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# INSIDE

## Stealing Elections, Texas Style

By Melinda Pillsbury-Foster  
**Page 15**



### The Webster Retort

By Stephen Webster

## Fear Its Self

**Page 16**



Libertarian Candidate  
For State Senate,  
District 22,  
Phil Smart,  
Was In Jail  
For Nearly Three Weeks

**Page 7**

## How To

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
By Nathan Diebenow



# The Lone Star ICONOCLAST

**NEW BOOK:**  
**'Point to Point Navigation,**  
A Memoir from  
1964 to 2006'

# Gore Vidal: Point to Point Provocateur

Interview With The Iconoclast's  
**W. Leon Smith**  
**Page 3**

... a sometime resident of Crawford has smashed in the foundations of our republic and chaos will ensue. The post 9/11 coup d'etat is now in full control of the state through corrupted elections and the joyous dismantling of the Bill of Rights.'  
— Gore Vidal

## Acclaimed Author, Activist Visits Texas Book Festival

Pictured In Conversation  
With Maureen Dowd

Iconoclast Photo By  
Nathan Diebenow

# Texas Senate Candidate In President's District Jailed

*Will Habeas Corpus Be Tested In Central Texas?*

## Endorsements

The Lone Star Iconoclast Suggests....**Page 10**



## The Trans-Texas Corridor

**THE RUBBER CEMENT INDEX**

**Page 22**

## Active Troops Voice Dissent, Bush Changes 'Course' Tune

WASHINGTON — A group of active-duty U.S. soldiers have come out two weeks before the 2006 mid-term congressional elections to express their opposition to the American military operations in Iraq.

The 118 service members based in Norfolk, Va., are asking Congress to withdraw U.S. forces back to the United States from the Middle Eastern country.

This particular grassroots movement, sponsored by anti-war groups Iraq Veterans Against the War, Veterans for Peace, and Military Families Speak Out, has organized an online petition drive at ([www.appealforredress.org](http://www.appealforredress.org)).

Active troops are permitted to send their opinions to Congress via the website along with their names, duty status, and service branches.

The Military Whistleblower Protection Act of 1995 grants U.S. soldiers the ability to directly contact Congress about their problems, protecting them from the legal harm.

Military regulations state that troops are not permitted, however, to disrespect their chain of command nor the president. Nor are American troops allowed to speak their minds on duty and in uniform by law.

This action marks the first time active members of the U.S. military have so publically aimed to contact Congress about the war in Iraq.

The petitions are to be handed over to Congress by the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday in January.

One of the petitioning soldiers, 22-year-old Marine Corps sergeant Liam Madden, told reporters last week that he was against the war with Iraq prior to his deployment in late 2004. His service there only strengthened this belief, he said.

"The more informed I got, the more I opposed the war," said the native of Quantico, Va. "The more people who died there, the longer we stayed there, the

more I opposed the war. The more I know, the easier it is to support withdrawal."

Legal representation for these troops has been provided by J.E. McNeil, the executive director of the Center on Conscience and War, in Washington.

Two days prior to this group's dissent, the White House told reporters that President George W. Bush had stopped using the phrase "Stay the course" with regard to the administration's policy on Iraq.

"He stopped using it," said Tony Snow, the White House press secretary. "It left the wrong impression about what was going on and it allowed critics to say, 'Well, here's an administration that's just embarked upon a policy and not looking at what the situation is,' when, in fact, it is the opposite."

This announcement has come during a split among the Republicans in federal office. While some GOP lawmakers have tried to paint Democrats as "cut and runners" over the occupation of Iraq, others have criticized the administration's leadership and strategy.

The weekend prior, the president discussed Iraq tactics with top military commanders in charge of the U.S. led multinational forces in Iraq. On Tuesday, top U.S. officials in Baghdad said the Iraqi government would be given most of the security responsibilities over the next year or year and a half.

The U.S. death toll there so far this month has reached the highest point in any month for the last two years. At deadline that toll was at least 83 servicemen.

## Israel Confirms Using Phosphorous Bombs In Lebanon

TEL AVIV, Israel — An Israeli official confirmed last week that its army had employed phosphorous bombs against Hizbollah over the summer in Lebanon.

This controversial ordinance leaves severe and sometimes fatal chemical wounds on its victims.

Lebanese doctors reported during its 34-day war campaign that civilians were harmed by the ordinance.

Cabinet Minister Jacob Edery thereby confirmed these reports for the first time last week in front of the Israeli parliament.

Edery continued, saying that the bombs were allowed under international law since they were used to mark "military targets" in open ground.

The use of white phosphorous against civilians and military forces in civilian areas was banned through the Geneva Convention, but human rights groups call for these bombs to be banned altogether.

As Israel admittance made news, a cluster bomb killed Rami Ali Hussein Shibly, 12, in his southern Lebanese village while he was picking olives.

The recorded death toll related to the conflict rose to 21. Another 100 people are known to be injured from cluster bombs, said the United Nations.

The U.N. and human rights organizations have blamed Israel for launching about four million of these cluster bombs on Lebanon for two months ending by mid-August.

## U.S. District Court Powerless Over 'Habeas' Petitions: Bush

WASHINGTON — The White House told a U.S. District Court the week prior that it is now powerless to hear habeas corpus petitions from Guantanamo Bay prison.

The formal notice stated that the Military Commissions Act (MCA) removes the court's authority to consider such cases or others tied to the well-being of anyone listed as an enemy combatant.

The law, which was approved by Congress last month and signed in law by President Bush earlier this month, also applies to permanent U.S. residents.

Under new law, the president has the power to determine whether a person is an "enemy combatant" and try them before military commissions without judicial review.

Lawyers representing the 196 pending

habeas cases have already issued a challenge, which will probably make it the third such case to be heard by the Supreme Court.

The two previous cases before the nation's highest court resolved issues over detainee rights for prisoners kept in U.S. custody indefinitely because they were suspected of committing terrorist acts or having information about those who would commit more of them.

The Constitution has historically been read to mean that citizens and non-citizens alike in U.S. custody have the right to know why they would be held prisoner by the government.

For this reason, legal scholars have said that this new law is unconstitutional.

This principal known as "habeas corpus" has been a standard in English and American law for 800 years.

## Google Goes Solar — Big Time

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. — Internet giant Google is setting its sights on harnessing a higher power to fuel its corporate headquarters.

Using 9,212 solar panels from

Sharp Electronics, EI Solutions will construct the largest corporate solar power installation in the U.S. at Google's Mountain View, Calif., campus.

The station will power several

of Google's Mountain View office facilities.

The total amount of energy generated on the Google campus — a capacity of 1.6 megawatts — could power 1,000

average California homes.

To view the project, visit EI Solutions' website.

INFO  
EI Solutions  
[www.eisvp.com](http://www.eisvp.com)



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# Gore Vidal:

## Point to Point Provocateur

**NEW BOOK:**  
**'Point to Point Navigation,**  
**A Memoir from**  
**1964 to 2006'**

By **W. LEON SMITH**  
ICONOCLAST EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

AUSTIN — Gore Vidal — the inimitable raconteur, essayist, novelist, playwright, historian, critic, and screenwriter — was in public conversation with Maureen Dowd at the Paramount Theatre on Sunday, Oct. 29, as part of the Texas Book Festival, where his new book, "Point to Point Navigation, A Memoir from 1964 to 2006," that is due in bookstores Nov. 7 was highlighted. Published by Doubleday, the memoir is a sequel to his acclaimed, bestselling "Palimpsest."

Noted in several venues, from literature to politics to entertainment, Vidal is considered an American icon.

In "Point to Point," Vidal ranges freely over his life experiences with the signature wit and literary elegance that is uniquely his.

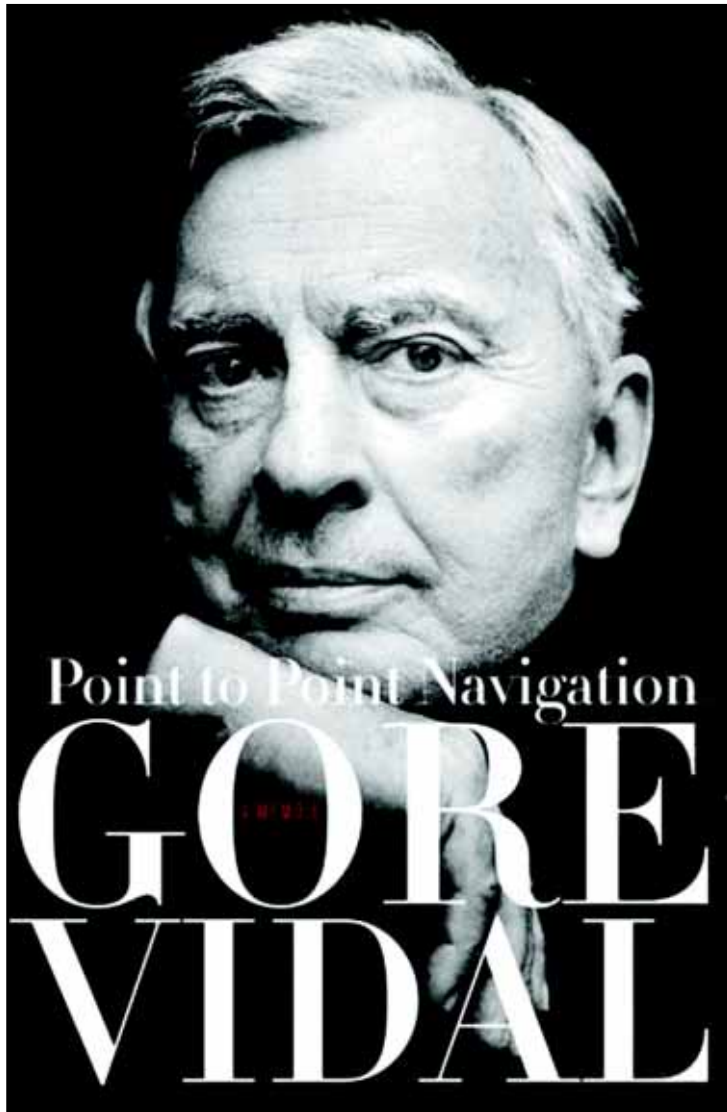
The title refers to a form of navigation he resorted to as a first mate in the Navy during World War II.

He says, "As I was writing this account of my life and times since "Palimpsest," I felt as if I were again dealing with those capes and rocks in the Bering Sea that we had to navigate so often with a compass made inoperable by weather."

From his desks in Ravello and the Hollywood Hills, Vidal, in "Point to Point," travels in memory through the arenas of literature, television, film, theater, politics, and international society where he has cut a broad swath. Among the gathering of notables to be found in these pages are Jack and Jackie Kennedy, Greta Garbo, Paul Newman, Johnny Carson, Amelia Earhart, Eleanor Roosevelt, Tennessee Williams, Orson Welles, Federico Fellini, Rudolph Nureyev, Princess Margaret, Elia Kazan, Francis Ford Coppola, Grace Kelly, Paul Bowles...and the list goes on.

According to Doubleday, some of the book's most moving pages are devoted to the illness and death of his partner of five decades, Howard Auster, and the book is, among other things, a meditation on mortality written in the spirit of Montaigne.

"Point to Point Navigation" is



a summing-up of Gore Vidal's time on the planet that manages to be at once supremely entertaining, endlessly provocative and thoroughly moving, notes his publisher. It is an important addition, and in some sense a capstone, to the canon of his works.

Always in the political limelight, Vidal's latest crusades involve bringing the Bush Administration to justice. He suggests that Americans "are now governed by a junta of Oil-Pentagon men...both Bushes, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and so on" based on that group's endeavors to control the oil of Central Asia.

He says that, regarding the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, of which American intelli-

gence warned was coming, for the neoconservatives, this politically justified the plans that the Administration already had in August 2001 for invading Afghanistan the following October. Vidal is critical of the intercept failures by Norad, which, he says, would deserve "a number of courts martial with an impeachment or two thrown in."

Last week, on the Alex Jones Show, Vidal said that he was certain that the Bush Administration had "let it happen on purpose," noting that the head of the Pakistani ISI bankrolling the hijackers had also met with U.S. government officials during the week before and on the morning of 9/11. Of this, he said, "What made no sense is that

Continued On Next Page

### Works By Gore Vidal

#### Essays, Non-Fiction

- Rocking the Boat (1963)
- Reflections Upon a Sinking Ship (1969)
- Sex, Death and Money (1969)
- Homage to Daniel Shays (1973)
- Matters of Fact and of Fiction (1977)
- The Second American Revolution (1982)
- Armageddon? (1987)
- At Home (1988)
- A View From The Diner's Club (1991)
- Screening History (1992)
- Decline and Fall of the American Empire (1992)
- United States: essays 1952-1992 (1993)
- Palimpsest: a memoir (1995)
- Virgin Islands (1997)
- The American Presidency (1998)
- Sexually Speaking: Collected Sex Writings (1999)
- The Last Empire: essays 1992-2000 (2001)
- Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace or How We Came To Be So Hated, Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002, (2002)
- Dreaming War: Blood for Oil and the Cheney-Bush Junta, Thunder's Mouth Press, (2002)
- Inventing a Nation: Washington, Adams, Jefferson (2003)
- Imperial America: Reflections on the United States of Amnesia (2004)
- Point to Point Navigation : A Memoir (2006)

#### Plays

- Visit to a Small Planet (1957)
- The Best Man (1960)
- On the March to the Sea (1960-1961, 2004)
- Romulus (adapted from Friedrich Duerrenmatt's play) (1962)
- Weekend (1968)
- Drawing Room Comedy (1970)
- An evening with Richard Nixon (1970)
- On the March to the Sea (2005)

#### Novels

- Williwaw (1946)
- In a Yellow Wood (1947)
- The City and the Pillar (1948)
- The Season of Comfort (1949)
- A Search for the King (1950)
- Dark Green, Bright Red (1950)
- The Judgment of Paris (1953)
- Messiah (1955)
- A Thirsty Evil (1956)
- Julian (1964)
- Washington, D.C. (1967)
- Myra Breckinridge (1968)
- Two Sisters (1970)
- Burr (1973)
- Myron (1975)
- 1876 (1976)
- Kalki (1978)
- Creation (1981)
- Duluth (1983)
- Lincoln (1984)
- Empire (1987)
- Hollywood (1989)
- Live from Golgotha: the Gospel according to Gore Vidal (1992)
- The Smithsonian Institution (1998)
- The Golden Age (2000)
- Clouds and Eclipses : The Collected Short Stories (2006)

#### Under Pseudonyms

- A Star's Progress (aka Cry Shame!) (1950) as Katherine Everard
- Thieves Fall Out (1953) as Cameron Kay
- Death Before Bedtime (1953) as Edgar Box
- Death in the Fifth Position (1954) as Edgar Box
- Death Likes It Hot (1954) as Edgar Box

#### Appearances, Interviews

- The U.S. Versus John Lennon (2006 film)
- Why We Fight
- Gattaca (1997 film)
- Bob Roberts (1992 film)
- Gore Vidal: The Man Who Said No (1982 documentary)
- Family Guy - "Mother Tucker" (2006 Animated TV episode)
- Da Ali G Show (2004 episode)
- Inside Deep Throat (2005 film)



# Interview With Gore Vidal

## From Previous Page

CNN wouldn't follow up on why the fighter planes had not been scrambled and gone up to stop the hijacking - that's the law of the land. You don't need the President to order you. You don't need a general - those are your instructions. I know. My father wrote them."

Eugene Luther Vidal was born in West Point, N.Y., the son of Eugene Luther Vidal and Nina Gore, at the U.S. Military Academy where his father was an aeronautics instructor. Vidal later adopted as his name the surname of his maternal grandfather, Thomas P. Gore, the Democratic senator from Oklahoma.

Raised in Washington, D.C., young Gore Vidal read aloud to his blind grandfather and was his guide, which gained him access to the corridors of power and shaped his political principles. During the 20th Century, Vidal wrote 22 novels, five plays, many screenplays, more than 200 essays, and the critically lauded memoir, "Palimpsest." Vidal's "United States" (*Essays 1952-92*) won the 1993 National Book Award. Vidal lives in Beverly Hills, Calif.

He perhaps best known for his historical novels, cutting-edge screenplays, and political activ-

ism, which included his candidacy for Congress in 1960, the same year John F. Kennedy won the presidency. That year, Vidal ran as a Democratic candidate in the solidly Republican district along the Hudson River in upstate New York, losing the election but receiving the most votes of any Democrat in 50 years in that district. Twenty-two years later, he ran for the U.S. Senate, finishing second to incumbent Gov. Jerry Brown in California's 1982 Democratic primary election.

In some circles, he is best known for his "debates" with William F. Buckley, Jr. in 1968, when ABC News hired the two as political analysts for the Republican and Democratic presidential conventions. The on-air battles of the two witty, sarcastic men of letters who resided on opposite poles of the political spectrum are legend, and eventually erupted in an exchange in which Vidal called Buckley a "pro-crypto Nazi" and Buckley lividly countered "Now listen, you queer. Stop calling me a crypto-Nazi, or I'll sock you in the goddamn face and you'll stay plastered."

Lately, Vidal is serving as a member of the advisory board of the World Can't Wait organization, which demands the impeachment of George W. Bush,



Gore Vidal (right) and John F. Kennedy (left) during the 1960 campaign.

and the charging of his administration with crimes against humanity

Vidal recently celebrated his 81st birthday and consented to an interview with W. Leon Smith, publisher of THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST:

VIDAL: I'm the only author that you've spoken to in America, I am sure, who has read all of BRANN THE ICONOCLAST. I was brought up on it.

ICONOCLAST: We named our publication after his publication. We don't necessarily agree with him politically on some things, but it was a very interesting era back then.

VIDAL: These were the types of authors I grew up reading because Senator Gore, my grandfather, was a great iconoclast. Although he was a senator from the Bible Belt, the Bible Belt never figured out that he was not with them.

ICONOCLAST: I have enjoyed reading your books and the movies based on your plays. I have seen the movie version of your play *The Best Man* many many times. To me it is a classic, one of the great political dramas with Henry Fonda and Cliff Robertson.

VIDAL: That's funny. I just watched it for the first time in some time.

ICONOCLAST: I think it's really interesting with the backroom negotiations that go on. I'm sure things have changed somewhat since then.

VIDAL: It's all who's collected the most money now — and buys the most ads on television.

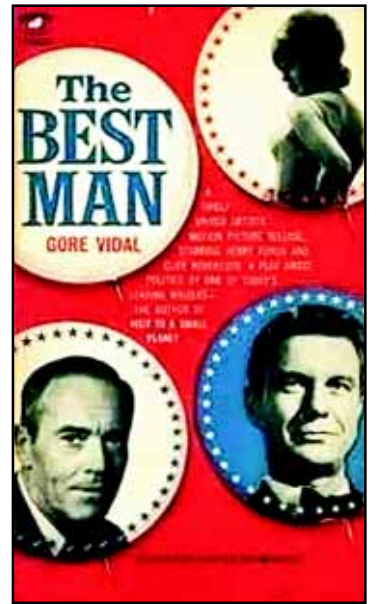
ICONOCLAST: When you wrote the play about 45 years ago, did you envision that we

were headed for the politics of today?

VIDAL: Yes. ICONOCLAST: When it comes to this administration attempting to destroy the Constitution, I take it personally, as do most of our readers. In writing your many historical novels, you have likely spent considerable time in the minds of many of our founders, and with that process likely have a feel as to how they would look upon America today. What do you think their take on it would be?

VIDAL: Benjamin Franklin, as usual, was the most prescient. In 1787 when asked to comment on the Constitution he said he did not like it but favored an immediate ratification because the republic was in need of good governance which this flawed work would provide us until it, too, failed as had so many other attempts due to "the corruption of the people." Old Ben knew his countrymen and never feared a hard truth. Jefferson thought the Constitution should be reviewed and revised every 30 years or so. Madison, his practical friend, said how on earth can we accustom the people to the rule of law if they know that everything can be changed next year? But these are details; in great matters, such as *habeas corpus*, they took Magna Carta as foundation stones for our systems of law and of the republic that rests upon them. As I write, a sometime resident of Crawford has smashed in the foundations of our republic and chaos will ensue. The post 9/11 coup d'etat is now in full control of the state through corrupted elections and the joyous dismantling of the Bill of Rights.

ICONOCLAST: The World Can't Wait has impeachment written all over it. If the Nov. 7 elections take place and if a true net vote can survive electronic voting machine theft, and if today's polls hold steady among



our generally apathetic and fickle populace, do you think Congress will move swiftly to engage investigations into 9/11 and all the atrocities that followed?

VIDAL: I have several times noted the direction in which way the country might go. If the state will allow Democrats to organize the House of Representatives then acts of impeachment of the little president will be in order ditto for several other members of the junta that has wrecked our military and the U.S. dollar for which it stands.

ICONOCLAST: Do you think the U.S. is on the verge of becoming a third-world country?

VIDAL: With luck we will take our modest place between Argentina and Brazil, our only compensation a great soccer team.

ICONOCLAST: From the presidency of Dwight Eisenhower forward, is there an administration that could be described as the tipping point that put us into the position we are today?

VIDAL: No; the end of the republic dates from Harry S—for nothing—Truman. FDR had come to terms with Stalin; then died. As of 1940 the Depression had returned, causing FDR, eager for war, to put \$8 billion into rearming the U.S. At a Keynesian stroke, unemployment ended. Happy Days (and war) were here again. At Potsdam the green new president Truman met Stalin, to talk him into helping us defeat Japan. But a sudden message from the War Department told him the atomic bomb was ready for use. Aware that with the end of the war effort the Depression was apt to return, Truman de-

Continued On Next Page

**TERRORSTORM**  
EXPOSING GOVERNMENT SPONSORED TERRORISM  
**9/11 WASN'T THE FIRST TIME**

Join us for a free showing of the new 2006 film "Terrorstorm" by radio host, filmmaker and activist Alex Jones. A Question & Answer session with Alex will follow the film.

This film lays bare the crime of State-Sponsored False-Flag Terrorism and shows how governments throughout history have used this tactic to go to war. Modern western governments continue to manufacture fake terrorist events in order to garner public support for pre-emptive wars of aggression and imperialism. Was 9/11 just this sort of manufactured terrorist event? Have we been duped? WAKE UP AMERICA!

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AUSTIN CITIZENS FOR 9/11 TRUTH

**GORE VIDAL**  
THE SERIOUS ALTERNATIVE  
UNITED STATES SENATE



# Interview With Gore Vidal

## From Previous Page

cided to replace Hitler and Nazi-ism with Stalin and Communism. Told by Senator Vandenberg that if he wanted to spend a fortune on a second war paid for by Congress, "You're going to have to scare the hell out of the American people," which he did with cries of "the Russians are coming!" which they were not. They had lost twenty million people in the war. But thus began the series of fantastic lies that the military industrial complex and its control of media still deafen us with. Where Truman was stupid in good faith, the current junta is stupid in the worst possible way, hoovering up our tax money while plotting to sell off Social Security.

ICONOCLAST: Do you think the administration is using Buckley Jr.'s playbook from 1968, where he advocated a preemptive strike against Red China? It is almost like déjà vu, with stark similarities between Iraq and Vietnam, the same arguments being retold today,

Buckley's father into Texas oil, and a raging debate between "law and order" and "law and justice," and the disenfranchisement of blacks.

VIDAL: I think the junta is basically too chicken, thank heaven, to follow Buckley's lunatic politics but...

ICONOCLAST: You have long been a strong advocate of free speech. In one of the provocative debates you had with Buckley, you said, "We have the

ing yet.

ICONOCLAST: One of the editors of THE ICONOCLAST, Don Fisher, wanted me to ask you why you just didn't punch out Buckley when he began making personal attacks on you in order to avoid the issues being discussed. Or was his falling into your trap enough?

VIDAL: Tell your editor that, re: Buckley, I have never struck a lady.

ICONOCLAST: There is a

**If the state will allow Democrats to organize the House of Representatives then acts of impeachment of the little president will be in order ditto for several other members of the junta that has wrecked our military and the U.S. dollar for which it stands.'**

— Gore Vidal

right according to the Constitution of freedom of peaceful assembly," and "It is no violation of the law to freely demonstrate," referring to attacks by police at the DNC in Chicago in 1968. How at risk is freedom of speech today?

VIDAL: Censorship is fairly rigid now but we've seen nothing

new documentary out this year. The US vs. John Lennon, in which you appear. Do you have any additional thoughts about Lennon that aren't in the film?

VIDAL: I thought my summing up said all that I meant: Vis a vis the Feds' desperate attempts to arrest and deport

Lennon were in character: J. Edgar Hoover and Nixon, like our present junta, represent death while Lennon stood for life.

.....

Here are some highlights from "Point to Point Navigation":

**Amelia Earhart:** "My father's widow, Kit, told me that she had come across a letter Amelia had written Gene after she had had an accident in California. While her Lockheed Electra plane was being repaired, she'd written an anguished letter all about some sort of emotional problem that she was having. I asked if a name had been mentioned. 'Oh, it was so long ago, I forget.' I asked Kit if the problem was with a man or a woman. My conventional stepmother frowned at this impropriety. 'A man, of course.' 'So what did you do with the letter?' 'I tore it up, naturally. After all, it was no one's business but hers.' So there was the final mystery that might have explained what happened. Gene had often speculated that she had deliberately

crashed the plane. 'She was going through a bad time with G.P...'"

**Johnny Carson:** "John was the only political satirist regularly allowed for thirty years on that television time which is known to be prime and so he was able to influence the way the people at large thought about many things that were often unexamined in the media until he put his satiric spin to them... He once told me that he could predict the winner of any approaching presidential election by the reactions to certain jokes he'd tell to the live audiences at his Burbank studio. He'd make amiable fun—at least it *seemed* amiable—of the entire field but all the time that sharp ear was listening carefully to the laughter and, even more attentively, to the silences. He read this microcosm of the American people like a barometer."

**Jack and Jackie Kennedy:** "With the help of Mrs. Roosevelt I had come up with an alternative to military conscription: voluntary service at  
**Continued On Next Page**

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# Interview With Gore Vidal

## From Previous Page

home or abroad in such places where help was needed. I got such a good response from the district that I passed the proposition on to Jack who adopted it. Once president, it became the Peace Corps headed by his brother-in-law Sargent Shriver."

"...Howard and I took the lift down to the [Ritz Carleton's] lobby. It was a small lift lined with mirrors. Halfway down it stopped to admit another passenger, a woman in a white trench coat. Our eyes met in mute shock: it was Jackie Kennedy Onassis. Relations between us had broken off after my row with Bobby in 1961 and time certainly had not improved my mood... to Howard's horror, I turned my back on her to discover in the mirror a smudge of ink on my brow. As I used a handkerchief to remove the ink the lift door opened and she sighed in her best Marilyn Monroe voice, 'Bye-bye' and vanished..."

**Grace Kelly:** "[Princess] Grace and I chatted about distant romantic Hollywood, not that she pined for her days of glory. I did ask her once, why, at the peak of her career, she had quit to become, in effect, the doyenne of an amusement park. Her answer was to the point. 'You know about the studio's makeup call?... Well, my makeup call was still pretty late because I was still very young. But I have a tendency to put on weight. When I do, my call is earlier. On my last picture, it was...' she frowned at the thought of the dawn's early light which one day she would have to face as had Loretta Young and Joan Crawford and a host of stars of yesteryear some of whom were obliged to report to makeup before sunrise. 'It was the sudden change in my makeup call that decided me it was time to go before I absolutely had to.'"

**Great Garbo:** "Not only did she like to talk about the old days but she wanted to know what MGM was like so many years later. She also had a number of ribald stories that she enjoyed telling and retelling."

**Federico Fellini:** "Farther down the corridor from my office, Federico Fellini was preparing what would become *La Dolce Vita*. He was fascinated by our huge Hollywood production [of *Ben Hur*]. Several times we had lunch together in the commissary. Soon he was calling me Gorino and I was calling him Fred."

**Tennessee Williams:** "The

Glorious Bird—the name that I called Tennessee—had caught on with many of his friends and, finally, with him, too."

**Francis Ford Coppola:** "I found Francis to be encyclopedic on anything that had to do with filmmaking. He was truly post-Gutenberg. Film was where *it*—all of it—was at... Recently, Francis told me

that I had turned him onto wine which, in turn, led to his becoming one of the leading winemakers in the United States."

**Paul Newman:** "Women sometimes behaved oddly when they saw [Paul]. Once when we were walking down Madison Avenue, a large young woman came toward us from the oppo-

site direction: quickly, he tucked his chin into his collar to hide those artful blue eyes. He also increased his pace. 'Keep moving,' he whispered as we passed her. Then there was a crash behind us. 'Don't look around,' he said, looking around; then he broke into a run. 'What happened?' I asked. 'She's fainted,' he said and leapt into a taxicab."

**Princess Margaret:** PM spoke of the royal family with expectable reverence not un-mixed with humor and the occasional surrealist note: 'The Queen is uncommonly talented in ways that you might not suspect,' she proclaimed. Suspecting nothing, I asked, 'In what way?' Well, she can put on a *very* heavy tiara while hurrying down a flight of stairs *with no mirror*."

## Houston Janitors' Strike Finds Allies In Congress

HOUSTON — The first week of a work-stoppage strike in downtown Houston saw high-powered officials come to the defense of hundreds of janitors hoping that their employers bargain with them.

U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, U.S. Rep. Gene Green, and U.S. Rep. Al Green last Thursday appealed to Chevron and other area building owners to give in to the unionized janitors' demands for better healthcare coverage.

The 5,300 janitors walked of their jobs to protest the city's five largest cleaning companies for treating them badly and for the failure to bargain in good faith.

After months of negotiations, the Houston cleaning companies — ABM Janitorial Services, GCA Services, OneSource, Sanitors Services of Texas, and Pritchard Industries Southwest — refused to submit to increase the pay and improvements benefits for janitors currently making only \$20 a day.

The janitors formed a union "Local 5" with the 1.8 million Service Employees International Union last year, and began seeking a raise to \$8.50 per hour, more hours on the job, and health insurance.

The five cleaning companies have refused to comment on the strike all throughout the week. They and Hines Interests — Houston's largest commercial

landlord — are facing investigations by the federal labor board over more than 20 charges they illegally fired and intimidated janitors who have been involved in supporting their union.

SEIU President Andrew L. Stern also joined the strikers on the picket line last week along with State Representatives Garnet Coleman, Ana E. Hernandez, Dora Olivo, County Commissioner Sylvia Garcia, and Houston City Council Member Adrian Garcia.

Stern told reporters that the Houston strike is important to workers' treatment nationwide because the pay for janitors in the nation's fourth-largest city

is so different than with other cities that janitors in the northern states suffer.

In fact, union janitors from other cities have sent about \$1 million in financial aid to the Houston group. Plans were already under way for other union janitors to expand the strike to

other parts of the country this coming week.

In the last 10 years, the membership of the SEIU has grown by 800,000. Janitors and their allies have formed picket lines in Miami this past year, in Boston in 2002, and Los Angeles and Chicago in 2000.

## Crawford's Brian Arnold Named To TSTC Honor Roll

WACO — Crawford resident Brian Arnold has earned a place on the Dean's Honor Roll for the summer semester at Texas State Technical College Waco.

Arnold, a student in Computer Networking and Systems Administration, is among those recognized with a scholastic achievement of a 3.5 to 3.9 grade point average.

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# Texas Senate Candidate In President's District Jailed

## *Will Habeas Corpus Be Tested In Central Texas?*

By W. LEON SMITH  
ICONOCLAST EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

WAXAHACHIE — While most candidates for public office are knocking on doors, attending “meet the candidates” events, debating, and speaking to constituents, the Libertarian candidate for State Senate, District 22 — which includes Bosque County — has for nearly three weeks been virtually incommunicado in a jail in Ellis County, the northern segment of the 10-county district that includes Bosque, Coryell, Ellis, Falls, Hill, Hood, Johnson, McLennan, Navarro, and Somervell.

Late Monday, following inquiries by the press and pressure from his daughter, mother, and girl friend, Phil Smart was released.

Smart, 49, of Palmer, a Certified Public Accountant, was arrested on Oct. 10 on charges of assault — causing bodily injury, a probation violation, and running a stop sign, an official at the Wayne McCollum Detention Center in Waxahachie told THE ICONOCLAST on Saturday. At that time, Smart had not been arraigned and bond had not been set, nor had his attorney visited with him during the extended incarceration.

On Saturday, detention center personnel denied THE ICONOCLAST access to Smart to discuss with him his stance on pertinent issues regarding his campaign, but his girl friend, Donna Watson, was able to visit with him that evening and asked Smart a few questions on behalf of the newspaper.

Watson said that she had been concerned for Smart's well-being, since he takes prescription drugs for health conditions, such as high blood pressure, and had been denied them for several days during his incarceration.

Michelle Shinghal, a journalist for HAMMER OF TRUTH, who on Sunday contacted the detention center housing Smart, was told by officials there that Smart was arrested on Oct. 10, but the

charge of running the stop sign was listed as occurring on Oct. 19, while Smart was in jail. After having her inquiry transferred



Phil Smart

to the booking department, Shinghal said that officials could not confirm the dates for the assault charge or the stop sign violation, but said that the assault charge was actually a probation violation and a misdemeanor charge, but that Smart could not be released until seen by a judge. Shinghal said she was told that it could take a month or more for Smart to see a judge.

But things changed Monday, when his daughter picked him up at the detention center.

In an interview with THE ICONOCLAST, Smart said that there was actually only one charge, running a stop sign, which he says he did not do. He claims the stop is just another in a series of strange events that happen when he runs for political office, which he did in 2004, for county commissioner of Precinct 1 and was likewise arrested during the waning weeks of the campaign and was let out after the election was over.

On Monday night, Smart told THE ICONOCLAST that on the day of his arrest he knew he was being followed by a traffic cop and was driving carefully.

“It’s not all that unusual to

have a cop behind you, but, like most people, I exercised extra caution. When I came to the stop sign, he was right behind me. I turned on my right turn signal and let a car pass that I needed to let pass, then waited for a second car to pass. It did.

“I made the turn and then after he (the cop) turned, he stopped me.”

Smart continued, “He claimed that I failed to stop at the stop sign, which is absolutely false.

“I’ve got a cop riding my butt and I’m not going to stop at the stop sign?”

“When he pulled me over, he said, ‘Can I search your vehicle?’

“I said, ‘No.’

“He said, ‘Why can’t I search it?’

“And I said, ‘I don’t have to let you search it.’

“Then he said, ‘You’re under arrest’ then he searched my car. He found some prescription sleeping pills in my car.

“I said, ‘You can’t arrest someone for not stopping at a stop sign,’ and he said, oh yes, he can. He told me they can arrest you for any kind of traffic stop except for speeding. It didn’t make any sense to me.”

Smart said, regarding the probation charge, that he was already in jail when the judge signed the order.

“It was some kind of thing they created.”

Smart said that as far as he knows, the alleged traffic violation is the only charge pending.

“The only thing they would tell me when I checked out of that jail, or book in or book out, whatever you want to call it, they told me ‘You have a traffic ticket out of Red Oak for \$80, a fine, and if you don’t pay that, you could end up right back here.’

Smart says he intends to pay the ticket although he feels he is completely innocent of the offense, “or they will have something, that ticket. If I were to get stopped, they could say they’ve got a warrant out of Red Oak for \$80, and that means, well, you could spend the rest of your life in jail for \$80.”

While in the detention center,

Smart says he was in a cell by himself, with lights left on, no clocks, no windows.

“The only way you could tell the time of day was to count food trays for a period and try to find out what was on them, so you could tell if this was lunch and this was dinner. With the lights always on, I think I stayed awake at least three days or four days when I got there, till I couldn’t do it any longer,” he explained.

“I wasn’t physically abused, other than to say that I was in solitary confinement. You can’t look outside, you don’t know what day it is. Eventually, anyone is going to lose their mind in that environment. I said, when I get out, I’m not going to forget about the people in here. I wasn’t the only prisoner down there. There are people who have been there so long and they don’t even know what they’ve been charged with. They say, ‘I’m charged. I don’t know why. I’ll get out when they tell me.’

“It’s all a matter of keeping the jail full. In other words, if they didn’t have anyone coming in, they wouldn’t let anybody out. If they had people coming in, they could say, well, you can get rid of two of yours and you can get rid of one or two of yours, whatever. People say they get \$300 a piece for every inmate from the state. For every day they have you they get \$300, so that’s a money thing there.”

Regarding his campaign, Smart said, “I didn’t know if I would be out of jail before Nov. 7. What I was doing before was going out and talking to strangers and asking them, ‘What’s important to you? What are you concerned about? And the reception I got was very good, overwhelming. It was so positive, unbelievable. So that gave me a lot of encouragement.’

Smart says that a big issue in this district is eminent domain and the Trans-Texas Corridor. He noted that his opponent, Republican Kip Averitt, will support the Trans-Texas Corridor if he gets re-elected, “for the party.”

“I’ve talked to a lot of people and everyone is against it. I don’t want it. This might die on its own, but the trouble is there

would be a lot of damage done, people losing their property, their houses, and their land. But when you think about it, why would anybody be for it?”

Joey Dauben, a former investigative reporter for THE ELLIS COUNTY PRESS who now works as a coordinator for the Republican Party of Ellis County and publishes <[elliscountyobserver.com](http://elliscountyobserver.com)> online, described Smart as a conscientious individual who dislikes corruption and is fast to voice his opinion against it. He noted that in 2004, Smart had run for county commissioner of Ellis County, only to be jailed then, too, a few weeks prior to the election and released after the election.

Dauben said that Ellis County is well known for governmental corruption and that Smart has been quick to criticize it.

Dauben noted that Smart’s home has been ransacked, he’s been accused of being a terrorist since he collects antique guns, and he has been harassed by law enforcement personnel who regularly follow him. Smart also collects antique cars, explained Dauben.

The former reporter appeared on a BBSRadio.com program, The Spiritual Politician, hosted by Melinda Pillsbury-Foster Friday night where he was interviewed from Republican headquarters in Ellis County.

Said Dauben during the interview, “Philip Smart noticed graft and corruption and wanted to take a vital part in exposing it.”

Dauben explained that in 1999 the county had constructed a \$7 million three-story government center building in downtown Waxahachie after the initiative had been turned down twice by voters. Later, deemed shoddily built, it was torn down.

“That’s just one of the things that Phil Smart got really big on,” said Dauben.

“His downside was that he came out against what everyone knew was the truth, that Ellis County is corrupt,” continued Dauben. “He came out against the very powers that have a stranglehold on what goes on in this county.”

Dauben added, “For all the bad things that people say about him, being a loose cannon, he’s

Continued On Next Page

# Texas Senate Candidate In President's District Jailed

From Previous Page

an accountant, and, honestly, he doesn't strike you as the type of guy that would go to SMU and graduate as an accountant, but the guy's brilliant. He really is a smart guy. He's very involved with the church, being an accountant, helping people with their taxes, but he wants things running smooth, and the right way."

The former PRESS reporter said that Smart often comes across as "bombastic" and some say he's offensive, very blunt.

"He's the type of guy who is brutally honest and would say, yeah, it's a crock. We've got to change it. Right now," said Dauben.

The Republican coordinator noted that the current State Senator, Kip Averitt, has only a

30-40 percent conservative rating on conservative organization report cards that have been put out, where Smart is near 100 percent. "Phil Smart's message was get back to the Constitution."

Dauben said to the people of Dallas-Fort Worth, "Yeah, Phil Smart was arrested, but at the same time, there's a huge story behind the headline."

He explained that Smart is a disciple of the Constitution, and is for clean government, no matter what it costs him and "that is a high understatement."

Members of the Libertarian Party at the national level are concerned that their candidate was jailed for nearly three weeks without arraignment during an important campaign timeframe

and feared that the county would attempt to use the cancellation of *habeas corpus* to justify holding him without due process, perhaps making Smart's case a test for whether Americans still have the protection of the Fourth Amendment and if the tenure of his prolonged confinement could constitute his being a political prisoner.

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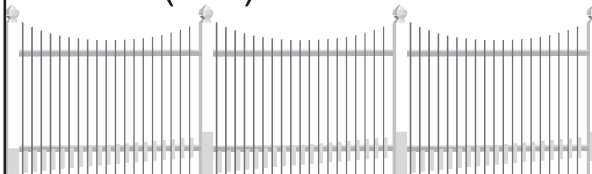
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## Same-Sex Unions Gain N.J. Court's Backing

TRENTON, N.J. — Same-sex couples have the same legal protections and benefits as opposite-sex couples under the New Jersey state Constitution, according to the Supreme Court of New Jersey last Wednesday.

The state legislature, though, must provide the necessary legislation to grant the legal union between same-sex couples in the next six months, the court ruled.

Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese called on the state legislature to pass such legislation, calling the ruling "pro-family."

"This decision recognizes that New Jersey's constitution protects all families," Solmonese said. "The Legislature should not go down the

path of separate but equal, but rather should embrace marriage equality."

Seven gay and lesbian couples with relationships some lasting three decades long filed the case.

The New Jersey court ruled 4-3 decision in the Lewis v. Harris case after hearing arguments in February.

This ruling is not unlike the outcome of a more well-known case in Vermont where civil unions among same-sex couples is constitutional, yet these unions are not called "marriages."

Since Massachusetts became the first and only state to grant same-sex marriages in 2003, 19 states including Texas have enacted constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriages.

In 2004, New Jersey enacted a domestic partnership law allowing same-sex partners to decide medical problems for their partners and insurers to offer health coverage similar to opposite-sex couples.

In July, the Court of Appeals of New York ruled that the state legislature must define marriage. The New York state legislature has yet to offer such legislation, though the public for the most part favors it.

## Religious Topics Top Lecture Series This November

AUSTIN — Three lectures on religion, two with respect to Islam and one on Christianity are scheduled during the month of November in Austin.

The first lecture "Religious Pluralism in Islamic Societies, Past and Present" will be presented by Syed Akbar Hyder, as a part of the St. Andrew's Citizen Education Series on Sunday, Nov. 5, at 12:30 p.m.

Hyder's talk will reveal "multiple, sometimes conflicting, understandings of the meaning of Islamic religious symbols."

"At a time when words like martyrdom and jihad are being used and misused for political reasons, Hyder's analysis is crucial for Americans to understand," said a press release.

Hyder earned his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from Harvard University and has been a professor of Asian Studies and Islamic Studies at the University of Texas since 2000.

His lecture will be held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church,

## Economists Switch Views Over Minimum Wage: Study

WASHINGTON — The Economic Policy Institute last week released a report explaining that with new research methods and new evidence developed over the last 20 years, economists views on the effects of the minimum wage have altered in favor of lifting the wage floor.

The report "Economic Effects of State Minimum Wage Increases" comes as voters in six U.S. states prepare to decide on ballot measures to raise the minimum wage either by \$1 or up to \$1.70.

If all the measures should pass on Tuesday, Nov. 7, the incomes of over a million and a half people, not to mention the benefits to 652,000 children, will increase in Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, and Ohio.

EPI economic analyst Liana Fox showed in her report that since the 1980s, experts have changed their view of the minimum wage, saying that the positive economic effects for individuals end up outweighing the negative effects, such as job losses, which had been the conventional wisdom previously.

Leading economists, including five Nobel Prize winners and six past presidents of the American Economics Association, back Fox's

analysis.

Raising the minimum wage "can significantly improve the lives of low-income workers and their families, without the adverse effects that critics have claimed," according to a joint statement from over 650 signatories in support of the wage raise in the six states.

Among the signatories are Nobelists Joseph Stiglitz (Columbia University), Robert Solow (MIT), Lawrence Klein (University of Pennsylvania), Kenneth Arrow (Stanford), and Clive Granger (UC/San Diego).

Fox's paper also explains that should a nationwide increase of the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour be implemented, it would benefit about 15 million workers, almost all of whom (80 percent) are 20-years-old and older.

In addition, this income would aid the parents of 7.3 million children, according to the report.

So far, 22 states including the District of Columbia have minimum wages above the federal rate (\$5.15 per hour). Should the six states pass their ballot measures, 70 percent of the U.S. workforce will live in a state with a minimum wage higher than the federal level, according to EPI.

## Study: Humans Consuming At Never-Before-Seen Levels

BEIJING, China — A new report by a conservation group

says that the human race is consuming natural resources at never-before-seen levels.

While the United Arab Emirates is putting the most stress on nature per capita, the people of the United States use more "global" hectares to support their lifestyles.

"If everyone around the world lived as those in America, we would need five planets to support us," said James Leape, the Director-General of the World Wildlife Foundation in Beijing, China.

The report said that increases in human pollution, deforestation, and overfishing has caused the animal population to fall by a third over the last 33 years.

Leape praised China for promising to cut its energy use by a 20 percent over the next five years.

However, every single person on the planet must change their daily living habits because the human population is growing at such a rate that more waste is being created than nature can re-process.

"As countries work to improve the well-being of their people, they risk bypassing the goal of sustainability," Leape said.

The report noted that its projections indicated that humans

would be consuming as much as two planet's worth of materials by 2050 — that is if humans fail to run out first. The United Nations now projects that nine billion people will inhabit the earth in 2050.

Leape, an American, made this announcement during the launch of the WWF's 2006 Living Planet Report at Tsinghua University.

In a separate report, leading economists estimated that should global temperatures increase by two degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels

The report from Tufts University's Global Development and Environment Institute said the economic loss annually from the temperature rise might be \$20 trillion by 2100.

The "Climate Change the Costs of Inaction" report, though, explained that government intervention could avoid \$12 trillion in annual damages at a quarter of the cost and stop the heat hike.

So far, the earth's temperature has jumped to 0.6 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels.

The Tufts report was compiled for Friends of the Earth's climate campaign.

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# Editorial

## Endorsements

### Governor: The Only Candidate With A Remote Chance To Defeat Lying Texas Governor Tricky Ricky Perry, Chris Bell

Thinking Texans realize state government is as it always has been, a product of special interests.

While this isn't likely to change with this election, riding ourselves of Rick Perry is at least a start.

The only candidate with even the most remote chance of doing that is Chris Bell.

We are given four choices in this race:

**Perry** is so bought and sold he should be listed on the New York Stock Exchange. His school finance package was geared to protect insurance companies, retail chain giants, real estate speculators, oil companies, banks stockbrokers and state-house incumbents. It finally passed after four Legislative sessions at the expense of small businesses, homeowners, schools and children. Were that not enough, he has yet to air a single ad that tells the truth. We would be less than honest if we did not advise our readers that Rick Perry will probably be the next governor. The millions of disenfranchised Texans who will vote against him have so many alternatives that Perry will survive on the frightened minority who blanch at the possibility that the Patrões will no longer let them hoe the fields; those afraid they will no longer get to dance on the porch of the big house. Texas has no runoff system in the general election, so we would do well to consider the alternatives in the coming weeks.

**Grandma Carole Keeton Rylander Strayhorn** has gone from Democrat to Republican to Independent without a good explanation for her chameleon act except that she is looking for a way, any way, to get elected. With each passing iteration nothing about her seems to have changed except those stances that her campaign organization believes to be politically expedient. She chooses issues and political affiliations that will make her more "electable." That way lies deceit. As Harry S Truman

once said, "If you run a Republican against a Republican, chances are you're going to elect a Republican.

**Kinky Friedman** is not a racist. He just needs some new material. He is a comic, not a governor. His bully pulpit is too long on bull for anyone to take him seriously for more time than it takes to grow tired of a steady diet of one-liners. His election would only serve to reinforce the constitutional impotence of the governor's office. The value of that is negligible at best. Those who understand Texas politics already know it; those who don't cast their ballots for the same inane reasons they once chose a homecoming queen.

The governor of Texas, as part of his official duties, can only hand out a few spoils; his only real power grows out of the Legislature. If his party controls either house, and he controls his party, he controls Texas. Otherwise, as Perry has proven, he's just a gasbag.

So if that is the case, why is a vote in this race relevant at all?

And why **Chris Bell**?

The gerrymandering that Texas suffered at the hands of the Bush juggernaut has assured that the Fascist Republicans will continue to control the Legislature.

Will Bell stop the pillaging boondoggle of the Trans-Texas Corridor? Almost certainly not. That ship has sailed; Perry's party has already steered it, and our tax money, to Spain. The best Bell can hope to do is veto any of the inevitable price increases the 'project' is bound to generate. The legislature will certainly quickly rubber stamp the multi-billion dollar swindles from one side of the dome to the other.

But Bell is more likely than any other candidate to ensure Texans know they are being had.

Is he likely to?

We will have to be satisfied with, "More likely than anyone else."

He will be more of a voice for education, questioning the idiosyncrasy of high-stakes testing and the homage to greed of our taxation system.

He will be a voice for health care. We might say "affordable health care," but in Texas even marginally competent health care, affordable or not, simply is not an option for the poor. Anything Bell says will be better than anything that has been.

He will propose a sensible alternative to turning the Rio Grande into an Iron Curtain in reverse. Perhaps he will even raise the question of whether sending more guns to the Mexican border is a solution to anything.

Most important, he will be a potent poke in the eye of those who have a permanent lease on Texas government, a message that the voters are not happy with legislation written by lobbyists, with schools designed to deliver votes to the legislature rather than education to our children, with smug and arrogant ivory tower state universities who ensure that our best minds graduate *debt cum laude*, with a state government that neither knows nor cares who its citizens are; only what they have.

This election will not change the Texas government.

We can only hope to change the message.

### Lt. Governor

THE ICONOCLAST endorses Nathalie Paravicini for Lt. Governor. The Green Party candidate's position on education reform, modernization of the tax system, and finding ways to cut election costs by implementing Instant Run-Off Voting could be significant in helping break the gridlock of sustained failure in state government. The pro-corporate approach to governance must end somewhere for Texas to move forward, and it is her pledge to stop the corporate takeover of our state govern-

ment. If elected, she wants to make appointments involving other political parties. In her position statement she says she supports "appointing committee chairs from different parties because it improves the negotiating climate by focusing the work on issues instead of politics. Furthermore, party affiliation does not measure knowledge, experience, or integrity."

She is anti-NAFTA, instead favoring fair trade; anti-TAKS, instead favoring not teaching to a test; anti-school vouchers, instead promoting public schools. Too, she has proclaimed her determination to work for fairness, favoring the working classes in the state who have in recent years been subjected to a higher proportion of taxes and less representation.

Her opponents are incumbent David Dewhurst (R), Maria Luisa Alvarado (D), and Judy Baker (L).

### Attorney General

Perhaps this newspaper's strongest endorsement of all goes to David Van Os (D) for Attorney General, one of the most brilliant, pro-Texas candidates there probably has ever been.

This labor lawyer from San Antonio with 30-years' experience has expressed to the ICONOCLAST that he will be a public servant for the people of Texas, not for the corporations of Texas.

Even before making this promise, Van Os refused to concede his campaign for the Texas Supreme Court in 2004 since there was no paper trail to record the votes from the electronic voting machines used in the state.

It should be noted that in that race, Van Os gained 41 percent of the vote. That same year, Texans gave Sen. John Kerry 38 percent of the vote for U.S. president.

However, this year, this lifelong Democrat has wide cross-party appeal because he has personally pledged to stop the draconian Trans-Texas Corridor before one slab of concrete is laid on Texas soil.

To show his commitment against the TTC project, Van Os has filed an "Affidavit for Public Record" at every single one of the 254 county courthouses in the state during his campaign to meet with citizens across Texas.

The affidavit reads:

"I am placing written oaths in the public records" because "I mean what I say. Under oath I promise that I will use every legal means available to me by that office to protect Texans and their property from the unconstitutional attack on the integrity of our land and property known as the Trans-Texas Corridor. I will enforce and uphold

the Texas Constitutional promise that runaway corporate monopolies will not be allowed to devour democracy and free enterprise. I will defend the people of Texas from big oil and the insurance jackals .... The office of attorney general will belong to the people and I will be the people's lawyer."

Van Os also believes that the enforcement of employment-labor laws will stop undocumented workers from crossing the border into Texas.

"We don't need expensive walls that'll make us feel like we're outside a Berlin Wall. We need to enforce the laws we have," he said. "Corporate employers who violate our laws in the employment of undocumented immigrants need to know this: I'm going to throw the book at them."

Van Os has also promised to go after the big oil companies, insurance companies, and other businesses that break the state constitution's anti-trust law.

This is perhaps the most important of the state-wide race this fall because it is for the highest law-enforcement seat in the state.

Should the Democrats win back control of the U.S. Congress and decide not to investigate the Bush administration for breaking international law with regard to the war in Iraq, the only other possible position could be the office of Attorney General of Texas.

The incumbent, Greg Abbott, though he swore an oath to protect the U.S. and Texas constitutions upon becoming Attorney General of Texas, has not used his office for either the good of Americans or Texans in tackling his Republican, corporate cronies.

David Van Os will fight'em till hell freezes over, and then he'll fight'em on the ice.

### Comptroller

In her television campaign ads, Ag Commissioner Susan Combs (R) who is now running for Comptroller says two things that cause red flags to fly. First, she says she will "improve financial accountability in our schools" and secondly, she will stop waste, fraud, and abuse in state spending.

Think about that a minute.

These goals might appear on the surface to be an overall package of good, but the primary problem of school finance does not lie with the school districts; it lies with the state itself, with unfunded mandates, and a Republican-led House and Senate that spent more time pouring over redistricting as its first priority than caring about our school children. How dare she attack the state's local school

Continued On Next Page



## ENDORSEMENTS

From Previous Page

boards that are continually bombarded by problems caused at the state level, from ill-conceived tests that terrorize teachers and students, to finance reform that simply isn't, to shortchanging CHIPS.

In her second pledge, to stop waste, fraud, and abuse in state spending, she is indicting the current Republican-controlled legislative and executive branches, of which she has been a part.

Our endorsement goes to Fred Head (D), a former highly conservative state representative who is known for being a "watchdog of the people," a fighter for the underdog. At a time when special interests rule the state house, his pledge to set things straight is sorely needed.

Among his goals are elimination of all unfunded state government mandates, use of state funds for the purposes originally designated by the people of Texas unless changed by the people of Texas, and common sense, simple and accurate appraisals of all property by appraisal districts, using real figures as specific as is possible to each property.

This might also be known as "truth in taxation."

### State Land Commissioner

THE ICONOCLAST supports VaLinda Hathcox (D), former Hopkins County Attorney, for State Land Commissioner. The former intern for Gov. Dolph Briscoe in the General Land Office (GLO) under former Land Commissioner Bob Armstrong has abundant experience that will best serve the GLO, the state's oldest agency that manages state lands and mineral-right properties totaling 20.5 million acres.

In her previous position she rewrote the state's oil and gas leases to include geothermal, coal, and other alternative fuel resources. She says that the current commissioner has "lost sight of its constitutional charge and the legitimate functions of the GLO." We agree.

Her opponents are incumbent Jerry Patterson (R) and Michael French (L).

### State Agriculture Commissioner

THE ICONOCLAST endorses Hank Gilbert (D), a 47-year-old self-employed rancher and former high school agriculture teacher from Whitehouse for State Ag Commissioner.

Not only does Gilbert hit the bulls-eye with his position

against NAFTA, but he is dead-set against the Trans-Texas Corridor. Says Gilbert, "You know, NAFTA was a federal treaty that our government entered into with Mexico and Canada. It, just like the Trans-Texas Corridor (TTC), was done without the input of the people. We didn't get to vote on it. We didn't get to vote on the TTC."

Also running for the four-year post on the state agency established by the Texas Legislature in 1907 are Todd Staples (R) and Clay Woolam (L). Staples, a 43-year-old businessman and rancher from Palestine is currently serving as state senator in District 3 and, through his voting record, has supported the Trans-Texas Corridor.

Gilbert, a plain-spoken, tell-it-like-it-is Texan, claims that NAFTA has "practically killed the fruit and vegetable market in the state of Texas. By the time our farmers are putting the seed in the ground to plant those vegetables, we're receiving those very same vegetables across the border from Central America and Mexico. They're hitting our grocery markets at the very same time our farmers are putting the seeds in the ground. So NAFTA has taken away any and all early markets away from our farmers. Which is where they used to make their money.

"One example I use all the time is watermelons because people traditionally in East Texas can't wait until the first watermelons get to the grocery store. Well, when our farmers are putting the watermelon seed in the ground in the early spring, we're getting watermelons out of Central America. If you'll take notice in the grocery store, those first melons will sell for five or six bucks a piece. I mean, pretty good money for a melon. By the time our Texas melons hit the market, they're worth 99 cents a piece in the grocery market. And that, at best, in a good year, is break-even cost for the farmer. And consequently, we've lost the biggest majority of our vegetable market in Texas.

"This relates a lot to TTC because TTC is basically known as the NAFTA super-highway. It's supposed to reach from Mexico all the way to Canada. And if that is allowed to happen we will kill our entire vegetable industry in the United States. Every vegetable you eat will come from Mexico or Central America. Or other Latin producing countries closer to the equator."

Gilbert won't sell us out.

### State Railroad Commissioner

Highly qualified for the position of Railroad Commissioner is Dale Henry (D), a former Mills County Commissioner who is known as a workhorse who gets things done.

A graduate of the University of Texas in Austin with a BS degree in Petroleum Engineering, Henry served two years of active duty in the U.S. Air Force, honorably discharged as a First Lieutenant, after which he served 14 years in the Air Force Reserve.

After a long career with Dow Chemical working in the field and with research and development groups aimed at enhancing the productivity of oil and gas wells, he applied for and received two patents.

Later, he worked for Dowell Schlumberger and Gearhart Owen stateside and worldwide, returned home to Texas (from Paris, France) and formed his own company as an independent oil field contractor, and served as president of Fox Crossing Water District of Mills County for 14 years before serving one term as Mills County Commissioner and later becoming a member of the Region "K" Lower Colorado River Regional Water Planning Group.

His opponents are a law student, Tabitha Serrano (L) and Perry appointee Elizabeth Ames Jones (R), who has long been involved in Republican politics, having worked with Karl Rove in 1980. "We cut our teeth in politics," Jones said of herself and Rove.

The best candidate for this position is Dale Henry.

### U.S. Senator

The big question in this race is this: Do you want to elect a cheerleader who will shout from the sidelines or someone who will actually get onto the field and fight for our state? That is the choice when it comes to incumbent Kay Bailey Hutchison (R) and attorney Barbara Ann Radnofsky (D).

For too long, Hutchison has played the part of cheerleader, offering blind support for initiatives of the Administration and Big Oil and taking no responsibility for the outcomes. She has let dollars that should come to our state go elsewhere and has taken \$1.7 million in campaign cash from Big Oil.

Her chief opponent, Radnofsky, has pledged to be a player — on the field, to fight for every dollar for Texas, to stand up for what Texans believe and to be a real Senator. She is committed to fighting for affordable health care, including preventive care and prompt pay, to, as she puts it, "fix the Medicare

mess" and deliver a real prescription drug benefit, and, as one of her most solemn pledges, "Guarantee veterans the health care they've earned."

In an interview with this newspaper, Radnofsky said she is for the return of meaningful debate in the Senate and is for renewed oversight of federal government agencies. She is against the Trans-Texas Corridor and says that if it goes through, "The towns are going to lose their character if not their entire business," hurting business, tourism, and individuals.

She is against NAFTA, since it contains provisions that "give foreign businesses an unfair advantage over American business at the same time that they hurt American labor."

Radnofsky is appalled at Hutchison's lack of regard for veterans. "My opponent who is subcommittee chairwoman on appropriations for veterans affairs has a series of votes that have frankly deserted our military," she said, noting that Hutchison stood on the floor of the Senate and said that "no additional money was needed for veterans" even though every major veterans organization and military experts pointed out what the needs were.

"What I will do is serve as a very effective advocate — articulate, passionate, caring about Texans, beholden to Texans," says Radnofsky, who earns our endorsement.

### U.S. Representative, District 17

Perhaps no other candidate in the state is as attuned to his district than Congressman Chet Edwards (D), who is being challenged by Guillermo Acosta (L) and Van Taylor (R). And perhaps no other elected Congressman has focused more on issues and his constituency, with the willingness to forego party alliances, than Edwards. Very much an independent thinker and doer, his votes have reflected the sentiments that have been espoused by both major parties, largely depending upon what he hears from the people he represents.

But beyond that, Edwards has spent abundant time in the district, getting to know his constituents on a first-name basis, and helping local citizens access important federal government programs. He has fought tirelessly to save the Waco VA hospital. In Bosque County, he played a crucial role in a recent water pipeline project for the Cities of Clifton and Meridian that will provide for future water needs, and he has fought to better enable regional healthcare on behalf of Goodall-

Witcher Healthcare Foundation, as just a couple of examples that could be multiplied many times over in this region of Texas.

Edwards has a solid track record of service and is considered an icon when it comes to fighting for the needs of veterans. If only there were more like him in Congress, returning veterans would more fully see their post-service needs answered.

Edwards genuinely cares about the people of his district and has proved it many times over. He says he likes being a U.S. Representative because at this level you don't tend to lose touch with the people you serve, you can listen to their needs or concerns and help them, and you can make their voices heard in Washington.

Congressman Edwards has earned our respect, our thanks, and our vote.

### State Senator, District 22

In the race for State Senator, there are two candidates that are similar, yet poles apart.

Both Kip Averitt (R) and Phil Smart (L) are similar, in that they are both CPAs. Both are considered conservatives, although Smart moreso than Averitt. But this is where the similarities end.

The incumbent, Averitt, has been described as having a friendly disposition and has been available to local interests when they need assistance in Austin. Yet he has made some decisions that were not in keeping with the desires of his constituents, such as focusing on redistricting and letting school reform wane. When the Senate was forced to act on school finance, only a tiny bandage could be found. Too, he has been ambivalent about the Trans-Texas Corridor and has done nothing to stop its progression, which has infuriated many people in this area.

Phil Smart has been described as bombastic, anti-corruption, and tells it like it is, even if he offends. When there are errors in government, he wants them corrected immediately and he doesn't mind being heard. He is totally against the Trans-Texas Corridor and plans, if elected, to fight it strongly. On perhaps the downside, he has been in jail during the past three weeks, unable to campaign on charges that his supporters say stem from his rubbing people in high places the wrong way.

Overall, unless something is exposed that would render Smart an unsuitable candidate during the waning days of the campaign, THE ICONOCLAST endorses him, since the Trans-Texas Corridor is a prime example of an initiative that needs to be defeated and a strong voice against it is needed in Austin.

# The Lone Star ICONOCLAST

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

The Enron scandal was nothing compared to this!

High Social Security payroll taxes have contributed to yearly Social Security Trust Fund surpluses until the proclaimed surplus is now in excess of \$1.7 trillion. However, Congress has elected to sacrifice Social Security on the altar of corruption by spending the entire surplus. The U.S. Treasury has been forced to cover up the Congressional embezzlement by issuing nonnegotiable IOU bonds to the Trust Fund.

This gotcha means that Congress must determine how to legally fund the IOU bonds when they mature. The choices are increase taxes, sell legitimate T-bonds, or monetize the debt. Congress will select the easy way out. The Federal Reserve will be asked to crank up the printing press and create money out of thin air. Of course debasing the currency means that the dollar becomes a peso and your Social Security check will only buy some coffee beans or at best, a bowl of java.

Currently, the yearly program surplus is about \$180 billion and to save Social Security, the yearly surplus must be invested in precious metals so that future Social Security recipients receive something of value. Yet Congress will scream out a refusal claiming that it will doom Social Security. What really frightens them is that we will gain control of our Social Security program and they will lose a cash cow.

Some day in the future when the Social Security eagle takes off on its monthly mission what would you rather receive in your hand, a gold coin or a worthless Federal Reserve note?

Sincerely,  
Robert A. Dahlquist  
Orange, Calif.

Dear Editor:

As the November general election approaches, our mailboxes and airwaves will be overrun with promises from policymakers and the candidates challenging them to cut our taxes, improve our schools, get tough on crime, fix our roads, et cetera, ad nauseum.

Yet the silence has been

deafening on the one issue that affects every family in Texas and threatens our state's economic health and well-being - our broken health care system.

In Texas today, one in every four Texans - 5.6 million people - are uninsured. This is not merely an unfortunate statistic.

When these Texans get sick, they go to the emergency room for care, forcing businesses, homeowners, individuals and local communities to bear the cost of paying for that uncompensated care through higher taxes.

Providing care to those without health insurance increases the cost of private health insurance.

Hospitals, physicians and other health care professionals shift the cost of providing uncompensated care to private health insurance, which in turn sends health insurance premiums soaring and leads to a lack of available, affordable health insurance options for employers and individuals alike.

According to a study by Families USA, the cost of uncompensated care for the uninsured adds \$1,551 to the average premium for private insurance in Texas.

Report after report has documented the economic consequences of being uninsured, as well as the poor health outcomes associated with those with unmet health care needs.

Yet while other states have pursued innovative, market-based solutions to reduce the ranks of the uninsured, Texas has fallen farther and farther behind.

In an effort to break the silence, the primary care physicians of Texas recently sent a report to the Texas Legislature entitled, "Fractured: The State of Health Care in Texas" that paints a frightening picture of our health care system and offers common sense solutions for the state. You can download a copy of the report at

[www.tafp.org](http://www.tafp.org) and let our leaders know that addressing Texas' health care ills must be a priority next legislative session.

Respectfully,  
Eugene Stokes, MD, FACP  
Texas Primary Care Coalition,  
Chair



## Air Combat Returning To West Texas Skies

FORT HOOD — West Texans will again see helicopters and military vehicles in the sky and on the roads as the 21st Cavalry Brigade (Air Combat) returns to train the 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. The unit has recently been equipped with the world's most lethal attack helicopter, the AH-64D Apache Longbow. The 21st Cavalry Bde. is responsible for training all Army aviation units as well as those of allied countries transitioning to the Apache Longbow.

Training will be conducted by Fort Hood's 21st Cavalry Bde. and involve frequent flights in Brown, McCulloch, Mason, Menard, Llano, Coleman, Concho, Tom Green, Kimble, Runnels, San Saba, and Mills counties during two periods from 17-30 Oct. 17 - 30 and Nov. 12 - 22. Those counties, along with several neighboring counties, make up what Fort Hood officials call the Western Training Area.

"The realistic training conducted by the 21st Cavalry helps units function as a team and operate over the distances which they will encounter in actual combat conditions," a unit training officer explained.

"This intense training program lasts about nine months and culminates with a series of exercises in West Texas areas

where land and airspace provide the extended maneuver space that can't be replicated within the boundaries of the Fort Hood Military Reservation."

As part of the training, visually modified vehicles - designed to imitate an "enemy" force - will be traveling throughout the training area and may be seen parked in the Western Training Area while the Apache crews search for them.

No live ammunition is used in the training exercise. However, in an effort to add more realism to the training, smoke may be employed to simulate a "kill" when a vehicle has been located and "destroyed" by the Longbows.

"This smoke may be of various colors," a Fort Hood spokesperson said. "It's non-toxic, and won't pose a threat to local residents or livestock."

Most of the helicopter flight activities during the period will be staged out of the Camp Bowie National Guard Training Center near Brownwood. Helicopter crews will be flying both day and night training missions.

Military convoys will be encountered along Texas Hwys. 190, 183, and 84, between Fort Hood and Brownwood prior to and following each training period.

The 4/3 ACR, nicknamed "Longknife" will be stationed

at Fort Hood upon completion of their training. The newest Longbow unit will continue to train in preparation for the possibility of deployment at some future date. As in the past, this training in the WTA may involve larger numbers of Army aircraft - including UH-1 Hueys, UH-60 Blackhawks and CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

"With the increased numbers of larger aircraft, there comes an increased chance crews may fly over buildings or livestock," a flight training specialist pointed out.

"It's the aircrew's responsibility to make every effort to avoid direct over-flight of buildings and livestock. Aviation crews are briefed on such avoidance prior to every mission flown."

Col. Gregory Brockman, commander of the 21st Cavalry Bde. expressed his appreciation - and that of the Army - to residents of the Western Training Area "for their continued support of the brigade during these training exercises so that training can be conducted in the most realistic scenarios possible.

"Your reputation for supporting our mission is known throughout the Army and your continued support allows us to train the finest attack helicopter crews and units in the world."



# Voting Machine Pinball ... This Is NOT A Game!!!

There are already reports of voting machine screw-ups in Texas and other states as early voters go to the polls.

People vote for a Democrat, Green, Libertarian, or Independent and, strangely, the Republican gets the "X."

So far, Congress has done virtually nothing to correct the problems that have plagued at least two elections.

And they haven't ordered "paper" to protect the sanctity of the votes.

If the balance of power miraculously changes, it is incumbent upon elected officials to get their hands dirty.

Very dirty.

Establish laws making it a crime of treason to tamper with voting machines, to produce tamperable voting machines, or to preside over elections that utilize voting machines that create errors.

Treason, meaning life imprisonment.

So if you are a stockholder in a company that produces even one — yes, one — crooked machine, then it's off to the pokey for you, your officers, and your workers. All of them!

## The Trenchwalker

By W. Leon Smith



Same goes for election officials who "buy" your machine, and Congressional officeholders who say it's okay.

It isn't!

This is not a game.

By disenfranchising one voter by stealing his vote, you have destroyed the basis of our democracy.

This is serious.

Many Americans no longer ask will there be a voting machine error?

They ask, "How many?"

So what if it takes three days to manually count the vote?

It comes down to accuracy over speed.

Without accuracy, an election is meaningless and our democracy becomes a joke.

Do Americans deserve an accurate count, an election that is not fixed?

There are only two answers.

"Yes" or "No."  
There is no inbetween.

A stew of gray means that theft is okay.

Americans ought to be better than that.

## HOTWDB Symposium Set Nov. 13

HILLSBORO — The Heart of Texas Workforce Development Board will host its 2006 Employer, Education and Economic Development Symposium, Nov. 13, at the Hill College Performing Arts Center, in Hillsboro. The event will begin at 11 a.m. and end at 2 p.m.

Included in the symposium are: exhibits of interests, a luncheon, and a featured speaker Jack Schultz, the renowned author of *Boomtown, USA*. Exhibits will open at 10 a.m.

Jack Schultz's work as the CEO of Agracel, Inc. led him to ponder the roots of rural prosperity.

He is a premier authority in economic development recognized for his ongoing research and vast knowledge of rural America.

The result of more than three years of research was

his popular book, *Boomtown USA: The 7 1/2 Keys to Big Success in Small Towns*. In it, Schultz exposes the well-hidden truth of America's hometowns that he fondly calls, the agurbs®, as well as, attempts to answer the perennial question: What separates the thriving towns from the struggling ones?

Schultz and Agracel, Inc., Schultz's industrial development firm which he founded in 1986, have established a new company, Boomtown Institute.

The Institute's mission is "To provoke innovative thinking, encourage leadership and foster investment in communities across the U.S.A."

Schultz says, "Vision is the difference between a ghost town and a Boomtown." Schultz inspires communities to construct their own

vision deliberately, and not wait on the inevitable to happen.

Schultz's national speaking tour that has taken him to 41 states and more than 220 towns, in addition to offering the Boomtown Boot Camp, an intensive, two-day, strategic planning session for communities.

Extensive research on matters that affect America's hometowns is a constant mainstay for the new entity.

Future initiatives include additional publications and books, mentoring services to communities as well as media projects that highlight the advantages of living, working and building a business in rural America.

There is \$10 registration fee to attend. To reserve a space, call (254) 296-5278 or email <lhaynes@hotworkforce.com>.



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## My Own Ghost Story

It's Halloween again, and having borrowed my headline from Kipling, I shall now borrow this column from myself. I wrote it a dozen years ago, and it seems to have lost none of its popularity. One can hardly lose what he does not possess.

Most people like ghost stories. The lover's lane killer with the hook, the headless corpse, the disappearing midnight hitchhiker all are timeless tales that have chilled bedtimes since bedtimes began.

Why?

It's fun to be scared.

Well, it's fun to be scared when being scared is all in fun.

There are no intriguing yarns about things truly scary: poverty, disease, oppression, loneliness, madness.

No, real ghost stories are about things surreal, things that, in the cold, clear light of day we know could never be.

Such fanciful fears excite us, stimulate our imaginations, make us appreciate that we are alive and, regardless of our goose bumps, well and safe.

But some ghosts *are* real; though not in the way we imagine

I know.

I once did battle with just such a ghost.

When I was a first grader in Avery, Texas, my parents moved into an old house near the tracks.

It had once been a grand Victorian, but had fallen into disrepair over the years and had been divided into apartments.

My parents, my brother, older by three years, and I lived in one and a pleasant, elderly couple named Marsh lived in the other.

Across the rear of the house we shared a large screened-in porch.

Before public water service became available in East Texas, most folks depended on cisterns, large, brick-encased holes in the ground that captured and stored roof runoff for household use.

Even though Avery had long since installed a city water system, many homes still had a cistern.

Our cistern was located in the middle of the back porch.

After school one day, my older, smarter brother, Fred, and I learned some eerie facts about the house in which we lived.

"It's haunted," pronounced my friend and classmate, Guy Lemmond.

"The feller that lived there taken a butcher knife to his wife and kids. After he cut 'em up and threw 'em in the cistern, he tied the wringer off'n that big warshin' machine on the back porch 'round his neck and drowned hisself down there, too. Ever since then, his ghost climbs up out of that cistern an' roams the house with a bloody

butcher knife lookin' for his wife and kids."

"How come he roams the house lookin' if he threw 'em in the cistern? Why don't he look for 'em down there?" I asked. "That don't make no sense."

"How do I know? I ain't no ghost. 'Sides, ghosts don't have to make sense. They're dead."

"That ain't true," scoffed Fred. "Is too!" Guy whined.

"Ain't neither. You don't know nothin'. You're just a little kid."

"Oh, it's true, all right. 'Least the part about him jumpin' in the cistern," added Paul Wayne Meggason.

He was older than any of us.

"I seen th' sheriff an' th' farmen when they come to drag him out with ropes and big ol' hooks."

Neither Fred nor I said much more about it, but I knew that the tale was much on my brother's mind.

Certainly it was much on mine.

That night at supper, we asked the ultimate authority in all such matters, our father.

"Yes," he said, adopting a grave, elementary school principal's expression.

"A man named Farley did live here before us. Poor man went nuts."

"And did he kill his wife an' kids and cut 'em up an' throw 'em in th' cistern?" I asked, already dreading his answer.

"I heard that, but I'm not sure it's true. I also heard that he just attacked his wife; that she ran out of the house and escaped with only a badly cut arm."

"And is his ghost...?"

"This is not fit conversation for the supper table," pronounced my mother.

While my father was the ultimate authority, my mother was the ultimate authoritarian. The subject was closed.

We wondered about the dreaded Farley ghost for some time after that, but it effected us little until basketball season.

Both our parents coached; my father, the boy's basketball team and my mother, the girls. Each Tuesday and Friday night they were away from home until quite late.

Fred and I were left on our own with a cold supper and strict orders to be in bed by nine. It was only on nights that our parents were away that the ghost of Farley began to move about.

Ghosts are clever like that.

They never appear around those who can dispel their mythology.

After we were in bed, the noises began.

First we would hear a seemingly harmless drip from the dank cistern.

Or perhaps it would disguise itself as a sound like the scurry

### Call To Mind

By Don M. Fisher



of a cat or some other innocent night-prowling animal.

But we knew better.

We knew it was the Farley ghost beginning his ghastly ascent, gory knife clinched in his rotting yellow teeth, searching for innocent children as his next victims.

"Did you hear that?" I would ask from beneath the covers.

"No!" would answer my brother, a little too loudly.

"Yes, you did!"

"It wasn't nothin'! Go to sleep. Ooo! There it is again."

"He's comin' up! I know it!"

"One of us has to go and throw somethin' down there an' knock him back down 'fore he gits out."

Fred always had a plan. Rarely did it involve him.

"O.K. You go."

"No! You!"

"No, I'm too skeered."

"Well, if you don't go, he might git us and he might not. But if you don't go, I'm gonna hurt your face. Ain't no 'might' about it!"

There are terrible consequences to being born three years late.

I crept through the kitchen to the back door and eased it open, dreading with each step a sudden attack from the rank, decomposed, dripping Farley.

I could practically feel the icy plunge of his terrible, ooze-coated blade ripping through the soft flannel of my pajamas as the door yielded to my timid touch. I leaned frozen across the sill.

No Farley.

But I knew he was down there, perhaps inches from the top of the cistern ready to leap from ambush once I stepped onto the porch.

"What are doin'?"

"AH-H-H-H-H!" I screamed and dashed back to the bed, running headlong into a dark figure that I knew must be Farley, knocking it sprawling to the floor as I scrambled back to the uncertain safety of the covers.

"Git out there!" growled Fred, getting up from the floor.

"You skeered the far outa me!" I said, peeking from beneath the quilt.

"I'm goan do more'n skeer you if you don't git out there an' knock that ghost back down in that cistern," he spit through clinched teeth.

"But what'll I throw?" I pleaded. "If we throw anything we got, mother or daddy'll miss it, an' they ain't goan believe there was no ghost in that cistern."

"Yeah, you're right. O.K. Throw something from the Marshes' side of the porch."

"Plumb t'other side of th'

porch? That's too far. 'Sides, won't they miss it?"

"They won't care. They're nice folks. 'Sides, they'd let you if they'd knowed it was to git rid of a ghost! Now go on."

This new plan meant that twice I had to risk exposure to Farley's dread realm.

I had to pass the cistern on the way to find some missile, then actually approach the opening, the very yawning maw from which he might spring at any moment, upon my return to hurl it down at him.

The porch was a moonlit blue realm of unnatural shapes and shadows. My bare feet on the worn planks released a cacophony creaks and groans as I tiptoed across what seemed miles until I passed the cistern. Then something, who knew what, made a scritch, wet plop far in its depths. I dashed to the Marsh's side, looking frantically for a weapon. A rusted toolbox. Maybe it would do. It was heavy. My fingers slipped on the dust-covered rust. I could only lift one end, but there was no time to find something else. I managed to hoist one end and drag it to the cistern. I more pushed than lifted it up the barely sloping sides, got my weight under it and, sprawling across the brick face of the cistern, worried it over the edge.

I never heard the splash.

There was half a porch, 15 feet of kitchen floor linoleum, a bedroom door, two quilts and a sheet between me and the cistern ere that toolbox hit water.

"Didja git 'im?" Fred asked, sticking his head under the edge of my bedclothes shelter.

"I don't know."

"Whatcha mean, 'You don't know?' Didja hit 'im 'r not? Maybe you better go back an' see ..."

"NO! I got 'im! Busted 'im smack dab in th' face. He won't be back no more!"

True to my word, we heard no more from Farley that night, nor did we for the next few evenings.

But eventually, his dank stirrings began again.

And again I hitched up my courage and my pajama bottoms to make my trepidatious journey across the back porch haunts. Each time I would fling another object down the cistern and dash Farley back into his tormented lair.

Once or twice, Fred actually made the journey himself.

Farley no longer ruled our lives, and we had a lot more play room on the back porch.

Meanwhile, all over Avery Elementary School, we gained the reputation as fearless ghost hunters. Every recess would find the Fisher boys out under the big sweetgum, regaling our peers with the latest skirmish with the dreaded Farley ghost, ending, of course, in another

hair's breadth victory.

Life was good again.

Until one day I came home from school and saw Mr. Marsh and my father standing out in the front yard, then overheard their conversation as I stood half concealed trying to look inconspicuous, invisible if I could have managed it, behind a corner of the house. A dread more terrible than any Farley inspired crept along my spine.

"I tell you, Mr. Fisher, I've never seen or heard of a burglar like this. He never takes anything valuable. An old toolbox I kept some window weights in. A singletree. Busted lawn chair, things like that. And you haven't missed anything?"

My father recognized guilt even out of the corner of his eye.

"Son, do you know anything about this?"

I was caught like a fly in lard.

It would have done no good to lie.

I was never very good at it, especially to my father.

I blurted out the whole terrible Farley saga, now made truly terrible by virtue of our discovery. My father's knowledge swiftly killed the Farley ghost, finally and irrevocably, there in our front yard.

Farley was no longer frightening.

Now he was just silly.

I thought Mr. Marsh was going to have a heart attack, laughing like that. Years later, even after I was grown, he would see me on the street and burst into fits of mirth, regaling any passerby within 20 yards with the story of that dull-witted Fisher boy and the ghost in his cistern.

I don't remember whether my father spanked me.

I doubt it. My spankings were rare, but memorable events.

But I do remember what he told me.

Farley wasn't worth much when he was alive.

Certainly less after he was dead.

His troubles were of his own making and his fate was sealed by his failure to deal with his misfortunes.

But I had made of him in death much more than he had ever hoped to be in life.

I had extended Farley's troubles beyond the grave where they should have lain rotting and forgotten with him.

There are no such things as ghosts, he said, until people decide to make them real.

Ghosts are like toys.

We can take them out and play with them in fun. Left out and in the way, they are at best annoying and at worst, dangerous.

When we trouble others with our superstitions, we plague the world with our own foolishness.

And the fears of a fool are to be feared far more than any ghost.



# Stealing Elections Texas Style: Mrs. Blankenship Goes Out To Vote

By MELINDA PILLSBURY-FOSTER  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Mrs. Marilyn B. Blankenship noticed what a lovely day it was as she went into vote early at the Renner-Frankford Branch Dallas Public Library at 6400 Frankford Rd. two blocks from her home in Collin County, Texas near Dallas. Arthur Edwards, the widower of her oldest friend from the 4th grade, accompanied her on the short ride to the library. He waited in the car for her to finish her brief civic obligation. A native Texan, Mrs. Blankenship appreciated the mild autumn weather. Growing up in Texas, the daughter of two strong parents, had left its mark on her. She had learned self discipline from both of them, along with a strong sense of honesty.

Exercising her civic obligations was something Mrs. Blankenship took very seriously as a Texan and as an American.

After finishing college she had begun teaching school in 1952. Over her career as an educator she had watched the school system of Texas change in troubling ways. Children, she believed, need not just information, they need to acquire inquiring minds so they can think for themselves.

Mrs. Blankenship went into the familiar interior of the library and picked up her ballot. A long-time Republican, this time she was determined to vote for change. Taking her ballot she went into the voting booth and inserted her card into the Diebold Voting Machine. Diebold is a local company in Texas; one of their facilities was just down the street.

When she voted for the first couple of candidates the 'X' showed up just where she wanted it. This time she had decided not to vote for any Republicans, even those she had supported in the past. She came to the list of judges. Judges are a partisan position in Texas. Mrs. Blankenship looked at her notes. She had decided that this time her vote would go to the Libertarian candidates and one or two Democrats of whom she approved. One by one she tried to vote for her choice. Each time the machine, moved the vote to the Republican candidate. Mrs. Blankenship exclaimed in exasperation, leaving the booth to complain to one of the several ladies who was working at the polling place. One of the workers came and watched as again the machines changed her votes.



Renner -Frankfort Branch Dallas Public Library

Shaking with distress Mrs. Blankenship left the library. She could not be sure if her votes had been counted as she wanted. Now she did not notice the nice weather. Mr. Edwards could see she was upset and asked her what had happened; he advised her to call the F. B. I.

Mrs. Blankenship believes in standing up for the right thing. During the Monica Lewinsky scandal she had gone to the library and copied down the names and addresses of 100 individuals in Congress who she hoped would vote to censure President Clinton for his deceitful behavior in lying to the American people. A trickle of responses has come back to her, mostly advising her to limit

her complaints to her own representatives.

Stealing an election – and her own vote - struck her as far more serious than the misbehavior of Bill Clinton.

Mrs. Blankenship's concerns over the moral character and the intentions of those in power had been growing over the decades. She had watched as the quality of education offered to the children she taught had become truncated, the focus moving away from the core of essential literacy and understanding of civics and history to a candy coated curriculum that neither prepared the students for real life or established a life time love of learning. It was not a partisan issue, it went much

deeper. The advent of Governor Bush has only accelerated the deterioration of the education offered to the children of Texas. Where would it end? Didn't they want the children to know anything? The question lingered in her mind, worrying her.

And now she was filled with a sense of violation. Did they expect that she would just walk out of the polling place and do nothing? Mrs. Blankenship opened the door of her home, sat down at her desk, and began to write letters.

October 24, 2006

I am contacting in writing the Election Bureau of Collin County to continue the paper trail I have created concerning the voting irregularity I experienced on Oct. 23, at 11:45 a. m. at Precinct 74 located at the Renner-Frankford Library in Dallas, Collin County. I filed a complaint by telephone on the day of the irregularity with Jan Lay in McKinney. She suggested I write to my federal representatives who passed the law requiring voting machines to be used which I have done. I have also talked by telephone with the Secretary of State's office and sent a summary letter along with a copy of my letter to the elected federal persons representing me to Austin.

You will note that I am enclosing two articles of national concern that the Diebold voting machine which I used is not secure. Why are officials dragging their feet on making the computers create a paper trail so that voters like me can be sure that their votes were not stolen by a machine? There is proof that problems in Texas have occurred where votes were added that were never cast and other examples where votes have been credited to candidates not chosen.

The machine I was using recorded a vote for a Republican three times instead of the Libertarian I chose in three cases for individuals listed in succession on the screen. I was so shocked I spoke out-loud that the machine was not recording my votes, but giving my votes to a candidate I did not choose. I had to make three corrections in successive order to correct these three errors. I was even more shocked when the summary appeared. I saw that Perry, Dewhurst and Combs were being credited with votes I DID NOT CAST FOR ANY OF THEM! I am positive who I chose for those offices and Chris Bell was being denied the vote I cast. These three errors in the summary were corrected by me before the ballot was submitted and my card withdrawn. I will forever believe that the machine I was using was rigged to switch votes to Republicans.

Collin County is known to be a Republican strong-hold, but I do not vote for a party. I vote for each individual candidate. If there is no opposition candidate and I do not want the lone candidate, I do not cast a vote at all in that category. I choose the candidates I support as an independent person who uses my vote as the Constitution intended it to be used. I have been voting regularly since 1952 when I cast my first votes in the presidential election.

Please take seriously my complaint about voting on a rigged Diebold machine and please do not pass this off as a glitch in the machine I was using. I do not think a glitch caused what I experienced in early voting Oct. 23, 2006. I consider the errors as fraud on the part of someone who tampered with the computer in that machine.

Marilyn B. Blankenship

## Don't Vote on Election Day Unless ... Eight Things to Look for in a Candidate

By JAMES C. HARRINGTON  
DIRECTOR, TEXAS CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT

AARP is running elegant "don't vote" commercials on television, cleverly making the point that we shouldn't vote until we know how candidates stand on issues. Makes sense, of course, but many people really don't inform themselves before they vote.

The Texas Civil Rights Project doesn't have a budget for good citizenship ads like AARP's, but we can respectfully suggest to voters what we think are critical issues in this election, from a human rights perspective.

First, we need Congress members who will tighten laws that ban warrantless spying on Americans and prohibit warrantless gathering records of our phone calls and internet usage and what we purchase.

Second, we should vote for Congress members who will limit the Administration's attempt to avoid compliance with the Geneva Convention, and who will insist on no torture, access to counsel, and

fair and public trials for anyone in American custody. If we hold ourselves out to the world as a leader in constitutional democracy, we have to practice what we preach. Hypocrisy undermines democratic leadership.

Third, we should support federal and state legislators who are seriously committed to real educational reform and willing to put significant resources and funding into that effort – and end the current sham testing regime. Education, after all, drives a democracy. Better pay and respect for teachers, smaller classes, and appropriate testing are a must.

Fourth, we need state and federal senators and representatives, who will vote for health care access for all people. It's a shame that 150,000 Americans go overseas every year for state-of-the-art medical procedures that cost one-fourth what they do here, paid for by their insurance companies. Those who don't have insurance or are in the middle class don't have this luxury and pay more for

### GUEST COMMENTARY

less care.

Fifth, it's time to elect officials who will raise the minimum wage to \$7.50/hour. It's been at \$5.15 since 1997. The dollar's buying power has dropped 25% since 1997. Raising the minimum wage to \$7.50 would benefit more than 8 million workers, including an estimated 760,000 single mothers and 1.8 million parents with children under 18. But even this increase would get them only to the poverty line. That's how bad it is now.

Sixth, we should support federal legislators who endorse comprehensive immigration reform that will speedily and fairly regularize the legal status of 12 million undocumented immigrants in this country, and integrate them fully into our democratic institutions.

Seventh, this country and this state need a fair and just system of taxation that doesn't dispropor-

tionately burden the middle class but which calls upon the rich, who have benefited greatly from this country, to share their wealth. Taxation should become a way of supporting our society in a just manner and not a means of gathering even more wealth.

Finally, we should elect candidates to federal office who support an immediate end to the war in Iraq and who will change the Administration's myopic view toward other nations. More than anytime in history, we are a global community, and the United States has to act accordingly, and responsibly. That will help undermine terrorism better than anything else this nation can do.

If a candidate for office doesn't subscribe to these principles, then we should not vote for him or her. Pure and simple.

*The Texas Civil Rights Project, a nonprofit foundation, promotes civil rights and economic and racial justice throughout Texas.*



# Fear Its Self

I know why you did it. I understand that you were afraid, at least initially. After all, you were just doing what you were told, just marching in line with the rest of the team. Remember Reagan's 11th: You do these things for our protection.

But when they said how a patriot must act, you accepted it as law.

And when they claimed an inherent power to commit a crime, you went along.

When they changed their reasons for war, and changed them again, and again and again, you let it slide. And when they said

"Mission Accomplished," you posed for the cameras.

When they said seniors will benefit from a system that enables drug makers to raise prices and lock out competition, you agreed, and even personally profited. All the while thousands of our elders suffered and died, unable to obtain the drugs which sustain them.

When they said it was okay to carry out acts that many Japanese soldiers were once condemned as war criminals for, you abdicated your duty to justice.

When they said they could jail



## The Webster Retort

By Stephen Webster

an American without charge, simply by declaring something to be so without having to present any evidence, you gave your approval.

When they said stay out of it, sit down, and shut up; Congress has no right to be involved in the conduct of a war, you tucked your tail and obeyed.

When they said it was time to hand the keys to the people's treasury over to the richest one percent of the nation, you went as far as buying them a gold-

fringed lanyard.

When they said it was alright to invade the homes of citizens without a warrant and detain our brothers and sisters without the sacred Writ upon which our very democracy is based, you nodded in agreement.

When they said judges have not the right to uphold the Constitution against the will of a man unelected and his band of ethically-challenged mates, you allowed it.

When they contaminated our weapons with depleted uranium, and thousands of soldiers and Iraqis began to fall ill or die, you said Fine, and fought against programs to screen our young men and women for this poison as they return from the sand pit.

When they said that the people really shouldn't be trusted with such liberal freedoms as those afforded by the Bill of Rights, you aided their treason.

When they said Help is On the Way, you were silent, watching as certainly as we all were as the façade of equality was brutally beaten and drowned in the murky, blackened waters of New Orleans.

And then, when they said it was time to repeal Posse Comitatus, the last protection the people retain that keeps our military from conducting operations on our soil without civilian control, you thought it might be a good idea.

When they said that the working families of this nation should no longer be allowed debt relief through bankruptcy, you pulled the line, further driving a steak into the heart of the American dream.

Then, one day, someone said, No. And then another, and another, until those who said No outnumbered those who would lie down and watch as a thousand tiny men with a thousand tiny daggers bleed Lady Justice dry, drop by drop by drop.

Then, one day, the thunderous applause stopped, until it was only you and a few others, blindly eulogizing the glory of the absence of liberty and the preservation of a New Type of Freedom; Orwell's prophecy fulfilled.

Then, one day, the righteous looked around them and realized they are being enslaved on the land their fathers died to defend. But soon the righteous will have an opportunity to Take Back their Destiny.

And I really, really hope they do.

It was another such time, during a period of exaggerated threat and tyrannical rule, when towers of men who were then considered terrorists, burned words immortal into the blood-drenched earth. Those words

ring loudly still today, as our forefathers scream from the heavens that Freedom is something that Dies if it is not Used.

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury.

For obstructing the Administration of Justice by refusing Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

For rendering the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent.

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Such were the words of John Hancock, who provided for us a foundation by which we can wrest our destiny back into the hands of those who build it, and away from those who would merely destroy.

It must be done.

For when they come for the Reporters, it will be in the name of preserving secrets of the state. In doing so, they will blind and gag the people.

And when they come for the Muslims, they will abate, because they are not them. In doing so, they will repeat a great sin we once fought against with every drop of our blood.

And when they come for the Mexicans, they will say nothing, because they do not vote. And in doing so, they will beat their drums as justification for upholding the Rule of Law.

And when they come for the Gays, they will remain quiet, for their ways, though harmless to others, were not pleasing. And in doing so, they will laude their own morality and a perversion of Christianity as the highest law.

And when they come for the Veterans who speak out against the chaos that fuels their cause, they will stay in their seats, for the Veterans' plight affects but a few. And in doing so, they will be defending the state from "enemy propagandists."

And when they come for their political opponents, they will applaud, for there will be nothing standing in the way. And in doing so, our democracy will have perished.

And when they come for the Christians who still adhere to the teachings of their Savior, they will further twist the words of a loving God into a resounding damnation. And in doing so, they will firmly establish an American Theocracy to dictate

Continued On Next Page

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## Texas And The Good Old Boys Are Determined To Get Smart Even If They Kill Him

By MELINDA PILLSBURY-FOSTER  
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Phil Smart is a Certified Public Accountant who runs his own business in a small town in Texas in the Dallas area. He runs his business out of his home, which is out in the country, allowing him the freedom he wants to indulge in his hobbies. In his hours away from the computer and pencil and paper Phil likes to restore old cars. His pride and joy is a Capri from the 60s, but he also is proud of owning one of only seven Edsels still in existence.

Phil Smart loves animals and has for years rescued abandoned dogs and cats, feeding them himself and finding loving homes for them. Several years ago his home was ransacked and two of his cats who were declawed escaped. They were killed. Mr. Smart found their bodies when he returned home. Smart's home had been invaded by the police while he was incarcerated on yet another traffic violation. The authorities found nothing illegal but left the Smart home a shambles. They began characterizing Philip Smart as a terrorist.

Smart graduated from Southern Methodist University in Dallas with degrees in business and psychology, going on to get another degree that allowed him to practice his profession. Phil is a quiet kind of guy except when he attends debates and forums. He started getting interested in politics several years ago and then two years ago decided to run for County Commissioner as a Libertarian.

He was arrested three weeks before that election and not released until after the vote was in. This election season Phil is running for State Senate, again as a Libertarian. The timing for his arrest is similar this time, a strange and unaccountable coincidence.

His interest in politics caused Phil to ask questions for those in charge of the local government. Speaking up is evidently something that upsets the local establishment. Along with asking questions at forums Phil posts signs and bumper stickers declaring his love for freedom and Libertarianism. This tendency to ask questions of persons in positions of authority is, according to his girl friend, Donna Watson, the reason Philip Smart has been arrested six times in the last two years. Donna is a financial counselor at an Oncology facility in a town nearby.

On the first occasion, Philip was upset that his bank would not give him cash for his CD. All the rest of the times the cause of his trips to the local jail have been traffic issues. On one of these occasions a female officer stopped him on his motorcycle, demanding his license. She then searched his motorcycle over his objections, also neglecting to note this on her report. But the motorcycle bears her fingerprints.

On this last occasion Philip was stopped for bringing his car to a stop six inches over the line at the stop sign. The arresting officer, a Sargent Rogers, then insisted on searching Smart's car, finding the daytimer that holds his medications. Since he had failed to carry these in the bottles that had the prescriptions included he was arrested. The next day Donna offered to bring down the prescriptions. She was told not to bother. Ms. Watson was told by Lisa Moon, the officer staffing the desk, that it is illegal to carry prescription drugs unless they are in bottles that have the prescribing physician, the pharmacy, and the name of the patient.

Philip Smart has been incarcerated in the Ellis County Correctional Facility located at Wayne

McCollum Detention Center, 300 South Jackson, Waxahachie, Texas 75165. He has no blanket and so at nights he is cold.

You would think that given his good character and the nature of the charges he would be placed with other nonviolent offenders. But instead he is incarcerated with hardened criminals. On at least one of these occasions he was placed in solitary confinement, lights on 24 hours a day for two weeks.

Now Philip Smart is suffering from the lack of the prescription drugs he needs to survive. His mother, Jesse Smart, works at Sak's; His father, Dr. Don Smart, is an Ophthalmologist. No one knows what to tell Phil's 16-year-old son, who is asking what happened to his Dad.

Phil Smart lives on a cul de sac street. Last year his beloved dog, Puppy, a Shelly-mix, turned up dead on his lawn, the victim of a hit and run. The neighbors were shocked and believe that Puppy's death was caused by Smart's political activism, the activism that so upsets the powers that be in Ellis County.

Far from being a threat to society Phil attends a tiny local church when he does not attend his girl friend's church. Certainly Phil did not expect that running for office as a Libertarian would prove to be so hazardous to his health. But Donna received a call from a consulting psychiatrist who was allowed to view Philip Smart remotely from his office in Galveston, Texas. The doctor was worried. Philip Smart's physical condition had deteriorating rapidly and he was shaky and disoriented from cold and the lack of his prescriptions. Those concerns evidently forced those in charge to ensure that neglecting to carry his prescription bottles with him did not become a death sentence. His mother received a call on Oct. 25, demanding she bring down a list of those prescriptions. Today, by indirect report, we have learned that Mr. Smart's condition has improved.

On Saturday, Oct. 28, supporters of the incarcerated CPA were leafleting in front of the Courthouse in Waxahachie in hopes of both securing his release and to support a candidacy that seems to them increasingly more significant in the face of harassment that can, they feel, only reflect the truth of the corruption with which Smart accused them originally. The coordinator of the effort, Gardner Osborne, is a candidate himself for U.S. Representative to Congress from the 12th District. His phone number is 858-373-7591.

Support for the plucky CPA is growing rapidly fueled by shock and concern. Onlookers learning of the events of the last three weeks are concluding that the rules of engagement have changed with many now speculating that Texas and Homeland Security are about to declare Mr. Philip Smart, a quiet CPA, a threat to National Security. They understand that if that is the case and with *Habeas Corpus* extinguished Philip Smart may be up for an extended vacation in one of the Homeland Prison Facilities in Texas that are even less attractive than the Ellis County Jail and many of them might be joining them there.

In America today there are evidently no rules we recognize.

Melinda Pillsbury-Foster was an early member of the Libertarian Party of California, serving there as Southern Vice Chairman for six terms while managing campaigns and running for officer herself. In 1988 she reregistered Republican and became active in the National Federation of Republican Women, managed the 1995 Convention for the Republican Liberty Caucus, and joined the Republican Women's Club of New York.

### GUEST COMMENTARY

## THE WEBSTER RETORT

From Previous Page

which behaviors may be acceptable.

But they forget that all Despots fear Representative Governance. Unfortunately, they never did think that one day, it might be the Representatives next on the list. And when they come for them, they will lose their choice to be silent. The decision will be made for them, and their irrelevance will cease to be.

In times such as these, I am comforted by the words of a leader long past: Franklin Delano Roosevelt. For truly, in this day, we have nothing to fear but fear itself.

Remember, remember, the Seventh of November, a day when redemption shall be sought. I see no reason, why the Seventh of November, should ever be forgot.

## Corruption Is Flourishing In Texas

**Texans Must Reign-In Gov. Rick Perry and Hold Him and Other Violators Accountable!**



Texas  
Commentary

By Peter Stern

Corruption starts at the Governor's Office and oozes down throughout the legislature and various governmental offices. Many of our elected and appointed officials are lining their pockets as Texans and their families via taxes and proposed toll roads are being forced to pay the tab.

"Enough is enough, and enough is too much!" — *Popeye the Sailor; cartoon character*

Gov. Rick Perry feels he is above the law — and at this time he may be correct. The governor has run amok. Apparently there are no laws in Texas to reign-in a runaway governor! There are no laws to protect Texans and their families from the governor's special interest power-plays!

**Here are important things Texans can do:**

- Vote-out the governor in November
- Demand that our elected legislators change the law so that in

the future all governors of Texas may be held accountable by the people

· Develop and implement a "recall" bill that would enable Texas voters to recall the governor via a public referendum/vote.

It's time Texas taxpayers grab the power from the Office of the Governor to protect themselves from scoundrels like Rick Perry.

*Peter Stern of Driftwood, Texas is a political writer well-known and published frequently throughout the Texas community and nationwide.*

You may contact Peter Stern at: [<psstern@austin.rrr.com>](mailto:psstern@austin.rrr.com).

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# if...



## Out Of The Blue

By Jerry Tenuto

Let me know if the following sounds familiar:

"An evil exists that threatens every man, woman, and child of this great country. We must take steps to insure our domestic security and protect our Homeland"

- Adolf Hitler, 1933 (Thanks to *Information Clearing House*/Tom Feeley)

No one will ever forget the way King George XLIII and all loyal Republicans mocked Sen. John Kerry during the 2004 Presidential Campaign as a "flip-flopper."

How infantile it was, to see the convention delegates pull out their Wal\*Mart flip-flops (made in China, no doubt) and start banging them together.

They couldn't comprehend the nuances of a man who was able to stand back from an issue and re-assess it after a time, then come to the conclusion that maybe his initial judgment wasn't the correct choice. You know, somebody who had the cerebral capability to reason through a situation, rationalize it thoroughly, and admit he may have made a mistake — or was lied to in the first place.

In short, a thinking individual; a living decorated, wounded-in-action war veteran.

What the GOP faithful wanted, and gave the World, was four more years of a stubborn, hardheaded fool, a jackass in human form who could take one idea and go with nothing else; a proven chickenhawk who was incapable of change because he understands neither the complexities of leadership nor nonlinear lucubration.

Besides, changing one's mind ain't manly — only womenfolk change their minds.

No, someone who could actually think freely frightened the bejesus out of the rank and file GOP membership, because they had been indoctrinated *en masse* into the school of "it is unacceptable to think."

That was the policy statement announced by George when he demanded Congress enact his personal law, the Military Commissions Act of 2006, *sic* The Torture Law, elevating him to dictatorial status.

It is a mindset we who possess active gray matter have seen festering among our sadly deluded fellow Americans since the Newt Gingrich "Contract With America" back in 1994. What a confidence game that was — Newtie's Republicans sure didn't make any contract with me. A more apt title would

have been "Contract On America."

Instead of suing these schmoees for breach of contract, their constituents schlepped to the polls for the next five consecutive elections and blindly voted them back into office without any consideration of the consequences.

They even gave these nabobs their very own Fearless Leader to kneel before and ass to kiss the past six years.

Now look at the mess they've put us in.

A big reason why we're in this mess is His Excellency, George, has been insisting we must "stay the course" in his supreme failure of failures, Iraq.

"Stay the course" until victory is achieved has been the King's battle cry in his War on Terror; fighting off a virtually non-existent enemy through Herr Oberst Karl Rove's repetitious tactic of frightening the Party loyalists.

But, nobody knows where the course leads, except that it's costing thousands of American and coalition lives; hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives; hundreds of billions in taxpayer dollars; America's prestige throughout the World; plus our Nation's economic and physical security for generations to come.

As for the victory part... well, we all know to the victor go the spoils. Halliburton and its subsidiaries, a charity primarily dedicated to the old-age care and welfare of Dark Lord the Dick Cheney and his family, have been enjoying the spoils from day one. So have CACI, Bechtel and any other number of other military-industrial complex war profiteers.

The rest of the Gang of Four — George, Condoliar, Rummy — along with their bestest friends in the oil business have been chomping at the bit for their opportunity for draining Iraq dry, to set into motion pre-invasion plans to carve that country up like a giant Thanksgiving turkey.

Recently, though, with things not going quite as well as George and the GOP might have wished in Iraq and elsewhere (namely, within the borders of the United States), the White House spinners have explained that we've misunderstood the meaning of "stay the course" these past couple of years.

Why, it doesn't mean stay the course at all.

According to the snake oil peddler who poses as a press

secretary, Tony Snow in his best FAUXNEWS babble said, "What you have here is not 'stay the course' but in fact a study in constant motion by the administration."

What utter hogwash. The only "study in constant motion" this Regime is interested in is how to bamboozle the voters into sucking down more of their cow turds during even-numbered years.

George is making every attempt possible to distance himself from those three words, the ones he and his mouthpieces have been using as talking points for far too many months. Now, with polls (to which our little dictator never pays attention) indicating disaster for his party, echoed by his own Daddy, King George XLIII is doing his own giant "flip-flop" regarding the Iraq debacle.

His Excellency has even gone so far as to say he never had a "stay the course" policy. Do these guys not know there are things such as cameras, microphones, videodiscs and tapes recording pretty much everything they say and do? Are they that stupid, or do they think we are?

How curious that this flip-flop has come about just around the same time as George, Dark Lord, Rummy, Condoliar and Herr Karl are being skewered in books that outline dissent and ineptitude within the West Wing (by Bob Woodward), and lies to and mockery of the religious right who got them enough votes to perform the coup (by former staffer David Kuo).

King George and Dark Lord have regurgitated mean-spirited slander again and again aimed at evil Liberals and Democrats who are al Qaeda sympathizers for wanting to pull out of a useless waste of American lives, military might and money. However, in the biggest flip-flop yet, now that the Iraqis are on record as saying the time has come to set a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. Forces, as Congressional and Senate Democrats have been asking, the new tack is to look into a feasible plan.

This, of course, is George and Herr Karl's standard play option, with less than two weeks before an election and the GOP limping badly — make statements about how things will change provided the Republicans keep control of all three branches, with the intention to do nothing at all once the status quo remains intact.

Along the trip through Fearless Leader's Fantasyland, take a ride on the "Economy Spinner." George, who's never in his life had to worry about the source of any money he's

wasted — yours, mine, Daddy's, Grandpa's Nazi War Spoils — has the chutzpah to keep telling us "the economy is doing well."

To his off-kilter way of thinking, "the economy is strong."

Sure, if you earn over \$150,000 per year.

And it's especially strong for the 1% at the top income level, where George and his partners dwell in greed and avarice.

The schmuck keeps boasting, with that chimp-like smirk, how Americans have more money in their pockets due to his tax cut policies. I don't see it. I don't feel it. I don't know anyone who's really better off than they were eight years ago.

Wages have remained stagnant pretty much across the board no matter in what field of endeavor one works. Any meager increases have been more than eaten up by inflation — housing, food, gas, heating, clothes, medical expenses — sorely ignored by George and his GOP lapdogs in Congress.

Minimum wage has remained a disgustingly slave labor-level \$5.15 per hour, guaranteeing that the extremely poor remain right where they are. (States where Democrats run the show, like Illinois, have taken the lead and set higher minimum wage levels.)

The little dictator and his minions, multi-millionaires all, keep repeating the mantra that 6.6 million new jobs have been created since August of 2003. But, what did we lose between the end of the Clinton administration and then? Wasn't it somewhere in the neighborhood of 9-10 million jobs?

As for these "new" jobs, the vast majority of them are nowhere near the level of the ones that were sent overseas, courtesy of GOP outsourcing policies. People that were earning \$20 or more per hour now have to scrape by with two minimum wage jobs that don't even give full-time hours and benefits.

Most of these 6.6 million new

jobs the Regime is so fond of reminding us about creating come with the phrases "would you like fries with that?" or "have a nice day," because there's nowhere left to work in America for English-speaking natives but fast food joints and retail stores.

If you're a white male over 35 with a degree, especially an advanced degree, good luck getting hired anywhere for any position.

In George's rosy economy scenario, he never once mentions the massive consumer debt that's choking the majority of Americans. It's the only thing keeping this economy alive. Now, thanks to the Supremes and Congress, the interest rates on credit cards are up as high as 29.9%, even for folks with A-1 ratings!

But, on the positive side, what George says about the so-called *death tax* is "it's a bad tax" that needs to be eliminated. Why, of course it is and does. After all, this tax really only affects the wealthiest Americans — they never pay their fair share while alive, so why should they contribute anything after they pass? Yet, these are the same people who feel it's their entitlement to control policy. Go figure.

To the viewer of the Sci-Fi Channel, you'll know that its programming most likely doesn't interest the Conservative Right-wingers.

Most assuredly the evangelists and Religious Righties would love to see the network eliminated from view altogether. After all, the shows found on Sci-Fi are virtually wall-to-wall imaginary, 24/7, 52 weeks per year; what a Godless endeavor. To them, the offerings of Sci-Fi Channel are borne of scientific gibberish, not historic biblical fact; they lift praise to mythological creatures not of this Earth and definitely not from heaven.

(Forget that true believers recognize God as the entity who

Continued On Next Page

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## TENUTO

From Previous Page

imbued the writers, directors, actors, set designers, et al with the talent necessary to create these shows. And it's a perfectly acceptable, even healthy activity for human to enjoy watching dramas and comedies unfold.)

Basically, the Sci-Fi Channel is a window to a World of what tomorrow could be; thus, I find it apropos that the net uses as its catchphrase or "hook" one simple word: if.

It always starts my brain wandering whenever I watch something on Sci-Fi and see one of their "bumpers" with that word, "if."

So, I'd like you to consider the word in a larger context. Before you head out to the polls next Tuesday, or send in your absentee ballot, please remember the possibilities that have awed you in science fiction writing, movies and television.

Think about all of those wonderful inventions we were told to expect back in the middle and latter part of the 20th Century that never came to pass (yet the technology existed to perfect them).

Consider how far our great Nation has slid down that slippery slope into the abyss of bottomless black water.

Pull up a search engine or open a history book and read the constitution of the United States of America.

Look into the complete lack of quality, integrity and honesty among the leaders of our Executive and Legislative branches.

Then repeat one simple word of hope to yourself all week long, just two letters that say more than any 900-page diatribe can ever accomplish:

if

If you want your life to be controlled like that of an automaton by big business...

If you want your children and their children to continue to attend schools that are second and third in quality to the rest of the industrialized World...

If you want a neverending war for oil with profits going to the people who are already the richest people in the Nation...

If you want to keep sacrificing our best and bravest sons and daughters in that war...

If you want the only corporations in America with any future to be those that are part and parcel of the military-industrial complex...

If it is acceptable to you to suffer a Senate and House of Representatives that fail to uphold the Constitution each and every member has sworn to defend and protect...

If you care to waste valuable legislator time and taxpayer money in endless debate of personal choice issues like same-sex marriage, flag burning, legalization of marijuana, and sundry other topics we all as adult Americans should enjoy the freedom to decide for ourselves...

If you can venture into the future without the prospect of advanced medical research aimed at ending the misery of debilitating maladies such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, Muscular Dystrophy, Multiple Sclerosis, et al...

If you want an untrustworthy gutless wonder like Herr Karl Rove, who never ran for any office, to continue as overseer of our Government from the relative safety of the shadows behind the Oval Office...

If you want Condoleezza Rice, a consummate prevaricator the likes of which this World stage has rarely seen, to keep making a travesty of diplomacy...

If you want to retain Donny Rumsfeld, the most egotistical and inept Defense Secretary in U.S. history...

If you think that Dick Cheney, a guy who scored five deferments during the VietNam War, then willingly helped commit our military to an endless quagmire of death and destruction in Iraq (while his company reaps ungodly profits atop their mutilated corpses and mangled bodies), and earned a reputation as "Dark Lord" from his sour attitude and ill-mannered lack of statesmanship should be vice-president for one moment longer...

If you want to live in a United States of America where the guy who sits in the White House was never elected — twice; the faux-president is incapable of proper speech or thought without a script or earpiece; our Fearless Leader who skipped out on VietNam and then the Air National Guard acts as though he were a king, Fuhrer and now, thanks to the passage of his own law, is by all accounts a dictator who can ignore the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Amendments to our Constitution; where you are subject to be spied upon electronically in your own home, arrested, "renditioned" and held without any reason for any amount of time; subjected to torture at the whim of executive order...

If you desire to live in a nation where fear is the operational mode, a land not open to the constructs of "Freedom for All" but more in line with the Fascist tyrannical rule that dominated Europe, circa 1933-1945...

Continued On Next Page

# Things I Can Do Without:

## 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.

· Message machines. If I'm not there, just call me back. I really sort of admire folks who refuse to install an answering machine, although these days it's usually a surprise when you can't leave a message somehow. I admit that we have one. An excellent benefit of message machines and caller ID is that they make it possible to avoid the majority of telemarketers. By the way, it's totally acceptable to say anything you like — anything at all — to a recording. You can scream or curse. No one can blame you. You won't have to apologize later. You can let off a lot of steam in this manner. I highly recommend it.

· Telemarketers. Also junk mail, junk email, junk faxes, and pop-ups on computers.

· Businesses that prey on / take advantage of the naive, innocent and elderly.

· Electric dishwashers. I haven't had an electric dishwasher since I moved back to the ranch. I'd sure like one, but I can live without it. Two human dishwashers live here, and we'll just have to suffer through. So many of our "time-saving" appliances don't save all that much time anyway. A study was done recently to see how much "housework time" is actually saved these days with all our wonderful modern time savers. It was determined that people actually spend more time, not less. And in the case of things like dish drying and ironing (not that I do much of the latter these days), those were often the times when people used to pause to think and reflect as they do the chore. Modern folks don't seem to have that kind of time these days. And that's probably a real pity. I remember my parents doing the dishes together. Mom would wash and Dad would dry. They'd chat as they worked. Of course as soon as I was old enough, I seem to remember Dad needing to go watch the news a lot during dish drying time. I pretty much took over his job. As I got older, I believe I often did a lot of both the washing and the drying. I guess it was only fair. My parents did plenty for me. All kids had chores to do back in the "old days".

· Clothes dryers. I do have one, but I still prefer a clothesline for most things (unless we hit a rainy spell when nothing will dry outside. Since we've had a two-year drought, damp days haven't been much

of a problem lately. Most of the time Mother Nature provides fresh air and sunshine for a price that can't be beat. But hanging clothes takes time, which, for most folks these days is in short supply, what with two family incomes, etc. (I often wonder if we really need the things that two family incomes can buy. And then I remind myself that now it probably takes two breadwinners to provide just the basics in most cases. What's wrong with this picture?)

Some things actually dry smoother hanging outside than in the dryer. I know, I know, if you put it in the dryer for a few minutes and then hang it up, that will often give you the best result. The problem is that I usually forget to take it out of the dryer until it's too late. With the clothesline, the towels feel like sand paper, but nothing's perfect. You can always put them in the dryer.

· Coffee. I know everyone else in this country seems addicted to it, but I rarely drink it. It upsets my stomach and makes my heart race. If I want a vice or addiction, I'll choose chocolate or ice cream any time.

· Text Messaging. Not only do I not care to pay extra for this feature, but I don't want to type on a keyboard smaller than the palm of my hand. Doing so would also require that I put on my reading glasses. There's nothing I have to say that is so important it cannot wait until I reach a phone or an adult-sized keyboard. I do certainly see how text messaging could be helpful during dull meetings or for clandestine communications, certainly more secretive than a cell phone conversation. And we thought Dick Tracy's watch would never become reality. Ha!

This reminds me of something I heard the other day. Some of the best inventions have been created AFTER a writer of fantasy or fiction imagined them and put them in a book, cartoon, television show or movie. Star Trek creators and writers can be credited with the inspiration for several major inventions in the medi-

cal field, among others. How about THAT?

· Space exploration to the far reaches of the universe. It's infinitely interesting, but does satisfying our curiosity warrant the cost? Shouldn't we be, oh, I don't know, maybe feeding the hungry or finding cures for illness?

· Wars we shouldn't be involved in.

· MP-3 Players and the ability to download thousands of tunes from the Internet. I know this is very important to multitudes of people, but it's simply not important to me. Although I enjoy almost any variety of GOOD music, I also enjoy peace and quiet. A lot. You notice I live in the country now. The idea of going around with a cell phone or an MP-3 Player stuck in my ear (The Blue Tooth is only a step away from surgical implantation, if you ask me), is anathema to my desire for peace. I LIKE to hear birds, the train whistle, wind in the trees. I do admit that the radio in my truck usually goes on with the ignition. But that's different. I'd rather hear tunes than traffic. I can sing along and no one will hear, a blessing, believe me. I do drive without the radio a lot as well. Sometimes, any noise just makes me nervous or interferes with my concentration. I've never claimed to be able to do two things (well) at once. You won't usually catch me driving while talking on the cell phone either. California's making this illegal, by the way, and so should every other state in the nation.

(If I drive in Dallas, my kids usually insist that I turn off the radio. If I get distracted, I'm scary. Well, actually, they prefer to drive me around in big cities now. I seem to have lost my edge, being so long in the country). Music also gets in the way of talking to myself in the truck. (Like you've never done it?) I seem to settle a lot of arguments with myself in this way. I can relive bothersome encounters and say all the things I should have said or wish I'd thought of — if I had only been quicker. It's a darn good time to blast away at those who've "done me wrong". I can bare my soul and hurt no one, settle scores with no repercussions, let off steam and not have to feel badly or apologize later. (— Sort of like cursing at telemarketing recordings). — Which brings me to a few

Continued On Next Page



# Are You Tired Of This Campaign, Too?

For months, radio and television ads and billboards have assaulted us about various candidates and political issues for the upcoming mid-term election. It's not just the volume of campaign ads that gets on my nerves. It's the negativity, and sometimes just their stupidity. Are you just as tired of this campaign as I am? Aren't you sick of ads like this one:

"Vote for me, and you vote for the security of this nation. I stand for moral values. Vote for my opponent, and you vote for someone who loves illegal immigrants and murderers more than he loves good, honest Americans."

But it's getting harder and

harder to avoid campaign ads. If I'm watching a ball game or a movie on TV, they go to a commercial and say something like, "A vote for the other guy is a vote to end America as we know it." When I'm driving in my car, the commercials are on the radio. Even if I turn off the radio, I see the ads on billboards.

And if I'm at home with the television and radio off, the political mudslinging still manages to make its way into my house through an insidious technique called, "the prerecorded telephone call."

Here's how they work in my house. The phone rings, I answer it, and then I hear something like this: VOICE: "Hello,



## Modern Times

By Lloyd Garver

I'm Jane Smith, a candidate for Congress in your district." LLOYD: "Jane Smith! Great! I have a lot of questions for you." You see, I don't realize it's a recorded voice for a second or two. But of course, by the time I say a couple of words, she is already on to why I should vote for her instead of the evil person who is running against her. I hate that it's a recording. It even

turns me off to the candidate. I didn't feel this way before the call, but once I've answered the phone, I feel that if she really wants my vote, let her call me for real.

As Election Day gets closer and the contests become tighter, I think we can assume that campaigns will intrude upon our lives even more. Look up at the beautiful sky these days, and you may see skywriting that urges you to "vote against the flag burner." Check your e-mail, and you're bound to see messages asking you to "vote for a real American." Try to play an innocent game of Scrabble, and somehow those campaign managers will make the letters spell

out something like, "The other guy once had a mistress."

We also can expect the campaigns to get even dirtier. They're already well below sleazy. In New Jersey, two state legislature candidates have accused each other of helping criminals. In Wisconsin, one Congressional candidate has said voters shouldn't support the incumbent because, among other things, "he voted to finance federal research of transgender Eskimos." One worthy of nobody's respect is going on in New York, where Hillary Clinton's opponent, John Spencer, denies that he told a reporter for the NEW YORK DAILY NEWS that Hillary used to be "ugly," before she had "millions of dollars of plastic surgery." And a California Congressional candidate sent out mailers, telling immigrants that if they voted in a federal election, they'd be committing a crime. In actuality, of course, immigrants who have become naturalized citizens may vote. (His party, the GOP, has asked him to drop out of the race).

Negative attack ads are nothing new. They're part of the American tradition. Maybe we shouldn't complain about them, because I'm not even so sure that they've been getting meaner and dirtier lately. LBJ's "Daisy Girl" commercial that showed an innocent girl one moment and a nuclear holocaust the next might be the most famous in this genre. Going back even farther, Thomas Jefferson's opponents called him every name imaginable. And in 1884, both major candidates got into it. Since Grover Cleveland was accused of fathering an illegitimate child, his opponent, James Blaine, had the classy campaign slogan of, "Ma, Ma, Where's My Pa? Gone to the White House, Ha, Ha, Ha." And the best Cleveland could come up with in response was, "Blaine, Blaine, James G. Blaine, The Continental Liar from the State of Maine."

But at least Blaine and Cleveland didn't interrupt your evening by reciting their stupid poems on your phone at home.

Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier" to "Home Improvement." He has also read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the "Modern Times" column for CBSnews.com's Opinion page and a weekly column for SportsLine.com. He can be reached at [lloydgarver@yahoo.com](mailto:lloydgarver@yahoo.com)

## TENUTO

From Previous Page

If any or all of these conditions are agreeable to the way in which you wish to live, then by all means please vote Republican.

However...

If you want to make a change, to see sunny skies return, to begin the healing process not only of an ailing Government but a Nation that seeks strong recuperative therapy, a populous that can smile again and not be

so pissed off at each other all the time, the time has come to vote Democrat or Independent.

Who can tell me what the Statue of Liberty stands for?

Saturday, Oct. 28, was the 120th Anniversary of the dedication of the Statue of Liberty. Do you remember from whence it came?

France.

Yes, the French, those good folks we were told to stomp on by the Republican Congress because they refused to buy King George XLIII's cock and bull story

about Saddam Hussein's WMDs back in 2003.

The French and most of the rest of the World used to be our friends. It won't take that much effort or too long to make nice again - all that's needed is change in Washington, D.C.

It can happen in one day... just one span of 16 hours when the worm turns and we, the people, take our Nation back, along with our inalienable right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness (so I stole a phrase - tell Jefferson to sue me).

The force is with you.

Shalom, thinking Americans.

(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))

## RUSTIC RAMBLINGS

From Previous Page

other things I could do without:

- Corrupt, self-serving politicians.
- Horrible middle managers that shouldn't have the jobs they hold, but no one can or will fire them.
- People with no manners.
- Two-faced people.

- Attorneys who have no humanity.
- Physicians who think they're God. (No one locally. That's why I visit our own clinic when I need medical care).
- Insurance companies that are happy to take one's money but don't want to honor legitimate claims.

- Health care that is too expensive.
- Health insurance that is too expensive.
- The people who drove up the price of health care and health insurance: politicians with agendas, people who sue for exorbitant malpractice fees, people who are able-bodied but stay on welfare so everyone else can foot their bills.
- Big business where the almighty dollar is king and there is no soul and no accountability anywhere to be found.
- Rotten people in general.

But there are always those in the world. We can try to avoid them when we're able. —Reminds me of a line from a recent movie: If you can't fix it, you gotta stand it. And I could add, "Or you can try your best to avoid it. I try to do this by hiding on my ranch whenever possible.

• Unwelcome strangers who ignore the "Posted, Keep Out" sign at my gate.

I could go on and on. But this is way too long. So what could YOU do without? Write in to the Forum. Get it off your chest! (I'll bet at least one reader will say he or she could do without my column).

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# Rise And Fall Of Duke Of Duval

On Oct. 24, 1952, a leading Lone Star daily posed the election-eve question, "Can Parr tilt the vote for Adlai?"

If the infamous Duke of Duval could select a senator, it stood to reason that he just might be able to pick a president, too.

The Anglo clique that ran Duval County at the turn of the century relied upon violence to preserve their ruthless regime. The key to maintaining their political monopoly was keeping the massive Mexican majority away from the polls.

When three Mexicans tried to exercise their right to vote in 1911 at the county seat of San Diego, they were shot to death. A Spanish-speaking politician named Archie Parr stood up for the powerless pariahs, a gutsy move that earned their undying

respect and blind loyalty.

Exploiting the old country culture of the Mexicans, Parr assumed the role of "patron" ostensibly taking care of his illiterate followers in return for their bloc vote. This unbeatable combination made the former cowboy the political boss of South Texas, whose word was law in Duval and several adjacent counties.

Parr moved up to the state senate in 1914 and took along 13-year-old George as his page. Twelve years later, Archie engineered the youth's election as Duval County judge, and the son ruled the roost in the absence of the father who remained in Austin another decade.

The Parrs instituted a spoils system and cynically enriched themselves at taxpayers' ex-

pense. To avoid a public trial that would have exposed the source of their vast wealth, George pleaded guilty in 1934 to income tax evasion.

After violating the conditions of his probation, he served nine and a half months for the crime. But a full pardon from President Harry Truman wiped the slate clean in 1946 and enabled him again to hold public office.

The proud papa lived long enough to see his offspring add the counties of Jim Wells and Nueces to their empire. After Archie's death in 1942, George took complete control of the finely tuned political machine.

Although Parr had in the past backed Coke Stevenson, he opposed the ex-governor's bid for the 1948 Democratic senatorial nomination. George snapped

his fingers and Duval, Nueces and Jim Wells counties obediently bestowed 10,547 votes on Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson to a token 368 for Stevenson.

Nevertheless, the official count five days after the election showed Stevenson ahead by 113 votes out of nearly a million statewide. Forty-eight hours after this announcement, a "corrected" return from Box 13 in Jim Wells County pushed LBJ over the top.

Astonishingly popular with the last-minute electorate in Parr Country, Johnson was the choice on 202 of the 203 tardy ballots. Before the tabulations and voting list mysteriously vanished, investigators discovered that the decisive votes had been cast in alphabetical order

This Week  
In Texas  
History



By Bartee Haile

and several by civic-minded residents of the local cemetery.

With a tip of his Stetson to the Duke of Duval, "Landslide Lyndon" went merrily off to Washington and took a giant step down the road to the White House.

But even George Parr could not save Texas for Adlai Stevenson four years later in the presidential contest of 1952. Dwight Eisenhower soundly beat the Democrat by better than 133,000 votes.

Parr had a simple explanation for the one-sided outcomes of his suspicious plebiscites. "The people of Duval County go along with me because they are my friends and are satisfied with the government they are getting."

As much as Parr enjoyed masquerading as a benevolent dictator, his reign was sometimes cruel and bloody. In Jim Wells County, an Alice radio personality lost his life in a courageous campaign against corruption.

After W.H. Mason accused lawman Sam Smithwick, a cog in the Parr machine, of operating a wide-open brothel, two burly deputies beat him senseless. When Mason kept up the attack, Smithwick gunned him down in broad daylight in July 1949.

To the murderer's amazement, his trial ended in conviction and a life sentence. Angered by the betrayal, Smithwick wrote Coke Stevenson from prison to say he was ready to reveal the sordid truth about Box 13 and the stolen election. Before he could spill the beans, Smithwick was found dead in his cell, the victim of a supposed suicide.

The Duke himself did not get off entirely scot-free. Although a 1957 conviction for mail fraud was thrown out by the U.S. Supreme Court, Parr once more ran afoul of the Internal Revenue Service and was found guilty a second time of short-changing Uncle Sam.

Facing ten years behind bars, 74-year-old George Parr chose to take his own life rather than die in prison. On April Fool's Day 1975, he drove out to his ranch, parked in a secluded spot and killed himself.

"Outlaws & Lawmen" - "Best of This Week in Texas History" Vol. VI is \$10.95 plus \$3.25 postage and handling from Bartee Haile, P.O. Box 152, Friendswood, TX 77549. And don't forget to visit [www.twith.com](http://www.twith.com).

## Geographically Speaking, I Have No Idea What I'm Talking About

When my daughter entered middle school this year, I knew it was only a matter of time before my worst fears were realized and, as a parent, I would have to help her with geography. As many of you know, I suffer from acute directional dysfunction — a disorder many famous historical figures also suffered from, including Christopher Columbus, who discovered America completely by accident while looking for...if memory of sixth-grade history serves me...a faster trade route to Wal-Mart.

I'm the kind of person who must enter and leave somewhere the same exact way in order to keep from getting lost, even if it means walking backwards out of a public facility, such as the men's room at Safeco Field. I've actually had nightmares about being a contestant on The Amazing Race. In it, I am partnered with my friend, David, who spent six years in the Marines and therefore still refers to distances in terms of



Life Is A  
Funny Place

By Ned Hickson  
Siuslaw News

"clicks," which is a unit of measure based on kilometers and the use of a special navigation device. Were I trying to find my way out of enemy territory, this device would be about as useful to me as a Superball. Because of this, my Amazing Race nightmare always starts and ends the same way, with everyone getting the first clue and then excitedly running off in the same direction, except for me, who excitedly runs in the opposite direction — and off a cliff with my "clicker."

It's a short dream but always traumatic, especially when I wake up lodged between the bed and the wall "clicking" my TV remote.

So when my daughter opened up her geography book and started talking about longitude and latitude, and the prime meridian, and flat map distortion, I

knew it was time for me to buckle down and, as her father, at least try to get out of it by faking a seizure. Seeing her expression, I quickly realized I had already used this technique when asked about "where babies come from," "algebra," "geometry," and why her favorite shirt was now tie-died.

The truth is, I used to be good at helping her with geography, back when we could pour all the major continents and countries onto the floor and put them back together, usually with some parts of Hawaii missing because, as I explained, some of the islands were vacationing around Florida.

Clearly, this explanation would only lead to another pained expression from my daughter, and quite possibly the kind of parent-teacher conference I'd been hoping to avoid until she began chemistry.

"C'mon, Dad. I need your help. I can't figure the answer to this," she said, pointing to the last question on her sheet.

Using this flat map, determine the distortion ratio be-

tween these two continents.

"OK, looks like Russia and Africa," I said helpfully.

"Russia?" she asked.

"Yeah," I said, tapping what I knew to be the world's largest land mass, not counting Shaquille O'Neal.

"That's the Soviet Union, Dad."

Things weren't off to a good start but I pressed on. According to the formula, all we had to do was determine the coordinates of the farthest points on each continent, add them up, factor in the distortion ratio, then decide how much a "D" on this assignment was going to affect her overall grade.

As it turned out, we actually DID figure out the correct answer. Don't ask me how because I honestly don't know. However, in case you're wondering, it was still smaller than Shaquille O'Neal.

(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))

## Arthritis Walk Set For Waco's Heritage Square

WACO — Held in cities across the country, the annual Jingle Bell Run/Walk is a fun way for individuals, families and teams to get together for a great cause — the fight against arthritis. The 2006 event is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 2, at downtown

Waco's Heritage Square.

Choose from a 5K run or a 1-mile fun walk and wear your best seasonal costume as judges will be awarding prizes. Awards will also be given to the top three finishers in each male and female age group for the 5K

race: 14 and under, 15-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60 and over and Wheelchair division.

Registration will begin at 4 p.m., costume contest at 4:30 p.m., the wheelchair division will start at 5 p.m. and the 5k and 1-mile will start at 5:05 p.m.

Now is the time to coordinate teams. A 5-member team registration is \$200 and includes long sleeve t-shirts for each member.

Contact the Arthritis Foundation at 254-772-9303 to register a team for the event.



# How To Stop The Trans-Texas Corridor

I've been told that the Trans-Texas Corridor is just a "boring highway story."

But if you plan on traveling through Texas between now and election day, Nov. 7, don't be scared by the loud scissor sounds.

It's probably the millions of Texas voters attempting to cut the strings of the political puppets that favor the Trans-Texas Corridor (TTC).

This 4,000-mile-long, four-football-field-wide corridor is supposedly going to be designed to transport people, oil, gas, water, electricity, broadband data, and goods via truck, rail, and utility lines up from the Mexico-Texas border near Laredo to the Oklahoma border.

Proponents of the TTC say that the proposed superhighway is to make money for new highway projects, increase economic growth within the state, and alleviate the state's growing traffic problems.

Opponents of the TTC say that should the road be constructed, an estimated million people would be displaced, 100,000 acres of prime land would be out of agricultural production, tens of thousands of jobs would be lost, property would be removed from the tax rolls, wildlife and hunting interests would be compromised, businesses in small towns would dry up, terrorists would have a huge ready-made target, and citizens would be taxed twice since they already pay for highways through gasoline taxes, vehicle registration fees, and at auto supply retailers.

In addition, Texas farmers, ranchers, small businesses, landowners, urban dwellers, environmentalists, Libertarians, Democrats, and even the state Republican Party are also supremely pissed over not being able to vote up or down on the TTC in the first place.

The man who hatched this "boondoggle" — Gov. Rick Perry — however, claims that voters did have an opportunity to vote for it in the form of a constitutional amendment, "Proposition 15," back in 2001.

While Prop 15 passed with 67.3 percent of the vote, the wording on the ballot read:

"The constitutional amendment creating the Texas Mobility Fund and authorizing grants and loans of money and issuance of obligations for financing the construction, reconstruction, acquisition, operation, and expansion of state highways, turnpikes, toll roads, toll bridges, and other mobility projects."

## The Rubber Cement Index

By Nathan Diebenow



And as you can see, neither the ballot nor anywhere in the Texas House briefing on Prop 15 had any reference to the proposed construction of the super-transportation corridor, so argue the Texans opposed to the TTC.

According to comments made by Texas Transportation Commissioner Ric Williamson on June 27, 2002, it would seem that Gov. Perry had been hiding the TTC from the public all along:

"Once the Governor decided that this is where we needed to head, he wanted to remove it from the political flow of the state, he wanted it to become policy as opposed to politics, and that was one of the reasons he asked us to move so fast, and we've done an admirable job...."

So, to stop the TTC policy from becoming reality, the anti-TTC forces plan to remove the Republican governor and his corrupt henchmen in the Texas Legislature from public office this fall.

In Perry's place, a host of anti-TTC and anti-toll road organizations have for the most part backed Carol Keeton Strayhorn, a Democrat turned Republican turned Independent, over Democrat Chris Bell and Independent Kinky Friedman, though both Bell and Friedman

**“You said pitchforks. That’s awfully mild. We’re going to see an explosion, an outburst in this state, rioting in this state, that we haven’t seen since the days of the Vietnam War.”**

— Hank Gilbert, about the Corridor

have said they are against the TTC.

"A Strayhorn administration," so the candidate says, would expand I-35 using existing rights of way according to TxDOT's 1999 state analysis to solve the population growth problems, and kill the \$7.2 billion contract from the private consortium that is planning to develop the first leg of the TTC down I-35 (i.e. TTC-35).

The contract also stipulates that the Cintra-Zachry consortium would pay the state \$1.2 billion to collect tolls as well as have the concession rights on



THOUSANDS OF TEXANS voiced their anger and frustration toward the Trans-Texas Corridor project during the 55 environmental study hearings last August. — Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

the TTC for the next 50 years.

Much has been made of this contract since its details have been kept under wraps against the ruling of Attorney General of Texas Greg Abbott. The consortium attempted to fight the AG ruling through a lawsuit in order to protect its sensitive proprietary information from competitors.

selections to the THC be approved by the state senate, the terms for the commissioners are staggered two years apart so that not all of the commissioners leave at once.

Still, there is an opening on the five-member THC board because Gov. Perry has not filled one of the seats.

The anti-TTC crowd has the right idea, though.

The THC decides how the funds allocated by the Texas Legislature through highway legislation are to be spent by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) for the following biennium.

Even so, an anti-TTC commissioner would inevitably remain up against the other pro-TTC commissioners appointed by the two previous administrations — one of which was then Gov. George W. Bush.

And we still have a while to go before the funding source for the TTC is officially determined.

The THC will be able to approve the TTC financing perhaps late next year after the Federal Highway Administration rules on TxDOT's final environmental impact statement next summer. Once the preferred corridor is selected sometime between 2007 and 2010, construction could begin.

TxDOT Public Information Officer Mark Cross told me last week that there's no way that

construction on this project could possibly happen right now anyway because there's no money allocated by the state to purchase the required land.

You know, it would be one thing for the state legislature to cut state funding to a state agency that oversees the state's highway construction projects, but the TTC project is unique in that its construction is supposed to be paid for by private investment only.

Even though the TTC itself would be owned by the state, this project is more than the "largest land grab in Texas history." It's perhaps the largest single ATM machine in the history of the world, so to speak.

As chairman of the Blackland Coalition, Chris Hammel told me in an e-mail last week: "The TTC is not about transportation needs of the public. It's about using TxDOT as a political fund raising tool. Follow the money."

Much has been made over the fact that a corporation based in Madrid, Spain — Cintra Concessions de Infraestructuras de Transporte, S.A. — and its San Antonio-based subsidiary — Zachry Construction Corporation — would be allowed to keep the tolls taken from TTC users without price regulations imposed by any state agency.

Well, that and TxDOT, even though its spokespeople say the

Continued On Next Page



## CORRIDOR

From Previous Page

agency doesn't want to seize private land using "eminent domain," still has the power to do so if landowners refuse to sell their property to the state to make way for the Corridor.

But American and European financial institutions and Texas contractors and engineers also have special interests in seeing this construction project get off the ground. The companies involved in the Corridor team include:

Earth Tech Inc. (California/offices in Texas), Bracewell & Patterson LLP (Texas), Rodriguez Transportation Group (Texas), Aguirre & Fields LP (Texas), OTHON. Inc. (Texas), Pate Engineers (Texas), HRM Consultants, Inc. (Texas), P1 Resources (Texas), Southwestern Capital Markets, Inc. (Texas), Railroad Industries Incorporated (Nevada), Amey, PLC (UK), Mercator Advisors, LLC (Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C.), Public Resources Advisory Group (New York), PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP (New York/offices in Texas), and JP Morgan Securities, Inc. (New York).

It's also interesting to note that the chairman of the board of Zachry Corp., H.B. Zachry, Jr., made two contributions totaling \$35,000 to Gov. Perry's reelection campaign. Zachry also has given \$112,112 in campaign contributions — almost all to Republican candidates, including Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst (\$27,500), State Comptroller Carol Keeton Strayhorn (\$16,000), Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott (\$2,500), and Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs (\$1,000). <<http://followthemoney.org/database/StateGlance/contributor.phtml?si=200443&d=7040614>>

In response, Perry's campaign has said that Zachry won the TTC contract through an open bidding process and that other contractors have contributed to the campaign and yet not received state contracts.

Reports filed with the Texas Ethics Commission show that highway contractors have given over \$1 million to Perry's campaign war-chest since 1997.

But this fact only adds to my point.

In fact, this last August, a Cintra consultant who became a legislative aide to Gov. Perry and then later returned to Cintra as lobbyist (get that?) had planned an all-expenses-paid trip to Toronto, Canada, with seven top TxDOT employees, three members of the Senate state budget writing committee (two of which were Democrats and one Republi-



**DAVID VAN OS** spoke against the Trans-Texas Corridor at a public hearing in Fort Worth last August. Van Os, a labor lawyer residing in San Antonio, is running for Attorney General of Texas in this coming November election. — Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

can), and the Republican who heads the House Transportation Committee.

Dan Shelley, though, scuttled the trip once the DALLAS MORNING NEWS caught wind of it.

In response, the governor's office has said that Perry has "the strongest ethics policy that any Texas governor has ever had."

It was also reported that Shelley also operated within the legal limits since he worked as a consultant, not a lobbyist.

Though this may be true, the real point is that another step to stopping the TTC project is to strongly push for the public financing of political campaigns in Texas.

But that can be tough considering, for example, that the "Top 10" TxDOT contractors contributed \$1.1 million to political campaigns in Texas. These contractors were awarded over \$14 billion in contracts from 2001 to 2004, according to Campaigns for People, a 501(c)(3) organization in Austin.

These same contractors also supplied substantial campaign dollars to legislators who helped pass House Bill 3588 in 2003. This 300-page bill, which was co-sponsored by state Sen. Todd Staples who is now running for Agriculture Commissioner, increased the state's powers to implement the Corridor and create tollbooths on existing non-toll roads.

Among Staples' past campaign benefactors include the late Ken Lay of Enron infamy (\$182,000) and Houston home builder Bob Perry known for subsidizing the Swift Boat Veterans ads against Democratic Presidential hopeful Sen. John Kerry in 2004.

Democrat Hank Gilbert, who is running against Staples for Susan Combs' former office, told

me before the TTC hearing in Fort Worth last August that the entire United States is at risk economically if the TTC project continues.

"It's a boondoggle that is only here to meet greed. It's not anything about good for the economy for the state of Texas, good for the economy of this nation," he said, in the interview. "People don't understand the ramifications of this project both economically and socially to this country. It's something we have to stop, and we have to stop it here."

While TxDOT spokespersons don't know if the TTC would extend beyond Texas and into the Midwest, critics of the project like Gilbert think it will eventually extend north through Oklahoma City, Kansas City, and Duluth into Canada along I-35.

The reason for this thought is based on the TTC's 4,000-page Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which connects international trade interests, specifically the 1993 North American Free Trade Agreement, to the TTC-35.

"[A]pproximately 75 percent of America's commerce with Mexico travels through Texas. Increased access and mobility within the study area would improve the movement of people, goods, and services and potentially lead to new employment and business opportunities," says the EIS on page 3.

By most accounts, Texas citizens that attended the 55 hearings on the Tier I EIS last August voiced a resounding "no" against the TTC.

A large portion of the people that attended the hearings in Fort Worth and Waco said they believed that the Corridor is a part of a plan to combine the nations of Mexico, Canada, and the United States into a "North

American Union."

Both Gilbert and David Van Os, the San Antonio-based labor lawyer and Democratic candidate for Texas Attorney General, agreed that the formation of such a union must be stopped to protect the sovereignty of the United States.

They also have said that they believe that Texans would push back when they refuse to sell to their land to the state and the state attempts to seize it using eminent domain.

"If the Republicans win this election, forget the Second Amendment. There are going to be people marching on Austin with whatever," said Gilbert in a talk captured by Infowars.com. "You said pitchforks. That's awfully mild. We're going to see an explosion, an outburst in this state, rioting in this state, that we haven't seen since the days of the Vietnam War. I honestly believe that. I hope I'm wrong. I hope for the sanctity of Texas and for the people of this state that I'm wrong."

In the same video <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RlumHzseiYw>>, Van Os added:

"This thing is spreading like wildfire. It's like a populist revolt. Hank is right. A lot of people are saying that they are giving the political process one last chance. And if it doesn't turn out the way the mass of the

people want it to turn out, we're going to see other methods being used. That's not a threat of any kind or any thing. That's just a statement of reality that I know from meeting so many people and hearing what so many people are saying all over Texas."

But could violence erupt in Texas over the Corridor such as it has, for instance, in South Korea where farmers have been protesting the free trade talks in their country last week?

South Korean television reported that riot police with batons and water cannons had beaten back the demonstrators in front of the hotel where the talks were held. Of the 500 protesters, six were injured along with one police officer last Tuesday, according to reports.

South Korean rice and beef farmers, fishermen, and other activists are against the U.S./South Korean accord because cheaper American products would damage their economy, they say. Should the agreement pass muster, the deal would be as large as NAFTA.

I don't know the answer to the above question, but Gilbert went so far as to admit on the Infowars.com video that "people would die first" before the TTC-69 passes through his property in Whitehouse, Texas.

"If anybody doesn't understand my feeling of the Second

Continued On Next Page



**HANK GILBERT** (left) spoke against the Trans-Texas Corridor at a public hearing in Fort Worth last August. Gilbert, a private landowner from Whitehouse, Texas, is running for Agriculture Commissioner in this coming November election. — Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow



## CORRIDOR

From Previous Page

Amendment, just come to my house," he said, as an American flag waved in the background.

In an interview with me last August, Van Os said that the governmental actions moving the Trans-Texas Corridor forward were "break-taking" in their disregard for the aspirations of individual citizens and property owners of Texas.

"In my view the worst thing about the Trans-Texas Corridor is that it is disrupting the fundamental checks and balances and the allocation of power between the people and the government," he said. "It is expression of extraordinary, extraordinary governmental arrogance with an unprecedented amount of raw power, almost unrestrainable raw power being given to one regulatory agency — TxDOT."

"The statute the legislature passed in 2003 gives TxDOT virtually unlimited and unreviewable authority to do whatever they want, whatever they want," he added.

So in order to reconnect Texans to their state government and curb this renegade state land-grabbing power, Van Os has suggested amendments to the Texas Constitution that protect Texans from state abuse stemming from eminent domain and toll roads.

Under the "Citizens' Protection Amendments," the use of eminent domain would be limited to public security and safety, not economic gain, unless the landowner gives his consent, and the implementation of toll roads would require voter referendums through county elections.

These amendments would, in essence, eradicate the harsher aspects of HB3588 and all but totally kill the Trans-Texas Corridor.

Now, some Texans recommend that to kill the TTC project, Texas should refuse to use the superhighway after its constructed, but by that time, it would already be too late.

The leg through Texas isn't expected to be totally complete for a long time — something like 50 years, I think.

But if you pay any attention to news on global warming, "carbon footprints," and human population estimates for that time frame, you already know we don't have that much time to slow down the depletion of the earth.

Last week, a report released by the World Wildlife Foundation said that unless we run out of natural resources first, we

would consume the equivalent of two planets by 2050.

Also by 2050, nine billion people will be living the earth, according to United Nations estimates.

So as you can see, instead of hastening the destruction of Texas and the planet with the TTC project, we should probably cut down on old construction practices and adapt to more sustainable living conditions pretty soon.

And so, there you have it, folks.

Let's recap for those who got in late.

To stop the Trans-Texas Corridor, Texans would have to:

— Remove Republican Gov. Rick Perry and his cronies in state government during this fall's election.

— Vote for candidates for governor and other state offices (preferably those that don't have ties to the Republican Party and that have never taken money from the highway lobby) who are against the TTC project.

— Push the governor and state senate to appoint anti-TTC commissioners to the Texas Highway Commission who will kill any finance plan for the project through private or a combination of public and private investment.

— Push for legislation that creates publically financed state elections and closes the revolving door between state government and big business.

— Push the state Legislature to pass David Van Os' proposed state constitutional amendments banning the for-profit aspects of eminent domain and toll roads. (Vote for David Van Os and Hank Gilbert!)

— Push Congress to pass legislation stopping free trade agreements, like NAFTA, CAFTA, and the FTAA.

— Push yourself and your friends to buy locally-made products over products produced elsewhere.

## <CorridorWatch.org> Issues 2006 CANDIDATE REPORT CARD

CorridorWatch.org is a non-partisan organization formed to educate and inform, not to participate in politics. CorridorWatch.org is not a political action committee (PAC) and therefore does not support or endorse candidates.

However over our four year existence we have observed and interacted with many of the individuals who are on this November's ballot. During this time we have developed informed opinions about these candidates.

Our goal in presenting the following Report Card is to let you know how CorridorWatch.org feels these candidates reflect the beliefs and concerns of our members and others who are opposed to the Trans Texas Corridor.

The following candidates have been graded on information available to CorridorWatch.org and reflect our assessment of their position on the Trans Texas Corridor and related issues such as tolling, toll conversion, private property rights and eminent domain taking for economic development. The grade also reflects the effectiveness (in our opinion) that the candidate would have in effecting positive change if elected.

We recognize that these issues only represent one factor in the decision every voter makes when voting for a particular candidate. Where two candidates have been given the same grade it is because we feel that based on various factors, their expected impact with regard to the TTC issue if elected would be similar.

CorridorWatch.org also feels strongly that the majority of the state-

wide office holders will be significantly effected by the direction of the occupant of the governor's office. Even the most ardent opponent will be challenged to make a significant change under a governor who champions the TTC. With different leadership however some incumbent candidates who kept a "low profile" under Governor Perry can be expected to become advocates of change and join open opposition to the TTC.

### U. S. Senator

"A" Barbara Ann Radnofsky DEM  
"B" Kay Bailey Hutchison - Incumbent REP

"C" Scott Lanier Jameson LIB

### Governor

"A" Carole Keeton Strayhorn IND  
"C" Chris Bell DEM  
"C" Richard "Kinky" Friedman IND  
"D" James Werner LIB  
"F" Rick Perry - Incumbent REP

### Lieutenant Governor

"B" David Dewhurst - Incumbent REP  
"B" Maria Luisa Alvarado DEM  
"C" Judy Baker LIB

### Attorney General

"A" David Van Os DEM  
"B" Greg Abbott - Incumbent REP  
"C" Jon Roland LIB

### Comptroller of Public Accounts

"B" Susan Combs REP

"B" Fred Head DEM

"C" Mike Burris LIB

### Commissioner General Land Office

"C" Valinda Hathcox DEM  
"C" Michael A. French LIB  
"D" Jerry Patterson - Incumbent REP

### Commissioner of Agriculture

"A" Hank Gilbert DEM

"C" Clay Woolam LIB

"F" Todd Staples REP  
**State Senator - District 3**  
"F" Robert Nichols REP  
**State Senator - District 25**  
"C" Kathleen "Kathi" Thomas DEM  
"C" James R. (Bob) Thompson LIB  
"F" Jeff Wentworth - Incumbent REP  
**State Representative - District 13**  
"A" Lois W. Kolkhorst - Incumbent REP  
"D" Charles Stigall LIB  
**State Representative - District 17**  
"A" Tim Kleinschmidt REP  
"B" Robby Cook - Incumbent DEM  
"D" Roderick (Rod) Gibbs LIB  
**State Representative - District 20**  
"B" Jim Stauber DEM  
"D" Dan M. Gattis - Incumbent REP  
**State Representative - District 20**  
"B" John Zerwas REP  
"C" Dorothy Bottos DEM  
**State Representative - District 52**  
"B" Karen Felthouser DEM  
"B" Lillian Simmons LIB  
"F" Mike Krusee - Incumbent REP  
**State Representative - District 57**  
"B" Jim Dunnam - Incumbent DEM  
"D" Neill Snider LIB  
**State Representative - District 62**  
"C" Peter "Pete" Veeck DEM  
"F" Larry Phillips - Incumbent REP  
**State Representative - District 90**  
"B" Lon Burnam - Incumbent DEM  
"D" Rod Wingo LIB  
**State Representative - District 117**  
"A" David McQuade Leibowitz - Incumbent DEM  
"D" Ted Kenyon REP  
This Report Card is also available at: <http://www.corridorwatch.org/tc/expand/ReportCard2006.htm>  
Subject to changes and/or additions.



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