

CRAWFORD, TEXAS

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**INSIDE**

**Iconoclast's  
New Blogger**



Jane Stillwater

**Reporting  
From  
Baghdad**

**Page 3**

**Iconoclast  
EDITORIAL**

**It's Time  
To Lose  
Faith**

**Page 15**

**Call To Mind**

**By Don M. Fisher**



*The Texas Legislature  
Ain't Scared Of Hell;*

*That Seems  
To Be Where  
They're Headed*

**Page 15**

THE LONE STAR  
**ICONOCLAST**

**When Solidarity  
Comes To Town**

**Hands Off Bolivia, Cuba,  
Venezuela, Say Activists** **Page 3**

Interview with Chuck Kaufman of the Venezuela Solidarity Network

**Fourth Anniversary Of The  
CRAWFORD PEACE HOUSE**



By Kay Lucas  
Peace House Director  
**Page 6**

**BATTLE OF BAGHDAD**  
**OF B COVER-UP**  
**FOUR YEARS LATER**

Interview With  
**CAPTAIN ERIC MAY**  
Ghost Troop Commander

Page  
**11**



MAINSTREAM

# Actor Threatened Over Possible Role In '9/11 Truth' Film

LOS ANGELES — Actor Charlie Sheen was raked over the coals on FOX News last week for his yet-to-be determined role in a theatrical version of a popular 9/11 conspiracy movie.

FOX News' Bill O'Reilly threatened Sheen to not narrate the new version of "Loose Change" claiming that if he does, "he's through."

"Don't do this. You're not gonna come back from it if you



Charlie Sheen

do," said the commentator. This outburst came after an announcement that Dallas Mavericks owner and billionaire Mark Cuban might distribute the film.

A host of other celebrities have opted to question the official government version of the events of Sept. 11, 2001.

Recently, TV talk show host Rosie O'Donnell questioned how one or more of the buildings fell in

New York City that fateful day. Criticism from the media of these celebrities has been

fierce. The New York Post's Page 6 suggested that "some celebri-

ties don't know when to keep their mouths shut" concerning 9/11.

## Rumsfeld Dodges Torture Lawsuit

WASHINGTON — Former Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld last week dodged a lawsuit brought on by nine former prisoners held overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The U.S. district judge attributed the lawsuit dismissal to a gap in case law.

Government officials, therefore, cannot be held personally responsible at the time of the alleged incidents of torture.

"This is a lamentable case," wrote Judge Thomas F. Hogan at the beginning of his 58-page opinion.

Hogan, who otherwise sympathized with the nine ex-prisoners, added that foreigners imprisoned by U.S. personnel overseas have no rights under the U.S. Constitution.

The plaintiffs were victims of torture, according to the lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and Human Rights First. They were specifically

beaten, chained upside-down, urinated on, shocked, sexually humiliated, among other things.

"I was confident that the American people would stand with me for justice, and I am very disappointed," said Thaha Sabbar, one of the plaintiffs in the case.

Hogan also dismissed the charges against retired Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, former Brig. Gen. Janis L. Karpinski, and Col. Thomas M. Pappas.

Hogan said that the case would have led to political lawsuits, one of which might have been filed by Osama bin Laden under accusations two U.S. presidents attempted to kill him.

The case could have also allowed war-time enemies to co-

opt the federal courts to stop the U.S. military from acting, he added.

The ACLU attorneys in the case, however, are not able to legally pressure Pentagon officials over their knowledge of prisoner abuses at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and elsewhere.

"The court ruled that innocent civilians tortured by the United States cannot seek recourse in the federal courts to hold responsible U.S. officials legally liable," said ACLU attorney Lucas Guttentag.

"We believe that the law and Constitution require more, and that the former secretary of defense must be held accountable for his policies that led to this abuse," he added.



Donald Rumsfeld

## Cheney Address Unglues BYU Students

SALT LAKE CITY — Vice President Dick Cheney's scheduled address to graduates of Brigham Young University is causing some administrators, faculty, students, and their parents to come unglued.

BYU will not prevent Cheney from giving the keynote speech at the graduation ceremony this year, according to a spokesperson.

Still, attendance during the ceremony might be down in protest of Cheney's presence there, said BYU Marriott School professor Warner Woodworth.

Woodworth told the Daily Herald that parents and LDS stake presidents are upset that Cheney would be asked to represent their families and their faith. He said the vice president's moral values are out of step with BYU.

"Cheney's coming here is a contradiction of what we're trying to do," he said. "We represent an institution of peace, he represents an institution of war ... an institution of deception and outright lies."

One of the lead student orga-



Dick Cheney

nizers of a protest to Cheney's talk said that the vice president fails the university's standards on speakers' morality.

Nephi Henry also said that BYU broke its own policy of political neutrality in its invitation to Cheney.

Other students have different perspectives on Cheney's scheduled address.

Betsy Fowler, a Ph.D. student, noted that the university setting — "a forum of ideas" — makes it suitable for the vice president to talk. She also decried the protesting professors for not supporting their students during this festive occasion.

Ted Lyon, a BYU professor of Spanish and Portuguese, is angry at the scheduled address, but said he would not sit out in protest. Instead, he argues that political messages should be balanced if they occur on stage.

"I'm suggesting that we invite Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama," he told the Daily Herald, adding that his students would prefer their graduation ceremony be spiritual in nature, not political.

## Code Pink Pressures Clinton On Campaign Trail

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A women-led anti-war group is still giving Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York a run for her money on the campaign trail.

Last week Code Pink protested out front Clinton's stop to seek endorsements at the Communications Workers of America (CWA) forum.

The group has been dogging Clinton for over two years because of her refusal to apologize for her vote to authorize the war in Iraq and her reluctance to back bills that de-fund war operations.

Participants at the CWA forum gave Clinton standing

ovations, while labor leaders brushed off Code Pink's presence.

Barbara Easterling, CWA's secretary-treasurer, told the group: "We don't need that to be the focus of the news today."

Former President Bill Clinton almost pointed out his wife's political flaws — her votes concerning the war in Iraq — as he came to her defense, according to the Hill the week prior.

"It's just not fair to say that people who voted for the resolution wanted war," the former president said, complaining about the media's perception

of the 2002 Iraq war authorization vote.

Gael Murphy, a founding member of Code Pink, said that at this point, an apology for Clinton's votes wouldn't stop the group from pressing on unless it came with a commitment to end the war in Iraq.

"We think it's important to put pressure on her as one of the most important politicians in the United States," Murphy said.

Code Pink has also spent a number of time pressuring other candidates, such as Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.).



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# When Solidarity Comes To Town

## Hands Off Bolivia, Cuba, Venezuela, Say Activists



CHUCK KAUFMAN, interim national coordinator of the Venezuela Solidarity Network, (left) sits in on a panel discussion about Venezuelan-U.S. relations.



VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT Hugo Chávez was voted into office by a legitimate landslide, according to the Carter Center last fall.

## Interview With Chuck Kaufman Of The Venezuela Solidarity Network

By NATHAN DIEBENOW  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Texans have more windows into Latin America than they might expect.

U.S. immigration policies, the Trans-Texas Corridor, and the anti-Bush rhetoric from Venezuela's president are just the tip of the iceberg.

But looking at trade relations between the Lone Star State and her neighbors to the south, one might begin to see how big this iceberg really is.

In 2000, Texas exported \$59.8 billion in goods to Latin America, all but \$8.1 billion of which went to Mexico.

Two years prior, Mexico became the second largest trading partner with the United States after Canada. Japan dropped to third place.

But since petroleum was found under Lake Maracaibo in 1918, Venezuela and the United States have formed a special bond.

Historically, this relationship has been based on the United States' rise into an imperial power with Venezuelan leaders struggling to maintain their autonomy.

Before Venezuela became an

oil giant, it owned outstanding debt to the British and Germans.

At one point, these imperialist powers sent their warships to blockade Venezuelan ports to collect their money.

Eventually, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt used his might to end the direct influence of European colonialism in the Americas.

At the same time, Roosevelt failed to win public support for a military invasion of Venezuela.

He was so ready to do so that he is said to have referred to Venezuelan President Cipriano Castro as "an unspeakably villainous little monkey."

The tone of criticism shifted after World War II, three decades since Venezuela became the world's leading oil exporter.

During this time, Venezuela's national identity strengthened and developed into the most "Americanized" of the Latin American countries. Venezuelans love baseball more than soccer, and eat McDonalds and Subway.

Despite the on-going strife between Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and U.S. President George W. Bush, business hasn't changed much between

the two nations.

For example, Venezuela still sends its oil heavy with sulfur to refineries in Corpus Christi, Texas – where it is cheaper to move from the Orinoco Basin than Shanghai.

Still, this coming Saturday, April 7, two protests will be held calling for the end of all U.S. sanctions and threats against Bolivia, Cuba, and Venezuela.

In New York City, participants will gather at 10 a.m. - 12 noon at Bryant Park, 42nd St. @ 6th Ave. A march will follow past the NEW YORK TIMES up 8th Ave. to Central Park. A public rally is scheduled at the statues of Simon Bolivar and Jose Marti, 59th St. & 6th Ave. (south end of Central Park).

In Los Angeles, participants will gather at 6:30 p.m. at Hollywood Highland by the Red Line Metro Station.

THE ICONOCLAST'S Nathan Diebenow spoke with Chuck Kaufman, interim national coordinator of the Venezuela Solidarity Network, to discuss President Chávez economic plans, his accomplishments, and his future – not to mention a certain rock star and his video games.

Here is that interview:

.....  
ICONOCLAST: How did you get involved with politics in Latin and South America, with an emphasis on Venezuela?

CHUCK KAUFMAN: I got involved in 1987 as a result of the Iran/Contra scandal hearings. Oliver North in the hearings made me so angry that I had an advertising representative business at the time, and I called a friend of mine who was an activist, and so let's volunteer for a Nicaragua group, The Nicaragua Network. It turned out we were in the same building on different floors in Washington, D.C. I started volunteering and then got hired. In August, it'll be 20 years since I walked in that door.

ICONOCLAST: When was the last time you visited Venezuela? How long were you there for? What was the purpose of your trip?

KAUFMAN: In October, I took a delegation down to investigate U.S. interference in the presidential election. I was there for just eight days.

ICONOCLAST: So it wasn't to audition for the musical film biography of Hugo Chávez's life?

KAUFMAN: (laughs) No.  
ICONOCLAST: What is that about?

KAUFMAN: (laughs) I didn't hear about that.

ICONOCLAST: I don't know if this was a joke or what, but I read that in a Jan. 29 op-ed piece

by Eric Wingerter called "Enabling' a False Perception." (laughs)

KAUFMAN: (laughs) He does like to joke around. I suspect it was a joke.

ICONOCLAST: Well, getting back to reality, into what kind of economic model is President Chávez trying to transform Venezuela exactly?

KAUFMAN: One of the things that attracted me to what he's doing in Venezuela is that it's very similar to what the Sandinistas tried to do in Nicaragua in the 1980s, which is a mixed economy with private enterprise and some publicly-owned property. It encourages a cooperative model both for factories and agriculture. The difference between Venezuela and Nicaragua is that Venezuela has oil and, therefore, actually has the money to make this stuff work.

ICONOCLAST: Where did he get the idea for this model? Nicaragua?

KAUFMAN: I don't know. I mean, I don't know if I've ever heard him say, "We're trying to do what Nicaragua did." But to me, that's what the appearance was. I saw the similarities of what he was trying to do and what the Sandinistas were trying to do, and also the U.S. hostility toward what he was trying to do was similar to the U.S.

Continued On Next Page

## When Solidarity Comes To Town

From Previous Page

hostility to the Sandinistas in the 80s.

It was natural for the Nicaraguan Network to think there needed to be a Venezuela Solidarity Network and to help create it.

ICONOCLAST: When did that network get started?

KAUFMAN: Just almost exactly a year ago. The first weekend in March of last year, there was a conference with about 475 people from all over the country. They came together to talk about Venezuela and learn about Venezuela. At the end they voted to create a national solidarity network.

ICONOCLAST: How big is that network?

KAUFMAN: It's still small. The Nicaraguan Network has been donating my time to coordinate, and we have two other half-time employees. There's a lot of peace and justice groups and former Central America solidarity groups and new Bolivarian Circles and chapters of Hands Off Venezuela that all consider themselves to be a part of the Venezuela Solidarity Network.

ICONOCLAST: From what I understand, Chávez is a Christian and that he believes Jesus Christ is in fact "the Commander in Chief of this revolution." How do you think a Christian fundamentalist — like Pat Robertson — missed that memo?

KAUFMAN: (laughs) Well, I think Pat Robertson is a fundamentalist first. I was raised a Mennonite, and he wouldn't meet my criteria for being Christian.

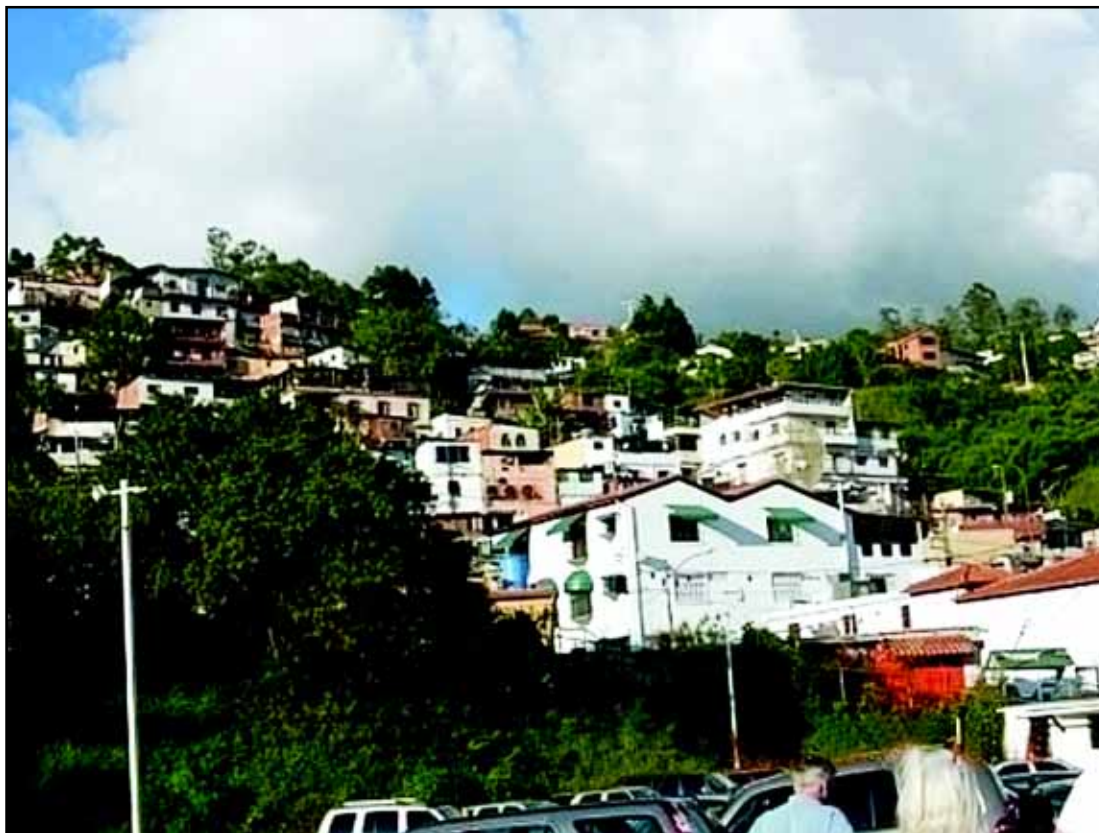
ICONOCLAST: Is there a big faith-based group influence to this solidarity network?

KAUFMAN: There is — similar to Central American movement of the 1980s. As a matter of fact, the first people who said, "We got to go to Venezuela. We need to get people down there to see what's going on" were the Maryknolls, the Catholic religious order. They have had people down there for — I don't know — 50 years probably.

They have been very excited by what Chávez has been able to do to improve a lot of the poor, and they have been really supportive to the Venezuela Solidarity Network.

ICONOCLAST: But how successful is he in keeping his promises to eradicate poverty?

KAUFMAN: Well, I think the fact that he got 63 percent of the vote in the election in December means that the people of Venezuela think that he has been making good progress. It is a process. You can't overcome



NEIGHBORHOODS in Venezuela fit on the sides of her mountainous terrain.

an entire history of ignoring the needs of the poor in just a few years.

Also, one thing I think people don't often credit for Venezuela is that the so-called "Bolvarian Revolution" came to power through the ballot box. Unlike revolutions that come to power through force, a lot of the opposition is still in the government bureaucracy and ministries. In Cuba, the opposition fled, and in Nicaragua, the opposition fled, but in Venezuela, it's still there.

You know, members of the Citgo board in the U.S. and PDVSA in the Venezuelan oil company are gradually getting replaced as they retire and as their appointments, if they are in an appointed position, run out, but there has been a lot of opposition to the things Chávez has been trying to do from within his own government.

ICONOCLAST: So Chávez has acted within Venezuelan law? He's not trying to become a dictator?

KAUFMAN: I don't think so. There was a bit of a flap a few weeks ago about the National Assembly — their Congress — gave him the power to rule by decree on certain specific areas, mostly the economy. But in Venezuela that's a fairly common thing. Previous presidents also had the power to rule by decree in certain areas for certain specified lengths of time, and the U.S. never raised any fuss about it before.

ICONOCLAST: How has Chávez handled political dissent from his own countrymen?

KAUFMAN: Well, if you go down there and read the news-

papers or turn on the television stations, you'll see that (laughs) there's substantial freedoms of expression. Most of the newspapers are anti-Chávez. All but one of the television stations are rabid anti-Chávez.

The opposition has shot itself in the foot on any number of times. Most recently, during the National Assembly elections of the year before this past presidential election, they boycotted the election, and now 100 percent of the National Assembly is made up of parties that support Chávez.

In Venezuela, the National Assembly is stronger than the presidency than it is in the U.S. Chávez doesn't appoint the Supreme Court. He doesn't appoint the supreme electoral council. He doesn't even appoint his own attorney general. All of those positions are elected by the National Assembly, so when the opposition took itself out of the National Assembly, they took themselves out of a role in the filling all of those important posts.

It's almost like Chávez has to create his own opposition. (laughs)

ICONOCLAST: Ouch! Well, are the private news media outlets in Venezuela more or less critical of Chávez after that TV station's license was revoked there by the state last year?

KAUFMAN: It's actually more recent than that, and its broadcast license wasn't renewed. Its time was up just like in the U.S. You know, U.S. broadcasting licenses have specific terms that have to be renewed, but that station is still operating

as a cable station and satellite station.

It just doesn't have use of the public airwaves because of its criminal actions. I mean, it was part of the leadership of the coup in 2002. I can't imagine that any television station in the U.S. that was calling for the violent overthrow of the government would keep its license for another almost five years. (laughs)

I haven't noticed any difference in the vociferousness of the opposition between Chávez and the press since that was announced.

ICONOCLAST: How much power does Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim actually have over Latin America as a whole? I mean, I know he owns quite a bit if not all the Mexican telecommunications, but what about the rest of that area?

KAUFMAN: I don't know if he has any holdings in Venezuela. I don't know if he owns the Venezuelan telephone company or not. I think Chávez has announced that they are going to nationalize the phone company, if they haven't already. But in all these cases where they are nationalizing industries, they are paying full market rate to the previous owners, so it's no confiscation.

ICONOCLAST: How true is the idea that if the price of oil drops significantly, Chávez will have a tough time recovering politically?

KAUFMAN: Certainly he'll have less money, but I don't know. It depends on how precipitously it drops and for what period of time. I can't see oil going back to under a dollar a gallon

in the U.S. ever because each day, there is less and less oil.

I suppose the ups and downs could affect the economy there since it's an oil-driven economy, but one of the things Chávez has been doing is trying to diversify the economy and, in particular, to begin agriculture in Venezuela because Venezuela imports practically all of its food. The oil economy has really distorted Venezuela's economics for a couple of generations now.

But another thing I wanted to mention was that all of these what they are called "cheap oil deals" that Chávez has done with countries like Nicaragua are not really cheap oil deals. The oil is at market rate, but the countries only have to pay half of it right now, and they pay the rest over 20 years, so if the price of oil drops, those countries are still paying over that 20 years for oil at the price it is now. It will have some effect of evening fluctuations in the price of oil for Venezuela.

ICONOCLAST: Returning to the United States, I have to ask a selfish question. How are Chávez and his economic policies good for the average consumer of the United States?

KAUFMAN: I don't know how they could be good for the average consumer, but I would say that they are good for the average American as an example that there are other ways than a Wal-Mart type sweatshop economy to structure yourself under. I think the U.S. workers would be a lot better off if they were forming co-operatives and running their factories.

Following the model of Venezuela, we'd all be better off if there was universal healthcare and education and the things Venezuelans are becoming entitled to.

I don't know if you can say that the average consumer in the U.S. is better off because I don't know if Venezuela has any impact on the price we pay for anything. Venezuela isn't responsible for the rising cost of gas any more than any other oil producing country including the U.S.

ICONOCLAST: If other Latin American nations followed Chávez's lead in reducing poverty, wouldn't that stem the tide of immigration to the United States?

KAUFMAN: Exactly. Exactly! That's the piece that just gets left out all the time. You know, NAFTA drove a million Mexican farm families off their land. If those people had still had their land, they wouldn't be in the U.S. without documents and trying to find work.

ICONOCLAST: Cuban President Fidel Castro is leaving power to his brother. This begs

Continued On Next Page

# When Solidarity Comes To Town

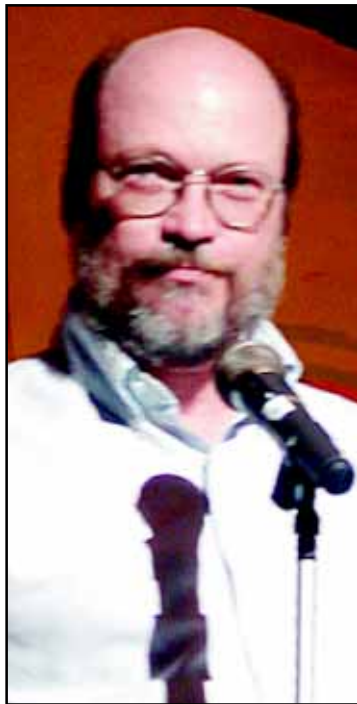
From Previous Page

the question, is Chávez grooming a successor? Is he of that mindset?

KAUFMAN: I don't know the answer to that. I hope that he isn't grooming a successor. I hope that he is institutionalizing a participatory democracy, so what we'd call Bolivarian Revolution isn't dependant on Hugo Chávez, the man at this moment. My firm hope is that it is becoming institutionalized and that there will be successions of power that will continue with these kinds of policies.

ICONOCLAST: I understand that Irish rock star Bono backed a videogame which promotes the invasion and destruction of Venezuela. Will he be invited to participate in any of these upcoming actions in New York City and Los Angeles?

KAUFMAN: Hmm... (laughs) Well, at this point, we're just trying to get an answer from him. We tried to contact him last July at first and got no response from him whatsoever.



**CHUCK KAUFMAN, interim national coordinator of the Venezuela Solidarity Network, spoke at an engagement in Japan.**

contrary to Bono's image as somebody who cares about AIDS and poverty and debt in Africa and whatnot to be funding a video game that has blonde-haired, blue-eyed mercenaries attacking Venezuela blowing up the national oil company and neighborhoods that are fully recognizable by people who have been to Venezuela and live in Venezuela or who have family in Venezuela. It just makes no sense.

We're not for censoring what people can have, to play games or to watch movies or that kind of thing, but at least they could fictionalize it. It shouldn't be recognizable, and it shouldn't be desensitizing people in the United States to the idea of invasion of Venezuela.

ICONOCLAST: I guess it would be a great place to apologize in New York City or Los Angeles, huh?

KAUFMAN: Yeah. (laughs) It would. (laughs) But I don't think I'll hold my breath. It would be wonderful if he'd like to do it. (laughs)

**INFO**  
The Venezuela Solidarity Network  
[www.venusolidarity.org](http://www.venusolidarity.org)  
April 7 Coalition  
[www.april7coalition.org](http://www.april7coalition.org)  
May 20 Coalition  
[may20coalition.org](http://may20coalition.org)

## Brazilian Police Close Cargill Plant

SAO PAULO — Environmentalists gained a victory last week when Brazilian police closed the Amazon-based soy export terminal of agribusiness giant Cargill.

"A big step forward has been taken in enforcing the responsible use of natural resources and bringing greater governance in the Amazon," said Paulo Adario, Greenpeace's Amazon campaign coordinator in Brazil.

For years, environmental groups argued that the Santarem

plant was illegally built and caused rainforest depletion.

Greenpeace targeted the Santarem terminal once it opened in 2003, accusing Cargill of contributing to slave labor, illegal land allocations, and massive deforestation.

Last week's police raid came after a Brazilian judge ruled against Cargill for failing to hand over environmental impact assessments during the terminal's early existence.

Cargill is expected to appeal the ruling on grounds that it was

unclear which governmental entity, federal or state, lawfully sanctions environmental reports.

The soy produced in Brazil is exported to Europe to feed livestock. Cargill claims it uses six percent of the Amazon for its own soy production.

Cargill, which posted more than \$70 billion in revenues last year, had never been forced to cease its operations before.

It is estimated that 20 percent of the Amazon rainforest is no more.

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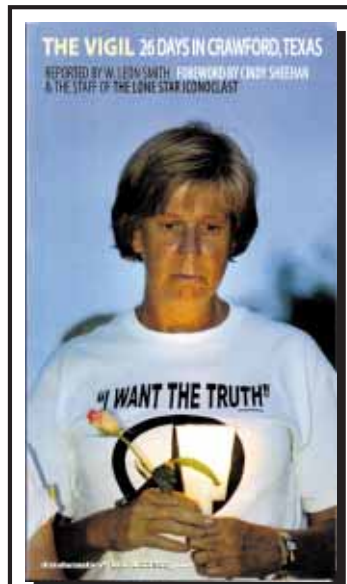
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At the present time, there is a letter going around circulated by religious leaders getting other religious leaders to sign on. I think there was a BOSTON GLOBE story about that yesterday. I hadn't had time to read it yet. We're also trying to get ordinary citizens to sign a letter as well.

We just think it's completely



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# Crawford Peace House Celebrates 4th Anniversary

By KAY LUCAS  
PEACE HOUSE DIRECTOR

*"Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

In anticipation of the upcoming fourth anniversary of the Crawford Peace House this Easter I look back over those momentous years in wonder and amazement. I could never have imagined how prophetic that famous quote by Margaret Meade would be when we stuck it on the wall during the first month of this adventure four years ago.

As the drums of war picked up cadence out on Prairie Chapel Road in Crawford, Texas, several thousand peace activists rallied here during late 2002, in the hope of bringing awareness to the media, to our leaders, and the population at large, that all of the reasons touted for invading Iraq were false. The First Amendment to the Constitution seemed to be at the forefront of many events.

Those early peace demonstrations were held at Crawford's high school football stadium, the "free speech zone" in Crawford. Tucked away in a wooded area behind Tonkawa Falls Park, the stadium is not visible from the two main thruways that intersect in downtown Crawford about a mile away. It was during one of those large gatherings here of several thousand peace activists from Dallas, Waco, Austin, and elsewhere, that the idea for establishing a house of peace in George Bush's adopted hometown was conceived by Skip Londos of Waco.

The month of February 2003 marked a worldwide call for peace as millions of people in cities all over the planet, including the U.S., gathered and marched in opposition to the impending attack on Iraq. However, the U.S. media conglomerate gave little coverage of these demonstrations, so the average American who gets his "news" from the "liberal" mainstream media was largely unaware of those millions of people who disputed the neocons' false propaganda that Saddam Hussein was responsible for 911, had ties with al Qaida, and had weapons of mass destruction.

In Crawford that February, John Wolf of Dallas purchased a small house near the center of town, using proceeds from button sales at peace rallies in Dallas to make the down payment. As the cleanup of the property proceeded and work in the garden began, rumors began circulating in this very con-



The Crawford Peace House

servative community that enjoyed the prestige of having the President as a neighbor. Residents were less than enthused to have a bunch of what they thought of as peaceniks move into town just four years after Bush established his residence on Prairie Chapel Road. One neighbor commented to the news media that she wouldn't be bringing us any welcoming cookies. Johnny Wolf stated that he was holding out for a blueberry pie, anyway. There were some rumors of threats at first, but thankfully nothing other than middle fingers and catcalls materialized. I think most of those folks have come to accept us. Very few are so foolish to say we were wrong and those who were glad we were here, but were afraid to say so, have become downright friendly.

This small house has played host to thousands of visitors and many historical events over the past four years. The first notable event occurred on May 3, of 2003, when five people were arrested, charged, and subsequently found guilty in city court for protesting without a permit. The charges were later thrown out in a higher court, as unconstitutional. The City of Crawford then lost in a civil court case and had to pay over \$42,000 in judgments to those defendants. A decisive victory for the First Amendment.

Military Families Speak Out held its first rally at the Peace House in July 2003. So many



Kay Lucas

concerned citizens and organizations have visited the Peace House during the past four years it would be impossible to mention them all in this small space, but here are a few.

The Crawford Peace House hosted several groups who cooperated to stage a protest for the first anniversary of the Iraq war, on March 20, 2004, which brought at least 2,000 folks here to hear Ralph Nader deliver an eloquent call for the impeachment of George Bush.

Peace Action Texas held a 'White House for Sale' awareness event at the Peace House, complete with an inflatable replica of the White House, at the same time a Bush fundraiser honoring large donors, dubbed

Rangers and Pioneers, was held at a local ranch.

Not all of our visitors are here for specific events. People from a very diverse political, philosophical, and spiritual spectrum often stop by to visit the Peace House. All express appreciation that this place exists. Today a woman from Albuquerque, N.M. and a man from Houston came by in their travels.

Waco Friends of Peace member Jane Vardiman brought Sister Helen Prejean, author of "Dead Man Walking" by to share a bowl of chili and some hot cornbread on a cold winter's day while she was in Texas to visit a death row inmate in the Gatesville women's prison.

Capt. Eric May of Ghost Troop and info-war fame visited a couple of days in July of 2003 and was back again that same month for the Military Families Speak Out rally.

In July 2004, we hosted over 3,000 people who came to see Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 911" on a giant inflatable screen in the football stadium parking lot. The two local Waco theatres had refused to show the film so Moore sent us a copy to show. This event marked another First Amendment challenge. We had five days to prepare for that screening. Republicans staged an anti-peace protest and tried to disrupt the screening. They were almost cited for protesting without a permit, until Johnny Wolf told the local police the Republicans could be included un-

der our permit.

Little did we know that all of these smaller events were training exercises for a much larger event to come the next year.

A local high school government teacher brought three classes on a field trip to visit the Peace House in the fall of 2004. THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST was here to cover that meaningful occasion. Our resident volunteer at the time, Josh Collier, along with Paul McDaniel of Waco Friends of Peace, did an excellent job of explaining the mission of our groups to some very skeptical teenagers who expected Bush bashing instead of an informative conversation on American foreign policy and how peace is preferable to war.

From the beginning the LONE STAR ICONOCLAST covered most of the events at the Peace House. The local paper had endorsed Bush in 2000, so they were very skeptical of us at first. Like much of the country, their young reporter Nathan Diebenow seemed to be taken in by the Neocon propaganda and wasn't too interested in politics at that time. However, I began sending him information that was not available in the corporate media and, true to the journalistic ethic, he began researching the issues in depth. And just as important, W. Leon Smith, the publisher of the ICONOCLAST, began publishing articles on those issues that few other newspapers would touch.

What an uproar their endorsement of Kerry in the 2004 presidential race caused here in Crawford. We were proud to call them fellow Texans and now are their only distribution site in Crawford, plus I've distributed them in San Francisco, Washington, D.C., Austin, Ft. Worth and any other place I happen to go. If you live in Crawford, come by and pick one up.

On Aug. 3, 2005, Hadi Jawad, CPH board member, called me and said he just heard Cindy Sheehan announce on the Mike Malloy show that she was coming to Crawford to confront Bush. He asked me to e-mail her and invite her to the Peace House. I was away from home and computer, and by the time I got back he had already gotten to his computer and sent the invite. But I followed suit and did the same. I assumed she would be coming on Aug. 7, after the Vets for Peace Convention in Dallas was over. However, on Aug. 6, 2005, we were holding a press conference for Dr. Kinoshi, a Hiroshima survivor, when the Vets for Peace Impeachment Tour bus drove up with Cindy Sheehan on board.

Continued On Next Page

## PEACE HOUSE

From Previous Page

That began a wondrous month-long marathon of facilitating between 13,000 and 20,000 people at three different locations.

As Cindy was given camera time, peace activists all over the country were overjoyed that the media was finally giving the peace movement a voice and began streaming into Crawford to stand in the ditch with Cindy and pitch in to do the necessary tasks to enable this historic occasion to function.

The Peace House continued to facilitate Camp Casey for Thanksgiving 2005, Easter 2006, and August 2006 along with numerous other smaller events and gatherings inbetween.

On Dec. 31, 2006, we dedicated a memorial for the 650,000 Iraqi men, women, and children who have died since March 20, 2003.

The mood of the country is much different than it was four years ago. The peace movement is no longer in the minority, but there is still much work to be done to turn our country in another direction. Peace Houses should be popping up in cities and towns all across this nation. Enough of us can convince our leaders we really do want peace. The warmongers are still intent on sending more and more of our children and even our grandchildren to never-ending war. The drums are now beating for Iran even though our troops are stilled bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And as one of Hitler's henchmen, Herman Goering, said, "...after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy. And it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country."

Our saving grace has been the internet. That's where we must get our news now. Except for a precious few traditional publications, such as this one, we must search out the truth ourselves. Here's another tidbit from one of Hitler's cohorts, Joseph Goebbels.

"If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it. The lie can be maintained only for such time as the State can shield the people from the political, economic and/or military consequences of the lie. It



Crawford students visited the Peace House in 2004.

thus becomes vitally important for the State to use all of its powers to repress dissent, for the truth is the mortal enemy of the lie, and thus by extension, the truth is the greatest enemy of the State."

We must demand the truth and stand for peace. Join us on Easter Sunday, April 8, at 1 p.m.,

as we mark the fourth anniversary of our quest for peace.

We are located at 9142 E. Fifth St., Crawford, Texas.

*Kay Lucas is director of the Crawford Peace House, which she has served for the last four years. Her e-mail address is <liteworks201@aol.com>.*

## GOP Senator Backs Troop Withdrawal Deadline

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A key Republican senator critical of the Bush administration's handling of the Iraq war voted in favor of a timetable for U.S. combat troop withdrawal last week.

"It's now time for the Congress to step forward and establish responsible boundaries and conditions for our continued military involvement in Iraq," said Sen. Chuck Hagel of Nebraska said on the Senate floor.

Hagel's fellow colleague from Nebraska, Sen. Ben Nelson, a Democrat, also came to the side of the Democratic-majority in the 50-48 vote after opposing an almost identical bill two weeks ago.

The nonbinding resolution, if carried out, would bring combat troops home from Iraq by March 31, 2008. Troop withdrawal would begin in 120 days.

Nelson wrote the "benchmarks" for the Iraqi government

to follow and report to American commanders and the Congress.

"Setting measurable goals is absolutely essential for our strategy in Iraq, and I've been pushing for these conditions for staying for more than two years," Nelson said.

President George W. Bush said he intended to veto the proposal.

"I would hope the president wouldn't veto it," Nelson said. "I hope we can sit down with the president and see how we can work this out."

A Republican amendment to nix the timetable from the \$122 billion war spending bill was voted prior to the final Senate vote.

A compromise bill is expected to be drawn among Senate and House members before a final vote on the bill next week.

The week prior the House voted for a bill that set a troop withdrawal date for Sept. 1, 2008.

## San Francisco Joins Movement To Ban Plastic Checkout Bags

SAN FRANCISCO — The City of San Francisco is expected to join countries like Ireland in outlawing plastic checkout bags at supermarkets.

The ban would come after the final passage of legislation which the mayor has promised to sign.

San Francisco would be the first U.S. city to outlaw the bags once seen as more sanitary than their paper counterparts.

"Hopefully, other cities and other states will follow suit," said Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, adding that he was "astounded ... by the worldwide attention" his ordinance had received.

The California Grocers Association, however, sees the ordinance as a path to higher prices for local shoppers.

Kristin Power, the association's vice president for government relations, said her group was "disappointed" by the Board of Supervisors' decision.

"It will frustrate recycling efforts and will increase both consumer and retailer costs. There's also a real concern about the availability and quality of compostable bags," she



said.

Under the nearly unanimous legislation, grocers and pharmacies can still use compostable bags made of corn starch or recyclable paper bags

The ordinance, in general, would ban the plastic bags from supermarkets in six months and large chain pharmacies in about a year.

Currently, there are about 180 million plastic, environmentally-unfriendly bags being handed out each year in the city.

The oil savings is substantial. About 430,000 gallons of oil is needed to create 100 million bags.

Supervisor Ed Jew was the lone dissenting voice on the board. He criticized the measure for mandating undue burdens on small businesses and residents.

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Jane Stillwater

# Iconoclast's New Blogger Reporting From Baghdad

BERKELEY, Calif. — Tired of receiving news about the war in Iraq from the media elites?

Jane Stillwater was, so she decided to do something about it.

With sponsorship from the LONE STAR ICONOCLAST, the 64-year-old Berkeley blogger will be reporting from Baghdad.

Her goal is to write about the war for "real people," and she hopes she gets clearance to embed herself with the U.S. mili-

tary in Iraq over the next three weeks.

Stillwater explained to the SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE before she left last week that she's already prepared for the job, including the language barrier.

"I've been all over the world," she said, "and you always find people who speak English."

Stillwater added that she's used to thrifty living. She has been a resident of Section 8 housing for almost 30 years. She

saved her \$1,072 airline ticket. She took a public bus to the airport. She plans to sleep in a sleeping bag on the Kuwait beaches, and she expects to send in her stories from Internet cafes.

This is her first time traveling overseas alone, but her friends and family know she'll be fine, since she has a history of adventure-seeking. In 2006, she traveled to Afghanistan on a tour with Global Exchange.

Stillwater graduated from UC Berkeley in 1966 with a master's degree in city planning. She raised four children while working as a legal secretary. And despite criticism, she wears her politics on her sleeve.

Here is a snippet from her last blog post before leaving for the Middle East:

I'm going to "Baghdad to write fabulous stories for YOU all about how our brave troops

are doing a bang-up job over there despite the fact that their bosses in the White House are sadistic bastards, terribly inefficient crooks and totally nuts — or I will spend three weeks wandering the streets of Kuwait City waiting for my flight home, searching for internet cafes and trying to sell bootleg Girl Scout cookies."

**INFO**  
[www.jpstillwater.blogspot.com](http://www.jpstillwater.blogspot.com)

Jane Stillwater's Reports Are Posted As They Come In At  
**[www.lonestaricon.com](http://www.lonestaricon.com)**

Here Are Her First Reports:

## Jane Stillwater's First Report:

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Greetings from Kuwait! This post is gonna be quick and dirty and not very coherent because I'm writing to you from a Kinko's at the Kuwait City airport. After two days on the plane, I arrived here around midnight and, since I can't even begin to try to arrange to get picked up until 6 am tomorrow morning, I'll be spending the rest of the night in a Barca-lounger in the airport offices of Kellogg, Brown & Root. How surrealistic is that!

Here's my first dispatch:

### The Great American Dream still exists — in Iraq!

By Jane Stillwater

<<http://jpstillwater.blogspot.com>>

You know how we all thought that the American economy was going downhill? It's not true! We're just not looking in the right places. Look closer — the 1950s American economic miracle isn't dead. It's still going on. People are still getting well-paying jobs. Mortgages are still being paid off. Jobs are available everywhere. You can find one just for the asking. Three cars in your garage? No problem. No money worries, no debts. Decent jobs are out there begging. Yes, the 1950s American economic miracle is still happening.

Only it's happening in Iraq.

How spooky, how weird, how de-ja-voo. While American cities are rotting and American children go to sleep hungry at night, there still is a land — far far away — where everything is as it was before our present economic American Easter egg cracked.

Where is this simple, illusionary, holiday place? Iraq.

Yesterday, escorted by two large handsome bodyguard cameramen supplied by the San Francisco Chronicle, I took a BART train to the San Francisco airport and boarded a plane to Amsterdam.

"Jane, your flight from Amsterdam to Kuwait has been canceled," said the guy at the KLM check-in counter. "Would you mind spending a night in Holland?"

Would I mind? Hecka no! But when I got to Amsterdam, they told me something else. "Tomorrow's flight has been canceled but you can still get on yesterday's flight." Huh? "And it leaves in two hours." So I trundled off to Gate D-7 — and while I was waiting for yesterday's flight, I chit-chatted with four really nice Department of Defense and Blackwater "contractors". They talked about perks.

"I'm making a fabulous salary."

"I've saved up enough to put my daughters through college. And also my wife!"

"We have a mini-van, a sedan and an SUV."

"I just got back from a week at Disney World and next year we're taking the family to Europe."

Sounds just like the good old days, doesn't it. Guys working hard, guys getting ahead.

On the flight from Holland to Kuwait, the entire PLANE was filled with contractors, pursuing the American Dream — in Iraq.

Who am I to try to put an end to this perfect world — just because it is based on the quicksand of a million dead bodies?

"Not I," said this little white duck.

On the way to Kuwait, I watched an in-flight movie entitled "Bobby" — about the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy. And what RFK said in that film hit the nail exactly on the head. "Too often, we excuse those who are willing to build their own lives on the shattered dreams of other human beings."

PS: While I was flying across the Atlantic, getting leg cramps, eating rubber chicken and watching "Casino Royal," I also read an article in *The Guardian* about the ghastly slaughter that is happening right now in Darfur. Don't even get me started on that one — wondering who else is making a profit off of all those grisly deaths.

\*\*\*\*\*

Here's an article on me featured in the San Francisco Chronicle! <<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/03/29/MNGUHOTSHD1.DTL>>

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**Got any extra Kevlar for my trip to Iraq?** If you wanna contribute to my Kevlar fund, I now have a PayPal account. Go to <https://www.paypal.com/>, click on "send money" and type in <[jpstillwater@yahoo.com](mailto:jpstillwater@yahoo.com)> where it says "to." Thanks.

## Jane Stillwater's Second Report:

Friday, March 30, 2007

### A review of the US troop chow hall in Kuwait: Would Michelin give it three stars?

By Jane Stillwater

<<http://jpstillwater.blogspot.com>>

I'm at an unnamed US airbase in Kuwait and getting ready to fly out to Baghdad tonight. But first things first. I mean visiting combat zones is nice and all that

Continued On Next Page



## STILLWATER ... From Previous Page

but...did your mother teach you ANYTHING? Nothing is more important than food! First let's talk about food.

My first impression upon walking into the airbase commissary tent was, "Wow!" They handed me a plate and then served me one-fourth of a chicken, broccoli, mashed potatoes and green beans. High-end cafeteria food but tasty and lots of it. I heaped up on that. Then I noticed the salad bar. Mama, I'm home! Vitamins. High fiber. Anti-oxidants. Fruit. Eat your vegetables, troops!

Then I discovered the salad bar. And the coffee bar. And the juice bar. And the soda bar and the cold bottled water. "But Jane," I asked myself. "What about dessert?"

Chocolate pudding and ice cream bars. Not Chez Panisse or nothing but good. And the ambiance was great. For an Army canteen, it was like Better Homes and Gardens — red table cloths and silken flowers tastefully arranged in ceramic vases. Plus lots of really hot dudes dressed in khaki and camo walking around with automatic weapons slung over their shoulders.

I was about to give this place a whole bunch of Michelin stars for sure — but when I finally sat down at my tastefully-decorated table and started to eat, I discovered that every wall in the chow hall had at least two giant plasma TVs nailed up next to the air conditioners and every single one of them was turned to Fox News! Eeuuww.

Watching Bill O'Reilly interviewing some lady from the Heritage Foundation while eating? That's just gross! Two big thumbs down.

But then the place almost kinda redeemed itself because when I was about to walk out, I noticed that I had missed something hidden over by the exit door — the dessert bar! Four flavors of cheesecake, tubs full of all kinds of ice cream, a frozen smoothie machine including toppings and cones, three kinds of chocolate cake and my all-time favorite — PUMPKIN PIE! Dump that loser O'Reilly and this place would definitely get two thumbs up from me!

Jane Stillwater's Third Report:

Sunday, April 01, 2007

### Letters from Iraq:

#### The Charge of the Light Brigade, Part 1

By Jane Stillwater

<<http://jpstillwater.blogspot.com>>

March 30 — we finally received our orders to fly out of Kuwait and into Baghdad. Hurray! Now all I have to do is get my passport back from the Kuwait visa inspectors and I'm good to go.

"Stillwater? Here's your passport." Whew. "Now line up here and wait." I did. This is exciting. And perhaps a little too real. Two hours later, we boarded a plane. It was a big one, a real work of art. It was as big as a football field inside, no windows, no frills — just one big warehouse. The pallets with our gear on them were stored in back of us and troops lined the walls and took up seats in the center.

This plane is spooky. Forget everything you ever experienced on Continental, United or Delta. This plane is weird. Exposed pipes run along the 20-foot-high ceiling. Wires hang loose. There's a plywood floor. There's NOTHING decorative about this plane at all — except that they gave us nicely-colored earplugs to baffle the sound.

While waiting in some tent or other for the plane to take off, the soldiers I sat next to took turns telling stories. I love these guys. Anyone who can tell a good story is all right by me. And these guys tell stories with flash and charm. Each one has an attention-grabbing introduction, an exciting and suspenseful plot, a gripping climax and a really great hook at the end. Guys, I salute you. Now don't go out there and blow yourselves up. You have too many stories to tell.

This plane holds a hecka lot of men. I'm not allowed to say how many but it's a lot — more than the amount of people who live in my neighborhood, less than the amount of people at a Pussycat Dolls concert. There were a lot of women soldiers back on the base in Kuwait but I'm probably the only woman on this plane now besides some sort of stewardess wannabe in khaki fatigues whose main job appears to be handing out earplugs.

1:15 am: This whole freaking embed experience is so weird, so bizarre. It's like nothing I can equate it with inside my realm of experience back home. It's bizarre. It's going to take me YEARS to digest all of this. Just going to the freaking toilet on a troop transport plane is bizarre.

Once the plane takes off, all the lights go out except for a handful of red ones lining the walls, giving the interior the look and feel of Hell — Hell and the Battlestar Galactica, with a little bit of Road Warrior thrown in. The soldiers are all wearing helmets and flack jackets. To a man, all of them are asleep — in awkward, unnatural positions. Only I am awake. And on the way to the toilet, I glide down the aisle like that Greek goddess of old who was kidnapped by Hades — Persephone?

Once inside the restroom, there's no light, only a red glow. I do my business by touch and get out as soon as I can, back to the jaws of death, back to the mouth of Hell. And the troops sleep on, in exhausted, exaggerated positions, looking for all the world like they were dead.

These men are my boys. Hurt them and you have to go through me. Hear that,

George Bush? These men aren't just action figure toys for you to play with. These are real, living human beings. Sincere. Serious about doing their jobs — and doing them well. They deserve better than the blunders of GWB. They deserve respect. They've got mine.

"Prepare for landing. Thank you." Obviously there's gonna be no in-flight movie and no in-flight meal. And I don't think we are going to have a spiffy arrival area and baggage carousel either.

"This is BIAP". Baghdad International Airport. "BIAP" must be short for "bi-opsy". That's what I think. The descent into BIAP is so swift and sudden, it feels like they cut out a piece of us. Yep, it's a good thing this plane doesn't have windows! But did all that decompression wake up the troops? Nope. I'm still the only one awake.

Then "BOOM!" The plane touches down with a sonic thud. We've landed in Baghdad.

Jane Stillwater's Fourth Report:

Sunday, April 01, 2007

### More news from Iraq:

#### Me, the Light Brigade & John McCain

By Jane Stillwater

<<http://jpstillwater.blogspot.com>>

Good grief! Iraq is just BRIMMING with news. I don't even know where to begin. At 4 am this morning, a huge armored vehicle moved us from the Baghdad airport to the Green Zone in a convoy composed of vehicles that looked like they had just come out of a Toys R Us catalog.

Nobody in Iraq seems to need sleep. Not even me. But they don't go without food. Did you know that the average American soldier in Iraq gains 26 pounds — while the average insurgent lives on rice and beans? If that doesn't give our troops an edge here, then what will? If we are now entering the fourth year of this war and it still is bogged down even despite our tremendous Cheesecake advantage, the Bush guys are in big trouble. But I digress.

I've been here in Iraq for three days and this is the first day I have even seen — let alone talked to — an Iraqi. So I started at the top and interviewed an Iraqi general. His basic message seems to be that the Iraqi army now has about 25 new ways to kill people and/or make them go to their rooms. "We have more troops, more joint security stations, more ammunition, more tips from informants, more security..." Then his translator went on and on about how the Iraqi army is eliminating tourists. Tourists? Oh, he meant TERRORISTS. My bad.

Then I spoke with an American admiral who stated, "The people of Iraq need to be able to walk to the local coffee shop safely." By this does he mean that after four whole years of occupation, people still can't walk safely to the coffee shop — or does he mean that what Iraq needs today is more Starbucks? I'm confused.

After that, you will never guess what happened next! I got to interview John McCain! Seriously. He was here. Right here in the press room. Which is fifty feet down the corridor and around the corner from the cot where I had dumped off all my stuff this morning and is now my new home. Senator McCain, Senator Graham, Rep. Pence and Rep. Renzi had put together what appeared to be the 2007 GOP Hype-the-War Tour. "Do you think that they will give us souvenir T-shirts of the tour," I asked some guy from CNN. Probably not.

Anyway, Sen. McCain and his backup singers were here and even though I don't agree with them, I was glad that they came. It takes courage to come to Iraq.

"Our new strategy is making progress," said McCain.

"We are doing things differently," said Sen. Graham. "We cannot let suicide bombers set the pace. If we talk about leaving and losing, the car bombers win." Then Graham talked about how the four of them went down to the Baghdad market today and it was perfectly safe. "We bargained and bought rugs."

Pence agreed about the safety of the market. Later, however, he added that they did have to travel there in Humvees and be escorted by soldiers and wear body armor — but other than that...

Later I talked with an Iraqi reporter who said that the market they went to was the safest in the city and several American reporters added that walking around in Baghdad without troops backing you up was suicidal and anyone who did something like that had a death wish.

Renzi then stated that, "We will not turn our backs on the Iraqi people," and the other Dream Boys agreed. And apparently if the bill to end the war makes it through Congress, Bush will veto it. "The President [sic] will veto any bill that will cut the legs out from under the military," added Graham.

So far, the group had talked a lot about how to make the "war" policy regarding Iraq succeed, but none of them talked about the elephant in the living room — that the policy itself is fatally flawed. But I did! Shut up, Jane.

Yes, even with all those Senators and reporters and everything there I still had to have my say. So. Exactly what DID I say to John McCain? Sorry but you're gonna have to die of suspense a little bit longer. Someone just brought me some food!

Fried chicken, meatloaf, honeyed carrots, mashed potatoes, green beans and

Continued On Next Page

**STILLWATER ... From Previous Page**

cookies! Giant chocolate chip cookies, macadamia nut cookies, peanut butter cookies, chocolate fudge cookies. Hey! You forgot the cheesecake.

So. What did I say to Sen. McCain? I gave him my famous "Light Brigade" speech. "I have been so completely impressed," I began, "by the quality, training, competence and skill of our troops here. They represent yet another generation in a long line of competent and capable Americans." McCain smiled and nodded his head, thinking I had finished my speech. Not.

"But," I continued, just getting warmed up, "our troops are also like the heroes of Lord Tennyson's poem, 'The Charge of the Light Brigade.' They are

fighting bravely and well in a situation caused by a blunder. So why should we senselessly continue to put our troops in harm's way for a mistake?" Or in order to appease some greedy, immature Lord Nelson wannabe. It doesn't make sense to destroy a whole generation of American soldiers just to support Bush and Cheney.

Then I got down to the heart of my question. Giving McCain that special look that us moms usually reserve for recalcitrant children, I said, "And after this terrible blunder in Iraq, are you then going to go ahead and make that same horrible mistake in Iran?"

McCain's answer was brief. "No comment."

## Supreme Court Denies Reward To Whistle-Blower

WASHINGTON, D.C. — An 81-year-old whistle-blower lost case before the Supreme Court that now makes it more difficult for such watchdogs to claim cash rewards.

James Stone, a retired engineer, sought up to \$1 million from a lawsuit he filed in 1989 against Rockwell International. But the reward was denied on grounds that Stone had little connection to the verdict against the company.

The lawsuit concerned a faulty environmental cleanup at a now-closed nuclear weapons plant near Denver.

The problem whistle-blowers face in this situation is timing — when to filing fraud suits on the government's behalf.

Stone said he was the original source of the information that brought about media attention to the plant.

However, while he failed to file the suit until after the media reported on the plant's problems, Stone did talk with federal investigators about the environmental concerns before the media reports.

The company denied this claim because Stone was laid off before the false claims were reported made.

Rockwell was still ordered to pay the government \$4 million, a quarter of which Stone claimed under the False Claims Act.

Business associations and government contractors applauded the outcome, hoping more limitations would be levied on false claims lawsuits.

Watchdog groups say that whistle-blowers will now hesitate before filing such claims.

James Moorman, president of Taxpayers Against Fraud Education Fund, said the incen-

tive for whistle-blowers is compromised now.

"No whistle-blower can afford to pursue a case to resolution under these circumstances," he told the Associated Press.

This Civil War-era law has been applied to settlements against pharmaceutical manufacturers.

Lawmakers like Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) are attempt-

# U.S. To Attack Iran Friday, Says Russian News

MOSCOW — Russian military experts predict that the United States would attack Iran this Friday, according to a Russian news agency report.

The Good Friday attack would consist of air strikes with tactical nuclear weapons, targeting Iran's sea and air defenses as well as its economic and political infrastructure.

The report from the Russian News and Information Agency Novosti (RIA-Novosti) comes a month after a warning by ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Shirinovsky

Shirinovsky said in February that the U.S. would attack Tehran sometime in late March.

Reports have also been leaked from inside the Pentagon, explaining the Bush administration's intention to launch a military offensive against Iran.

In one recent account, investigative reporter Seymour Hersh wrote in *The New Yorker* that U.S. plans to bomb Iran have been drawn over the past year.

An attack could happen "this spring," he added, as the additional U.S. aircraft-carrier groups move to the Persian Gulf.

Two carrier groups already patrolling the Gulf simulated attack maneuvers in the shipping lanes off Iran's coast last week.

These specific maneuvers happened four days after Iran captured 15 British sailors and ma-

rines. Iran says these personnel entered into its waters. Britain says otherwise.

The U.S. says its operations in the Gulf were not connected to the sailors' capture. Its maneuvers consisted of over 100 U.S. warplanes and 10,000 personnel.

In his piece "The Redirection," Hersh also revealed an Iran-Contra-like deal in which pro-al-Qaeda organizations were given illicit funds okayed by Vice President Dick Cheney.

But while new Defense Secretary Robert Gates denied that the U.S. has any military plans for the Islamic Republic, President George W. Bush has not ruled out using nuclear weapons against Iran.

The Democratic-controlled Congress' position on Iran mirrors that of the president. In fact, only one of the many Democratic presidential candidates has denounced the so-called "nuclear option."

At issue is Iran's nuclear energy program, using technology supplied by Russia. In recent months, however, Russia has taken a stricter stance on Iran's nuclear ambitions, though experts say Iran has a decade until it enriches enough weaponized uranium.

In 2003, Iran offered to enter into peace talks with the United States, but the White House refused to meet with representatives of the Islamic state.

ing to strengthen the False Claims Act to compensate whistle-blowers and ensure that

taxpayer money is well-spent. The Bush Administration backed Stone in his case.

## FCC Commissioners Back Internet Investigation

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Two FCC commissioners begrudgingly backed a proposal to investigate the practices of the broadband Internet industry.

Both of these Democrats on the five-member Republican-controlled panel said that this step delays addressing the debate on "network neutrality."

"I want an FCC that un-

conditionally states its preference for nondiscrimination on the Internet," said Commissioner Michael Copps.

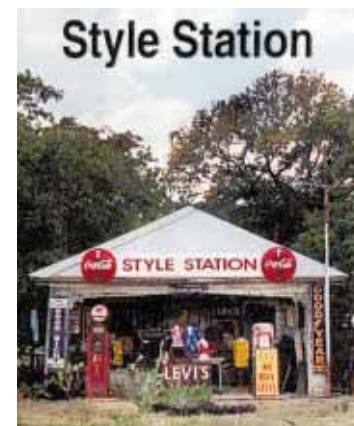
The proposal which passed is a "notice of inquiry" — a fact-finding initiative that might not lead to a ruling.

Debate erupted last year over whether broadband Internet providers should treat online content equally or charge a fee for guaran-

teed services at different speeds.

Net neutrality advocates fear that the telecom companies would block access to the Internet should fee schemes be imposed and regulated.

The net neutrality movement has the backing of odd allies such as the Christian Coalition and MoveOn.org.



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# BATTLE OF BAGHDAD OF B COVER-UP FOUR YEARS LATER

## Interview With **CAPTAIN ERIC MAY** Ghost Troop Commander

By **W. LEON SMITH**  
ICONOCLAST PUBLISHER

CRAWFORD — April 5-8 marks the fourth anniversary of the Battle of Baghdad, the bloody battle that was the lead-up to President Bush's infamous and untruthful claim on May 1, 2003, of "Mission Accomplished."

However, according to news sources overseas, including American military operatives and various investigators, all was not what it seemed at Baghdad Airport. They claim that the Battle of Baghdad was largely covered up as something the American public should not see, with U.S. news coverage instead focusing on a staged photo-op rescue of captive Private Jessica Lynch and later the pulling down of the Saddam Hussein statue, as symbolic of an easy victory.

Captain Eric H. May, a former intelligence and public affairs officer in the military, told *THE ICONOCLAST*, "The biggest story of the war became a non-event when the truth of the matter was that it was simply too bloody an event to report." He says that this played a part in persuading the American public to forfeit "thinking for themselves" when it came to this war.

As a unique way to acknowledge and honor the fallen — and oft-forgotten — soldiers in the Battle of Baghdad, Captain May formed what he calls Ghost Troop, an independent military cyber-cavalry movement aimed at fighting governmental propa-

ganda — a/k/a info-war.

Commanded by Captain May, Ghost Troop consists of current and past high-level military professionals and police veterans who claim expertise at reading governmental strategies. As a former member of the "propaganda machine" himself, Captain May has expressed grave concern that most of the mainstream media, now owned by corporations that are part of the military/industrial complex, are selling the American people a bill of goods for the sole purpose of corporate profits from the war.

This, he says, is why when there are important things happening, such as the Battle of Baghdad, that might not best serve continuing those profits, the media will latch onto obscure stories, like that of Private Lynch, and blow them out of proportion, consuming the lion's share of air-time and print, while ignoring, effectively covering up, the real stories of importance.

"The bogus rescue of Private Lynch was merely a distraction from the truth," said May. "And the staged photo-op of the pulling down of Saddam Hussein's statue was nothing more than a way to cement into people's minds that it was an easy victory. But what about the soldiers who gave their lives on the battlefield? Their story was not told. Theirs was the real truth of this segment of the war. The citizens of the United States were deceived."



Captain Eric H. May, Ghost Troop Founder

In an interview with the *ICONOCLAST*, Captain May discusses intricacies of the war and the political maneuverings that were working in the background. Since 1992, he had been one of the rare officers who had publicly and persistently pre-

dicted that an Iraq war would turn into quicksand, in a series of op-eds published in the *HOUSTON CHRONICLE*.

.....  
*ICONOCLAST*: Ghost Troop found its roots in the Battle of Baghdad. Since the fourth anni-

versary is this year, what are your views on the first four years of the Iraq war?

**CAPTAIN MAY**: My position is that of a person of consequence in the U.S. media, who was involved with people of consequence in the Bush circle. It gives some authenticity to the perspective that otherwise would be lacking. Here are the documents that show I was in touch with George Bush, Sr. when he was in retirement in Houston, through his office. Chase Untermeyer, a Bush family lieutenant and current Ambassador to Qatar, had put me in touch with him. This goes back to Dec. 21, 1995. Here's a memo from Jean Becker, the Chief of Staff for George Bush. On the back is a memo from Karen Hughes, written when they were interviewing me to be Bush Jr.'s speech writer when he was Governor of Texas in '96 and a presidential bid was on the horizon. Here's the receipt for the 3rd Infantry Division fund. That's what I brought back from Ft. Stewart, Ga. where one of the division chaplains, Col. Neil Dennington, confirmed the Battle of Baghdad and the cover-up for me.

I think the Battle of Baghdad was emblematic of the whole misadventure in the Middle East. There is nothing that I thought then that I don't think now has been validated by time. The American public still doesn't know that there was a Battle of Baghdad because the media-military apparatus con-

Continued On Next Page

# BATTLE OF BAGHDAD OF COVER-UP FOUR YEARS LATER

From Previous Page

structed the Private Jessica Lynch mess to hold attention.

A book published about the Battle of Baghdad, David Zucchini's *Thunder Run*, starts on the morning after the Battle of Baghdad started, mid-way through the battle! It was a propaganda book. The truth is that the battle started April 5, the night that Baghdad Bob said that they had counterattacked us at the Baghdad Airport and there was a sustained fight that went on for several hours. The best evidence that I have from international sources, scientific sources, is that our position was becoming untenable at the Baghdad Airport and we used a neutron warhead, at least one. That is the big secret of Baghdad Airport.

If one looks into international data, there are reportings of enhanced radiation of some livestock, and of human metabolic effects - death and disease. It explains why, after the Battle of Baghdad, we got fragmentary stories of things like truckloads of dirt being moved out and moved in. It made no particular sense at the time, until one puts it into perspective, as a decontamination operation. Again, that part of the Battle of Baghdad, the fact that we went nuclear, explains a lot of things that came out afterwards and also explains why it is that it had to be covered up. You can't go to a country to try to make sure that nobody tries to start a war with WMDs against you and WMD 'em. It's a highly embarrassing position to be in.

I think Baghdad laid bare that we really weren't going into a limited war at all, we were going into a world war, and were prepared to use nukes. Incidentally, since the nuking of Baghdad Airport, the Bush Administration has retrofitted our military doctrine to allow for the use of tactical nukes in that sort of situation.

ICONOCLAST: If there was, indeed, a neutron warhead used, would it not have saved the lives of many of our soldiers and, actually, been the proper thing to do if we were losing that battle? I am thinking of the American lives Truman probably saved by ending World War II the way he did.

CAPTAIN MAY: From a strictly tactical point of view,



Capt. Eric May

using a neutron warhead killed the Iraqis who were in the open, while giving U.S. forces, who were inside armor, a chance at survival. Had I been one of the commanders on the battlefield at Baghdad Airport, I would have preferred the neutron option to being overrun and destroyed by the Iraqi forces. But war is never simply tactical. As Clausewitz, the Prussian military philosopher, puts it, "War is a continuation of politics by other means." It's on the political level that the nuking of Baghdad Airport was a disastrous decision.

Unlike the nuking of Japan, which was admitted to the American people, the nuking of Baghdad was kept from them, meaning that we had decided to keep them in the dark about the conduct of the war. Further, the Arab world knows very well what we did in Baghdad, and that only added to their hatred for the United States, so the big picture of the Baghdad Airport neutron bomb is that we saved ourselves from limited military failure, but thereby caused ourselves unlimited domestic and foreign disaster.

It's one of history's great ironies that the Bush Administration was screaming that WMDs would be used on us in the Iraq war, and then when all is said and done, WMDs were used — not on us, but by us.

The Battle of Baghdad is one

of the many events of this war that simply show that our government has lied to us and that the media has been embedded by that government in the very worst connotations of that word. In fact, the word embedded should have never been admitted into the lexicon of the American media were it not for the fact that they were in bed with the government.

ICONOCLAST: Would you say that they were complicit?

CAPTAIN MAY: Utterly. Outside of the ICONOCLAST, I can't think of a newspaper in America that isn't a mere propaganda rag. Four years after the summer of 2003, the truth is starting to come out, what with revelations from the Libby trial that make it clear that Cheney, Rove, Libby, and other assorted henchmen were doing everything they could to stifle dissent and hide the truth.

During that summer I was in touch with some of the more radical people in American journalism because I really thought that there was a radical voice in American journalism. I can remember talking to David Corn of THE NATION, which was supposed to be totally independent of corporate or political manipulation, and he sat there for 30 minutes talking to me about Baghdad. I said "I must have a lot of fresh information here. What kind of notes have you taken?" He said that he hadn't written down a word. That was how pervasive the fear was.

About the time of the Libby retaliations against CIA agent Valerie Plame, whose husband had indicated that facts were altered to support going to war, I was in touch with Thom Shanker, the chief Pentagon correspondent for the NEW YORK TIMES. We corresponded a bit. He greatly admired my looking into this battle that had been hidden by the U.S. media and confirming it from military sources. But, shortly after the Wilson retaliation, Shanker backed off. He was so scared about the things that were happening in late July 2003, the period of the Bush Administration's retaliation against its war critics, that he and I talked on the phone for about 15 minutes — all in Russian. He would not talk English for fear of being monitored. Dur-

ing our conversation, he kept saying, "I'm scared. I'm scared to death. They're killing people." He was talking about the Bush people.

What the public hears about the summer of 2003 from the media is just more misinformation. Now the public believes that the summer of 2003 was somehow about hardcore politics, political hardball; they believe that a few rules were broken, irregular things happened, and so forth. They don't understand. It was a full-out political repression with people in fear for their lives, and sometimes losing their lives.

By July 2003, my editors at THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE gave me the green light to write an op-ed denouncing the Bush war plan, which had failed. It was supposed to have been a political war to get us easy success and cheap oil in three months. But it had become an apparent failure, so I was given a green light by my editor around July 4 to hit Bush and the Bush war plan as a failure. Joe Wilson was apparently given a green light by THE TIMES about the same time.

General Wesley Clark, on the 25th of June, 2003, had appeared on CNN. I quoted him widely in my op-ed. He had said that the whole Middle Eastern war was a plan the Bush people had before 911, for which 911 had just been a convenient excuse to get us in. And the idea was always to get in there and take over the oil before China reached enough military strength to be able to stop us.

So, the truth about that war came extremely close to coming out in the summer of 2003. It's as if for that brief period the establishment was actually having second thoughts about whether it wanted to commit, to go to the hilt, with this war that was turning into just what I labeled it in my CHRONICLE op-eds, a quicksand war, a war where we would only get stuck deeper and deeper.

Looking at the last four years, to round the question out where you started it, I published a piece in THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE on April 3, 2003, in which I said I believe we are stepping into quicksand in Iraq. The same day my editor at the CHRONICLE ran the piece, he told me "I'm running it today because you're the voice in the wilderness and the Army's going to reach Baghdad tomorrow and prove you're wrong." The next day, the Army reached Baghdad. We were overwhelmed at the Baghdad Airport, we went nuclear, and we nuked the Constitution to cover it up. I would say my prophecy of a quicksand war was validated within 24 hours of going to press.

Everything since then is just more icing on the cake. We get

deeper and deeper into quicksand, so that now we have this Orwellian escalation of sending 22,000, which is more like 40,000, God knows, maybe 100,000 before it's all over. There are all kinds of word games and idea games and sophistry and rhetoric used to support a war, and that's been the story of four years. It could not have been done without the full mobilization of the media as a propaganda apparatus for the United States armed forces. The military-industrial complex has become the military-industrial-media complex.

ICONOCLAST: Do you think the media is still on that same track?

CAPTAIN MAY: I think the media at present is trying to reduce Bush to some degree merely because it's going to have to start telling a little bit of truth to maintain any credibility. The last four years have been horrid for the media because they have been trying to sell shit as shinola and no one's purchasing it anymore. More and more, informed people are now turning to the internet to get their information. That process has undermined the media's prestige, which means it has undermined the media's market, which means the media's power. So the media right now has to throw us a bone of truth. Surprise, surprise, Libby was trying to destroy reputations in Washington! Surprise, surprise, the soldiers have been treated like crap! I mean, those are the things those of us on the internet have been writing about since the war started, and suddenly the media is catching up, four years later.

ICONOCLAST: What about the Walter Reed Hospital situation? Has that been a cover-up since Day One?

MAY: It goes right to the heart of the point, which is that no one has ever given a damn about the soldiers. The same thing that has been done at Walter Reed for four years was done to the wounded soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division at Ft. Stewart the summer of 2003. The boys were sleeping out in canvas tents in the Georgia summer. There was no publicity of any note given to that. When I think about Walter Reed, I think it is emblematic of the health-care given, not in just this war, but probably in every war.

Nations always like to say, "We care for our soldiers, We love our soldiers, they're our heroes." But I've run into to many veterans who have said that wars always start out with everybody saying "*semper fideles*," and they always end up with the veterans saying "simply forgot us."

Continued On Next Page

## Battle of Baghdad Cover-up

From Previous Page

So, Walter Reed is a case of simply forgetting the soldiers; of deliberately omitting to care for the soldiers; of deliberately omitting to mention that the soldiers were not being cared for. And, when I think about Walter Reed, I think of how many letters were written to how many Congressional officials by how many parents. These GIs weren't lying there, staring up at the ceiling seeing rats crawling up in the corners, and not writing home. Letters were addressed to Congressmen, both parties. How many times in the last four years have we heard these same Congressmen bragging about visiting wounded GIs at Walter Reed?

ICONOCLAST: So you're laying the blame for a situation like that on Congress and the Executive branch?

CAPTAIN MAY: Sure, and on the media. How many assignment editors, how many producers at TV and radio stations and newspapers got called, or written, or button-holed by concerned parents, or by GIs who wanted to bring out the truth about Walter Reed? This is the same thing I found with the Battle of Baghdad. Everybody knew about it, everybody who was anybody, at least. Just no one was going to say anything about it. They were too scared.

We need return to a Vietnam-era term which, I think, we've lost from the political lexicon. We have to understand that this war was decided upon by an *Establishment*. That includes the executive branch which made its plans and used 911 to pursue those plans; it includes Congress, which, after 911, gave away its Constitutional rights to decide whether there would be a war, and wrote Bush a blank check; it includes the media which, for God's sake, said it was going to be embedded, and then lived up to that phrase in every way it possibly could. The media right now coming out four years later and saying there are problems with Walter Reed. That's shutting the gate after the cow got out. Four years after the cow got out.

ICONOCLAST: You say that 2003 was the turning point in the war. Could you elaborate on that?

CAPTAIN MAY: On June 25, 2003, Wesley Clark, who was pushing for the Democratic nomination, appeared on CNN's *Crossfire*, and actually spelled out the whole war equation, which was that the Bush people and the neo-cons, going way back into the 90s, had wanted this war. This war was a geo-

**W**e need return to a Vietnam-era term which, I think, we've lost from the political lexicon. We have to understand that this war was decided upon by an *Establishment*.  
— Captain Eric H. May

political push to control oil and take care of Israeli political problems, and 911 was the excuse they needed.

After 911, they ramrodded us into a war that we were supposed to clean up neatly before China could gear up to be any kind of opposition. Basically, Wesley Clark said that the global war was a world war. It was shortly after his remarks that war critics and truth-tellers started chiming in on both sides of the Atlantic.

On July 6, Joe Wilson, in the *NEW YORK TIMES*, wrote an op-ed column that the Bush Administration's claims of Iraqi nuclear material were bogus.

At about the same time, David Kelly, one of the top WMD experts in the UK, was giving information to the BBC to the effect that Blair had "sexed up" the intelligence to go to war.

None of this is shocking now. We've since seen the Downing Street memoranda where the Bush Administration, prior to the invasion, said that it was going to "fix the intelligence" to justify the Iraq war.

Again, Wesley Clark was coming out and saying all this in late June, and Joe Wilson was saying so in early July, and David Kelly was saying so in July, to which voices I joined my own on July 8, two days after Joe Wilson's op-ed piece in the *NEW YORK TIMES*. My op-ed piece ran in the *HOUSTON CHRONICLE*, which you might say kicked Bush in the other knee. The Wilson piece kicked him up in D.C., and then in Bush's home base of Houston, there was an op-ed by Captain Eric H. May which was entitled "Still Worried About the Quicksand War in Iraq" which basically said that everything I had predicted was coming true and we found ourselves in a new Vietnam.

That wasn't the most brilliant analysis, it was simply bold analysis. It was bold to say it, because it is what a good part of the Establishment was thinking by July, but was afraid to say. So Bush was in a real dilemma. The Bush Administration had mucked up the Bush War, had failed to live up to its claim of an easy victory, and its critics were tearing it down.

It was at this point — July 2003 — that the retaliations we're now hearing about vaguely in the Scooter Libby trial occurred. The Libby trial is

like an iceberg. Five percent of reality is above the surface and everything else didn't get mentioned. It's hiding under the surface.

For two weeks beginning on the 8th of July, the White House was in full-scale damage control through retaliations against its critics. They were about to lose their war and that meant they were going to lose the presidency because the only reason for the presidency of Bush was the war. He called himself the war president and he got it right. That's what they put him in for, so he was in danger of being politically emasculated, if not, ultimately impeached for different things, among them being the cover-up of Baghdad Airport.

That's why, after we war dissenters attacked him, Bush took an abrupt trip to Africa in the second week of July. It was remarkable! Here we were, in the middle of a failing war, and he runs off to Africa!

It's impossible to understand what was happening unless you realize that there were major retaliations about to come down through hatchet-men Cheney, Rove, Libby, and Rumsfeld. Bush got out of town for the retaliations of July 2003 the same way that Al Capone got out of Chicago for the St. Valentine's Day Massacre — to avoid blame for what was to follow.

Those retaliations started on the same day my op-ed, "Still Worried About Quicksand of War In Iraq," ran in the *CHRONICLE*, JULY 8. This was the day the British government arrested and detained Dr. David Kelly. Ministry of Defense officials kept him for three days, then they released him. Here in the U.S., on July 14, Robert Novak ran the column blowing Valerie Wilson's CIA cover as a retaliation for Joe Wilson's op-ed of July 6.

The next couple of days, in the UK, Kelly was fed to the wolves, testifying before Parliament, where, basically, Parliament said, "Who's really behind this, and don't you feel like you're being set up?"

Kelly was clearly frightened, and he meekly sat there and said, "I can't say, I can't say, I can't answer."

It was after he finished talking to Parliament that he, that he told friends he might be assassinated. On the night of the

17th he was found dead, with his wrist slashed in a park where he routinely took a walk.

"Coincidentally," this was when George Bush came back from his African junket and Tony Blair, "coincidentally," met Bush for the first time since the war started for a joint statement in front of the United States media. A reporter asked Bush what he was going to do about opposition to the war, and Bush stared at the camera and said, "We're going to address the issue." Then Bush looked at Blair and Blair looked back at Bush and the two of them turned around and walked off-stage without saying another word. It was ominous.

The next morning, July 18, the British media was noting "how ironic it is that at the very moment that Tony Blair is meeting with George Bush, at exactly that moment, Dr. Kelly is found dead." But 12 hours later, after initially suggesting murder, they were saying, "suicide." Now, four-fifths of the British public, according to polls, still think that Kelly was murdered, but their media won't investigate. Kelly's death was the beginning of Bush and Blair's promise to "address the issue."

In the middle of all this, on July 16, my contacts in Houston told me my life was in danger, and there were fatal retaliations coming. I went underground at about noon on the 17th, half a day before the Kelly assassination, and I believe that it's only because of this that I'm alive today. After all, right after the Kelly assassination, Bush and Company were coming to Houston.

On Sunday, the 20th, the *LA TIMES* ran an editorial cartoon that quickly went around the nation, which was a picture of Bush with a gun to his head, like the picture from the Tet offensive in 1968, where the general was executing the Viet Cong guerrilla out in the street. The arm holding the gun in the cartoon said, "Politics." So, that weekend it looked like the war might be ending, and the Establishment might be pulling the plug on Bush.

On Monday, the 21st, Bush had left Houston for his ranch in Crawford, and he was falling apart. Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian prime minister, came out here to visit him. They al-

ways bring Berlusconi out to bolster Bush, to make him look presidential. At a press conference that day, Bush couldn't read his remarks, they were read for him. His hair was uncombed, he did not have a tie on, and his hands were shaking. The reason I noted that was because at the same time I was in hiding and my hands were shaking. It was a very crucial time.

CNN, at about the same time that Bush was falling apart in Crawford, began to break the story about Jessica Lynch, saying, "...about the Jessica Lynch story .... at the time we were misled by military officials ..." They were saying, in effect, "Oh, no fault of ours, but we were bullshitted, we were deceived."

About 30 minutes later, suddenly the storyline shifted to "Jessica's coming home, she's being released." Evidently that was a play for time. They changed the storyline, but they had come that close to telling the truth about Jessica — which meant telling the truth about the Battle of Baghdad cover-up.

The bottom was falling out of the Bush boat on July 21st, Monday, that's why he was falling apart in Crawford. That evening, Donald Rumsfeld fired his Special Forces commander back at the Pentagon, and Tuesday morning, July 22, Rumsfeld showed up at the Pentagon for a sudden conference with his new Special Forces commander, and the first question out of his mouth is, "Have you killed anybody yet?"

By the end of the day, the two Hussein boys were killed in Iraq, which held the news cycle for the rest of the week. Remember those ghoulis three days, when all we saw was Uday's and Qusay's bodies?

Councilman James Davis of New York City was assassinated in his office that same day by somebody who walked in with a gun, but "fortunately," a New York police department intelligence detective who had never been there before was filling in for his buddy, as security, and right at the moment that the assassin shot Councilman Davis, the police sergeant shot the assassin, thereby preventing questions and answers. About a week later the New York City council promoted that sergeant to lieutenant, which sure looked like a payoff.

Shortly after the assassination, Councilman Davis' brother was out in the street saying, "they killed him," "they killed him." And when asked who, those friends around him said, "Shut up. They'll kill you, too."

So on the 22nd of July, the day  
Continued On Next Page

# BATTLE OF BAGHDAD OF B COVER-UP FOUR YEARS LATER

From Previous Page

after it looked like the bottom was dropping out of the Bush boat, the Hussein boys both end up dead in Iraq and Councilman Davis winds up dead in New York. I still have a question mark on Davis' death. I don't know whom it served. But a lot of people were making noise about the war, and what caused it. That may be why they punched his ticket.

There you have it, from July 17th through the 22nd: there was a purge in the U.S. and UK. In Ghost Troop we call this the July Jumble of 2003.

By the end of the summer, you had the Gitmo-ization of Iraq. It was in September, in fact, that there was another story the media was complicit in covering up. Remember Army Captain James Yee, the Muslim chaplain out of Guantanamo Bay? He

was a West Point graduate and war veteran from Operation Desert Storm. Captain Yee was busted in Florida, carrying documents from Gitmo, and the Bush Administration hinted that they were going to try him for treason, a capital offense. In all likelihood, Captain Yee was probably coming back to the United States to spill his guts about how they were mistreating people in Guantanamo Bay.

I suspect he called up a Congressman or a news media person, who ratted him out to the Department of the Army so they could figure up a plan to go after him and shut him up.

That was at the same time the Bush Administration transferred the commander at Guantanamo Bay, Major Gen. Geoffrey Miller, to take over Abu Ghraib. A few days later, Spec. 4 Alyssa Peterson, a Mormon missionary who had gone into the military out of matters of principle, who was an interrogator, a language specialist in the detention center, wound up dead with "an accidental weapons discharge" to her skull. Here you have Chaplain Yee, who behaved according to principle, and tried to blow the whistle, and he winds up in the brig with a treason charge over

his head, and Alyssa Peterson, a girl whose personal character is very high, who apparently tried to make too much noise about detention center abuses and was assassinated.

The turning point of the summer extended from July, when the Establishment was seriously thinking about unplugging the Bush presidency and the Bush world war, to the fall, when Bush got the green light to go ahead. That's when we started torturing prisoners and breaking the Geneva Convention. The summer of 2003 was the pivotal time in the Iraq war. With the recent revelations about how the Bush gang operates, who can be shocked? Nowadays people see Bush for what he is, not a "war president," but a war-monger, and a war criminal.

**N**ations always like to say, "We care for our soldiers, We love our soldiers, they're our heroes." But I've run into to many veterans who have said that wars always start out with everybody saying "semper fideles," and they always end up with the veterans saying "simply forgot us."

— Captain Eric H. May

For Captain May's original report on the purges of the summer of 2003 search "Ghost Troop Introduction" at [www.geocities.com/onlythecaptain/](http://www.geocities.com/onlythecaptain/). This report includes the Captain's Iraq essays from *The Houston Chronicle*.

Captain May and Ghost Troop were featured in a cover story in *The Iconoclast* in 2006. The story is available at <http://www.lonestaricon.com/absolutem/anmviewer.asp?a=402&z=52>.

## THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

The list of drugs found in Anna Nicole Smith's body during her autopsy is awe-fully sad: anti-anxieties, pain relievers, muscle relaxants, sleeping pills, and anti-smoking medications. Apparently, she was wracked by pain, anxiety, tension, nervousness, and disease. Beautiful, rich and famous, Anna seems to have found no happiness, just increasing pain. The need for buzzing paparazzi, to always wear a public face, the desire for expensive gee-gaws, surrounding attendants and supplicants that comprise such a "lifestyle" cost her an awful toll to maintain.

What does her death tell us about our ideal of "celebrity?" What are the personal characteristics, acquisitions, and achievements that we "celebrate?"

Perhaps the satisfactions of being present in each moment, of being authentic in relationship with others, and of caring for and repairing our world are more celebratory.

Yours truly,  
Bruce Joffe, Piedmont, CA

Letter To The Editor:

### Foreign Alliances Destroy Our Independence

Amid guarantees that the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) would stimulate commerce, spur job creation, curtail illegal immigration, and have no impact on U.S. independence, Congress approved it in November 1993.

NAFTA has been a disaster for many Americans. But most important, rulings from NAFTA's judicial panels have superseded state and federal court decisions, thereby overriding U.S. and state constitutions, and our independence.

The Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) was launched in March 2005 by President Bush, Mexico's President Fox, and Canada's Prime Minister Martin. Despite its pleasant sounding name, its purpose is to

erase our Canadian and Mexican borders. Go to [www.thenewamerican.com](http://www.thenewamerican.com) for details.

In September 2006, high-profile representatives from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico met in Banff, Canada for a closed-door meeting of the North American Forum. Mel Hurtig, a Canadian who attended said, "were talking about the integration of Canada [and Mexico] into the United States." For them to hold this meeting in secret and to make every effort to avoid [others] learning about it, right away, you've got to be hugely concerned.

Another step toward creation of a North American Union (NAU) is the construction of a NAFTA Superhighway. A ten-lane road for cars and trucks, with more lanes for oil, gas, and railroad lines are planned. Designed to link the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, it will require confiscating millions of acres of privately owned property by eminent domain.

If the Superhighway proceeds, and NAFTA, SPP, and NAU are in place, American law will be null and void, replaced by an incomprehensible mess of so-called trade law. NAFTA is the foundation for this mess. Tell congress to repeal NAFTA now!

Sincerely,  
Alex Randis, Northridge, CA

To The Editor:

### Bleeding Democracy

State bills HB 218 & HB 626, hit the House floor Thursday March 29. These will require proof of citizenship when registering to vote. They will also increase ID requirements at the time of voting and add further restrictions to the counting of provisional ballots. Democracy does not exist without citizen participation and is only as strong as that participation. These bills promise to place a slow bleed on an already declining voter turnout in Texas. And as there has been no evidence of voter impersonation at the polls, these bills are also a cure in search of a malady.

Those most likely to be effected by the new restrictions are not voter impersonators, but rather law abiding U.S. citizens. These are the voters who will attain the required documents legally. If these citizens have any financial or time barriers to getting these documents, they will be denied their constitutional right to vote.

These bills lack any provisions for voter notification prior to an election. Undoubtedly, registered voters who have been voting at the same polling place for years, will be caught by surprise and be forced to vote provisionally. In the 2004 presidential election 36,193 provisional ballots were cast in Texas, of those 7,770 were counted. With greater restrictions on provisional ballots, even fewer will be counted.

With the voter turnout steadily declining in Texas—33% voter turnout in November, 2006—the pulse of Democracy in Texas is already weak. Let's not render it DOA at the time of our next Federal election.

Kathryn Dean, Austin

Letter To The Editor:

Karl Rove, senior advisor to George W. Bush and chief political operative, has introduced a new bait-and-switch version of his blame-game politics and is setting up the scaffold for the next presidential election.

With the Bush-Cheney-Rove triumvirate in power, this nation has suffered the most incompetent leadership and corrupt politics in our nation's history. Rove's solution, charge that the party that has been out of office, the Democrats, is responsible for all of the problems and that they are doing nothing to fix them and are only playing partisan politics.

At the same time, Rove's operatives tell us there are no problems—everything is great. This is the smoke and mirrors of right-wing politics.

On top of this, Rove has set about bending our system of law-and-order to his sinister cause. Eight US Attorneys fired and Rove has put into the Arkansas US Attorney's office one of his henchmen in preparation for smearing Hillary Clinton if she gets her party's nomination. Rove will have him singing the second chorus of "Like a bridge over troubled Whitewater."

To get a catalogue of Rove's subversion of our democratic system, consult "The Architect: Karl Rove and the Master Plan for Absolute Power," by James Moore (Emmy-Award winning news correspondent) and Wayne Slater (award-winning reporter for THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS).

Sam Osborne, West Branch, IA

# The Texas Legislature Ain't Scared Of Hell; That Seems To Be Where They're Headed

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "There's always good cover behind the women and children."

## Big Iron On His Lip

Hot damn! I can shoot the postman!

Lying Tricky Ricky Perry, the governor Texas didn't want, signed the Homestead of Death bill last week.

So, all you Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, kitchen utensil salesmen, and anybody with FFA fruit or band candy, stay out of the line of fire.

Said edict proclaims that Texans may now shoot an intruder to protect oneself or another's self.

Can't wait for them Republican campaigners!

Everybody needs protection from carpetbaggers and scallawags.

Previously, you had to try to flee before you could shoot an intruder.

Now you can stand still and take better aim.

Of course under the new law, you cannot be involved in criminal activity or provoke the attacker.

That would be the "hide the whiskey, dope, poker chips, and/or other guy's wife" provision.

There is one possible negative to this; in a close year it could affect the outcome of our bid to be the state with the most executions.

## Of Course I'm An

### Excellent Red Herring

Wealth advocate Florence Shapiro paraded the state's 17,000 autistic kids past the Senate Education Committee last week, forcing them to play Pachelbel canon and recite complex mathematical statistics as a foil for a voucher heist.

It's the classic Pity Parade, an old and cheap trick employed by old and cheap politicians.

FloShpo is hiding the issue behind the pore li'l children. (Yes, I said childERN, and I meant it.)

Texas school law requires that local districts serve the educational needs of autistic children.

There's a decided problem that too many districts either don't know how to do that, or simply won't.

Some don't have the money; others are just pitiless auto-crats. In Texas, schools don't need compassion, just good test scores.

The real problem is with the "won'ts."

## Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



Usually parents have to go to court to force them to obey the law.

It puts the parents through some grief, but eventually, the district will take care of the kid, even if they don't like it.

If FloShpo has her way, they won't have to.

The Plano socialite, whose hobbies include Japanese flower arranging, Junior League fashion shows, and screwing up Texas education beyond all reality, wants to hand out \$14,000 vouchers to the less fortunate so they can put autistic children in private schools, rather than simply make sure public schools obey the law.

There's a couple of problems that FloShpo's political SUV flattened in her rush to the Voucher Mall: to a severely autistic kid, \$14,000 is a drop in the sippy cup.

It would cover maybe two months' care for a child who, for example, needs an around-the-clock teacher's aide.

Additionally, many parents of autistic children really want residential care or other treatment that, while necessary to the child's well-being, doesn't have anything to do with his or her education.

Schools can't, and shouldn't have to pay for treatment.

It's just hard, especially out here in the Texas Bush, to find the money anywhere else.

While FloShpo doesn't know much about education, she's very well versed in giving money to rich people.

She's advocated shoveling taxpayers' money into textbook company profits for years.

What she really wants is to give a \$14,000 tax break to the wealthy parents of autistic kids who send their kids to private schools already.

That, and finance Bob's Private Autism School, Charter Bus Line and Venetian Blind Factory. (We fold like our products and the state's money.)

Nobody else will be able to afford it.

And that's what FloShpo is counting on.

She gets her vouchers; her suburban pals get the gold mine, and the poor autistic kids get the

shaft.

Show's over. Now, back to Wopner.

## V-Ouch!

Just when you get to really hating them, the Texas legislators go and do something right.

After a 129-8 shellacking, Tricky Ricky, Crash Craddick, and Lite Governor Do-hurts stuck their vouchers between their legs and slinked out of the big pink pimple with Texas education funding still more or less intact. The house killed a plan to rob urban schools of funding for 50,000 cherry-picked low-income kids' funding and give it to private schools.

Not that they would have stayed there long; traditionally preps manage to run off the poor kids before the end of the year, pocketing the state's money.

Did we mention Bob also owns a parochial school?

Parochial as in Webster 2, "having a limited or narrow outlook or scope."

## Let Them Eat Tax Breaks

Crash ruled out any consideration this week of giving Texas teachers a cost-of-living raise for the first time in six years. He manipulated aging educators onto the poor farm to protect Tricky Ricky's "Enterprise

Fund," a kind of reverse bribery that lets speculators open private businesses with public money.

Teachers will have to shoot and eat these hare-brained schemes, because no bank with any sense is going to run rabbits down such a hole.

Crash also kept the governor's mad money safe from health insurance plans for 300,000 of the state's poorest children.

So ends another episode of "Tales of the Texas Legislature."

Texas is, once again, safe from marauding kids and old people.

# THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST EDITORIAL

## It's Time To Lose Faith

For the United States to regain its stature among nations and its reputation as a haven for benevolence and freedom, one thing has to go.

Faith.

We aren't talking spiritual faith here. We're talking faith in the people elected to do our bidding, those public employees who swear allegiance to our Constitution, our law of the land, only to trash it the first chance they get.

Bush has proved himself as the anti-president.

There's no need to list the ways. Americans know.

During this past election, voters mandated a change in course, "faithfully" discharging to Democratic Party candidates the mission of cleaning house and redirecting policy.

Hasn't happened.

There's that word "faith" again.

It seems that the bloodsucking neoconservative cancer that devoured the heart and soul of the Republican Party has found a new place to roost, on a stable of wimps who have decided that "thar's money in them thar corporates!"

Where Bush and Companies have steered America toward a catastrophic train wreck, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her Demos have decided to let it happen.

"It'll teach them Republicans come next election."

Sorry, Nancy, but you were elected to do a job — to keep the train wreck from happening.

You were elected to uphold the Constitution.

Do you realize that if you let the Patriot Act stand without swift action to extinguish it, you have dismissed your duties? You are part of

the problem, not an answer?

In fact, you are probably committing an impeachable offense by, with inaction, disallowing freedom's mandates as set forth in the Constitution.

You can't clean up corruption without picking up the broom and sweeping.

This goes for all the dirt. — Iraq, Gitmo, big oil, the federal debt, piracy by the military/industrial complex, an Executive branch out of control; the list is long.

You can't merely watch it happen and spew meaningless rhetoric in the form of excuses. It is your job to stop it, and stop it now.

By taking impeachment off the table, you endorsed Bush's lies and have become the batgirl for his Bush league. You are one of "them."

If you know that crimes have been committed by the Executive branch — and you do — then to not pursue justice is an affront to decency and to your office, and makes you an anti-patriot, not to mention a criminal-in-kind.

It is clear that some members of Congress and the Senate want change, but they are putting this change on a political timetable that suits what they believe will benefit their personal advancements in office, the hell with the public and the country. "We'll give those starving dogs some food — in a few months." Patience and neglect aren't the same thing.

Right now we are seeing our employees' true colors, prior to the swiftboat ads and the games that will be played as "election season" heats up.

Which is worse? Pirates or wimps?

Maybe it is those of us who put "faith" in either.

— W. Leon Smith

# Taming The Beast!

BY MAHER OSSEIRAN  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

The Neo-conservatives' six years in power have turned the country into a ferocious beast, despised more than feared by the people of the world, except for certain client governments, while domestically, the country is no longer recognizable by the staunchest of patriots as their place of birth.

In November 2006, the country spoke and voted into power their only alternative, the democrats, and tasked them with finding a way out of Iraq and preventing wider wars.

Nancy Pelosi surrendered impeachment, the only weapon the Democrats had, before the elections, and by bowing to the wishes of AIPAC, took out any language from the appropriation bill that would force Bush to come to congress prior to any military action against Iran; again ceding the power to wage war to an irresponsible president. Pelosi tells us that such language is not good for Israel.

The Neo-cons, with AIPAC clearly on their side and keeping the democrats at bay, are not too concerned.

Democrats and Neo-cons have their focus on the prize of 2008; who is going to ride the beast. The Neo-cons have two years to make the beast even more ferocious, more wars, to scare off the Democrats, while the Democrats are hoping to tame the beast before they take the reins.

Attempts at taming are a whole series of grandstanding, such as the Alberto Gonzales issue, an issue caused by the

Democrats' unwillingness to take a stand to the Patriot Act, and the Walter Reed fiasco and the treatment of the veterans where both parties are equally to blame over the past administrations.

In certain circles, grandstanding is no longer an option; the beast needs to be slain, but once slain, the Democrats lose their ride.

Dennis Kucinich tells us that impeachment should be back on the table, but we need to proceed with caution, otherwise Bush can quickly take us through another war.

I guess Kucinich is right, a dragged-out investigative and impeachment process would allow Bush plenty of time to launch a new war; we do need to thank his enablers, the conservative Democrats, Pelosi, and AIPAC too.

The only thing that is left is the slaying of the beast, the only way to recover our democracy and dignity, and sorry democrats, your ship has sailed.

Impeachment is still the process in a democracy, but the cause for impeachment needs to be a crime that is on the books, a crime that is apolitical (outside politics), a crime that is easy for everyone to understand and accept; shoplifting would be a good example, but a crime that is much more heinous which would stop Bush in his tracks.

There is such a crime; the crime is high treason with intent.

There is ample evidence that the Bush administration was the closest of any to capturing Bin Laden on Sept. 26, 2001, but deliberately decided not to.

On Sept. 21, 2001, the Bush administration launched a sting operation, with the help of Saudi intelligence, which was originally designed to capture Bin Laden; after 9/11 the operation evolved into two parts.

The first part was to tape him confessing to his guilt.

The second part was to capture him.

The first part was successfully executed on Sept. 26, 2001. The result was the grainy videotape of Bin Laden confessing at a dinner meeting to a paraplegic visitor and providing proof of detailed prior knowledge.

The Bush administration had four days advance knowledge of the date of the meeting, 24 hours advance knowledge of the location of the meeting, and knew that Bin Laden would be in that village for at least three hours if not overnight since his family lived in that village too.

The better part of the sting was squandered in favor of taping, if Bin Laden were captured, the Bush administration could not have launched military actions against Afghanistan 10 days later.

An intelligence operative was left behind to alert the special forces of Bin Laden's return to visit with his family. It is then that the second part of the sting operation would be executed; his capture.

Bin Laden returned the evening of Nov. 2, 2001. The weather was freezing rain. Despite the inclement weather, two Special Forces helicopters were dispatched, a predator prototype (the most sophisticated at the time in the Air Force arsenal, one of two prototypes in operation), and F-14 jets circled overhead.

Due to the bad weather, the airspace shrunk and brought the aircrafts too close to each other, while the helicopter is equipped with a collision avoidance system, the Predator drone is not.

The drone collided with one of the helicopters and they both crashed.

The second helicopter rescued the crew of the first and an F-14 destroyed the crashed helicopter shortly after.

The capture mission failed.

Bin Laden is still free because of the premeditated decision to tape him instead of capturing when the Bush Administration had its best chances.

But that is not the end of it; there is another incident that qualifies as premeditated high treason.

Since Bin Laden is still free, the videotape resulting from the first part of the sting operation can only be described as a sensitive by-product of a failed intelligence operation.

Buckling under pressure from the Muslim and Arab streets for proof that Bin Laden is responsible for 9/11, the Bush administration released the only evidence it had of his guilt. The White House and the Pentagon tell us that there was ample deliberation, indicating a premeditated act, of the consequences of its release; the videotape was released on December 13, 2001.

The one major consequence they don't want anyone to know about is how Bin Laden would react when viewing the tape. Inevitably, Bin Laden was to see that tape and he would quickly realize that it was taped covertly. He would realize how close intelligence operatives were to him; basically they could have captured him.

The only time Bin Laden took exception to his own security rules in meeting visitors - he went to this visitor in accommodation to the visitor's handicap (paraplegic) while other visitors were always brought to him under a strict security protocol - he gets taped covertly confessing by intelligence operatives.

The very serious consequence of releasing the tape is that se-

curity around Bin Laden will get even tighter and no one would ever get close to him again regardless of how honest the effort is by this administration or any future one.

The most wanted man in America for a crime that resulted in 3,000 deaths is still at large as a result of deliberate and premeditated acts by the Bush administration and the second of which insured that he would never be caught.

The evidence was strong enough that many in congress were informed, including Kucinich, Judiciary committees in house and senate, the attorney generals of the states of Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York, The Manhattan DA, and the DoJ through Patrick Fitzgerald.

No one would act for fear of slaying the beast and losing the ride. While the Democrats are busy taming, more of our kids and innocent Iraqis are dying, and more of our national wealth is being squandered.

The Democrats' plan forward is best described by a word used by Senator Joe Biden "recovery." Gambling on a recovery is their answer to these heavy losses in Iraq; ante funds for the war now so they could have the opportunity to recover something later, anything.

Unfortunately, nothing that could be recovered in Iraq is worth what has already been laid out; constitutional democracy will not take hold in Iraq, and the liberal new Iraq Energy law that would allow American oil companies to siphon off Iraqi oil for pennies will remain ink on paper.

As it stands, we are, and will remain, net losers in this war on terror since we have lost the dearest thing to us as a nation, our constitution; the sole of our country. While Iraq has nothing to offer that would extinguish the sorrow of the grieving families, recovering our soul and that of our country, might give them some solace.

The Bush administration has done many horrible things and this heinous crime of high treason will undoubtedly come to light one day: the sooner it does, the better.

It is time to slay the beast, there isn't a moment to waste in getting our country back and showing a doubting world that our democracy is truly breathing and that no one is above the rule of law; not even George W. Bush.

*Maher Osseiran, born in Beirut in 1956, grew up when Lebanon was evolving then devolving into its civil war. He studied the civil war and devised a method for accurate analysis. To know more about Osseiran's techniques, visit his website <[www.mydemocracy.net](http://www.mydemocracy.net)> where he posts some of his articles. Others can be found on Counterpunch and The Lone Star Iconoclast.*



Maher Osseiran

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# Will Of The People Ain't 'Theatre,' Dubya

Perhaps he didn't hear it. The Republicans from Congress who went home to start new careers in January heard.

The Democrats and Independents who moved into new offices in Washington, D.C. heard.

The Republican National Committee heard, loud and clear.

Even Halliburton heard – it's cutting and running, moving to Dubai where there can be no accountability for all the theft from and deception of American taxpayers.

Apparently, George W. Bush chooses not to hear it.

He simply refuses to accept the reality that America does not want his war; that we are fed up with sacrificing our finest young people, our resources, our security, our finances and the future of our children for his personal murderous rampages against human beings that never did us any harm.

During the past week I traversed seven states – Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, New Jersey, New York. I made stops in small towns most folks have never heard of, medium-sized cities such as Dayton, and of course New York City, "The Big Apple" itself.

People no longer require encouragement to say what's on their minds where our Little Dictator is concerned. Most folks just seem to speak freely about their disgust with the way this Regime has befouled everything from energy to Iraq, while managing to completely ignore or trash all things domestic.

It doesn't matter who one talks with: Waitresses and shopkeepers don't hesitate to give one an earful of how difficult life has gotten these past six years. Commuters on the

buses to Manhattan from the New Jersey suburbs have had it with working longer for less reward. Even travelers from Europe are disgusted by the uncouth mannerisms and Wild West antics of the "Cowboy" in our White House.

(The good citizens of Ohio seem to be especially aggravated by their state's politics.)

To a person, beyond the personal upheavals and disappointments, the stagnations of their own lives and careers or job situations, everyone I met wanted the United States to get the hell out of Iraq. Now. Period.

That's what we said loud and clear at the ballot boxes on Nov. 7 last, and that is what we want.

So, when the Democratic-led Congress promised to serve Li'l Georgie with a written declaration indicating "we're mad as hell and we're not gonna take it anymore," or in other words, *bring our troops home, you blithering nincompoop*, his response was a threat to veto the legislators.

In true Neo-con fashion, Fearless Leader made the threat prior to the vote, on a bill that he admittedly has not read, only been briefed.

This is a schlemiel who has headlined a Fascist Regime steeped in political theatre of the most outlandish, absurd, egregious dimensions, beginning with Herr Oberst Karl Rove's Florida vote count *putsch* circa late 2000. Thus, there can be no gauge to measure Li'l Georgie's hubris when considering his reference to Congress doing the work of the People – the American voters who sent them to Capitol Hill – as "engaging in political theatre" simply because the majority wish to not bow to his tyrannical demands.

Of the West Wing Fascisti,



## Out Of The Blue

By Jerry Tenuto

there are Fearless Leader who received an MBA only after Daddy bought and paid for it; Dark Lord the Dick Cheney holding whatever degrees, who cut and ran during grad school as soon as he was too old for the draft to come calling; Herr Karl, college drop-out; Condoliar Rice, too many degrees yet not a scintilla of common sense; and a gaggle of attorneys of dubious merit led by Al 'Gonzo' Gonzales, Constitutional Enemy Number One.

This small inner circle of brigands, prevaricators, confidence artists and pickpockets believes in its own collective twisted egomaniacal consciousness that they know better than 534 duly-elected members of the Senate and House of Representatives, people from all walks of life – doctors, lawyers,

businesspersons, educators, farmers – who have often excelled in their chosen fields and have been entrusted by those back home to care for the well-being of our Nation.

Well, if nothing else the West Wing Fascisti continue in its attempt to deceive us into buying their snake oil medicine.

Why, that ultraprophet of doom over all America, Dark Lord the Dick continues to make the same tired old speech he's been vomiting up for four years now, about how (his old buddy) Saddam Hussein was in league with al Qaeda – which we've known all along to be an out-and-out lie – and if we don't stop 'em there they're gonna jump into the ocean loaded with dirty bombs and RPGs, swim here and attack us at home. Meanwhile, the chosen sheep who flock to see and hear the schmuck roundly applaud his litany of lies.

The people have spoken, yet the Fascisti who stole our Government, our White House and our very way of life continue to ignore us.

Somebody needs to get this

very simple message to George W. Bush: You cannot veto the will of the American people.

That's the bottom line.

All across America good folks have had it with this Regime. We're sick and tired of George W. Bush, and everyone around him.

America wants him and the rest of that rotten bunch gone.

From what I've been told, yesterday wouldn't have been too soon.

Depending upon your preference, may you have a Blessed Passover or Easter.

Shalom.

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

# Camp Casey Easter To Continue Despite Rain

— Awards Ceremony Set This Thursday In Austin —

AUSTIN – Activities scheduled over Easter weekend at Camp Casey Crawford have been changed due to severe weather predicted for this week.

The property of anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan is said to be underwater after heavy rain that fell on Central Texas last week.

But organizers are still committed to holding actions which include a rally at the check point to the president's vacation ranchette and a "townhall meeting" to talk about his impeachment.

"It will be a lean Camp Casey if the rains continue, but 10 to a hotel room ain't bad," noted Col Ann Wright, a lead organizer of Camp Casey Crawford. "Camp Casey is flexibility – August 2005 and 12,000 showed up in the ditches."

The organizers are directing participants to camp at Tonkawa Falls or, if necessary, at Camp Casey with a warning that campers would need to be "very self sufficient."

A dinner and awards ceremony is scheduled for this

Thursday, April 5, 6:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m., in Round Rock.

The peace award honorees include those who those who have helped organize and sustain Sheehan's campaign ever since she sought to speak with President George W. Bush outside his Prairie Chapel ranch in August 2005.

Among the honorees are musician Willie Nelson and his wife, Annie, CODEPINK organizer Jodie Evans, ret. Army Col. Ann Wright, the Crawford Peace House organizers Johnny Wolf, Hadi Jawad, and Kay Lucas, and 16-year-old website creator Ava Lowery.

The evening will feature musical entertainment by Carolyn Wonderland, Emma's Revolution, Hank Woji, and Jesse Dyen.

The locations of the awards presentation has been changed to the Spill Bar, at 212 E. 6th Street, Austin Tx. 78701, at 6:30 p.m. -10:30 p.m. The deadline for tickets ends Monday, April 2. Tickets cost \$50.00 a piece.

The camp in Crawford officially opens on Thursday, April 5, with orientations.

The following day, participants are to gather at Camp Casey at 1:30 p.m. for an action at 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. at the check point to Bush ranch.

Another dinner is scheduled on Friday night 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. at McGregor Hall in McGregor. Following will be an impeachment forum until 9 p.m.

An Impeachment Festival is scheduled on Saturday, April 7, along with a panel consisting of David Swanson of After Downing Street.org, Ann Wright, Cindy Sheehan, and Debra Sweet, National Director of World Can't Wait.

On the last day of Camp Casey, Rev. Lennox Yearwood will preside over a nondenominational sunrise Easter service at 7 a.m. - 9 a.m. Later in the day, Carolyn Wonderland will performance followed by the "Make HipHop, Not War" concert.

"In the tradition of Camp Casey, we will roll with the punches and bounce back stronger," said Wright.

For more information, visit the website for Gold Star Families for Peace ([www.gsfp.org/](http://www.gsfp.org/)).

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# Drastic Measures

Since I wrote the Fighting Baby Boomer series, some changes have occurred in my eating patterns. Despite my efforts at well-being through healthy, sensible eating and hard work (without giving up sweets and my beloved chocolate, without a regular exercise routine), the numbers on the scale kept creeping up. It wasn't anything horrific, mind you, but it wasn't a good direction. Pack on five little pounds a year for five years and look what you have. A sad fact of life: it IS definitely harder to lose weight at middle age. Maybe even active folks are a bit less active. Certainly female hormonal balances change. Maybe our metabolism changes too. Maybe, maybe. I don't know why. It just is. Take my word for it.

Despite my rationalization that dark chocolate was good for me — despite my rationalization that a calorie is a calorie (and why have 100 calories of fruit if one can have the same 100 calories of chocolate, ice cream or other tempting sweets?) — Despite everything I could think of to justify my behavior, the scale kept telling me the truth, the new reality of my life. I had been in denial for a long time.

And this is strange, because I see Zack refuse sweets daily. He's a wonderful example of will power and, as a result, stays trim. Rarely will he have an ice cream attack and indulge himself. He turns down desserts at restaurants, parties and receptions. But he can also drink beer and not gain an ounce. It just isn't fair. Of course, he also expends huge amounts of calories each day and works out with weights often. That might have a little something to do with it.

One friend was diagnosed last year with diabetes and put on a strict diet. She's lost over 20 pounds. Another friend, not a diabetic — but a middle-aged woman who was experiencing what many have come to expect as an inevitable weight gain — was put on a diabetic diet by her doctor/brother last year. ("Why wait until you have diabetes?" he reasoned. This hit home with me, as well. I had diabetic pregnancies and was put on a strict diet way back then. This somewhat common condition disappears with the birth of the baby. But it can reappear later in life if the woman gains weight. I was warned to stay trim throughout my lifetime to avoid a recurrence, and I was successful until recently).

My friend who went on the elective diabetic diet has slowly

## 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.

lost 28 pounds, now looks and feels great. She may be a bit of a fanatic about it (refusing to eat anything in public places or at private parties, never sampling even one bite of any kind of food), but she describes this as a lifestyle, not a diet. She became, in a limited way, one of my examples to follow.

I began to mentally use the experience of this friend, someone I read about in a magazine, and another couple of friends and acquaintances, to prepare myself for changing the habits of a lifetime. They weren't terrible habits. I had always eaten healthy food and lived a healthy life. But there was my penchant for sweets. It was my one big vice. I always figured, how bad could it be? — with all the other temptations to which I might have fallen victim?

The woman in the magazine said she finally realized that the piece of cake at the wedding reception was for everyone else, but not for her, ever again. She had lost weight and was determined to keep it off. And she did. The second woman was one I mentioned in an earlier column. When questioned about her weight loss, she answered, "I pretty much gave up food." That was a bit of an exaggeration, but not much. Another friend, a recently diagnosed diabetic and a very active man told me, "It's not just giving up sugar. It's also about portion control of other foods. I cut way down." I didn't think I ate a huge volume of food, but perhaps I could cut down, too.

So a month ago, I pretty much gave up chocolate and sweets. I stopped the darned oatmeal as well because it was, ah, as my mother would have euphemistically and delicately pronounced, "a little binding." My high fiber, wheat bran cereal has a bit of sugar in it, but I decided I could live with that. And the caramel rice cakes that are sometimes now "dessert" have some sugar as well.

Giving up chocolate was easier than I thought it would be, once I had finally made up my mind. I was very proud of myself and thought I'd see immediate results from this huge, life-altering sacrifice. But I didn't. Boy was I disappointed, not to mention surprised. I probably haven't done enough exer-

cise to speed the process. I need to psyche myself up for that, as I did for giving up chocolate and other sweets. I'll get there. And I must find the time and commit to a schedule and routine for exercise.

First I used the IRS prep as an excuse for not exercising in earnest (other than the usual ranch work). My annual IRS ordeal takes me weeks and is full of stress. It's one of my most hated jobs. So this truly IS an excuse not to exercise. I didn't need to start exercising and using that as an excuse not to work on my books.

Now my excuses for not exercising are preparation for my daughter's visit — and spring-cleaning. The latter will afford some amount of calorie burn-off, but not like sustained cardio. Maybe while she's here, I'll be encouraged to work out with Becca, my little gym rat daughter (without an extra ounce on her fit frame). She's a darned good trainer, a real taskmaster, but no match for her brother who really cracks the whip when it comes to exercising (with no sympathy or tact whatsoever). For these kids, it's a way of life. (Surely they didn't get this from me).

And as my daughter reminded me, if one is quite overweight, the pounds come off quickly as one starts to diet. If one has only a few pounds to shed (or a weight to maintain), the loss is much more gradual. Hopefully the weight stays off with this method. Finally, after a month, I'm starting to see a pound or two slough off. These results, however slow and small, have given me incentive and encouragement at a time when I was ready to give up, wondering why I bothered.

And it's true what is said about addiction to sweets: once the cycle is broken, one craves sweets less and less. Instead of grabbing almond M&Ms or dark chocolate, now I have a few salted nuts or a piece of fruit — if I'm hungry between meals — even a piece of meat or a mini-meal with vegetables. I've learned to snack on shredded wheat with bran. It tastes "real" and it fills you up. Plus it's good for you.

I've simply talked myself out of the need for sweets. Mind over matter. (Before you congratulate me, remember that it took five years or so to get to this point. — The phrase "slow but not stupid" comes to mind. And of course, my newfound will power may not last).

If I can just find time for the dreaded treadmill (and free weights, which I like much more), I hope to see better results in the future. — I must get back into the habit of using weights regularly, as Zack and

the kids do. When all else fails and I'm tempted to eat something I shouldn't, I remind my-

self of that age-old rhyme, "a moment on the lips; a lifetime on the hips."

## Your Investments Are Safe, Thanks To Me And Other Financial Dunderheads

Given the state of today's economy, it's hard to know who to trust when it comes to investing your money. You could trust ME of course, but that would mean giving your money to someone whose greatest return on an investment came when I accidentally got a 75-cent candy bar out of a vending machine using only two quarters.

The truth is, I know absolutely nothing about the financial marketplace. This is why I currently do not own any stocks, bonds, treasury bills, money market accounts or, for that matter, any actual money. However, it's because of this — and what the White House calls my "unique financial perspective" — that I was asked to join the Presidential Advisory Board on Corporate Fraud, where our motto is:

We will wipe out your dirty business.

It's our job to sift through literally thousands of highly complex financial reports sent in by America's corporations, and then analyze each one for signs of fraudulent activity. You may be wondering how someone like myself — with the financial IQ of a Rhesus monkey — could possibly hope to find ANY sign of shenanigans somewhere in the complicated maze of bookkeeping ledgers, profit statements, and Hooters receipts.

It's actually very easy. That's because we've been painstakingly trained on how to study a document and quickly spot signs of fraudulent activity — such as finding a yellow sticky note with the words fraudulent activity written on it.

Using this technique (based on the Evalyn Wood speed-reading method) we've been able to scrutinize the financial dealings of over 600 hundred major corporations in just under 36 hours (including lunch breaks, naps and a tour of Washington D.C.)

And I'm proud to say I believe our efforts have had a major impact on ending corporate fraud because, so far, we haven't found a single incident.

By itself, this may not be enough to restore your confidence in the financial marketplace. But remember this: The President's latest economic stimulus package will soon be



Life Is A Funny Place

By Ned Hickson

Siuslaw News

making its way through Congress on the "fast track" (a special system designed to speed up the review process by avoiding any contact with the president whatsoever.) This new plan is the result of high-level meetings with economic advisors, corporate analysts and CEOs from around the country. In fact, the President is so sure of his plan that he said, in a direct statement to Congress, that he would personally be handling his package as often as possible, and that he wouldn't stop handling it until the bill was passed.

"For obvious reasons, we hope the bill passes quickly," said a White House spokesman.

So what does all of this mean to the average American?

Investment opportunity, of course.

A big part of the stimulus plan will include more tax cuts — particularly for larger businesses. This makes perfect sense because, as we all know, the first thought any CEO has when his company gets a million-dollar tax break is: "Let's use this extra money to create more jobs!"

Known as the "trickle-down effect," this will lead directly to a sharp drop in unemployment as the demand for yachts and private jets increases.

At this point, many of you are probably asking yourselves: So, what should I invest my money in?

Being that I am now a member of an important government board that investigates corporate fraud, providing you with that type of information could get me in really big trouble.

However, I CAN tell you about an investment opportunity that will guarantee a one-quarter yield. The only catch is, you really have to like candy bars.

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

# Early Primaries: What's The Rush?

Our presidential primary system has been getting criticism lately, some of it deserved. But even with its flaws, at least the binding primary system is a lot more democratic than the old days when political bosses in dark, smoke-filled rooms decided who the candidates would be. And it's about to become even more democratic.

We're all used to seeing candidates in places like Iowa and New Hampshire pretending to enjoy the sub-zero weather as they kick off the "primary season." But now somewhere between 10 and 20 states will have their primaries on Feb. 5, 2008. And Nevada recently announced that it plans on having its primary even earlier — On Jan. 19th, wedged between the Jan. 14th Iowa caucuses and the Jan. 21st New Hampshire primary. Why are all these states rushing to have their primaries so early?

More and more, the early caucuses and primaries have become very important. Probably too important. Campaigning is so expensive and so dependent on contributions that one's showing in these early contests often determines whether a candidate continues or drops out of the campaign.

So it's possible that in the recent past, the best candidates haven't even gotten a chance to run for president just because people in Iowa and New Hampshire didn't like them. Maybe these unfortunate candidates just didn't know enough about Iowa wrestling, or that the state insect of New Hampshire is the ladybug. Sorry, you can't be President.

Because of this "undue influence" of a few states with early caucuses and primaries, this time around, more and more states want to get in on the action. So instead of voters from a few states determining which candidate has momentum and which candidate is through, voters from all over the country will help decide who their party's nominee for President will be. That's the good news.

The bad news is that it's going to happen so early. We could know who the Republican and Democratic nominees for President will be on Feb. 5th — a full nine months before the election. All of the mystery, the wonder, and the "what ifs" of the campaign could be over. In February! I don't want to know who the presidential nominees are



**Modern Times**

By Lloyd Garver

before some people in my neighborhood take down their Christmas decorations.

This rush to have the primaries earlier than necessary reminds me of the people who buy their Sunday newspaper on Saturday. I always wonder, what do they do all Sunday morning?

But more importantly, is it the best thing for the country to hurry the primary season? Won't some voters feel rushed into making a decision? And candidates are going to be traveling so fast in their private jets from state to state that their heads will be spinning. We'll hear things like, "It's great to be here in my favorite state, South...I mean, North Carolina." They'll be whisked away by their handlers in the middle of a speech: "My position on the war is quite simple. I believe we should... sorry, gotta go."

Instead of all the states rushing to have early primaries, I think all the states should have a "later primary." A National Primary would be a good idea, with all the states voting on the same day. But not in February.

Give us a chance to get to know these candidates, and give them a chance to mess up or surprise us with some great idea. My recommendation is that we have a National Primary in June. June would be perfect. Candidates and voters won't feel rushed, and it would be a nice break for me from watching the Cubs' pitching fall apart.

However we tweak the primary system, there will be problems. But again, it's certainly more democratic than having those cigar-chomping, deal-making bosses of yore deciding who should be the candidates, election after election.

And yet, that brings up a troublesome question. It's true that years ago, because of the binding primaries, we changed things so that the voters get to determine who the party nominees are instead of just the party insiders deciding. But since reforming the system, do we always come up with better candidates and better Presi-

dents than those guys in the smoke-filled rooms did for all those years? I'm just not sure.

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

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# Public Education: An Issue Of Legal Responsibility

Apparently, once again, legislators decreased the state's responsibility for public school by \$1.5 Billion. Lawmakers highlight the reason as "...because of growth of local property tax values." Never mind that property values increase every year mostly because local districts are continually forced by the state to raise property taxes to replace more of the state's share of responsibility. Property tax increases based on increasing home values are the easiest way for local governments to provide financing for public schools. *Catch-22 anyone? You betcha!*

Yet we're told in the same breath by lawmakers that "Net state spending on public schools would increase \$2.4 billion, according to the House plan." Sounds like officials are playing monetary diversion tactics by moving around our tax dollars. They take away money from one area and divert it to another, making it look as though the legislature increased its constitutional responsibility to provide our children with a quality education. *Ha! Fooled*

*ya!* I've long pontificated that if the state doesn't want to assume its constitutional responsibility to provide a quality education to every child, then legislators need to change the law. Some lawmakers appear to be looking at doing just that.

Currently the state is guilty of violating its mandated responsibility to parents and their children. Personally, I advocate a class-action lawsuit against the state by parents and educators. Seems like any effort to resolve an educational issue in this state results from the judicial and not the legislative system.

If legislators want to privatize education, that's fine only if taxpayers don't have to foot the bill for it. Otherwise, legislators simply are looking to cover their own butts for not providing the appropriate and adequate financing during the past decade.

**Case in point:** *It is the legislature that has created the current emergency plight of public education by having forced the court 10 years ago*



## Texas Commentary

By Peter Stern

*to set up an emergency financing system that ensures educational inequality among economic classes and is doomed to fail.*

Dubbed the "Robin Hood" clause, it takes tax dollars from "wealthy" districts and gives it to "poor" districts. Perhaps we should rename it the "Tinkerbelle" clause because only magical pixie dust could make such an absurd system work.

However, if privatization of public education is our next step, legislators had better put into place a well-structured regulated system of tuition and finance costs. We need only observe what has occurred under the recent deregulation of higher education tuition costs to note the critical nature of this issue.

Privatization of public edu-

cation brings along a whole set of other issues and problems. Ongoing legislative inept special interest short-term thinking is incapable of determining and implementing an entirely new educational system. In addition, operating two parallel educational systems under the state rubric, public and private, is doomed for failure. If the state cannot successfully manage one system, how is it possible for it to manage two?

However, if the real concern is to educate every child equally (*which of course it isn't*) then privatization is NOT the educational road to recovery. Privatizing education will merely ensure the inequality between the "haves" and the "have-nots" within our society.

Furthermore, the Legislature and Texas Communities also had better start thinking about what they will do with the large population of children whose parents cannot afford to pay for their children's private education. They need to bear in mind that jail systems and welfare programs cost significantly more than

does public education.

Privatizing education is another misguided special interest notion legislators have selected so they don't have to assume the constitutional responsibility they have been diverting for the past decade. Isn't it clear yet to everyone that legislators, business folks and other special interests are NOT the groups needed to develop a quality functional public school system? Certainly, they have proven beyond a doubt that they are incapable of doing so.

It's time for voters to insist that on the issue of public education, legislators should either "**poop or get-off the potty.**"

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

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