

CRAWFORD, TEXAS

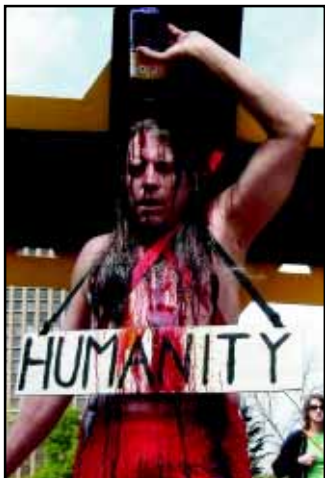
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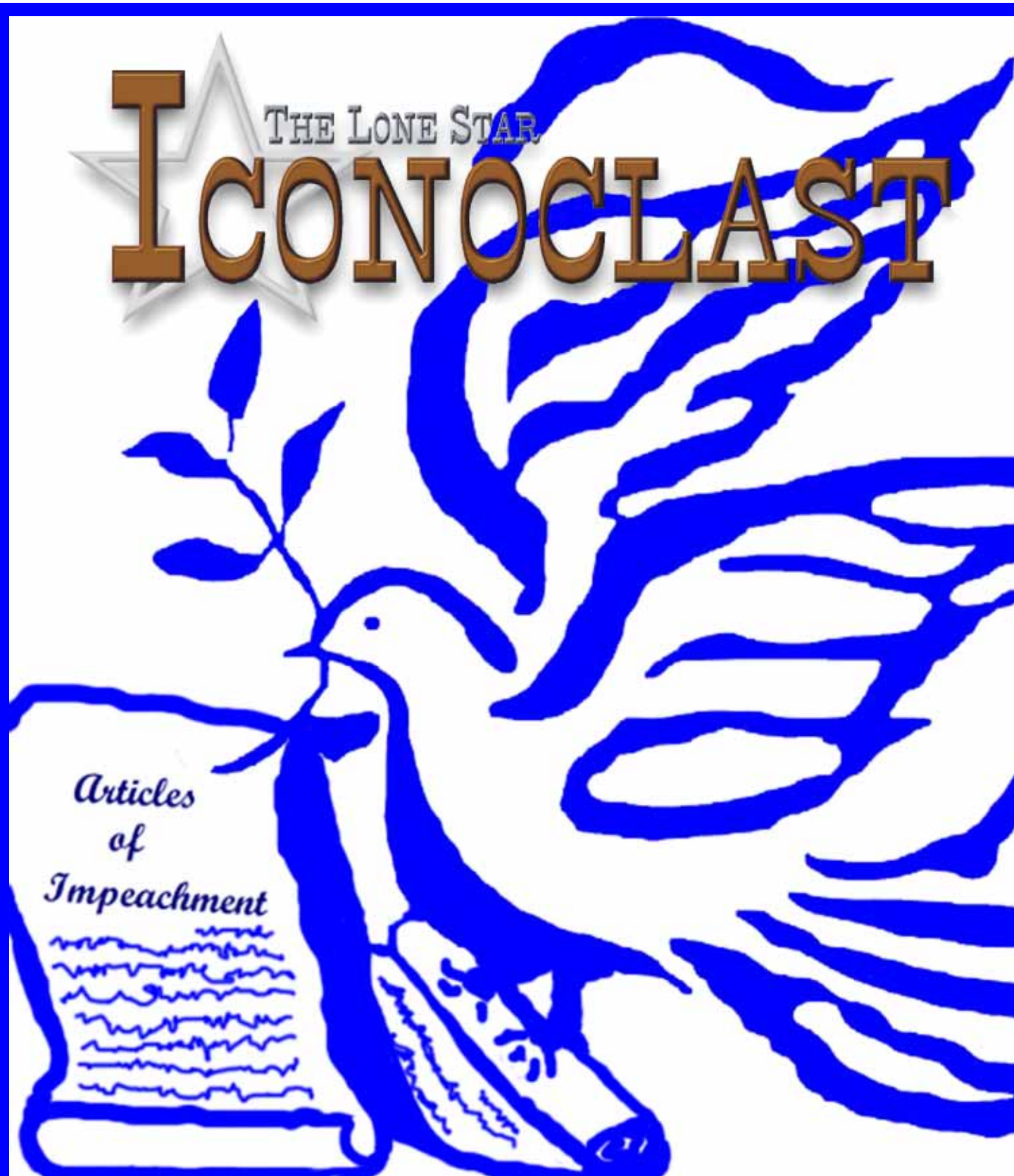
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Political Consultants Unhappy Over New Primary Dates

— *State Party Activists Say Otherwise* —

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Republican and Democratic political consultants alike are unhappy with the way states are moving their presidential primary dates up the calendar this year.

Democratic consultant Jenny Backus told the Associated Press that the process served the American voters better when the primaries were spread out over the

course of time.

"It's very disappointing to see all these states to try to front-load the process," Backus said. "I think the party and the process got stronger in 2004 by trying to stretch out the calendar."

Republican consultant Rich Galen said purse strings will become tighter due to the shortness of these campaigns, but he added that time will tell how voters will

react.

"I don't think it helps democracy, but it's not clear to me that it hurts it," he said.

However, some state party activists replied that the result of the move has swung their way. Now, candidates are campaigning longer through their state instead of raising money and leaving for the next state.

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said he hap-

pily signed a bill moving his state's presidential primary up from June to Feb. 5.

"Now California is important again in presidential nominating politics ... and we will get the respect that California deserves," he said.

The last time California made an impact in the presidential primary was 1972. At that time, Hubert Humphrey lost the Democratic nomination to George McGovern.

A host of other states are eye-

balling Feb. 5 as the date for their Democratic or Republican primaries or caucuses.

Among those 15 states considering the move are Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Texas.

Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho (Democrats only), Missouri, and Utah have already set their date for Feb. 5.

The states with primaries in January include Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Nevada.

Senator Seeks Hearings Over Halliburton Move

HOUSTON — Sen. Byron Dorgan said last week that he would seek hearings to investigate the relocation of Halliburton's corporate headquarters from Texas to the United Arab Emirates.

The intention of this investigation is to see whether the world's second-largest oilfield-services company is attempting to avoid taxes, sidestep prosecution of ongoing legal problems, and continue doing business with prohibited countries like Iran, he said.

Halliburton CEO David Lesar said the decision to move his office to Dubai was made for purely business reasons, specifically to focus more on its Middle Eastern operations where it has operated since 1946.

In fact, over 38 percent of Halliburton's \$13 billion in oil services revenue came from the eastern hemisphere alone last year.

The company would still be incorporated in the United States, Lesar added.

A corporate lawyer from the firm Williams and Connolly told the Washington Post that only part of Halliburton's tax allocations would be affected by the relocation.

Specifically, the United States could not collect taxes on the company's income earned abroad and paid to a foreign

company, he said.

Otherwise, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and Sarbanes-Oxley would still apply to Halliburton because it is traded on U.S. stock exchanges.

In terms of tax purposes, the relocation is cosmetic, according to H. David Rosenbloom, director of the international tax program at New York University School of Law.

"[M]oving the chairman's office to Dubai is the same as moving it from the fourth to the 18th floor," Rosenbloom told financial web site MarketWatch.

Legal experts also point out that moving completely offshore would hurt Halliburton's chances of landing contracts in Iraq.

Still, Halliburton's move to the UAE fits its pattern of avoiding accountability to federal authorities, according to one watchdog group.

Halliburton Watch noted that Vice President Dick Cheney's former company is currently being investigated in the U.S. for rigging bids for government defense contracts, defrauding the military over contaminated food and water products and faulty equipment and services, illegally profiting in Iran, and bribery of Nigerian officials.

Cheney could be implicated in these investigations since he is said to have ran Halliburton as its CEO when one of the

bribes to the Nigerian government officials allegedly happened. Cheney continues to receive compensation from the company.

Halliburton has also been accused of eluding federal oversight by using multiple subcontracts for work in Iraq and post-Katrina and refusing to pay benefits to former employees.

Last month, Halliburton said that it would sell all of its majority shares in its scandal-plagued engineering and military-services subsidiary KBR — the Pentagon's largest contractor in Iraq.

Thus far, KBR, formerly known as Kellogg, Brown, and Root, has acquired \$20 billion in revenues from defense contracts in Iraq. Last year, the entire company gained \$6 billion in contracts.

"With various ongoing investigations, Halliburton's sale of KBR and the move to UAE are tantamount to fleeing the scene of a crime," said Jim Donahue, co-director of Halliburton Watch.

"It's an example of corporate greed at its worst," said Sen. Patrick Leahy, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, referring to the company's relocation.

Referring to Halliburton as "a war profiteer in the worst way," Green Party co-chair Jim

Coplen demanded that Congress cancel all contracts with the oil-services company and its subsidiaries.

Halliburton's shareholders meeting was moved last year from its corporate offices in Houston to the hometown of its founder in Duncan, Okla. These meetings over the last few years had been plagued by anti-war and anti-globalization protesters, and the 2006 meeting was no different.

The move from Houston, Texas, to Dubai, the fast-growing city in the UAE, has mixed results for the wealth and safety of Halliburton's employees.

While Dubai has no income tax, it gives less importance to

the rights of employees than the United States does. The UAE has outlawed trade unions there.

Dubai — a known financial hub for terrorist groups — has a lower crime rate than that of New York City.

However, Halliburton employees could still be targeted since they work so closely with the unpopular U.S. military in Iraq, according to security experts.

Halliburton is the only company mentioned by Osama Bin Laden in an April 2004 tape.

For more information, visit Halliburton Watch.

INFO
www.halliburtonwatch.org



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Happy Anniversary, Mr. President

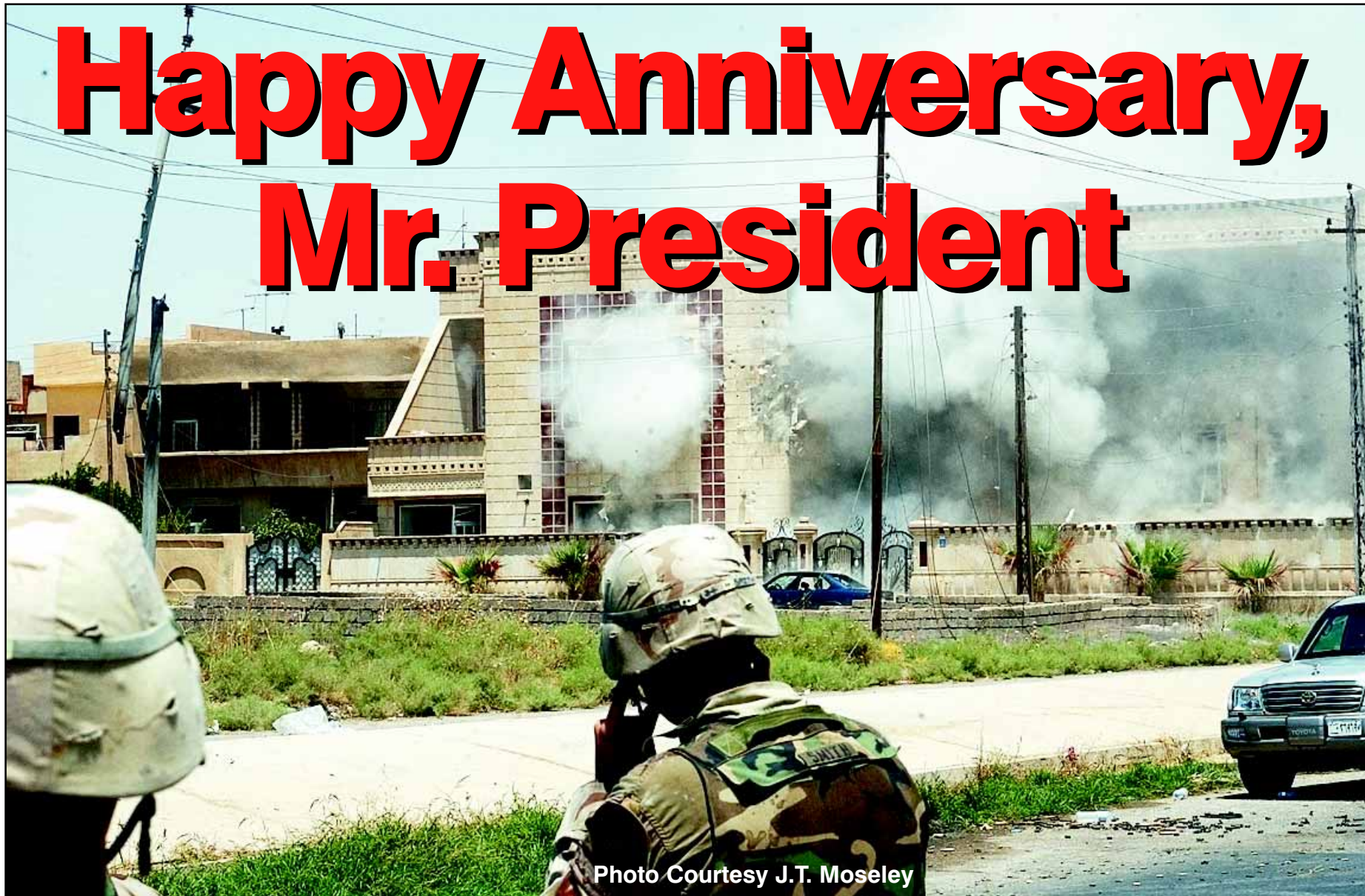


Photo Courtesy J.T. Moseley

Resolution To Impeach George W. Bush Introduced To Texas Legislature On Fourth Anniversary Of Iraq Invasion

By STEPHEN WEBSTER
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

AUSTIN — Lon Burnam is prepared to face what he is sure will be a political fallout over his actions.

Burnam, a six-term State Representative from Fort Worth's 90th district, spends his off hours as the Director of The Dallas Peace Center; a position he has held since May 1, 2000. To Camp Casey alumni who spent weeks in Crawford, he's one of the big wheels that helped open the flood gates during Cindy Sheehan's first summer in Texas. To the leadership of The Crawford Peace House, he's a close and frequent ally, ever-present at peace planning sessions. But to his colleagues in the Texas House, many of them moderate Republicans, he is, as of March 19, 2007, a definitive *persona non-grata*.

On Thursday, March 1, THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST obtained a copy of Representative



Texas Rep. Lon Burnam

Burnam's impeachment resolution. It may be found on page five. Burnam also took time out of his busy schedule to submit to a Q&A interview with investigative reporter Stephen Webster. Their discussion follows.

State Rep. Lon Burnam To File Resolution

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ICONOCLAST: Representative Burnam, you are going to propose an impeachment resolution to the Texas legislature on March 19, which is also the fourth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. Correct?

BURNAM: Correct.

ICONOCLAST: That's pretty audacious, considering the state you are in. Why do you feel this must be done?

BURNAM: There are a number of these resolutions being filed around the country, and I think it is about time. We have to get a reality check. We're going to have to stop, look, and see where we are. Indeed, I have believed all along he was lying and misrepresenting issues to the public. In the last four years, a lot of people have figured that out.

What the guy's done is committed high crimes and misde-

meanors, and he should be impeached. Now, granted, this is the Texas legislature, and this isn't going to get very far in the legislative process. But there's no other issue more compelling than when your government *starts a war* - an elective, totally optional war of aggression. People who were in leadership positions need to held accountable. That is my intent in filing this impeachment resolution.

ICONOCLAST: Let's talk about some of the specific charges given by your resolution. ... One of the first reasons that you give for filing the impeachment resolution is that President Bush conspired with others to defraud the United States of American by intentionally misleading the Congress and the nation regarding an Iraqi threat to the American people to justify a war in direct defiance to the United Nations

Security Council. Would you care to expand on that?

BURNAM: That's pretty straightforward. If you recall the facts, and we go further into the charges in the resolution, that's exactly what he did. I think a lot of people have forgotten that.

ICONOCLAST: Doesn't it say in the resolution authorizing President Bush to use force that it was given because Al Qaeda was known to be in association with Saddam Husain in Iraq?

BURNAM: I don't know if it said that precisely in the resolution, but everybody was given that impression at the time.

ICONOCLAST: The second reason you give in the resolution states that the decision to go into Iraq was unnecessarily reckless, and though Saddam Husain was a despotic leader

Continued On Next Page

Happy Anniversary, Mr. President

who had used chemical weapons against a neighboring country's Kurdish and Shia people, the invasion of Iraq was not necessary.

Being in Texas, a lot of the legislature is going to disagree with you. How are you going to put it forward to these other legislators to convince some to be more receptive to these allegations?

BURNAM: I ... am not anticipating that I will have very much dialog at all with Republican members of the legislature. I am expecting that I will be able to hammer home to some of my Democratic colleagues exactly how bad this was, and what an awful time we've gone through.

ICONOCLAST: What about your charges of keeping secret prisons, citizens being held illegally and without the writ of *habeas corpus* and so on. Could you cite some various examples that people not necessarily attuned to current events might not have heard of?

BURNAM: All of that information is out there in the public domain. I don't have it at my fingertips ... But there's not a week that passes without news items on this.

ICONOCLAST: Would you please explain the extent of your involvement with The Dallas Peace Center? And isn't the Peace Center in association with other area groups like DallasRally.com? They are putting on a protest in Dallas on March 19th. Is there going to be any effort to cross-promote your resolution?

BURNAM: Well, on March 19 the Peace Center is hosting a blood drive. We're doing a blood for oil exchange that day. We're inviting people to come to the Peace Center and give a pint of blood for a quart of oil, because we want to draw a very, very clear analogy of what's been going on here. A very few Americans have been sacrificing a great deal for the President's expansionist oil policy.

ICONOCLAST: But how much a part of it all is oil? Given the number of other industries that are profiting off Iraq, don't you think there are bigger reasons?

BURNAM: I think its a huge part of it. And yes, there are corporations that know how to profit off war. But the reason for the entire mismanagement of our relationship with Iraq, and almost the entire Middle East, is our almost insatiable craving for oil, and the fact that we've allowed the Bush family and other corporate oil giants to

have way too much control over our national public policy.

ICONOCLAST: In your resolution, you charge the President with releasing classified information in an attempt to sway public opinion. Obviously, you are referring to the Valerie Plame case. But there have been no convictions ...

BURNAM: But there may be a court ruling [by the time this interview is published].

ICONOCLAST: Yes, but it would be for a perjury charge, not for revealing classified information.

BURNAM: But you can see, in that process, I think there's been further evidence of the release of classified information. But you're just trying to raise the question, so, um, yes ... You're probably not going to have that court ruling on the illegal release of classified information, but its going to be the next best thing: lying about the illegal release of classified information.

ICONOCLAST: Are there any additional events or gathering that will be promoting or supporting this resolution that will encourage members of the public to support it?

BURNAM: I have been approached by a number of people that know I'm going to file this, and they asked what I think they should do in support of this. I frankly don't know. I've been struggling with that. I am very deeply involved with the entire legislative process right now, while I think that being creative in thinking of ways to close the war is important, I just haven't had enough time. Ask me again in a week.

I'm polling people; I'm talking to people. Its going to cost me, personally, in the legislative process to file this resolution, but I think it is extremely important that we get everybody we can. Its kind of like Sudan. I wear a wrist-bracelet to remind me to keep things in perspective; to help me remember what's important. There's a lot of things that go on in the legislature that eat your time up, but aren't exactly necessary or important. But this is critical.

ICONOCLAST: Do you think this is going to cost you, politically, among your constituents?

BURNAM: I don't think it will cost me among my voting constituents in my district. I have a fairly liberal district in Ft. Worth. But, you know, the general population in this country - 70 percent of the people - think we're totally on the wrong path on this war. Some people will be offended that I offer an impeachment

resolution, but I think we need to galvanize the thinking here on what's been going on.

ICONOCLAST: You mentioned it will cost you in the legislature. Do you mean cost in allies? Perhaps moderate Republican allies?

BURNAM: Yes. And a lot of times, people that are primarily focused on anti-war opposition, are not going to be very focused on the subtle nuances of interpersonal relationships in the legislative process, which are extremely important. This will offend a number of my colleagues.

ICONOCLAST: It seems a lot of Democrats are more concerned with victory in 2008 than preventing dangerous precedents from being set by the current administration. Why do they appear reticent to uphold the rule of law?

BURNAM: That's not unusual for people that are more directly involved with and interested in electoral politics. The little chicken and egg rhetorical question that I began back in the 80's with a friend of mine - 'When is the peace movement going to become relevant to electoral politics?' - and the other question - 'When is electoral politics going to become relevant to the peace movement?' There's been way too long where there's no intersect at all.

ICONOCLAST: There is significance in polls which show 50, 60 percent support impeachment, should it be found that high crimes and/or misdemeanors had been committed. MSNBC has sponsored polls on their website which show an upwards of 80 percent support for impeachment.

BURNAM: I was not aware of those polls. I'll look that up.

ICONOCLAST: Do you have plans to seek higher office should political opinion continue to travel in a direction which favors the peace movement?

BURNAM: Well, I wouldn't foreclose any options right now ... I don't have any specific plans one way or the other.

ICONOCLAST: Have you seen the poll which shows only 42 percent of Texans give the President a positive review of his job performance?

BURNAM: That doesn't surprise me. I've heard polls in the low 40's. But I hasten to remind you, that's not the case in the Texas legislature or the Texas state government.

ICONOCLAST: Among all the charges against the president contained within your resolu-

tion - which there are many - what do you believe to have been the most damaging to our Republic?

BURNAM: I think the bottom line is, no country should ever start a war. Our image, in the international community, is very, very badly damaged by him starting a war, by him lying to justify starting a war, by his pressuring other governments to participate in the war ... It is amazing how forgiving some foreign governments can be of the American people. But the unifying as a whole has no use for this national government we have right now.

ICONOCLAST: Do you see any dangers in future presidencies should the Congress at least not attempt an impeachment on the grounds that high crimes and misdemeanors have

been committed by this President?

BURNAM: "I clearly think that bad precedent has been established. It is in the republic's best interest that impeachment proceedings ... I mean, my God, they impeached Bill Clinton for lying about his personal, private life. This guy has lied about a war! To my mind, George Bush committed treason.

ICONOCLAST: But sir, Bill Clinton did commit an impeachable offense: lying under oath.

BURNAM: Yes. But I'm talking about proportionality. Those lie affected more lives? Bill Clinton lied to a court about his personal, married life. George Bush lied to Congress about starting a war.

Further reading ...
<DallasPeaceCenter.org>
<DallasRally.com>

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Happy Anniversary, Mr. President

From Previous Page

Concurrent Resolution For The Impeachment Of President George W. Bush

Filed in the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas by Representative Lon Burnam of the 90th Representative District on 19 March, 2007.

WHEREAS, The elemental source for initiating congressional impeachment proceedings is found in *The Constitution, Jefferson's Manual, and Rules of the United States House of Representatives*; Section 603 of *Jefferson's Manual of Parliamentary Practice* authorizes federal impeachment proceedings to be initiated by joint resolution of a state or territorial legislature as a matter of privilege; and

WHEREAS, Precedent for employing this authority is well-established and documented in *Hinds' Precedents of the House of Representatives of the United States*; one such entry related to a 1903 joint resolution passed by the Florida state legislature requesting that the U.S. Congress impeach U.S. District Judge Charles Swayne that resulted in a senate trial; and

WHEREAS, Invoking this authority, the people of the state of Texas charge that President George W. Bush has violated the United States Constitution and other federal law and abused the power of his office to the extreme detriment of the country and the interests of its citizens, actions that constitute high crimes and misdemeanors; and

WHEREAS, President Bush conspired with others to defraud the United States of America by intentionally misleading the congress and the nation regarding an Iraqi threat to the American people to justify a war in direct defiance of the United Nations Security Council and in violation of Section 371, Title 18, United States Code; in so doing, President Bush and members of his administration: 1) overstated the offensive capabilities of Iraq, including that country's supposed possession of weapons of mass destruction, and manipulated and distorted intelligence relating to Iraq's weapons program during a plenary session of the United Nations and in direct contradiction to evidence gathered by international weapons inspectors; 2) manipulated public opinion by repeatedly and erroneously linking Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi government with the terrorist organization responsible for the attacks of September 11, 2001, al Qaeda; and 3) manipulated public opinion by stating in the State of the Union Address that Saddam Hussein had sought "significant quantities of uranium from Africa," despite confirmation from the Central Intelligence Agency and officials from foreign governments that the documents supporting these claims were forged; and

WHEREAS, The Bush Administration's decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was an unnecessarily reckless endeavor; while Saddam Husein was a despotic leader who had used chemical weapons against Iran, as well as the Kurdish and Shia people, and required prudent and efficacious attention by the United States and the international community in order to maintain peace and stability in the Middle East, the invasion of Iraq, in fact, necessitated the removal of United Nations weapons inspectors who were on the ground in Iraq and uninhibited from performing their job of monitoring Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capabilities; in fact, during the two years before the invasion, the United States enforced a no-fly zone over 60 percent of Iraq's airspace, significantly restricting the country's military movement and activity through its territory; and

WHEREAS, Indeed, Iraq posed no threat to the territory or people of the United States, yet the 2003 invasion of Iraq has resulted in the deaths of more than 2,400 American soldiers and a reported 38,000 Iraqi civilians, tens of thousands of wounded American soldiers, and severely diminished American military readiness; the fiscal cost of the war has surpassed \$370 billion; and

WHEREAS, In addition, to meet the needed manpower to execute the invasion, President Bush has federalized and deployed members of the Texas National Guard overseas, thereby subverting the power granted to the congress under Section 8, Article 1, United States Constitution, to call "forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions"; regrettably, the illegal deployment of the Texas National Guard deprives the state of its primary mechanism for defense and emergency response, needlessly jeopardizing the safety of Texans; and

WHEREAS, Under the guise of the war on terror, the Bush Administration has held American citizens and citizens of other sovereign nations without charge or trial; despite these secretive detentions, the United States has been embarrassed by revelations of torture and abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, and evidence suggests that President Bush has authorized the use of similar acts of torture in the interrogation of detainees in American facilities around the world; and

WHEREAS, These detentions are clear violations of international and federal

law; as a signatory to the Geneva Conventions, the United States is bound to provisions of Article 13 requiring that "Prisoners of war must at all times be humanely treated . . ." and Article 17 stating that "no physical or mental torture, nor any other form of coercion, may be inflicted on prisoners of war to secure from them information of any kind whatever"; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, the War Crimes Act of 1996 provides that a person who acts in breach of the Geneva Conventions has committed a war crime and is subject to punishment under federal law; similarly, Article VI of the United States Constitution provides that ". . . all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land . . ."; and

WHEREAS, The Bush Administration's defiance of the Geneva Conventions has potentially threatened the lives and well-being of American soldiers captured as prisoners of war in future conflicts; likewise, the Bush Administration's defiance of international law has tarnished the United States' reputation as a country founded on principles of human rights and diminished America's integrity and influence in the international community; and

WHEREAS, In an effort to further manipulate public opinion relating to the justification for the Iraq war, the Bush Administration leaked classified information, knowingly revealing the identities of covert U.S. Intelligence agents and exposing them to potential harm and retribution; and

WHEREAS, The Bush Administration's breaches of law are not limited to international affairs, having similarly violated the public trust by suppressing scientific information and altering government documents relating to the causes and effects of global warming with the intention of deceiving the American public; and

WHEREAS, President Bush's illegal actions have also undermined the balance of power between the branches of government; in clear violation of the Fourth Amendment, President Bush has publicly admitted to ordering the National Security Agency to contravene provisions of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978, specifically authorizing the agency to spy on American citizens without securing a search warrant; and

WHEREAS, President Bush has also subverted congressional authority with regard to domestic policy by filing hundreds of signing statements that declare the administration's official legal interpretation of legislation passed by congress; in more than 750 instances, the president has asserted an authority to ignore numerous sections of the bills he has signed into law, including legislation relating to military rules and regulations, affirmative-action provisions, requirements that congress be told about immigration services problems, "whistle-blower" protections for nuclear regulatory officials, and safeguards against political interference in federally funded research; and

WHEREAS, Moreover, President Bush has overtly undermined the authority of congress; the Bush Administration has undermined specific provisions of the Clean Air Act by changing Environmental Protection Agency rules to allow older power plants, refineries, and factories to upgrade their facilities without installing newer, more advance pollution control technologies, thereby increasing the amount of pollution and threatening the health of all Americans; and

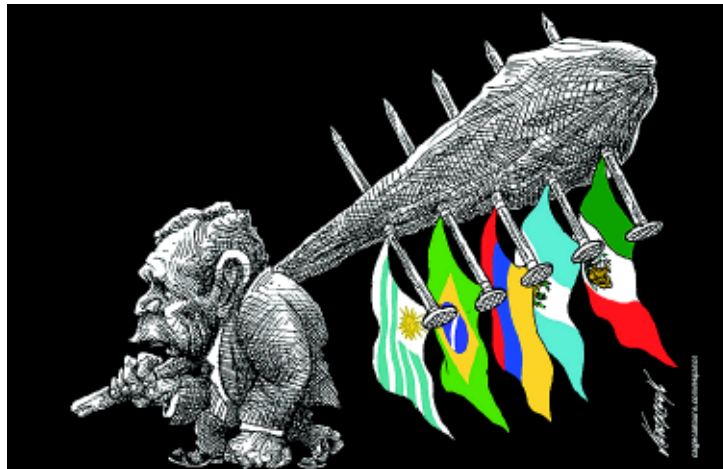
WHEREAS, In order to secure passage of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Modernization, and Improvement Act of 2003, the Bush Administration knowingly misled congress regarding the cost of the bill by providing a \$400 billion cost estimate to lawmakers while government documents revealed the true cost was calculated by administration officials to exceed \$500 billion; and

WHEREAS, Despite overwhelming evidence supporting these charges, the Republican-controlled congress has declined to fully investigate any of these incidents to date; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas submit the charges contained herein to the United States House of Representatives under the authority of Section 603 of *The Constitution, Jefferson's Manual, and Rules of the United States House of Representatives*; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the charges contained herein constitute proof that the president of the United States has willfully violated his oath of office to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That George W. Bush, if found guilty of the charges contained herein, should be removed from office and disqualified to hold any other office in the United States.



Cheney Wrongly Links 9/11, Iraq Again

WASHINGTON — Vice President Dick Cheney once again wrongly linked the planners of terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, to the past head of the Iraq government last week.

"Iraq's relevance to the war on terror simply could not be more plain," Cheney said in his first public speech since his former top deputy was convicted of a felony.

Findings by the Senate Intelligence Committee and the presidential Commission on Intelligence Capabilities, however, showed no relationship between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda before the U.S.-led invasion that happened four years ago this month.

Yet, Cheney continued to spread the idea that al-Qaeda has made Iraq a front in the so-called "war on terror."

The vice president's remarks were made to the annual conference of a pro-Israel group, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee.

The San Francisco Chronicle noted that the conference-goers interrupted him at least 27 times with applause.

Cheney is attempting to gain Congress' approval for more than \$100 billion to continue the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Anti-war activists fear this

appropriation will help finance a war against Iran.

The administration claims that this Islamic republic is a sponsor of terrorism and is planning to create nuclear weapons under the guise of its civil nuclear energy program.

Weapons experts say that Iran would not be able to create a nuclear weapon for another decade.

The administration used the threat of nuclear weapons as a justification for the Iraq War, but former ambassador Joseph Wilson refuted those claims, saying that the Iraqi president was not trying to purchase such materials in North Africa.

As a result of Cheney's efforts to smear Wilson, his former chief of staff and national security advisor I. Lewis Libby was convicted for obstruction and false statements during an federal investigation into the leak of the identity of an undercover CIA agent, Wilson's wife Valerie Plame.

Libby who faces sentencing June 5 was convicted six days after Cheney's remarks to the pro-Israel group.

Thus far, the military operations in Iraq have claimed the lives of at least 3,193 soldiers, wounded 23,785 other GIs, and cost over \$400 billion.

Incandescent Light Bulbs To Be Phased Out

WASHINGTON — The world's largest manufacturer of light bulbs is phasing out a 125-year-old piece of inefficient technology — the incandescent light bulb.

In its place, Philips Lighting Company will market cleaner, more efficient lights and lighting systems.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) praised the move with Philips at the National Press Club last week.

"This is a bright idea whose time has come," said Noah Horowitz, NRDC senior scientist. "The average incandescent converts roughly 95 percent of the incoming electricity into wasted heat. We can do better."

Horowitz noted that while efficient products are already on the market, such as compact

fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), the best has yet to come from Philips and other manufacturers, such as improved halogen light bulbs and light-emitting diodes (LEDs).

"There are roughly four billion light sockets in the United States alone, so screwing in cleaner, better technologies will dramatically lessen our power consumption and pollution production, while increasing our pocketbook savings," he said.



Britain's Labor Party Unable To Stop Nuke Renewal

LONDON — Britain's parliament by a 409-161 vote passed a bill renewing its nuclear arsenal last Wednesday.

The bill put forth by Prime Minister Tony Blair overcame dissent from 87 members of his own Labor Party.

The opposition Conservatives backed the plan to replace submarines armed with Trident nuclear weapons systems — to the tune of up to \$39 billion.

Anti-nuke protestors rallied outside parliament, the Scottish parliament, and a submarine base in Scotland before the vote.

Members of the Labor Party — which has pushed for nuclear

disarmament in the 1980s — vowed to stop the nuclear weapon build up from continuing.

"We must lead the world in campaigning for the eradication of the nuclear threat, and we must lead by example," said Nigel Griffiths, a Labor politician who left her government position in protest of the build up.

The last time Blair received so much criticism from within his party was in 2003 before a vote to back the U.S.-led war in Iraq.

Blair justified the nuclear build up due to supposed threats from North Korea or

other clandestine powers. After a decade in power, he is to step down in the next few months.

Critics of the rearmament point out that it would not only now be more difficult to prevent powers from seeking nuclear weapons, but it would also be a waste of resources.

Compared to the nuclear arsenals of the other four permanent members of the U.S. Security Council, Britain's is the smallest with four submarines holding 16 U.S.-made Trident long-range missiles and UK-made warheads.

This year, this stockpile is to be reduced by 20 percent to less than 160.

Allied Media Conference Set For Detroit June 22-24

DETROIT, Mich. — The 9th annual Allied Media Conference is coming to Detroit, Michigan.

Hundreds of representatives from the participatory media movement will meet June 22-24 under the banner "Breaking Silence, Building Movements."

This movement emphasizes media as a tool for communication and transformation, not a commodity for passive consumption.

"Though much of humanity is still silenced, more people than ever are speaking out. Whether it be with high-tech tools like blogs, video cameras, and MPCs, or lo-fi tools like spray paint or the spoken word, people are voicing their truths and forging new connections," said a spokesperson in a press release.

For eight years, the conference has provided peer-to-peer trainings, open discussions, and community support.

This year, organizers hope to put a greater focus on incorporating media within communities and movements.

"In a time of escalating war, and the daily violence of neoliberal policies, we need media that amplifies the voices of those most affected by these crises," said the spokesperson. "We need media that not only breaks silence, but mobilizes people to envision alternatives and to take action."

Conference-goers can expect to network with an assortment of media workers: filmmakers, radio producers, publishers, web designers, and other artists.

For more information on registration, visit the AMC website.

INFO

Allied Media Conference 2007
www.amc2007.org
myspace.com/alliedmediaconference

Experts Blast UK Anti-Drug Law As Unscientific

LONDON — The British version of the U.S. Controlled Substances Act should be scrapped, according to a report by an expert panel released earlier this month.

The panel's 335-page report found that the Misuse of Drugs Act was not only unscientific but also unrealistic.

"The main aim of public policy should be to reduce the amount of harms that drugs cause. ... [A]ny approach that has total prohibition as its principal objective is bound to fail," stated the report.

The panel also noted that marijuana should be controlled much like the way legal drugs, such as alcohol and tobacco, are regulated.

Drug policy reformers are attempting to use the RSA report to ignite discussion across the United States.

"If our marijuana laws were based on science rather than myths, we wouldn't arrest nearly 800,000 Americans each year for a drug that's safer than tobacco or alcohol," said Rob Kampa, executive director of the Marijuana Policy Project in Washington, D.C.

The authors of the report were brought together by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce (RSA). Their study of the drug laws lasted two years.

For more information on the report, visit the RSA website.

INFO

RSA
www.theRSA.org
www.RSAdrugscommission.org

USDA Should Finalize Organic Standard For Fish: Watchdog Group

BOSTON, Mass. — The United States Department of Agriculture should finalize an organic standard for farmed fish before allowing imported seafood from being sold in the U.S. with an “organic” label, says a watchdog group.

“U.S. consumers cannot trust that imported farmed salmon sold as ‘organic’ is as pure as they expect,” said Andrea Kavanagh, Director of the Pure Salmon Campaign. “The USDA should not allow use of

this label until a U.S. organic standard is in place.”

Currently, a number of European agencies have certified farmed salmon and cod imported Norwegian, Irish, and Scottish farmed salmon as “organic.”

However, the USDA’s National Organics Standards Board (NOSB) has yet to develop an organic standard for farm raised fish within the United States, though its Livestock Commission has raised

some recommendations.

The Pure Salmon Campaign said that it does not support the organic certification of carnivorous fish (i.e. salmon) raised in open net cages in the marine environment.

These cage systems, the campaign explained, allow wastes, diseases, and parasites to spread throughout the ocean.

Ana Sortun, chef and owner of Oleana in Cambridge, Mas-

sachusetts, said she tells her customers there is “no such thing” as “organic” farmed salmon.

“As a chef and wife of an organic farmer, the term organic has no meaning to me when applied to fish,” she said.

The same goes for Rick Moonen, chef and co-owner of RM Seafood at Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

“The organic salmon product on the market now comes

from farms that directly dispose feces, that may have used toxic chemicals to kill parasites, and that are not required to ensure their fish are contaminant-free,” he said. “‘Organic’ or not, I will never put a product like that on my menu.”

The NOSB is expected to discuss its organic aquaculture standards and the Livestock Committee’s recommendations on March 27-29.

General’s Anti-Gay Ideas Not Practical: Military Experts

NEW YORK — The U.S. military is running out of practical answers as to why homosexuals open about their sexual preference should not serve in the armed forces, say experts.

They point to Marine Gen. Peter Pace’s comments last week referring to homosexuality as “immoral” and akin to adultery.

“I believe homosexual acts between two individuals are immoral and that we should not condone immoral acts,” said the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Since the Chicago Tribune broke the story, Pace has said that he should have kept his personal beliefs to himself and instead spoke more directly to the military’s decade old “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy.

This policy prohibits homosexuals from serving in the U.S. military. Those that do serve are obligated to hide their preference for the same sex from their fellow soldiers and superiors.

Aaron Belkin, director of the Michael D. Palm Center and associate professor of Political Science at University of Califor-

nia, Santa Barbara, said that the policy is hypocritical when homosexuality is framed as a moral issue.

“The whiff of hypocrisy is even stronger when you realize the military let in 1,600 convicted felons under the moral waiver program last year, but Pace wants to draw the line at gays,” he said in a press release.

The number of convicted felons enlisting in the U.S. military almost doubled over the last three years under the very same moral waiver program that bans candidates unqualified to serve due to bad behav-

ior, according to a Palm Center study.

In recent years, the military has been recruiting more drug abusers and high school dropout to replace soldiers coming home from numerous tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to reports.

Nathaniel Frank, a senior research fellow at the Palm Center, noted that evidence from the world’s militaries shows that open homosexual soldiers do not undermine the morale of their fellow soldiers.

“No one ever said that when you serve your country you’re

entitled to choose everyone you serve with,” he said.

Frank pointed to a recent op-ed piece in the New York Times written by Pace’s predecessor, Gen. John Shalikashvili. In it, the general said that research has shown that gay service does not undermine cohesion.

Gen. Shalikashvili is not the only big name calling for the practice of gay exclusion in the military to end.

Vice President Dick Cheney has referred to the idea of gay exclusion “a bit of an old chestnut.”

Hip Hop Congress Schedules National Conference For July 4-8

ATHENS, Ohio — The 6th annual national conference of the Hip Hop Congress is scheduled for four days starting on Independence Day at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

This year’s conference, co-sponsored with Unite Here, SPAN, and H2A, will continue to develop a national service infrastructure for HHC with other national organizations, student groups, artists, and partners.

Registration and official schedule for this conference will be announced in the coming weeks.

Workshops will include not only intensive sessions on the initial four elements of hip hop but also interactive discussions on Health Care, International Hip Hop, Hip Hop and Education, Women in Hip Hop, Event Planning, the Recording Industry, Youth Violence and much more.

In addition, each of the four nights from Wednesday, July 4, to Sunday, July 8, there will showcase independent acts.

Artists that have performed in previous HHC events have included Ghostface, Brother Ali,

Zion I, Percee P, Living Legends, Jurassic 5, Tha Jacka, DJ Crucial, Common Market, and All Natural Inc.

The organizers are extending an open invitation to its partners in Hip Hop activism, such as The Zulu Nation, The Temple of Hip Hop, Hip Hop Caucus, Mississippi Artists and Producers Coalition, Hip Hop Action Summit Network.

“We also want to encourage and invite not only artists, organizers and friends of the organization from all over the country but also anyone with a desire to push hip hop, education, and society forward,” said a spokesperson in a press state-

ment.

Hip Hop Congress is a 501©3 non-profit organization and international grassroots network whose mission is to unite, educate, and empower individuals.

With over 35 chapters throughout the country, the Congress works with artists, organizers, promoters, and a host of other institutions and organizations.

To participate in workshops, performances, as a sponsor or supporter, contact PR Chair Aaron Berkowitz.

INFO
Berkowitz
(314) 809-2502
Berkowitz@hiphopcongress.com



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Millions Of Musicians Protest War



Photo By Martha Wood

Million Musician March Parades From State Capitol To Austin City Hall

BY MARTHA WOOD
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

AUSTIN — Playing trumpets, washboards, bells, tambourines, clarinets, guitars, fiddles, tubas, saxophones and drums, a mixed group of Texans ranging from Buddhists to war veterans protested the fourth anniversary of the Iraq War Saturday, March 17.

The Million Musician March for peace paraded from the state capitol to Austin City Hall playing songs like "When the Saints Come Marching Home" and chanting things like, "Cut the funding for the war what the hell is Congress for?"

The organizers of the event, Richard Bowden and Barbara K hung out beforehand playing the fiddle, and the bell, respectively.

Both agreed that the fourth anniversary of the Iraq War was

something to be commiserated with the rest of the world.

"There are protests going on all over the world," said K. "I think there are protests in 1,000 cities to commiserate the fourth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq."

Bowden, fiddle player, and the director of Instruments for Peace, said he was saddened by the day.

Shaking his head he said, "I think it's pretty clear (the war) is a disaster."

Although Bowden doesn't think protesting on one day will change foreign policy he said the protest was more about continuing the fight to bring awareness to the average person. His big concern is that the war will continue because of dollars.

"Why would people want to leave when they're making so much money?" he said.

Some average people who are already aware and there on Saturday were Austinite Mary Kay and her 18-year-old daughter Annie Sexton.

"I'm here for peace," said Kay. "We're all in this together, whether we're from Iraq or the United States; we're all from the same planet."

And some folks who are more directly affected by the United States' foreign policy were there to help protest the war for more specific reasons.

Iranians, and Dallas residents, Bruce and Zena Asadi said they drove in to participate in Austin's protest because of fear.

Bruce Asadi, 48, a builder, has lived in the Texas since he was 19.

Asadi said he fears for the average Iranian and for his family who still live in Iran. He fears the U.S. will not stop with Iraq and will continue on into Iran with the war.

"We oppose the war because it brings death and destruction to the people, the regular people. Our sisters and brothers in Iran will not benefit from the war, but from stopping the war. It's why



CAROLYN WONDERLAND performs.

— Photo By Martha Wood

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Millions Of Musicians Protest War



NEVYN MCKINNON of Austin protests the mixture of religion and government. He wore a cross decorated with a Star of David and bottles of oil. He poured oil and fake blood on himself to symbolize the Iraq War being about blood for oil. — Photo By Martha Wood

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we're here," he said.

Some Austinites at the protest just wanted to protest the government in general.

George Ramsey, the leader of The Long Hair Revolution to Restore the Constitution, said, "Everybody loves our Constitution we just have to enforce it."

And Nevy McKinnon, carrying a cross on his back, emblazoned with a Star of David, and decorated with bottles of oil said he was protesting the influence religion has on government.

"This whole thing is about how religions have failed miserably to relieve us," he said. "It's primarily about war. They insti-

gate; they foment; they collude and cozy themselves with kings, presidents, and prime ministers."

McKinnon, a healer and artist, said that religion is unnecessary if people had proper education and emotional guidance.

"If we had appropriate education, appropriate spiritual and psychological guidance we would no longer need a mediator between ourselves and divinity."

After musicians Carolyn Wonderland and Guy Forsyth played, Congressman Lloyd Doggett (D-Austin) and legendary Texas journalist Liz Carpenter spoke,

Continued On Next Page



LIZ CARPENTER speaks at march.

— Photo By Martha Wood

Millions Of Musicians Protest War



EVENT CO-ORGANIZERS Barbara K (an Austin musician, guitar player), and Richard Dowden, a fiddle player and director of Instruments for Peace, rally the crowd. — Photo By Martha Wood



BRUCE and Zena Asadi, Iranians from Dallas, expressed concern that the United States will attack Iran next. They have family still living in Iran. — Photo By Martha Wood



MARY KAY and daughter Annie Sexton, with their dog Ellie, of Austin, protested in order to promote peace in the world. — Photo By Martha Wood

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in addition to poets and families of dead soldiers.

Carpenter started off by saying the reason she was there was because of age. She is 86.

"I've gone from the George the first to George the worst," she said. "Peace is not a word you hear from this administration."

Carpenter said that in the past poetry and pop culture have romanticized war. But the Iraq War and the evilness of it, she said, should inspire artists everywhere to talk about peace in their art.

"Iraq, a totally unnecessary war, should inspire a whole outburst of peace poetry," she said.

Carpenter inspired the crowd by talking about diplomacy and the importance of electing more women to power.

"Women don't mind saying 'We were wrong and let's get going,'" she said.

Diplomacy, Carpenter said, is "Keeping the conversation going."

When Doggett spoke he promised that he would not vote to continue war funding. He called President Bush the "purse-snatcher-in-chief."

"We have to tell George Bush one thing, enough," he said. "Enough lies, enough



LLOYD DOGGETT and his wife Libby speak at the rally. — Photo By Martha Wood

blood, enough money, enough secret prisons, enough extraordinary renditions, enough war in Iraq, enough, just enough. We have to put a stop to this."

He told the crowd of musicians and artists that they "have to be smarter" than the Bush administration and find ways to inspire the American public. He told the crowd watching the artists to join in.

"Lift your voices, raise your head and let your heart become an instrument for peace."

For more information visit <www.instrumentsforpeace.org>.



GUY FORSYTH, an Austin musician, performs for the crowd. — Photo By Martha Wood

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This Ain't No Election; It's A Fight

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "Ever" good political platform has at least one trap door."

While picking up the lunch tab (again) for the evil Dr. Trenchwalker, I began to reflect upon the Democratic Party and its cast of caricatures.

It's a little like Mark Robson's classic "The Harder They Fall," that exposed the seamier side of the fight racket (as opposed to the NFL racket, the NBA racket or the tennis racket).

Your fighter is good looking, has great human interest, really gets the coffee shop rattling every morning like a herpetology convention; danced through the preliminary bouts like the can-was on fire.

Only one problem.

Sooner or later he's gotta fight somebody.

Or she does.

We have truly reached the age of suffrage now that women are free to smear blood and snot all over somebody else's gloves.

And I ain't talkin' opera gloves

Let's see: lipstick, eyeliner, tissue, Endswell.

The way this fight fan see's it, Clinton has the best corner. They can really read her opponent. She has great footwork and defense, but a weak jab and no real power in her left. Hard core fight fans don't like her, and doubt she can defend the title.

Obama looks good, puts on a great weigh-in performance and has some power shots. Again, no jab, and they brought him on too fast. No real fights, plus his midsection is suspect. He's never had to take any hard body shots. And then he's got an entourage that makes Don King's crowd look like the Ebenezer Baptist Choir.

Edwards has a jab like a telephone poll in your face, never lets his opponent rest. He's got power in both hands, but he's got that one big undercard loss, and there's just not a lot of market for white fighters until you

Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



get to the pay-per-view bout.

Richardson is the best fighter on the card. He's clean, he's undefeated and he knows his way around the ring. The only problem is, it's tough for a Latin fighter to get a shot at the title? Secretly, he's the guy the champ's managers fear most, so they're going to spend their pre-fight publicity talking up the top ranked fighters, knowing their only hope of holding onto the belt is to match a ham-and-egger like McClain or a big money boxing technician like Romney, then land a lucky shot against a popular club fighter who wouldn't know a sucker punch from a Tootsie Pop.

Democrats are like most of the crowd at Madison Square Garden.

They wouldn't know a boxing match from a chicken fight.

They don't want a president.

They want Jesus.

Well, he ain't running.

What this country needs is somebody who will put the most people to work at the highest salaries doing jobs they're proud and happy to do.

We need houses that our grandchildren won't be paying for, and money in the bank, not plastic in our pockets.

We need an energy policy that tells the entire Middle East to go to hell and the major oil companies to go to prison.

That way, global warming will take care of itself.

We need those things, not just for ourselves, but for everybody from Tierra del Fuego to the Arctic Circle. If they can walk to the U.S. border, they're our problem and our responsibility.

We don't need a saint.

We need a fighter.

And fighters ain't pretty.

THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST EDITORIAL

Bills Strengthen Democracy In Texas

Democracy requires guts.

The state of Texas is fortunately in a good position to gain a little bit of both.

Two bills have been filed in this 80th Legislative session that, if passed, would increase participation and restore faith and accountability in electoral process here.

The first bill is Texas HB 2280 introduced by Rep. Mark Strama (D-Austin).

It removes "primary screen-out," the long election practice which denies voters the right to sign a ballot-access petition if they vote in a political party's primary.

Should this bill be approved, it would allow any registered voter to sign a petition for a new party or an independent candidate.

Texas is the only state in the union that has the restrictive law on the books.

House Bill 2280 came as a result of last year's heated gubernatorial election that featured five contenders, two of whom were running as independents while the other ran as a member of the Libertarian Party of Texas.

The primary screen-out law prevented the Green Party of Texas, for example, from collecting enough signatures to gain legal ballot access with which to then field a candidate for governor.

There were two reasons for the Green's misfortune.

One was that many registered voters had already voted in the primaries, causing them to be ineligible to sign petitions for other candidates.

The other was that remaining eligible voters were often confused by the fact that the law prevented them to sign a petition for more than one independent, nor for more than one third party, but they could sign one of each.

Such a law mocks the basic principles and rights guaranteed in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The benefits of HB2280 to the people of Texas also outweigh its expenses – which under the current system are costly and unruly for the Secretary of State to enforce.

Once the screen-out provision is eradicated, political debate, democratic participation, and candidate competition will increase – allowing more citizens to engage in the political process.

It should also be noted that HB2280 still protects existing political parties by preventing voters from affiliating with more than one political party. The bill would also not require a Texas constitutional amendment to enact.

The other bill is HB3119 as introduced by Rep. Borris Miles (D-Houston).

It provides a framework for both the Secretary of State and electronic voting machine vendors to properly certify election systems using open-source software for vote tabulation.

House Bill 3319 is also said to protect counties from price exploitation by mandating vender competition.

Companion bills now in the Legislature advocate paper ballots to be retained in order to verify votes on electronic voting machines in cases of recounts and audit.

As one can see, the movement for a more democratic election process in Texas is gaining ground and should not be stopped.

To do so would only serve to dry the stain already on this state's reputation.

Both HB2280 and HB3119 will allow voters to choose candidates who better reflect their beliefs, values, and direction for the Lone Star State.

Together they increase fairness and accountability in democratic process.

They should be championed for the sake of the people of Texas.

— Nathan Diebenow

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No You're Not Paranoid, The SEC Is Out To Get You

By MELINDA PILLSBURY-FOSTER
SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

GUEST COMMENTARY

If you think that the Securities and Exchange Commission extrudes those volumes of regulations to protect you the consumer, then I have a bridge to sell you; Quite the opposite. Those regulations that the SEC mandates actually make it nearly impossible for you to dream the big American dream. The chances of the ordinary investor getting a chance to invest in that little start up that will become the next Microsoft, IBM or CISCO Systems are slim to impossible, especially if the SEC has anything to do with it!

Don't feel alone, however; smaller companies are also being converted into cash through the machinations of the SEC's familiars.

That is why your chances of living out a comfortable retirement, or having the luxuries you see enjoyed by others, or participating in the wealth reserved for the elite few; those "qualified" to invest in a Hedge Fund are null.

The SEC wants you exactly where you are; a working "John" who makes a day's wages for two days' work, worrying about whether your 401K will be enough, and whether the corporation you spent your life working for will go through down-sizing, or worse, "bankruptcy," and thus default on your retirement benefits.

It is ugly, but it is the reality faced by most Americans today.

Government carefully couches the text in terms both esoteric and bland, designed to firmly close the door on your real participation in the wealth produced by America. This happens in ways you never even imagined, all the while simulating a system they proclaim to be for your protection. But the only ones protected are the "Good Ole Boys." You scrape by with pennies, they make trillions. Hedge Funds are at present their favorite form of thievery.

Welcome to Plantation America, where ownership is more subtle but as sure as any experienced by a shackled slave in the Old South.

Here are a few terms you need to understand before we get started.

Hedge Fund. This is an investment pool where a limited number of elite investors, usually 100 or less, invest usually one million or more dollars each. Many Hedge Funds are so exclusive that their minimums are 100 million for each investor. Hedge Funds are often described as "a managed portfolio that targets a specific return

goal regardless of market conditions." Translation: To do whatever is required to bring in the money. Those "strategies" include several sophisticated strategies such as: short selling, arbitrage, hedging, and leverage. These are few words that disguise the meaning of "steal it" with more taste.

Short selling. This is selling stock or another commodity whose value is expected to decline. It has two flavors — naked and covered. Naked means to sell what you do not really own. Covered means you own it and you sell it, repurchasing for less after its price has declined. Remember this because it's an important part of the rest of the story! I should point out that this is illegal in every other aspect of life, but was declared legal by those closely associated with the Fed, the securities industry, and U.S. Treasury, which makes perfect sense if you understand what they really do.

Arbitrage means trying to profit by exploiting price differences of otherwise identical or similar "financial instruments." You move around to find different values placed on these. Financial Instruments are things that are paper, but valuable, like mortgages, notes, bonds, and securities. They like this best when they can simultaneously buy and sell the same item, making money instantaneously through a spread. A simple analogy of arbitrage is... ever notice that when you buy a stock you always seem to pay the highest ask, and when you sell it you always get the lowest bid! You have just been arbitrated!

Hedging. This is like betting on both horses in a two-horse race. One horse is the favorite and you bet enough there to cover the whole amount of both bets if Dobbin wins. But you collect really big if the other horse comes in first. You risk nothing! Brokerage firms lend out your stock that you have in the street name, and do this all day long with your assets and don't have to pay you a dime! To prevent this, simply take delivery of all your long-term stock investments. Otherwise know that the firm will use your stock to make them money. They will not tell you this or share the profit.

Leveraging is when you borrow money from someone else and use that money to buy something at a lower price than you can sell it for. You will already have it sold before it ar-

rives. In other words, if you are a brokerage firm this means you borrow money from your clients, without their knowledge, to lend to a company issuing the stock who you are helping go public. The brokerage company sells you the stock for 50% less than it will be priced on the street at the IPO. Now you get commitments from clients who are agreeing to buy that same stock in the underwriting syndicate with a 5% markup over the IPO price or 55% more than you are paying. The price charged here is referred to as a premium, for whom you can see. From this is deducted the kick-backs, reimbursements of expenses, and that vacation to Hawaii on the private jet for the firm's major executives.

If you have kept track of the profit the firm made, here's how it works. They used your money (no firm capital at risk), they lent it to a private company they are taking public to buy stock at 50% or less of the market value, and they sell it to you for 5% more than the IPO that's a 105% profit on your money for the firm, and all you get as Joe Paycheck investor is to own the stock that has now been fully diluted. This is the protection racket run by those friendly folks we call the SEC and its network of crony brokerage firms and political watchdogs.

They don't pay you interest on the money most of the time; the subject is never mentioned. When the market turns south you wonder how you could lose so much money so quickly!

PIPES - Private Investment in Public Enterprise is also a type of Hedge Fund.

Brace yourself, this one will be a shock. Ever notice how certain things always have innocuous names that disguise what is really going on? This is just one of those things, PIPES, a type of hedge fund where millionaires or billionaires use the exclusive unregulated domain of private equity investment funds to manipulate the markets of thousands of small companies. Now, I will go slow, because I want to make this very clear and easy to understand. You remember Joe Paycheck. He has been wondering how he will retire on his present savings rate, so he begins looking for an investment he could buy that will present a better-than-average return on investment.

His friend John Doe tells him he was reading an article that recommended looking at small cap, micro-cap or penny stocks as potential opportunities. These are stocks just like the

NYSE stocks but the share prices are much lower per share, and the SEC regulates these companies just like the big ones.

Joe never really knew much about the stock market and so had always played it safe with mutual funds. Those, however didn't make much. When he asked about buying stock he was told he needed to buy a round lot (100 shares), or he would pay a premium. One-hundred shares made the cost too high. With companies like IBM selling at \$58 per share (or \$5,800) or, say, Microsoft at \$24 per share (or \$2,400) that represented more money than Joe had at the time, and he had always heard it was best to diversify by owning at least a half a dozen companies or so to spread the risk around in case one company went south. It was impossible to do this when he had to buy 100 shares of each.

But Joe is worried about that retirement and so he decided to look around. After a few weeks of looking, Joe decides he will start watching the subscription services like PR Newswire, Business Wire, and Reuters. One day he reads a press release about a small startup company that has gotten a patent on the next big thing, and, low and behold, they just received \$100 million dollars in equity funding from a venture capital fund that struck a private equity deal with the company and its principals. But they are only going to take a draw against it right now of \$100,000. And can you believe it, those guys at the venture firm are even willing to take stock in return for the money they loaned! This has got to be a winner! More importantly, they are willing to wait on registering the stock they are getting until the company does its next stock offering! Joe assumes that these venture guys must have done their homework or they would never have agreed to loan \$100,000,000 dollars to a small startup company.

Going back a bit, a few weeks earlier, Joe had received a gift from his mom and dad for \$11,000 and he had gone to DATEK and opened a self-directed investment account in anticipation of doing something.

So with all this new found courage Joe logs onto DATEK and places an order for 100,000 shares of this stock in Big Thing Enterprises trading at .011 cents per share or \$1,100 total. Wow that's just over a penny a share! A penny is nothing! I will own 100,000 shares of the Next Big Thing! I'm rich... and, low and behold, the next day the stock is

trading at 3 cents and Joe has tripled his money.

So he decides he has to have more of this before it gets away from him and everybody else finds out about the next big thing! He decides he will buy another 100,000 shares at .03 and spends another \$3,000 of his parents' gift.

The next day he gets home from work and checks the market, and the damn thing is 8 cents per share. He has nearly a 400% total investment return and there are still three trading days left in the week.

So he says, well I am way "in the money," so he decides what the hell, he takes the entire remaining \$6,900 in his account and buys 90,000 more shares at 8 cents a share, and for the next few weeks the company issues even more press releases and the stock goes as high as 18 cents a share on low volume but rather thin trading (more buyers than sellers). Then the company announces that they have spent all the money on research and development and needs to take another advance against the equity line of credit for another \$100,000. The venture firm says okay and another big spurt in the stock occurs with heavier volume (more sellers than buyers). All the company had to give up for the \$200,000 it borrowed was 30 million shares of stock (or .007 cents a share) and they still have 40 million shares in treasury and the principals have the rest (20 million). The company had a float of 10 million shares before this all started. That makes a 100,000 million share capitalization.

Then, all of a sudden, news stops coming out, and the company freezes its borrowing from the venture firm, and things go very quiet. The stock continues to fall in price all the way down to 3 cents a share. Then it hits 2 cents a share and then 1 cent a share the next week. Joe decides he's just going to hold onto his stock and wait for it to come back. Then the company decides it isn't going to borrow any more of the \$99,800,000 left on its equity line of credit with the venture firm, because the cost of capital is just too high and the they would have to give up the company and still never have borrowed all the money on the equity line. Joe and the company have both received the same news, the light bulb has gone on.

Through manipulation of the rules, Chris Cox and his predecessors have made it possible for the most potentially lucrative investments to be driven, like cattle through holding pens, into

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No You're Not Paranoid, The SEC Is Out To Get You

From Previous Page

the slaughter yards we learned about above called, "Hedge Funds."

Imagine for a moment you are an eager, intelligent, hardworking young American who has come up with a Great Idea. You patent that idea at not inconsiderable cost to yourself. You even do market analysis that proves that this idea is gold plated. Eyes shining with belief in the American dream you start looking around for capital. You are surprised to find that none of your local banks will back you. Doing an Initial Public Offering costs more than you can afford and still bring your product to market. What good would that do, you'd be forced to do business like all other small public companies and sacrifice the company to the vultures because you can't sell to small investors; the brokerage forms won't back you because they have all been scared off by the ugly, nasty SEC after the 9/11 debacle. You are puzzled and surprised.

The banks and others you contact, for instance the Small Business Administration, your local bank, say they can't deal with you and that you need sophisticated financing and point you to places like the Venture Capital Vultures and hedge funds. There, you learn that to get the capital to take your invention into the market you will need to "cut an inside deal" that they tell you is this standard practice. That, at least, is true. But "the deal" makes it possible for the Vulture Capitalist to end up owning your business.

At first you will probably be excited. The deal means you can get all you need to secure your success — \$20,000,000 is no problem. But then you learn that you never GET all that money at one time. You have to get it in smaller increments that always leave you underfunded and returning for more — and on increasingly bad terms. Because the Vultures now have reduced price stock available to them, they can "short" the stock, because the company is actually giving them shares for cash, which they get as part of the loan the company signed, meaning they can sell it (even if it is restricted or unregistered) thus making the stock sooner or later worthless. And so it goes.

This is one of the reasons so many companies fail. It seems like this would be bad for the Vultures, but surprise, the SEC and the wealthy owners in those Hedge Funds can even write off their profits as 'losses.' Most of them pay no taxes of any kind.

And when they ultimately end up with the company, the loss carry-forwards allow them to reap all those profits and reduce their taxable income by applying the loss carry-forwards.

Like I said, these things can make really big money. They make even more money if you have a powerful friend who muscles people around like the SEC, leaving them few other options. This is how the wealthy turn 'the market' into their own personal playground and sock billions away in the piggy bank.

Christopher Cox, the 28th head of the Securities and Exchange Commission, knows that most Americans trust the government and believe that their rules are constructed to protect them, the small investors.

Sad misconception.

Cox knows exactly what is happening. That is why he is where he is.

He was appointed by that paragon of free markets, George W. Bush, on June 2, 2005, and unanimously confirmed by the Senate on July 29, 2005. (Most Congressmen are millionaires,

not when they arrived in D.C., but soon afterwards, and so have a use for Hedge Funds.) He was sworn in on Aug. 3, 2005. If you go to their website you will find that the focus under Cox is on, "the needs of individual investors."

For "individual investor," think over \$1,000,000.

You can keep your measly little savings in the ol' mustard jar.

As we noticed with George W., his "core constituency" is not the little old Republican lady living on her Social Security who worked, believed, and voted for him. The "Core" folks are those who can afford to become Pioneers (\$250,000) or Rangers (\$100,000).

However, that does not mean you need to feel left out. George and Chris have plans for you, plans that include having you continue into slavery.

We have an alternative plan that we think you will prefer.

While Bush and his friend Chris call this, "investment," what it actually should be called is racketeering, and it's being carried out as a conspiracy to

defraud the public at large. That makes it a felony, a multi-count felony. So our plan is to sort of clean up the marketplace so that honest people can return America to a very different model for business.

We have begun writing a bill and are now looking for a sponsor to carry it through Congress. You are probably thinking, "Yea, right! Those crooks?" But right now Bush is teetering with everyone; more than 50% of Americans now favor impeachment, so this is the perfect time to get legislation

passed. The bill includes the removal of Chris, demands true business transparency, and new rules for stock trading, hedge funds, PIPES, and opening up real investments that could earn the blessing of Mother Theresa instead of the envy of Al Capone.

See, we knew you would like it. Soon, you, an American who can't afford to join a Hedge Fund will be free from the plantation of GREED, having ridden the Underground Railroad to a very different America. Welcome home.

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Bush, Blair, And The Terrorism Shell Game

Deceit, Scams, And Coercion In The Formulation Of 'Synthetic Terrorism'

BY MAHER OSSEIRAN
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

"Synthetic Terrorism" is the result of deceitful acts on the part of the Bush administration that later turned criminal, treasonous, and potentially resulting in the most serious crime against humanity since the Holocaust.

"Is it high treason or just a simple case of dereliction of duty?" detailed the potential crimes of the Bush administration but there is also ample evidence in the public domain implicating U.S. allies; some of whom could be considered active collaborators in the deceptions.

At the center of this deception is a covert video of Bin Laden, the result of a sting operation executed by Saudi intelligence under the direction of U.S. intelligence. On the videotape, Bin Laden confessed to prior knowledge of the 9/11 attacks.

It was shown with a high degree of accuracy that the sting operation (the taping) took place on Sept. 26, 2001, two weeks after 9/11, and 10 days prior to the invasion of Afghanistan on Oct. 6, 2001. If Bin Laden were captured on Sept. 26, as per Bush's promise "dead or alive," there would have been little support, internationally or in the U.S., for an invasion of Afghanistan.

As soon as the sting team, which executed the taping, extracted itself from Afghanistan, around Sept. 30, 2001, Tony Blair made a strong statement relating to Bin Laden's guilt.

The BBC reports the Prime Minister's statements thusly:

"UK Prime Minister Tony Blair says he has been shown strong evidence linking Bin Laden to the attacks against the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington which cost more than 6,000 lives.

In a BBC interview, Blair said the evidence from intelligence services was "powerful and incontrovertible."

I had to look up the word incontrovertible in the dictionary — incontrovertible; not open to question or dispute; indisputable; **absolute and incontrovertible truth.**

Four days later, on Oct. 4, 2001, Tony Blair addresses Parliament and informs it that a document detailing Bin Laden's guilt would be placed in the Li-

GUEST COMMENTARY



Maher Osseiran

brary of the House of Commons for their review. Of a certain category of evidence, specifically what was gathered after Sept. 11, his address deals with it in this manner: "Since Sept. 11 intensive efforts have taken place here and elsewhere to investigate these attacks and determine who is responsible. Our findings have been shared and coordinated with those of our allies, and are clear..."

The document covers the history of Osama Bin Laden, his relations with the Taliban, what we know of the acts of terror he has committed; and some of what we know in respect of Sept. 11. I enter a major caveat, much of the evidence we have is intelligence and highly sensitive. It is not possible without compromising people or security to release precise details"

Actually, no details of such evidence, precise or vague, were given in the "evidence document," just a new qualifier — **of a very specific nature.** The following is the complete statement:

"There is evidence of a very specific nature relating to the guilt of Bin Laden and his associates that is too sensitive to release."

Not much could have changed in four days and what we can conclude from these statements is that the **incontrovertible** evidence was of a **very specific** nature, gathered by **intelligence**, too **sensitive** to release, and that it was **shared with some** of the allies.

The only evidence that fits such description is the product of the intelligence sting operation — the Bin Laden confession tape of Sept. 26, 2001.

Other than Tony Blair, the only allies that made similarly strong statements around that period were NATO, and Pakistan; allies who are critical to the success of Operation Enduring Freedom.

From a State Department document:

"On Oct. 2, 2001, ...After a briefing by Coordinator for Counter terrorism Francis X. Taylor, NATO Secretary-General Robertson said that the United States had provided

"clear and compelling" evidence of bin Laden's role in the terrorist attacks. As a result of the briefing, NATO concluded that the attacks were directed from abroad and will "therefore be regarded as an action covered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which states that an armed attack on one or more of the allies in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." NATO was therefore prepared to provide unconditional support for U.S. military actions."

From the same document: "On Oct. 4, 2001, ...In Pakistan, Foreign ministry spokesman Riaz Muhammad Khan said that the evidence shown to his government "provided sufficient basis for indictment" of bin Laden"

Why was this damning evidence shared with those allies essential to prosecute a war and why was it **not** shared with the rest of the world that was looking for a fair and peaceful outcome?

Now it becomes too obvious that the invasion was the real goal and what that entailed in terms of geopolitical gains for the U.S.; in Bush's own words of Feb. 14, 2007, "sometimes money trumps peace." It was not a slip of the tongue; it was an intentional jab at the European leaders' position on Iraq. Bush stood by his words saying that he knew the statement is general but he considers it accurate; does this accuracy apply to his own approach to Afghanistan?

The invasion went ahead and the Pentagon was counting on a total media blackout over the operations in Afghanistan in order to contain international and domestic public opinion. The Pentagon's control of journalists in the field of operations was so tight that a mutiny among journalists was brewing. The Pentagon even had to apologize, as reported by THE NEW YORK TIMES:

"We owe you an apology," Victoria Clarke, the assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, wrote Thursday in a letter to the Washington bureau chiefs of major news organizations. "The last several days have revealed severe shortcomings in our preparedness to support news organizations in their efforts to cover U.S. military operations in Afghanistan."

The only news organization that was not affected by this blackout was Al-Jazeera and its

coverage exposed the atrocities endured by civilians. This prompted war cheerleader, Johns Hopkins professor, CNN pundit, and later demoted to FOX News pundit, Fouad Ajami, to publish "What the Muslim World Is Watching" in the NEW YORK TIMES, on Nov. 18, 2001. A 6,178-word document that can only be described as a tirade that is too large for even a magazine format; yet a newspaper published it. The whole article can be summed in this relatively small excerpt from a paragraph that describes Al-Jazeera's impact on the Muslim viewer:

"The aim is to win the propaganda war, or the battle of public diplomacy in the Muslim world.... The Bush administration is eager to explain America's war, eager for the Arabs and the Pakistanis to accept the justness of its military actions. But how can it possibly expect to persuade the reporters at Al Jazeera to change their deep-seated view of this conflict? It would therefore be folly for America's leaders to spend too much energy trying to moderate Al Jazeera."

This paragraph must have gotten etched in Bush's mind and might be behind his wish to bomb Al-Jazeera's headquarter in Doha; it seems bombing their offices in Kabul and Baghdad was not enough. Anyway, that is another story and the bottom line is: Al-Jazeera's coverage prompted the Arab and Muslim street to keep asking for evidence and forced the leaders of the invasion to keep trying to produce it.

An attempt in mid Nov. 2001, by Blair failed. An Al-Jazeera bureau chief explained what happened; Blair attempted to release a tape of a Bin Laden interview conducted by Al-Jazeera. The interview was to be comprised of responses to questions by both Al-Jazeera and CNN. When the Al-Jazeera's team reached Bin Laden's hideout to conduct the interview, their questions were tossed out and were informed that Bin Laden had his own set of questions with prepared answers. The news team objected, but feeling threatened, accepted to conduct the interview. Also, Bin Laden put a condition on Al-Jazeera, either Al-Jazeera airs **all** or **none** of the interview. Such a condition forced Al-Jazeera to choose **none** and refused to be

intimidated or to act as Bin Laden's mouthpiece.

Somehow, Al-Jazeera's decision reached the west, and British intelligence managed to lift the tape. On Nov 11, David Bamber of the SUNDAY TELEGRAPH in London introduced the lifted tape. Bamber informs us that the TELEGRAPH had access to it and reports it this way:

"The footage, to which the TELEGRAPH obtained access in the Middle East yesterday, was not made for public release via the al-Jazeera television network used by bin Laden for propaganda purposes in the past. It is believed to be intended as a rallying call to al-Qa'eda members. He also tells us: "The video will form the centrepiece of Britain and America's new evidence against bin Laden, to be released this Wednesday."

Those translated quotes were recognized by Al-Jazeera as their tape and moved to prevent Blair from using it.

The U.S. distanced itself from the video unveiling and left Blair twisting in the wind trying to save face armed with only a partial transcript.

On Nov. 14, Spin Meister Blair quoted the transcript in Parliament as evidence. To the rest of the world and in legal terms, those quotes can only be considered as hearsay on hearsay and fell too short to be accepted as evidence.

On Nov 14, T.R. Reid, the Washington Post Foreign Service correspondent, reported from London on Blair's predicament; he wrote:

"The British government did not release the video or a full transcript, saying it does not have a copy of the video but has information about it from intelligence sources."

This feeble attempt by Blair to supply evidence can only be described as a desperate act. Its failure augmented the feelings of anger and impatience of the Arab and Muslim streets. Proper evidence needed to be presented and the only evidence of value that can counteract Al-Jazeera's coverage of the atrocities was the tape produced by intelligence services on Sept. 26, 2001.

It took Washington a month to produce the evidence. One, they needed to put space between them and Blair's failed attempt. Two, they needed to clean it up as much as possible to prevent the viewer from realizing it was a covert tape.

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Osseiran

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Of Bin Laden's visit, which lasted close to three hours, only 35 minutes were left on the tape. All material that would have exposed the camera as a covert camera had to be removed. I suspect, because of the sensitivity of the whole operation, very few were involved in it, most likely rogue intelligence agents, the available talent pool must have been very limited and that impacted the video editing team the most; what was edited out was inadvertently substituted with Bin Laden family home videos.

These Bin Laden family home videos were chuck full of information and extremely helpful in exposing this Bush administration scam.

How many were active participants in the scam and how many participants in the Afghan invasion were just scammed? How far up the chain of command does it go and how far down has it trickled and why hasn't it been exposed on a wider scale?

The evidence leads to the conclusion that the highest echelons of NATO knew, so did senior Pakistani officials, as early as October 2001; did others figure it out the day the covert tape aired on Dec. 13, 2001? After all, Jason Burke of the OBSERVER, a highly respected reporter on terrorism issues and the author of "Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror," wrote the following in THE OBSERVER on Dec. 16, 2001:

"This weekend, as the debate the tape has provoked continued across the Islamic world, several intelligence sources have suggested to THE OBSERVER that the tape, although absolutely genuine, is the result of a sophisticated sting operation run by the CIA through a second intelligence service, possibly Saudi or Pakistani."

How many government officials, western and otherwise, read THE OBSERVER that weekend? I would find it hard to believe if the answer is, none. I also find it hard to believe that no intelligence services vetted those words.

The world is on the brink of another war instigated by the Bush administration as part of its fake war on the "Synthetic Terrorism" it created.

World leaders, from those of NATO, to Pakistan, and others can no longer ignore this issue, hide behind their finger, play the field, and hope that the truth would die away; it rarely does. Not facing the issue exacerbates matters and can only be

viewed as hypocritical and irresponsible.

For those leaders who fear the wrath of a world population desperate for sanity to return, and that of the Muslim populations that feel railroaded and wrongfully blamed, I say, you underestimate the capacity of the world to forgive; all that is needed is the application of the rule of law to those who committed these deceptions and atrocities.

Applying the *rule of law* should and would start in the U.S. with the appointment of an impartial investigator to look into these allegations. Please review and sign the petition to Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, for the purpose of appointing such an investigative and prosecutorial entity.

Bin Laden 'hidden by Taleban,' BBC News, Blair's *incontrovertible* evidence statement and other important developments, Sept. 30, 2001.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/1571689.stm>

Full text of Tony Blair's speech to parliament, The Guardian, October 4, 2001.

<<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/attacks/story/0,1320,563202,00.html>>

Other links:

<<http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/page3682.asp>>

<<http://archives.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/11/14/inv.britain.proof/index.html>>

<<http://archives.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/11/14/inv.britain.proof/index.html>>

<<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2001/11/11/wbin11.xml>>

<<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,619480,00.html>>

Maher Osseiran, born in Beirut in 1956, grew up at a time when Lebanon was evolving then devolving into its civil war. From a very young age, Maher was an observer who needed plausible answers. His early analysis during the Lebanese civil war was discounted by his own parents as too gloomy and earned him a not too pleasant nickname. He was never happy when events proved his analysis correct but satisfied that some started listening and making the right decisions. To know more about Maher and his methodology, visit his website <www.mydemocracy.net> where he posts some of his articles while others can be found on counterpunch and The Lone Star Iconoclast.

(Article reprinted with permission from The Muckraker Report, located at <<http://www.muckrakerreport.com/id362.html>>)

Only Real Men Can Iron Clothes At 3,000 Feet



Life Is A Funny Place

By Ned Hickson

Siuslaw News

I have reached the conclusion that most of the world's ironing is now being done by men. I say this because it's the only explanation I have for a sport called "extreme" ironing, which is actually being lobbied as an Olympic event by "ironing enthusiasts" — a phrase referred to in the Bible as a sign of the coming apocalypse.

And four horsemen will come from the sky. And they will lay waste to the land, but not before having their robes pressed by ironing enthusiasts.

It's easy to understand how extreme ironing evolved if you keep in mind a simple truth about the male species:

Given enough time, any man

performing a mundane task will find a way to hurt himself.

And if you can hurt yourself doing it, then it's practically a sport already. Sure, bowling and golf might appear to be exceptions to this rule. But ask anyone who has ever jammed their finger in the ball return, or inadvertently left a tee in their back pocket, and they'll tell you there is plenty of danger involved.

As a man who irons, I know, firsthand, the danger that comes with pressing my daughter's favorite clothes. Especially if I use the wrong setting and turn what was once a flowery cotton blouse into our newest hand towel. Until recently, men who ironed were looked upon as being wimpy. This was a stigma left over from an earlier time when men brought home the bacon and women cooked it — then cleaned the kitchen, vacuumed, washed the dishes, bathed the kids, and did all the laundry. Back then, men who refused to perform domestic chores were still called masculine things such as "The Breadwinner," "King of the Castle," and "Man of the House."

Generally by other men.

Today, men who want to bring home the bacon — while avoiding any domestic chores — are called other things, such as "single" or "recently divorced."

As a result, we men have come up with a way to demonstrate our unquestionable maleness by 1) taking a simple task and 2) making it as difficult as humanly possible. This is the general idea behind "extreme" ironing, which, according to its web site (www.extremeironing.com) "combines the excitement of an 'extreme' sport with the satisfaction of a well-pressed shirt."

Being a man, I can appreciate that kind of logic.

Any one woman can iron a pair of slacks; it takes a MAN to do it while jumping out of a plane.

Because of this, I have decided to train for the 2008 Extreme Ironing World Championships, which my daughter has pledged her support for by providing me with as much ironing to do as possible. In fact, as a demonstration of her unselfish commitment to my goal, she recently acquired an entire new wardrobe, none of which is "wrinkle free."

My hope is that the experience will draw us even closer together as a father and daughter.

At least, once I find her on the other side of this pile of ironing.

(You can write to Ned Hickson at nhickson@oregonfast.net, or at the Siuslaw News at P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR. 97439, or visit his blog at www.nedhickson.net/blog/.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Between the Spring Equinox, March 21, and the Autumn Equinox, Sept. 23, days are longer and nights shorter.

It makes sense to shift the "extra" morning daylight to the afternoon with daylight saving time (DST). But what about the daylight hours after Sept. 23?

There is no extra daylight.

DST sets our clocks for a later sunrise and darker mornings than standard time.

Children have to walk to school as the rising sun is glaring into the eyes of sleepy commuters.

Extending DST to well past September is dangerous.

In 2005, the Republican-controlled Congress extended DST until the first Sunday of November, putting the profits of the barbeque industry above the safety of our children.

Yours truly,
Bruce Joffe, Piedmont, CA

To The Editor:

The Iraq war has staggered on for four years now, in defiance of America's disapproval, and there is no end in sight to the bloodshed. Now the minority who insist that our troops should keep dying there are pandering to a childish machismo by claiming that leaving Iraq would be "surrender."

But look at what Bush has needlessly surrendered - over 3,200 American lives, our security, our world leadership, our honor, and almost \$2 billion of our tax dollars every week that are spent on his war. And think of the families who are devastated every day that the war continues.

Now is the time to stop surrendering those things that make America great. America should no longer be sacrificed to Bush's failure. It is time to get out of Iraq's civil war and Bush's deadly mess. Our only chance to make that happen is to keep telling our members of Congress to get us out of Iraq.

Please contact your members of Congress. If we want to support the troops, we should help save their lives.

Sincerely,
Doug Long, Rio Rancho, NM

Rogue Nation

Time To Change The Course Of U.S. History



Texas Commentary

By Peter Stern

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

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

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

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

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

- Starting a needless invasion and war with Iraq
- Sending our children on missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, which were ill-conceived and absurdly planned with no victory in sight
- Cutting taxes for the rich, while spending more than \$3 trillion on war costs
- Determining many U.S. policies and actions behind "closed doors"
- Providing false and/or misleading information and intelligence to the American people
- Eliminating urgently needed social programs for children and poorer citizens
- Doing little to prevent the diminishing quality of public education
- Permitting increased health care costs despite curbing "frivolous" medical lawsuits
- Permitting astronomical costs of fuel — gas, oil, electric
- Permitting increasing costs of tuition for higher education
- Outsourcing millions of American jobs and services without providing new opportunities for American workers
- Lying to the people of New Orleans and not providing needed emergency financing

and services during the Katrina fiasco in a timely manner

- Selling off American public lands and ports for special interest gains
- Permitting only special interests to bid (or not even have to bid) on lucrative service contracts
- Permitting the "sale" of American government to the highest special-interest contributors
- Privatizing Medicare programs recklessly and irresponsibly for special-interest gains
- Pushing to privatize Social Security for special-interest gains
- Increasing voter fraud cases and countenancing lack of

voting machine integrity (with these machines manufactured by special-interest campaign contributors)

- Cutting financing for public education during the past decade and diverting those tax dollars to other interests
- Promoting irrational and unneeded toll road plans to generate more profits for special interests
- Freezing gas taxes, which build and maintain roads, and/or diverting gas taxes to other special-interest needs
- Providing loose or no enforcement of immigration laws and policies
- Permitting illegal U.S. government spying and wiretap-

ping on private citizens.

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

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

'Why are you people not pushing for Impeachment of Bush, Cheney and the entire administration? They are criminals!'

— Peter Stern

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

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

The Bush administration cannot be permitted to continue to operate as some sort of religious zealots and blatant imperialists. America must be managed as the nation of, by and—foremost—for American citizens.

Where, oh where, has America gone?

Peter Stern, of Driftwood, Texas, a former university professor and public school administrator, is a political writer published frequently throughout the Texas community and nationwide. He is a disabled Vietnam veteran and holds three post-graduate degrees. He may be contacted at <psstern@austin.rr.com>.

Lawyer Accepts Pardon But Nothing Else

On March 22, 1877, Guy M. Bryan wrote the new President of the United States, who happened to be an old college classmate, to recommend a relative for the Supreme Court.

William Pitt Ballinger had no idea why the caretaker governor summoned him in the middle of May 1865. He was relieved to learn that Pendleton Murrah and Gen. John Bankhead Magruder had accepted the fall of the Confederacy as an irreversible fact.

The war was over, and they needed someone to negotiate a separate peace for Texas. For once Ballinger's stubborn opposition to secession would come in handy. The victorious Yankees might be willing to talk to a Unionist, who had not shed a single drop of blood for the Lost Cause.

Accompanied by Ashbel Smith, a diplomat that negotiated treaties for the defunct Republic, Ballinger sailed for New Orleans on May 27, 1865. His twin objectives were to keep northern soldiers out of Texas and the freed slaves working for their former masters.

Gen. Edward Canby was polite, even gracious, and let the visitors have their say. He then told them there was no way Texas could avoid military occupation, which began on June 19 with the arrival in Galveston of 800 troops. But Canby and his better known superior, Gen. Philip Sheridan, did assure the two-man delegation they would do everything in their power to maintain a stable black labor force.

This Week In Texas History

By Bartee Haile



For a discussion of political matters, Gen. Canby suggested the Texans speak directly with President Andrew Johnson. Ballinger and Smith decided to heed his advice and hung around New Orleans waiting for their travel documents.

But the Washington trip was canceled by soreheads back home. Radical Republicans, whose property Ballinger confiscated as Confederate receiver, "opposed me representing Texas for I had been engaged in the most odious work of the rebellion."

Ballinger learned upon returning to Galveston that Johnson had issued a general amnesty, which wiped the slate clean for most southerners. Only two groups of former Confederates, government officials and those with assets in excess of \$20,000, were exempt and had to apply for presidential pardons.

Since he fell into both categories, Ballinger wasting no time in penning a personal appeal to the president. But he realized that full restoration of his rights could not be accomplished through the mail.

Carrying glowing testimonials from the provisional governor and lesser luminaries, Ballinger made the difficult journey through the war-ravaged South. His first stop

in Washington was the home of a kinsman, whose influence could tip the scales in his favor.

Ballinger and Samuel F. Miller had been close since their Kentucky childhood, and their warm friendship had weathered the war. Miller now sat on the Supreme Court, one of five Lincoln appointees.

The reunion with his brother-in-law left Ballinger worried and depressed. Miller told him flatly, "Reason dictates that in some way you should be punished." The justice insisted that examples had to be made of Confederate leaders, which meant prison for most and the gallows for "a half dozen of the most prominent and wicked."

When Ballinger called again, Miller had letters of introduction to the president and secretary of state William Seward waiting for him. One sentence leaped off the parchment: "I have never known a man whose integrity I would rely on more confidently."

Miller had gone to bat for him and knocked the ball out of the park. The pardon — the first to a Texan — was granted without the applicant setting foot in White House.

Ballinger suddenly found himself in the absolution business. He presented 40 petitions from other worthy Texans to the obliging president and within the month had wonderful news for 40 grateful clients.

Texas' top attorney had not secured the priceless pardons out of the goodness of his heart. His net

profit after expenses was \$7,500, a handsome sum for those times.

Even though Ballinger's fortune steadily grew after resuming his law practice, he always seemed preoccupied with money. It was the paltry pay that he cited as the reason for turning down a seat on the state supreme court offered in 1874 by Gov. Richard Coke.

Another brother-in-law put Ballinger on the spot three years later. As soon as Rutherford B. Hayes was sworn in as president, Guy Bryan launched an all-out campaign to convince his college chum to chose Ballinger for the highest court in the land.

This time the public-service shy lawyer could not plead poverty nor trot out his second-favorite excuse that he could not bear to be parted from his family. So Ballinger argued that his Confederate past was certain to come back to haunt him and cause public embarrassment for all concerned. He successfully planted the seed of doubt that undermined Bryan's efforts and eventually allowed him to withdraw his name from consideration.

The year after William Pitt Ballinger spurned a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court, admiring Texans handed him the governorship on a silver platter. Once again he said turned up his nose at the honor, and that was the last time anyone bothered to ask.

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

Cowardly And Deceptive Means

I think the term “Democratic leadership” has become an oxymoron.

From the green fields of Crawford, Texas, during the sweaty summer of 2005, a rallying cry was issued from coast to coast. Thousands gathered just miles from the Bush Ranch, sparking a flurry of media coverage and the onset of an inevitable national debate. People of ever political stripe came together and built the most powerful emerging movement in America which now holds a commanding majority in the electorate.

In short, the Peace People Cleaned House. They swept a dearth of Iraq war supporters from their representative halls, proving our democracy may yet be salvageable.

This is not about partisanship. It is not liberal or conservative to be against dropping our brave men and women into a pit of razors. It is not Left or Right to wish our wounded soldiers were receiving proper medical care at government-run facilities. There is no Left or Right when ideology becomes of principal import over and above the health and safety of our sons and daughters.

But seriously, folks. This is getting absurd.

The amount of disgust that pursued through my veins at the notion of a “non-binding resolution” opposing the troop surge reached a level that nearly gave this Faithful Muckraker a Dick Cheney. Ehrm, I mean, coronary.

The Texan in me wants to stand up and shout: **“You yellow-bellied, silver-tongued, lying, traitorous, unwashed, flat-footed, cowardly, good-fer-nothin, rot-gut scoundrels!”**

First, the facts of this so-called “surge” ...

The president has “decided” to send in 21,500 additional troops, or so he said. (It is actually more.) Once complete, the “surge” would bring troop levels to – dun dun dun – the same level they were at in 2005; which was lower than in 2004.

America currently has about 120,000 troops in country. Post surge, it increases to roughly 141,500 troops. The nation of Iraq has a population of 26,783,383 terrorized, gun-clutching, panicky people. So, by that measure, there will be 189 Iraqis to every one American. In all reality, the “surge” is nothing more than a meaningless PR campaign; or as John



The Webster Retort

By Stephen Webster

Soltz of VoteVets calls it, “a drop in the bucket.”

BoiBush is clearly getting desperate to save face. Unfortunately, all this does is place a greater number of our men and women in an extremely dangerous situation far beyond their control.

It will make no difference.

And if the Walter Reed scandal is any indicator, the military is little better today at providing care for our wounded vets than they were during ‘Nam. Sure, battlefield medicine has improved. But what good is it if we abandon them once they come home?

And the White House’s line? “That’s not our responsibility. Talk to the people across the river.”

Good Lord! My grandmother used to have a saying about America’s power structure. It went a little like, “The buck stops here [meaning, at the White House], but most politicians just want to play ‘smear the queer’.”

We are like the French in Algeria, and no amount of guns, bombs or fighting will solve our problem. The solution lies in a decentralized federal system with wealth-sharing, localized police and an emphasis on individual freedoms. Instead, we have given them a divisive and authoritarian religion-based state that serves only to fuel sectarian tensions, driving the civil war to new heights.

Nancy Pelosi, our esteemed House Speaker, was placed in a position of power by The American Peace Movement. Our bipartisan majority understands what it will take to pacify Iraq, and bringing our soldiers home NOW is just the first step. There is no point in keeping them in the middle of a crossfire. Even James Baker, DadiBush’s third hand, understands this.

That Pelosi would promote the “non-binding resolution” as something useful is unconscionable. And now she is lending support to the passage of yet more funding to escalate the war? Who have we elected?

Republicans say that de-funding the war “puts troops in harm’s way”. As though military command is just go-

ing to up-and-vanish, forgetting about all 141,500 soldiers in country. *Give me a break!*

Sadly, the utterance of such a phrase sends “Democratic leadership” scurrying for the hills.

Is the memory of our leaders so short that they cannot recall the 90’s?

Texas Republican Congressman Sam Johnson is one such forgetful individual. He recently argued against a proposal to tie war funding to concrete troop readiness levels. *“The grim reality is that this House measure is the first step to cutting funding of the troops,”* said Johnson. *“Just ask John Murtha about his ‘slow-bleed’ plan that would hamstring our troops in harm’s way.”*

However, when President Clinton attached U.S. troops to a NATO peacekeeping force in Bosnia, Congressman Johnson had no problem committing to an action which, as he now feels, would “hamstring our troops in harm’s way.”

In 1996, Congressman Johnson said, with some amount of indignation over Clinton’s marching orders, *“I wholeheartedly support withholding funds! [Mmhm.] Although it is a drastic step and ties the President’s hands, I do not feel like we have any other choice. The President has tied our hands, gone against the wishes of the American people, and this is the last best way I know how to show my respect for our American servicemen and women. They are helpless, following orders. But we, we are in a position to stop this terrible mistake before it happens.”*

Even the esteemed Senator Phil Gramm of Texas vowed to support efforts his colleagues today claim would “put troops in harm’s way.”

Yes, that’s right: they were for cutting funds before they were against it.

Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Reid need to grow some spine. Their Republican counterparts utilize cowardly and deceptive means to avert honest debate. But they, being the so-called “Democratic leadership”, are proving no less cowardly or deceptive as they shirk their promise of Ending the War.

De-funding war opens the Path to Peace. Anything Else is just Smoke and Mirrors.

Accept No Substitute. Power to The Peaceful.

Credit Card Blues

A few months ago, my wife and I decided that we had been spending too much money lately. We hadn’t gone crazy. We’re not particularly extravagant. We don’t own a jet, we don’t rush off to a private island when things get too hectic here, and I don’t own a pair of “nice jeans” for the weekend. But we had noticed that gradually, over the past few years, we were inexplicably spending more money. I suggested that we try to go for a couple of months without using our credit cards, and just pay cash for everything. I felt this would make us more reluctant to buy things that we really didn’t need. I was right. The experiment worked. We definitely spent less money. And I hated it.

Before deciding to put our credit cards aside, we went over our financial records. I pretended to be interested in all the details, and the conclusion was that there weren’t any glaring areas where we could cut back. It wasn’t as if all we had to do was lay off our upstairs maid and the butler and everything would be fine. Instead, it was all those little things that we buy and don’t really think about that had been adding up.

So, we took a certain amount of money out of the bank and put the cash in a secret place in our house. (Note to Burglars: Since we no longer are doing the cash-only system, we don’t keep cash in our house anymore). We would each take some cash out of our stash whenever we felt we needed to replenish the money in our wallets. However, we’d be very careful about those “withdrawals” because the money in our hiding place would have to last the entire month.

I had never been in the habit of carrying much cash on me. I would usually just have a few dollars stuffed in one of my pockets. I had my credit cards, and I thought – incorrectly, as it turned out – that I rarely spent money, anyway. When I started to carry cash, I actually felt a difference in me. I’m sure I walked with a swagger. I had become a “Big Time, Charlie Potatoes” with money in my wallet. I was living large, and for me, it was all about the “Jacksons” I was carrying.

I didn’t part too easily with any of those “Jacksons” or “Hamiltons” or even my “Washingtons.” I learned very quickly what the owner of every casino in the world knows – people are much more likely to spend money if it’s not really money, but plastic. If you were



Modern Times

By Lloyd Garver

actually putting cash on the table and losing at blackjack, you’d stop playing a lot sooner than when you’re just losing those plastic chips.

Similarly, when we pay for something with a plastic credit card, it doesn’t “hurt” as much as actually reaching into our wallets and handing over our cash to a stranger.

As I said, the cash-only system worked. I was much more likely to ask myself the question, “Do I really need this?” before I bought something.

Since it worked so well, why did I hate our “no credit card” system? For one thing, I felt like I was a kid on an allowance. I resented that I couldn’t buy whatever I wanted. And there was guilt attached to every purchase – “Should I really be buying this?” “If I do, will that mean I’ll have to take more money out of our hiding place?” “If I buy it, does this mean I’m an irresponsible person with no self-control who is a poor role model for my children and a bad citizen of the world?” (Sometimes, I’m a little rough on myself).

After two months, we decided, thankfully, that we had learned how to spend money more wisely, and we could go back to a more normal, relaxed “sometimes credit card, sometimes cash” system.

But the damage had already been done. Even though I am now “allowed” to make an impulse purchase with my credit card, the leftover guilt from the two-month experiment stops that purchase from being a joyous one. It’s no fun to be responsible.

I think the only thing that would get me out of this mood is if we would go out and have a ridiculously expensive evening, throwing our money around extravagantly, celebrating the fact that we have learned how to be responsible with our money.

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

Public Enemies

Jesse James.
John Wesley Hardin.
William H. Bonney, aka "Billy the Kid."
"Baby Face" Nelson (Lester Gillis).
Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd.
Kate "Ma" Barker.
Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker.
George "Machine Gun" Kelly.
John Dillinger.
Al Capone.

These are but a few of the more notorious public enemies in American criminal history.

This list is by no means complete; each of these names is instantly recognizable not just within our Nation, but also to countless millions around the world.

We now have a new name to add to the list of America's Most Notorious Public Enemies: Alberto R. Gonzales.

This guy zipped upward in rapid succession from general counsel for Texas Gov. George W. Bush, to secretary of state, right into an appointment on the state's supreme court.

When Herr Oberst Karl Rove and Bill Rehnquist's Federalist Supremes manipulated the installation of Li'l Georgie as Ruler of The Free, Gonzo trailed along to play White House counsel.

Albie was promoted to U.S. Attorney General in 2005, prompting the position to be renamed "Inquisitor General."

At no time in the six years since being elevated from relative obscurity to international notoriety has this arrogant little toady shown himself to be anything other than the reincarnation of Torquemada.

Gonzo never saw a Constitutional guarantee or a Human Right with which he could agree — unless told to by Boss Dubya, or Boss Herr Karl, or whichever big boy's boots were getting' licked today.

While general counsel, Albie gave us the Patriot Act out in the open — or so we thought. This darling little *wunderlaw*, phase one of dictatorial power being systematically blanketed over a mostly unsuspecting free nation, did not just materialize in the weeks following September 11, 2001. You can bet the family jewels this scheme had been plotted, honed, and reworked months, possibly years in advance.

What the White House advertised as a method to hamstring our new enemy, who was our old enemy, who was really our old ally, who was being set up as the excuse for rapid escalation of contracts within our military/industrial complex and energy

profiteers... Well, this new kind of "legislation" was rushed through the most scandal-ridden Congress in history at the insistence of the tyrannical RoveBushCheney Fascist Regime and promptly rubber-stamped into "law."

Strangely, as if by magic, the version that the members of Congress actually voted on, delivered at the bewitching hour the previous night, was substantially altered from that which they had debated on the floor. Ha! Gonzo got us all, but good!

Once the Patriot Act went into effect, with each tiny snip here and every little rip there we soon learned it was more offensive toward than defensive of the Freedoms For All as our Nation's Founders had envisioned.

Since 9/12/2001 any or all of us have been subjected to warrantless telephone wiretaps and e-mail searches, presumably at the pleasure of George W. Bush and with the legal imprimatur of Al Gonzales.

It was a memo from Gonzo that opened the floodgates for the harsh treatment of battlefield captives (okay, torturing POWs); imagine, an Air force veteran trained in the absolute necessity of the Geneva Conventions, then referring to these accords as "quaint" and past their time.

As counsel to the Supreme Grand Poobah, Albie has successfully stonewalled both Chambers of Congress from serving Li'l Georgie and Dark Lord Cheney with subpoenas always, as well as most senior West Wing staff and cabinet officials whenever it suits Regime strategy. All these people somehow get coverage under the blanket of "executive privilege," previously an option reserved solely for the Chief Executive.

While going through the formality of a confirmation hearing in front of the formally GOP-controlled, ethics-challenged Senate, Gonzo vowed he would never, ever, in a million-zillion years install a Federal Prosecutor without first presenting the person before that body.

During the short two-year span between his appointment as Inquisitor General and the power shift to Congressional Democrats, American citizens and others within our borders have lost pretty much every remaining right we were born with as free men and women.

Whenever a White House policy is called out for being obviously fascist, Albie argues not the peoples' side, as his job description dictates; rather, he pleads the Executive Branch



Out Of The Blue

By Jerry Tenuto

excuse for screwing us, citing some backassward convoluted jabberwocky that is neither law nor coherent.

The next day we'll find out there's a heretofore-unknown clause the Fascisti have slipped into a bill at the last minute while nobody was looking, most likely at the printshop, overriding Congressional intent and giving the Executive free rein in yet another arena.

They did this with Patriot Act II late last year, slipping in Executive ability to read anyone's snail mail at his pleasure. Being the Holiday Season, by the time anyone found out the ousted Republicans were laughing all the way to their new overpaid K Street jobs.

Take an incident near the Rio Grande between a pot-smuggling illegal (entrusted with \$1 mil in product) and a couple of U.S. Border Agents, add a little goosing from his homies in Mexico City, toss in an election for *el presidente* that the Necons must help go *right*, and Gonzo's got his own party's Congresspersons screaming, "What in hell is going on?" after it's the illegal/smuggler who gets immunity — and the agents who wind up doing double-digit prison stretches.

While this travesty of a trial was playing out in the Southwest, Herr Oberst Rove was busy collecting data from around the country on Federal prosecutors, and ranking them according to loyalty to the Republican Party. Loyalty based upon Karl's standard of party loyalty, pretty much the same job Heinrich Himmler had as overseer of the SS some 65 years ago.

One of the last acts our Little Dictator managed to conspire with the do-nothing, rubber-stamp Congress before they were run off Capitol Hill was the passage of a combination of bills that effectively erased the Bill of Rights, with the exception of the rightie redneck's favorite, good ol' number two.

Gonzo's utter contempt for the rule of law and his concept of George W. Bush's ultimate power above all else were sharply brought into critical view when the new legislators came to town. One of the mainstays of American jurisprudence, an absolute guarantee of our Constitution, is that the writ of habeas corpus cannot be suspended except for rebellion or invasion.

Alberto Gonzales, Inquisitor

General of the United States, bore witness at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Jan. 16, 2007 that, "There is no express grant of habeas corpus in the Constitution."

You may remember how he argued the point with Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, a fellow Republican no less.

According to Gonzo's biography he holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School. How can that possibly be?

I think the Nation deserves a look at that law degree.

On Dec. 7, 2007 (Pearl Harbor Day — Rove's sick idea of coincidence, perhaps) dismissals without cause began going out to eight Federal prosecutors around the country.

It seems the Gonzales Department of Justice stepped on the wrong eight people; they all made their stories known, and six appeared in front of a Senate committee.

There had been complaints from party members and officeholders as high up as the Senate prior to the Nov. 2006 elections that this octet was not aggressively investigating Democratic vote misconduct. It mattered not whether said districts had election fraud perpetrated by Dems, nor if there were any GOP shenanigans.

The records of these prosecutors against real criminals, you know, like those who might be prone to do harm upon others, kidnapers, bank robbers, heroin and cocaine traffickers, had no bearing on the decision to boot them out.

In fact, the woman who had put Randy "Duke" Cunningham away, Carol Lam, San Diego had just indicted CIA official Kyle "Dusty" Foggo along with defense contractor Brent Wilkes in the same case one day prior to being terminated.

Her bad for being assigned to a hornets' nest of Republican thieves.

The eight attorneys who lost their jobs were at the bottom of Rove's hit list. Just why was Herr Karl compiling a list of DOJ prosecutors in the first place? He has nothing to do with their functionality, and should he ever be investigated, it would be one of these 93... Aah, boy, now I do feel silly!

Here's a really funny coincidence — one of the fired prosecutors was replaced by Timothy Griffin, a Rove assistant. Now, Griffin is a house lawyer and not known for his courtroom acumen. He is known, however, as the guy who attempted to deprive at least 70,000 Black soldiers and homeless people of their right to vote in the 2004 election. His error was he put .org when the address was .com, and the e-mails eventually wound up at the BBC.

Of course, the Gonzo DOJ

won't prosecute the guy; now, he's stealing the job an honest attorney who did not falsely attack Democrats over voting irregularities. He had a truckload of dirty tricks waiting for unsuspecting minority voters in Florida. Wow! Herr Karl must be extra-special proud of Timmy!

This schmuck admitted he feared the Congressional confirmation process, and would pull out rather than face the formal Q&A under oath. That was one hell of a solid Little Dictator did for the guy when he pulled an end run around the people.

In fact, it wasn't coincidence these new prosecutors were all appointed under an almost unknown clause Gonzo slipped into Patriot II when nobody was looking. This one allows for the replacement of Federal attorneys without Congressional approval.

Albie promised the Republican-controlled Senate he wasn't going to play that game. So what? That vow no longer applies, I suppose, because those now in charge are just lowly Democrats.

Just like "Scooter" Libby was sacrificed for Cheney and Rove, Gonzo's chief of staff D. Kyle Sampson was excised for Gonzo and Rove, claiming it was he who was behind the release of the eight prosecutors.

Here was another house lawyer with virtually no time in an actual courtroom, who made recommendations as to whose heads should and shouldn't roll. Sampson had his eye on a personal trophy; his prize was to have been a prosecutor in Utah. Yep, he had one all picked out for himself.

However, Kyle learned the power of Rove was not to be reckoned with.

Everyone must be prepared to give himself up to save Herr Karl when the time comes; he is the greased pig that shall never be caught.

Now, in all of Gonzo's sessions as witness before the Senate, he has never answered one question in a straightforward, honest manner. I call his avoidance of anything resembling truth as the "Gonzo Bob and Weave."

He dances around so much no adversary could never lay a hand on him.

Everything Albie says is formulated to protect either Li'l Georgie or someone else in the Exec, or his own sorry ass.

When asked about the eight firings and their replacements, he claimed ignorance. Poor Gonzo, it's too difficult to keep track of everything that goes on in his Department of Justice with 110,000 people.

Right. As if the 93 prosecutor positions — lynchpins of the system — are of minor importance. That's why Rove keeps such

Continued On Next Page

Boomer Battles, Part II

And another thing. To continue my whining about fighting the good fight, resisting the onslaught of aging, in an attempt (for most of us) to NOT become our parents —

Remember we were the generation that claimed we would never trust anyone over 30. Now here we are buying things like Geritol and Centrum Silver. “Silver” is a not too well disguised euphemism for “old,” if you hadn’t noticed. How in the world did this happen?

After I wrote the first “Boomer” column, I started remembering things I had forgotten. (another sure sign of age). I considered all I’ve given up in the name of good health, things I so took for granted in my youth.

So this column is for you younger folks as well. Heads up! Appreciate the things you can do at this stage of your life. Your body is still young, strong, and flexible. Most importantly, many of you can eat any darn thing you like and never gain an ounce or have a moment’s guilt. (I wouldn’t supersize it consistently, though. That’s pushing it. Remember — you’re laying the foundation now for the health of the rest of your life).

My mother told me once there would come a time when I wouldn’t be able to eat anything and everything I wanted. This had happened to her, and she had been skinnier than I ever was. And it would happen to me, she warned. Enjoy it while you can, she told me. I didn’t believe her, of course. (No one ever wants to think that these rules of life apply to themselves). But Mom was oh, so right.

The “wonder drugs” we see advertised on television promise to alleviate aches, pains, and other ills. Many of these drugs have been created specifically to service a generation of boomers hungry for the fountain of youth. We’re making the drug companies rich. But possible detrimental effects often convince us these medications might not be worth the risk. (“Side effects may include liver damage, blindness, kidney failure, diarrhea, stroke, heart attack, impotence and/or death.” Yeah, sure. Give me some of that!)

But take these things we do, when the benefits outweigh the dangers. Zack sometimes takes Celebrex for pain in his joints. You might remember that this drug was in the news awhile back as possibly contributing to heart attack. He just said to me, “I need to go take my ‘heart attack pill’ to make my knees feel better.”

Some of us just stick with our (take your pick as they apply to you — “arthritis, constipation, insomnia, anxiety, etc.”) and live

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.

with it. The pharmaceutical industry has many good products to offer us and will no doubt help us feel better and live happier and healthier lives. But keep in mind, these companies are in business to make money.

Also be mindful of the millions of dollars from lawsuits paying for the vacations, hot cars, and summer homes of personal injury attorneys. These enterprising businessmen advertise in newspapers and on television things like “Did you develop (fill in hideous disease of your choice) after taking (fill in corresponding medication)? Call the law firm of Gonef and Thief. They might get you a settlement for malpractice. And they’ll take a chunk of the proceeds. It’s all about money.

I figure the best course of action might be preventative, so, as I wrote in the previous column, I’ve tried to add beneficial natural supplements to my diet and avoid things that are almost certain to do me harm. I said I was trying. I haven’t always been so successful.

Although I haven’t yet been able to forego small amounts of occasional —OK, daily— chocolate, homemade cakes, and ice cream (low fat or light), I have certainly cut way down on my consumption. And most of the chocolate now is of the dark variety. It’s supposed to be better for us, dontcha know. (Yeah, right, probably just more industry hype designed to provide a new product for the masses and part the public from its money). The scale tells me that even more drastic measures are called for.

And yes, I know more exercise is needed. Boy, I hate that treadmill. My idea of exercise is doing something productive (and fun) out here like clearing limbs down in the pecan bottom. Such activities kill two birds with one stone. (Judeo-Christian work ethic in action). Not only do I burn calories, but I also accomplish a task. However as my son has reminded me, if farm and ranch work provided a complete workout, there’d be no fat farmers. Enough said. Weight training is definitely in order. Plus it builds strong bones. And I sort of like lifting weights anyway (until it hurts).

The remainder of this column will appear in next week’s paper. I need to stop now to eat something that isn’t good for me and go stare at my treadmill.

Noah vs. Nuge

I get a kick out of Ted Nugent.

Actually, I get a kick out of his nicknames more than anything.

He’s got so many of them I wonder if he broke the Second Commandment in getting them.

But that’s really beside the point.

Let’s examine a few of his names, shall we?

Nowadays, you can’t buy alliteration like “The Motor City Madman.”

Well, you can, I guess, if you earned it as a successful musician or you refer to yourself as Mrs. John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt.

La! La! La! La! La! La!

Sorry, I can’t help myself. I just love that song.

Now, obviously, “Uncle Ted” is intended to make him a part of the American family.

In fact, it links him to that one uncle we all know, love, and avoid in our extended families — you know, like your mom’s brother who used to dress up like Tarzan in front of unsuspecting school boys.

Yeah, that one.

Then, on another end of the space/time continuum, there’s “Terrible Ted.”

It’s just as crazy as the “Madman” but with a touch of Russian czar with syphilis.

I understand how it ended up getting a “PG-13” for all the stylized violence, simulated sex, and whatnot.

But in this case, the double T alliteration comes across as “G,” making me question the honesty of the label.

Now, for these next ones, hmmm, I have no idea how he paid for or where he got “Sweaty Teddy,” “Deadly Teddy,” or “Great Gonzos.”

I have a feeling, though, that they came while he was hunting Muppets down on *Sesame Street*.

But none of those are half as bad as — well, if I were his agent, I’d ask him to reconsider “The Nuge.”

I’m sorry, but it just sounds like what Scandinavians might call their “nose goblins.”

All I’m saying is that I don’t want *Theodocious Atrocious* to go extinct if the Neanderthals catch him with such a silly name.

It’s bad enough that we’ve got global warming threatening to turn little Texas villages like Crawford into coral reefs.

No, you can’t go around allowing yourself to appear weak, you know, like Noah.

I mean, yeah, Noah had big ideas with trying to save everybody and their animals in the world from the flood and all.

But those faithless bastards

The Rubber Cement Index

By Nathan Diebenow



will eat you alive given the chance!!

You might as well just shut up than let folks continue calling you “nose goblin.”

Yeah, just shut up.

Don’t stick your neck out — especially after you’ve lost a huge national election and want to support a boring old science movie.

You’ll never win any nice Baal replicas for your efforts, anyway.

Of course, you could always run for the hills to take a higher moral ground, Nuge.

Let them do whatever they think floats their boats.

It’s not like you’ve foreseen a great drought and have an inside track to influence the pharaoh.

He’ll probably brush off any lobbying efforts advocating for the stockpiling of food.

And forget about trying to convince him to back an industry-wide reduction in greenhouse gases emissions.

You’re no Joseph, and you sure as hell ain’t no Jesus.

No, Mr. Ted, you’re just a rich guy with a full quiver, a bow, and a rock ‘n roll heart.

And I like that.

You could definitely make a name for yourself.

TENUTO

From Previous Page

close personal tabs on them. How convenient that Sampson was booted from the West Wing within a day of being disenfranchised by his boss.

Then, in the middle of all this bad publicity, Gonzo’s torture theory allegedly bears fruit with joyous news from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. After four years of captivity and who knows what intensity of deprivation and mistreatment, the Pentagon released “transcripts” of a “military trial” wherein Khalid Sheikh Mohammed finally confessed to 30 plots against the United States and our allies.

According to the “confessions,” the Sheikh pretty much was single-handedly responsible for every attack since 9/11, and a whole bunch before. He also has a vivid imagination, attested to by his wishlist of what he’d like to do to all of us. This guy wanted to bomb GIs in South Korea; pick a city or country, a people or nation and he was out to blow it up. If an attack was on the satellite news,

successful or a failure, Khalid planned the operation.

Among his bigger claims to fame were: A shoe bomber on two U.S. airliners; the 1993 World Trade Center bomb; the Mombassa, Kenya hotel bombing, Nov. 2002; a plan to burn down the Sears Tower using fuel trucks; the 9/11 attacks in their entirety, and a second wave targeting Library Tower in Cal., Plaza Bank Bldg., Wa., the Empire State Bldg. and the Sears Tower.

If you believe any of this “confession” garbage is true, then vote for one of these warmongering, chickenhawk Republicans in 2008 who want these insane wars to continue on through to the next Millennium.

Alberto Gonzales has taken the Justice Department and made it yet another tool of this Fascist Regime. It does not serve the people; it serves at the pleasure of George W. Bush.

Which is to say it serves at the pleasure of Herr Oberst Karl Rove.

As for Herr Karl... The fingerprints of his excessive political influence and involvement are indelibly stamped on the fate of

the eight fired prosecutors. Could anything be more obvious than the installation of his own hand picked and trained dirty tricks operative as a replacement?

Yet, with typical Rove hubris he tells a friendly audience during a speech that these are just normal personnel turnovers; why, it’s the Democrats who are politicizing them.

If this is a standard procedure, shouldn’t Gonzo have been let in on it?

It’s not just Gonzales that has to go — the entire rotten bunch needs to be run through the disposal.

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)

The Hell With 'Phased'

By DAVID VAN OS
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

An old memory came to me yesterday afternoon as I read the news about the madmen who are running our country piling more ships of war into the Persian Gulf. It is a memory set in a brilliant spring morning in the capital city of Texas, one of those Austin days of early May when the blue sky and the lush greenery and the bright flora can meld into a vision of eternal springtime so inviting it makes the heart ache. And yet it is a memory of a morning when the world was not a bright place.

It was the day after the Kent State shootings. News of the shootings had spread during the evening like a white-hot wildfire across college campuses that were already tense over Nixon's surprise invasion of Cambodia just a few days before. This was something completely new and chilling for white middle-class America — its young shot dead by American soldiers on an American college campus, as a result of the rapidly metastasizing cancer within our body politic that was the Vietnam War.

Sometimes that morning seems like three lifetimes ago and sometimes it seems like yesterday. There we were, thousands of us, crowding together in the sunshine on the main mall of the UT-Austin campus giving our rapt attention to the amplified voice of a brilliant speaker by the name of Mickey Leland, whose eloquence and passion struck harmonic chords in all the thousands of us in unison. Mickey Leland spoke not to us but for us that day, as he poured everything he had into expressing for all of us what we were all thinking and feeling.

Our collective, massed frustration and rage over the mounting evils wrought by the vicious criminals who had wrecked the America we had all been taught we were going to inherit someday could no longer be kept at bay, we erupted en masse from that rally to occupy and shut down the University of Texas main campus as did our fellow students at campuses across the country, and a week of near-insurrection ensued across America that began the national turning of the tide.



David Van Os

GUEST COMMENTARY

Though so many of the circumstances are different now, in so many ways they are the same. A madman president and his madman regime seem hell-bent to continue down their madman path to wreak death, death, death on a world that billions of people simply want to live in peacefully and enjoy the lifetimes that they are given to live. In that way the times are the same.

But in another way the times are different. Whereas in that distant May of 1970 the general population of America was still bitterly divided over the merits of the Vietnam War, in our time today the majority of the general population is decisively opposed to the madman regime's lunacy. Whereas as of that spring 37 years ago there was not yet a majority in our national Congress that opposed the madman regime's war, today there is.

This should make for a huge difference, shouldn't it? Our country will be pulling the plug on the neocons' thinly disguised attempt to resurrect the crusades of the 11th century, won't it? WON'T IT? How many more children of America will die in Mesopotamia for Bush's lies? What working class neighborhoods will they hail from? How many more mothers' hearts will lie broken for Bush's delusions of grandeur? How about the agony of the Iraqis? How many more of the daughters and sons of that ancient cradle of civilization will lose their lives to the growing carnage that Bush wrought?

The hell with "phased." There is only one way to get out and that is to GET OUT. NOW. Not to withdraw is to cut and run from both humanity and sanity.

David Van Os has been a civil rights/labor lawyer for over 29 years. A dedicated Democrat, he is a co-founder of the Texas Progressive Populist Caucus, and receiver of the 2005 Backbone Campaign's "Spine Award". David has proven day-in, day-out, that he stands for the PEOPLE of this great state, not its corporations. For more information contact Rachel Barrios-Van Os at (210) 332-7080 or visit (vanosfortexasag.com).



Thomas The Tank Engine

Thomas the Tank Engine™ To Visit Grapevine Vintage Railroad

GRAPEVINE — Thomas the Tank Engine is set to roll into Grapevine for the "Day Out With Thomas 2007: All Aboard Tour." The event, which takes place March 23-25 and March 30-April 1, will be hosted by Museum of the American Railroad & The Grapevine Vintage Railroad, <www.dallasrailwaymuseum.com>, at 705 South Main Street in Grapevine, Texas, 76051.

For more than six decades, children have been captivated by the tales of Thomas the Tank Engine. Pulling out of the station for its 12th consecutive ride on the rails, the "Day Out With Thomas 2007: All Aboard Tour" will visit 45 cities in the United States and Canada. "Day Out With Thomas" is the only place for families to take a ride with a 15-ton replica of everybody's favorite #1 engine, Thomas the Tank Engine, and enjoy Thomas-themed activities at the Imagination Station, including stamps, temporary tattoos and hands-on arts and crafts. Each year the tour grows, traveling to new destinations, adding new activities and welcoming new visitors.

For the first time ever, a new guest will pay a visit to five "Day Out With Thomas" events, as everyone's favorite builder, Bob the Builder™, stops by to help his friend. In a 20-minute performance, Bob the

Builder will ask for the help of aspiring Can-Do Crew members to build a "shed" for Thomas to sleep in while he's visiting the railroad.

Thomas the Tank Engine, star of Thomas & Friends™, on PBS KIDS® and PBS KIDS SproutSM will be kicking off his Day Out With Thomas 2007: All Aboard Tour in March and is expected to welcome more than 1 million passengers through December. This limited-engagement experience features a variety of Thomas & Friends-themed entertainment for the entire family, including:

- A 25-minute (approximate) ride with Thomas the Tank Engine
- The opportunity to meet and take a photo with Sir Topham Hatt™, Controller of the Railway
- A Thomas & Friends Imagination Station; featuring stamps, temporary tattoos, hands-on arts and crafts activities and coloring sheets.
- Storytelling, video viewing and live music
- A 20-minute performance by special guest, Bob the Builder

The tour provides a unique, interactive family experience at every station, offering a variety of entertaining activities that reflect the local flavor of each stop. At the Grapevine Vintage Railroad, activities will include: bounce houses, kiddie train ride, clowns, magic shows, and

much more!

The approximately 25-minute train ride with Thomas the Tank Engine will depart every 45 minutes, rain or shine, between 8:30 am & 5:30 pm daily. Tickets for the Day Out With Thomas 2007: All Aboard Tour are \$18 for ages two and up.

Tickets are on sale now and are available by calling toll-free 866-468-7630 or logging onto the website <www.dallasrailwaymuseum.com>.

Jonesboro Arrowhead Show Set

JONESBORO — The 11th annual Jonesboro Arrowhead Show sponsored by the Jonesboro 4-H Archer Club will be held Saturday, April 14, at the Jonesboro Community Center.

The event is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., admission \$3 (children under 12 free).

Dealer set-up will begin at 6:30 a.m. Dealer tables are \$35 and should be reserved in advance.

All proceeds go to the archery club. Concessions (breakfast and lunch) will be available.

CONTACT: Rusty Lilljedahl, P.O. Box 180, Jonesboro, TX 76538, phone (254) 463-2466.