cheney's life and choice. But Lynn Cheney raised her children in a home environment where she wrote about lesbian sexual behavior while emoting the rhetoric of living a very different life. This positioning profited Cheney and his fellow NeoCons to the tune of billions, if not trillions of unearned dollars. Those dollars were not created, they were stolen from real people, many of who will die as a result.

Mary Cheney's baby will live a life of comfort and privilege while Iraqi children die horribly, their deaths an adjunct to the lies told by this baby's grandfather.

BAGHDAD, 29 Jan 2007 (IRIN) - The Iraqi government, the United Nations and NGOs have condemned an attack against a girls' school in Baghdad that left five students dead and more than 20 injured on Sunday. Parents, students and teachers were left horror-struck after the incident.

An 11-year-old boy in Baghdad would doubtless have something to say to Dick Cheney about his life.

"BAGHDAD, 29 Jan 2007 (IRIN) - "I'm 11 years old and an only son. I'm a pupil at

Mansour Primary School in Baghdad. Lately, I have been feeling very lonely in my class. This week, I was the only student in class because all my classmates didn't come to school for various reasons.

"Since last September, three of my classmates have been kidnapped and two have been killed. One was murdered with his family at home and the other was a victim of a bomb explosion a month ago.

"This is one of the things Cheney and Bush have bought with the money stolen from Americans.

The Cheney baby is not the issue; long life and health to the unborn child, no matter what its

gender and despite the deceitful and disgraceful behavior of its grandparents.

The only mistake Blitzer made was to accord Dick Cheney a respect he does not deserve. Americans need to examine how wealth is accumulated; that is what matters. It is past time for Americans to reassess and take action.

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

Bush Grabs Power From Federal Agencies

WASHINGTON — President George W. Bush launched another power grab within the government bureaucracy when he recently signed a directive that allows the executive branch more control over federal agencies.

The executive order published in the Federal Registry last week mandates that a political appointee must operate an office that oversees each agency's regulations and policies.

These federal agencies normally develop regulations that guard the health, safety, the environment, civil rights and privacy of the public. This regulation-making power is given to the bureaucracy in laws approved by Congress.

The job of the White House's appointee would, in effect, be to enforce the president's will over the civil servants and scientific experts working for the federal government.

The fact that President Bush issued the directive as the Democrats regained control of Congress was not lost to Peter L. Strauss, a professor at Columbia Law School.

"Having lost control of Congress, the president is doing what he can to increase his control of the executive branch," Strauss told the New York Times.

Business executives expressed joy in the new position, saying their industries needed relief from federal regulations.

However, consumer, labor, and environmental advocates cringed, warning that the directive's unnecessary limits would leave the agencies' efforts ineffective in protecting the public.

Both groups say that the administration has its eyes on the Environmental Protection Agency and the

Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The directive also mandated that the agencies allow the White House time to look over "any significant guidance documents" prior to their publishing. This statement refers to the documents the agencies issue to work around the Office of Management and Budget's rule review process.

However, instead of helping the OMB's process, President Bush's order "will result in more delay and more White House control over the day-to-day work of federal agencies," said Dr. Gary D. Bass, executive director of an organization that monitors the OMB.

The new hurtle the agencies must jump over mandates that the financial effects of the regulations be analysed each year.

Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif.), the chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, added that the President's mandate is "a terrible way to govern, but great news for special interests."

While environmentalists say Bush's order sabotages the enforcement of safeguards that could prevent pollution, businesspeople feel that the guidance documents that accompany the regulations are hidden from the public. These documents, though they are shown to regulated businesses, carry no legal weight.

Be that as it may, the new White House policy mandates that these documents be uploaded to the Internet should they have an economic effect of \$100 million a year or more. The public is still granted a comment period except when the president says otherwise.

Ku Klux Klan Comes Out Of Mothballs

The resurrected Ku Klux Klan launched a wave of terror and intimidation on Jan. 30, 1921, with the whipping, tarring, and feathering of a Houston lawyer for the “crime” of defending blacks and petty criminals.

Coming out of mothballs in October 1920, the Klan spread like wildfire across the Lone Star State. More than 200,000 Texans — roughly one out of every dozen white adults — were suckers for the secret order’s sales pitch, which exploited their nostalgic reverence for the old Confederacy and vague desire for a moral housecleaning.

In pledging allegiance to the KKK, most members were willing to tolerate a certain amount of violence to keep blacks in line. What they did not bargain on was that their white friends and neighbors would be the nightriders’ favorite targets.

The Beaumont Klan boldly boasted of their vicious attack on a doctor suspected of performing abortions. In a 4,000-word statement published in the local press, they gloated, “The eyes of the unknown had seen and observed the wrong to be redressed. The lash was laid on his back and the tar and feathers applied to his body.”

At Timpson in Shelby County, a man was badly beaten for leaving his wife. A woman in nearby Tenaha was stripped naked, whipped with a wet rope and tarred and feathered because she was rumored to be a bigamist.

A mob chased two freshly tarred and feathered victims up Congress Avenue in downtown Austin, and a Brenham resident was pummeled for speaking German. Alleged immorality earned the lash for a Mineral Wells constable and a Marshall clerk, while the tar-and-feathers cure was twice prescribed for a Fort Worth gambler who failed to see the light after the initial dose.

The Dallas chapter or Klavern, largest in the state with a membership of thirteen thousand, specialized in flogging. During the spring of 1922, 68 people were whipped to within an inch of their lives in the Trinity River bottoms.

Houston Klansmen were the most accomplished spies. They kept tabs on practically everybody by tapping telephones, reading telegrams and opening mail at the main post office. Their Denison colleagues combated premarital sex by patrolling the local lovers lane in white sheets.

This Week In Texas History

By Bartee Haile



Law enforcement at the municipal and county levels was honeycombed with KKK sympathizers and activists. Few Klan crimes were ever solved, and rarely did the culprits stand trial.

When Waco police arrested three Klansmen, the grand jury refused to indict despite an airtight case. At Goose Creek outside Houston, a gang of cross-burners dragged a woman from her sickbed and mercilessly beat her and a male visitor. After 12 Klansmen got off with hundred-dollar fines for the savage assault, a KKK publication bragged, “It cost Goose Creek just \$1,200 to clean up.”

While many politicians were careful not to offend the bloc-voting Klan, Sen. Charles Culberson and former lieutenant governor Martin Crane joined Congressman John Nance Garner in denouncing the bullies. Forty-nine state legislators risked reelection to lobby the uncooperative governor for an anti-mask law.

A judge in Wichita Falls jailed three Klansmen for contempt, and the mayor of Dallas criticized their sinister shenanigans. Chambers of commerce, Masonic lodges, American Legion posts, and the state bar association were among the early opponents of the Klan rampage. THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE added its influential voice to the outcry with a sound piece of editorial advice: “Boys, you’d better disband.”

Dan Moody set the example for district attorneys throughout the state. After a traveling salesman was kidnapped, chained to a tree and flogged half to death in Taylor, the young prosecutor unmasked the perpetrators, including a minister and the police chief, and sent one to the penitentiary.

Authorities at Laredo prevented a Klan march by deputizing a hundred armed citizens and borrowing a machine-gun. Rocks and fists caused Klansmen to cancel similar plans in McKinney, and strict enforcement of an ordinance banning masked mobilizations rained on a proposed parade in San Antonio.

The so-called “visitation,” the Klan’s curious practice of interrupting a church service to lecture the captive congregation, began to backfire. Baptists in

Denison and Austin forcibly ejected the intruders, and Corsicana Presbyterians supported their pastor’s courageous refusal to join the KKK.

Only two years after electing one of their own to the U.S. Senate, the Texas Klan was repudiated at the polls in 1924.

Miriam A. Ferguson defeated Felix D. Robertson in a bruising gubernatorial battle and knocked the wheels off the Klan bandwagon.

The new legislature quickly passed a tough anti-mask law by lopsided votes in both chambers. The vast majority of Klansmen got the message and

deserted the Invisible Empire leaving a handful of hateful die-hards to crawl back under their rocks.

Bartee Haile welcomes your comments, questions and suggestions at haile@pdq.net or P.O. Box 152, Friendswood, TX 77549.

An Average Of A \$500 To \$700 Refund Available To EVERY Texas Taxpayer!

Governor, Legislators Sitting On TaxPayer Dollars

Why are legislators and Gov. Perry keeping the \$14 million in overpaid taxpayer dollars?

An average of a \$500 to \$700 refund is available to every Texas taxpayer and that amount would help defray some daily living expenses.

Many officials don’t want to return the money because some are afraid that the money may be needed “down the road” and/or to counter any future shortfall. Others don’t want to return the refunds because — *let’s face it, money is tight* — in their minds they already have determined to use the money for interests OTHER than what the tax dollars originally were collected for.

State officials also have done the same thing with other tax dollars, e.g., gasoline taxes, whereby some of the money collected does NOT go towards building and maintaining Texas roadways, but are diverted to other interests determined by officials. Originally the Texas Lottery was supposed to go for public education; however, much of it is diverted to other interests. Diverting tax dollars is big business in Texas.

During the past decade the



Texas Commentary
By Peter Stern

state legislature has enjoyed diverting taxpayer dollars to whatever interests officials felt were in need. They also may have diverted some to interests of their wealthy campaign contributors/lobbyists.

If not illegal, at the least diverting tax dollars is questionable and the governor and other officials must be held accountable for holding onto and/or diverting taxpayer dollars.

BTW, currently the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) continues “to cry” that it hasn’t the tax dollars to quickly and effectively build and maintain roadways and has “creatively” and aggressively pushed for toll roads throughout Central Texas and elsewhere. In truth, TxDOT has been sitting on millions of taxpayer dollars and collects the interest on those millions. In addition, taxpayer dollars have been used to advertise TxDOT’s pro-toll road agenda and also the Toll-Tag program. Furthermore, TxDOT

has been using lesser and/or inferior roads materials to perform maintenance work more quickly and at less cost — yet providing a poorer quality of roadway repair, e.g., the recent overlay/repaving of FM 1826 in Hays and Travis Counties. Public outcry on this recent job is pressuring TxDOT to redo that roadwork. At best this is questionable behavior and TxDOT requires more independent oversight.

The point is that tax dollars belong to Texas taxpayers and if they have overpaid taxes then they are due a refund ASAP. Otherwise, it is no better than stealing, and collecting interest on those “stolen” tax dollars becomes fraudulent activity.

Texas taxpayers must demand the refund from legislators — it is their right and their money!

Peter Stern of Driftwood, <psstern@austin.rr.com>, a former Director of Information Services, university professor and public school administrator, is a political writer well-known and published frequently throughout the Texas community and nationwide. He is a Disabled Vietnam Veteran and holds three post-graduate degrees.

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Full-Contact Bowling Could Get More Men To Yell At Their TVs

Like millions of other red-blooded, unathletic men across America, I will be spending a good portion of Super Bowl Sunday sitting on the couch, eating handfuls of assorted snack foods, and whining every time a player from my team makes even the teeniest mistake. It doesn't matter that these men are performing feats of athletic skill I can only achieve in my

dreams (after which I usually wake up with a pulled groin muscle.) And it doesn't matter that each of these men possesses more muscle mass than my entire body weight plus a mid-sized SUV. The reason these things don't matter to us men is because we know THOSE men can't actually hear us. If they could, then Super Bowl parties as we know them

would cease to exist:

"Did you see number 42?! That idiot completely missed the tackle!"

"Hey, Bill — I think he's looking at you."

"What...?"

"Try moving over by the cheese dip — oh yeah, he's definitely looking right at you."

"What's he holding up?"

"I think it's some kind of fancy GPS device."

"Why's he smiling like that?"

"Quick, Bill! Change the channel!"

This obvious exaggeration was done to make a point, which is that, aside from leaving for work one morning and being tackled through the screen door by a 310-pound linebacker, nothing can keep a man from shouting at the TV during a sporting event. In fact, my friend Bob, who owns one of those giant TVs with picture-in-picture viewing, has taken this to a new level by learning to yell at four different games at once. While this is certainly an impressive display of multi-tasking, watching a game with Bob is like watching a game with a sports fanatic suffering from Multiple Personality Disorder.

I should clarify that not all sporting events fuel a man's primal need to yell at the TV. One example is bowling. The reason is simple: There's no element of physical danger involved. True, there's always the underlying risk of someone's fingers getting pinched between two bowling balls, but it just doesn't evoke the same level of danger as it would if bowlers had to actually compete for the ball in a tip-off before each frame:

"...The ball goes UP-and-now-down, off the head of Czechoslovakia's Sirius Kunkussion, and onto the foot of Floppy Sesamoid, who is now gasping for air from the hand blower..."

It's pretty much the same thing for golf and tennis; no real danger involved. And even though golf does use exciting terms like Water Hazard! Sand Trap! and Sudden Death!, we all know the only real danger is if someone forgets to pack a sweater for the senior tour.

However, in both sports, a few well-placed scorpions could make all the difference:

"What a beautiful shot by Tiger, eh Tom?"

"Yes it was, Frank, but he seems a little hesitant to get his ball."

"Well, Tom, Tiger's a smart young man. He knows there's a good chance that one of the three remaining scorpion hazards is probably in that cup."

"That's a good point. But re-



Life Is A Funny Place

By Ned Hickson

Siuslaw News

member: He does still have one last caddy-option left. The question, of course, is whether to use him here, or save him for the sand trap."

Or tennis:

"In case you're just tuning in, it's advantage Federer, which means Roddick must win this next point if he wants to stay alive — no easy feat, I must say."

"That's right, Tom. As you can see, they have just released the scorpions on Roddick's side

of the court. One wrong step, and he could — WHOA! I think we've just lost another ball boy..."

Now, before I get a bunch of angry letters from bowlers, tennis players, golfers and scorpions, I just want to say that I have nothing but the utmost respect for those sports (and for scorpions in general.) The last thing I want to do is offend anyone with a racket, golf club, or good enough aim with a bowling ball to drop a 7-10 split.

Especially since we just had the screen door fixed.

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

Good Partner

For years I was in a position — or so I thought, — (perception is everything) — in which I felt I must continually check up on everyone and everything around me to make certain things were going correctly. I felt that if I missed a beat, things would surely fall apart. It was pretty nerve wracking, and the stress wasn't exactly beneficial.

Now you might call this compulsive or controlling, or it might have to do with a certain hyper Type A Personality. (I've calmed down a lot since then). But it probably had a lot more to do with being a busy wife and mother, trying to work and also keep a household running smoothly, deal with all the personalities involved and the inevitable problems. Sometimes I felt I was out there all alone, and if I stopped moving for a minute, disaster would ensue.

Lots of people are in this position these days, doing a big balancing act. And whether or not a person has a helpful spouse or partner makes a big difference. Family and extended family are good. At the very least, we all need good friends. In fact, it's probably the norm rather than the exception for people to feel they're continually burning the candle at both ends, never getting properly finished with anything, and often tired. (By middle age, I think perhaps many of us finally start to accept this, that no one can do it all).

A lot of women in my generation were caught in sort of a no-man's land between choosing to stay at home with their kids and going out to conquer the world. Those of us who tried both got pretty stressed out. A European friend commented to me, years ago, "You Americans work WAY too hard." Lately it seems that no matter how hard we work, many of us still

Rustic Ramblings

By Dr. Gene Ellis



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

can't easily afford more than the necessities. Those are expensive enough. I worry for my kids' futures. Will there be no leisure time for them? — No time to kick back or stop to smell the roses?

I find that my life is much more peaceful now. A lot of that has to do with choosing the country over the city, although living on a ranch is hard work. And the days are gone now of being on red alert 24/7 with little kids or teenagers at home. As a parent, I will always adore them, worry about them and wish for their happiness, health and prosperity. But I accept now that these things are mostly beyond my control. I'm only the back up and the cheering section now. As the old saying goes, I gave them roots, and then I gave them wings, hard as that was to do.

Children need their own lives, and it's right and good that they take charge of those lives when they are at a responsible age, make their own decisions. And in a way, we parents get our own lives back again, enriched by having had our children, raising them, and having them in our lives. I keep hoping I will have time to do many of the things I still want to do, now that my kids are on their own.

Probably the main reason my life is so peaceful now is because of this wonderful man who, with good humor and grace, accompanies me through life as a willing helpmate, no matter how exasperating or challenging the job. It's good to know Zack is there and, good partner that he is, always "has my back," as I have his.

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EXHIBITED — One of the shots of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina that will be exhibited at the upcoming TLU “Conversations with Katrina: 500 Days After the Deluge” is this photo.



NEW ORLEANS — This shot is where the phrase “A picture is worth a thousand words” comes from.”

TLU To Host New Orleans Writers, Photographers

SEGUIN — After Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans artists used words and photography to express their emotions and examine the impact of the storm on their lives. On Feb. 8, Texas Lutheran University in Seguin will host “Conversations With Katrina: 500 Days After the Deluge,” and a dozen New Orleans writers and photographers will share their stories of the storm.

The event, which is free and open to the public, will begin at 5 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 8, with an opening reception and photography exhibit at Texas Lutheran’s Annetta Kraushaar Gallery in the Schuech Fine Arts Center, and continue at 7 p.m. in Jackson Auditorium with a program of panel discussions of the writers and photographers.

Janis Turk, TLU English professor and one of the organizers of “Conversations With Katrina: 500 Days After the Deluge,” divides her time between homes in New Orleans and Seguin. “The artists of New Orleans have used their craft to rebuild internally and work through their feelings following the storm,” Turk said. “This mini-symposium will allow students and the greater community to enter a dialogue with the artists who are sharing their stories, bringing us all to a fuller appreciation of the impact Katrina has had on their lives and work.”

Among the writers who will speak are Tom Piazza, author of fiction, poetry, essays and the best-selling new book *Why New Orleans Matters*; John Biguenet, award-winning author whose weekly columns and personal essays on New Or-

leans during and after Katrina appeared in the New York Times; and Joshua Clark, writer and editor who covered New Orleans for National Public Radio during the days and weeks following Hurricane Katrina.

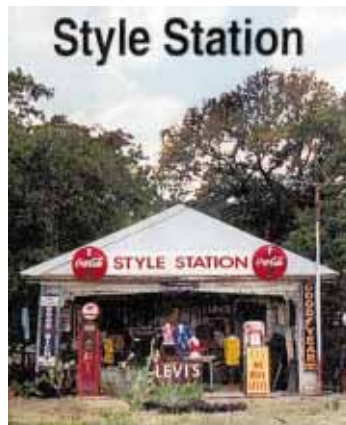
Other authors include Marda Burton, who is writing a humorous travel memoir; Lee Grue, a poet and editor of *The New Laurel Review*; and Karissa Kary, poet, writer, and director of the Tennessee Williams Festival in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

Approximately 75 pieces by eight photographers will be on display in the Krashaar Gallery beginning Feb. 8. Photographers displaying works include Harry Benson, internationally-acclaimed, award-winning photojournalist, Ellis Jobert, a silversmith and photographer; and Elizabeth Kleinveld, whose work appeared as part of the

exhibit at the Russell Rotunda of the U.S. Senate entitled “Seeing is Believing, Seeing is Healing,” during the first anniversary of Katrina.

On Friday, Feb. 9, the writers and photographers will meet with various student groups and

classes at TLU to continue the dialogue. For more information about TLU, visit the university’s Web site at www.tlu.edu.



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