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# THE OKLAHOMA Observer



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OCTOBER 10, 2008

## End Of Deregulation Era Reaganomics, R.I.P.

By Frosty Troy

The biggest political story of 2008 is getting little coverage. It involves the collapse of assumptions that have dominated our economic debate for three decades.

Since the Reagan years, free-market cliches have passed for sophisticated economic analysis. But in the current crisis, these ideas are falling, one by one, as even conservatives recognize that capitalism is ailing.

You know the talking points: Regulation is the problem and deregulation is the solution. The distribution of income and wealth doesn't matter. Providing incentives for the investors of capital to "grow the pie" is the only policy that counts.

Free trade produces well-distributed economic growth, and any dissent from this orthodoxy is "protectionism."

The old script is in rewrite.

"We are in a worldwide crisis now because of excessive deregulation," says Rep. Barney Frank, D-MA, the chairman of the House Financial Services Committee.

He notes that in 1999 when Congress replaced the New Deal-era Glass-Steagall Act with a looser set of banking rules, "we let investment banks get into a much wider range of activities without regulation."

This helped create the subprime mortgage mess and the cascading calamity in banking.

While Frank is a liberal, the same cannot be said of Ben Bernanke, the chairman of the Federal Reserve. Yet in a speech, Bernanke sounded like a born-again New Dealer in calling for "a more robust framework for the prudential supervision of investment banks and other large securities dealers."

Bernanke said the Fed needed more authority to get inside "the structure and workings of financial markets" because "recent experience has clearly illustrated the importance, for the purpose of promoting financial stability, of having detailed information about money markets and the activities of borrowers and lenders in those markets."



This is the third time in 100 years that support for taken-for-granted economic ideas has crumbled. The Great Depression discredited the radical laissez-faire doctrines of the Coolidge era.

Stagflation in the 1970s and early '80s undermined New Deal ideas and called forth a rebirth of radical free-market notions.

What's becoming the Panic of 2008 will mean an end to the latest Capital Rules era.

What is striking is that conservatives who revere capitalism are offering their own criticisms of the way the system is working.

Irwin Stelzer, director of the Center for Economic Policy Studies at the Hudson Institute, says the subprime crisis arose in part because lenders quickly sold their mortgages to oth-

ers and bore no risk if the loans went bad.

"You have to have the person who's writing the risk bearing the risk," he says. "That means a whole host of regulations. There's no way around that."

While some conservatives now worry about the social and economic impact of growing inequalities, Stelzer isn't one of them. But he is highly critical of "the process that produces inequality."

"I don't like three of your friends on a board voting you a zillion dollars," said Stelzer, who is also a business consultant.

"A cozy boardroom back-scratching operation offends me."

He argues that "the preservation of the capitalist system" requires finding new ways of "linking compensa-

tion to performance."

Frank takes a similar view, arguing that CEOs "benefit substantially if the risks they take pay out but pay no penalty if their risks lead to losses or even catastrophe - another sign that capitalism, in its current form, isn't living by its own rules."

Frank also calls for new thinking on the impact of free trade.

He argues it can no longer be denied that globalization "is a contributor to the stagnation of wages and it has produced large pools of highly mobile capital."

Mobile capital and the threat of moving a plant abroad give employers a huge advantage in negotiations with employees.

"If you're dealing with someone and you can pick up and leave and he can't, you have the advantage," Frank says.

"Free trade has increased wealth, but it's been monopolized by a very small number of people."

The coming debate will focus not on shutting globalization down but rather on managing its effects with an eye toward the interests of "the most vulnerable people in the country."

In the presidential campaign so far, John McCain has been clinging to the old economic orthodoxy while Barack Obama has proposed a modestly more active role for government.

But the economic assumptions are changing faster than the rhetoric of the campaign.

"Reality has broken in," says Frank. And none too soon.

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By Jim Hightower

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# Observations

## Cargill Skates

The Daily Disappointment always attacks Democrats but it was stunning to see the paper's defense of Lance Cargill, disgraced GOP speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives.

Democratic Party chairman Ivan Holmes spoke out after Cargill ended up with a reprimand from the Ethics Commission but was not criminally prosecuted.

Contrary to the paper's accusation that Holmes "was out for blood," Holmes was out for justice – and it wasn't done in this case. Holmes didn't use his opinion, he used facts. His rebuttal to the personal attack cited facts:

Was the redirection of campaign contributions intended for one party committee to another committee illegal? In other words, was money intended to go to the Oklahoma Republican Party for statewide uses diverted to local elections? Yes.

Does Title 21, O.S. 2008, §187.1 clearly state that to circumvent the Ethics Commission is a criminal act? Yes.

Was it clear that numerous individuals were involved in illegally redirecting those funds? Yes.

If it had been a Democratic speaker of the House who had illegally taken money intended for one purpose and given it to a different committee for another purpose, would the Oklahoman have written an editorial asking for a grand jury investigation?

We have no doubt that if this was not an election year, Cargill would have been prosecuted as state law says he ought to be.

## He Lost It All

Bishop Carlton Pearson has shut down his New Dimensions Church in Tulsa after weathering a blizzard of criticism and the loss of his church and congregation.

His crime? He began preaching what he called "the gospel of inclusion" wherein all people will go to heaven,

not just the chosen.

He was unshaken as he lost most of his 6,000 members and his church in foreclosure.

As for the bishop, he has followed his remaining flock into All Souls Unitarian Church of Tulsa, a superb white community that welcomed him and his black followers with open arms.

Meanwhile the bishop is a popular speaker across the nation and continues to speak out. He has a three-book deal with Simon & Schuster.

One of the beautiful things about secular America is that we are free to believe and preach to our heart's content. The bishop is a better Christian than many of his critics.

## Dumbo

Know why GOP Sen. Jim Inhofe was quiet as a church mouse in the wake of the Wall Street meltdown? He was one of the fiercest opponents of oversight and accountability legislation.

He was a vocal supporter of then-Sen. Phil Gramm's Financial Modernization Act of 1999, which led to the housing fiasco.

The Washington Post reported that by eroding government oversight of Wall Street, Gramm's bill "helped pave the way for companies such as AIG and Lehman Brothers to become behemoths laden with bad loans and investments."

Inhofe has called Phil Gramm his mentor – the same Phil Gramm fired by John McCain as his finance guru after he ridiculed citizens worried about the financial crisis.

Notwithstanding fact after fact, a majority of Okies will march to the voting booth and continue Inhofe's 22-year reign of incompetence and ignorance.

## A Disgrace

Quick: How many American kids are living in poverty? If you answered



about 13 million, you're close to the actual figure, enough to fill about 200 football stadiums seating more than 65,000 youngsters each.

Indeed, according a new report by the Census Bureau, the latest kids-in-poverty figure for 2007 comes to 13.3 million children younger than 18, or 18% of the population in that age group.

That's about half a million more than in the previous year. Among black kids, nearly 40% were below the poverty line, compared with 28.6% of Hispanic youths, 14.9% of whites, and 11.9% of Asians.

In Oklahoma, one in five children lives in abject poverty, yet critics wonder why test scores are low and prisons are overflowing. Poverty often breeds failure.

The overall poverty rate in the U.S. last year was 12.5% [versus 12.3% a year earlier], household income was up a bit [to \$50,233], and the number of people without health insurance increased to 47 million from 45.5 million.

Poverty is growing while the Bush Administration cuts programs aimed at giving America's poor a hand up, not a handout.

The Iraq war has cost \$750 billion but not enough money can be found to help America's poor children.

Make no mistake. Vote for McCain and you get a Bush third term. Remember we told you so.

## Fake Facts

One of the arguments you hear from those in favor of tort "reform" is the false claim that Oklahoma is losing doctors and liability insurance premiums are unbearably high.

The claim is that Oklahoma is losing doctors in high-risk fields such as emergency medicine and obstetrics.

Are there big malpractice liability payouts that help fuel high insurance rates for doctors?

Before you fall for this fairy tale, check with Hugh Robert, executive director of the Oklahoma Center for Consumer and Patient Safety.

He says both contentions are wrong.

The number of doctors in Oklahoma is actually rising and lawsuit outcomes prove that Oklahoma is hardly a jackpot jury haven.

Oklahoma losing doctors? Hardly. In 1997, according to data from the

Oklahoma State Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision, 4,787 medical doctors were practicing in the state, including 166 emergency physicians and 276 practicing obstetrics, gynecology or both, including ob-gyn surgical specialists.

By 2007, the total had risen by more than 900 to 5,718, including 283 ER doctors and 395 in the ob/gyn fields. However, the number of the latter had dropped from 414 in 2004.

When it comes to osteopathic physicians, data from the Oklahoma Osteopathic Association shows that in 1997 there were a total of 880 doctors licensed to practice in Oklahoma, not including retirees, interns and residents.

In 2007, the osteopathic association listed 1,324 licensed doctors in Oklahoma, including 143 ER doctors and 58 in the ob/gyn field.

Federation of State Medical Boards shows that Oklahoma ranks 43rd per capita for the number of doctors practicing in the state, just above Arkansas. Texas ranked 49th, Kansas 24th, New Mexico 31st.

Between 2002 and 2006, population growth in Oklahoma was 2.54%, according to the U.S. Census. The doctor population has grown at 7.93%.

Somebody please read this to the editorial writers at the Daily Disappointment.

## Evaluate Her

What is going on at Langston University? We had high hopes for the new president, Dr. JoAnn Haybert, but she has been a real disappointment.

At \$220,000 a year, we expected she would live up to her reputation as a fund-raiser. She hasn't even raised a million dollars.

Worse, she talks down to faculty as though they were field hands. This kind of arrogance in unbecoming of a university president.

We know dollars are in short supply in higher education, but we were amazed to learn that members of the fabulous Langston marching band are charged \$200 each to travel with the band – now half its previous size.

We have campaigned for a board of regents for Langston. The best they could come up with is an advisory commission that won't be in place before January.

The first order of business ought to be an honest evaluation of Dr. Haybert's tenure.

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OUR MOTTO: To Comfort the Afflicted and Afflict the Comfortable.

OUR CREDO: So then to all their chance, to all their shining golden opportunity. To all the right to love, to live, to work, to be themselves, and to become whatever thing their vision and humanity can combine to make them. This seeker, is the promise of America.

- Adapted from Thomas Wolfe

# Observerscope

Do you suppose Tulsa's Catholic Bishop Slattery will also take out a huge newspaper ad to point out that being in favor of capital punishment is as bad as being for abortion? There isn't any degree of mortal sin is there?

Laurel: To U.S. Sen. Pete Domenici, R-NM, for slipping an amendment in the bailout bill that requires insurance companies to treat mental illness just as any other medical problem. He has spent six terms trying to get that done.

How sad that Rep. Dan Boren, D-OK, was the lone Oklahoma vote for a bill restricting abusive practices of the greedy credit card industry. It passed 312-112, with GOP Reps. Tom Cole, Mary Fallin, Frank Lucas and John Sullivan, casting no votes.

Dart: To holier than thou Republicans, most of whom don't know that Rick Davis, McCain's campaign manager, drew \$30,000 a month lobbying against stiff regulation of the corrupt Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae. His total take: \$2 million.

GOP Sen. Jim Inhofe's ad attacking Democratic opponent Andrew Rice for voting against a mandatory minimum of 85% is way out in left field. A new national poll shows more than 60% are opposed to mandatory minimums. [U.S. Sentencing Commission]

Laurel: To Smart Start of Central Oklahoma, tackling the problem of 42.5% of first-through-third grade public school students in need of reading remediation. It's a dire parenting problem.

Public school teachers who vote for John McCain deserve exactly what they would get - No Child Left Behind with a passion and vouchers for any public or private school child.

Dart: To 80 Protestant ministers, including Fairview Baptist Church's Paul Blair of Edmond, endorsing John McCain in their tax-exempt churches, laying groundwork for a legal attack on separation of church and state. We pray they lose their shirts.

Elected officials and agency heads have formed Oklahoma Crystal Darkness to stop meth. First Lady Kim Henry will head the coalition. For details: [www.crystaldarknessoklahoma.org](http://www.crystaldarknessoklahoma.org).

Laurel: To James R. Wilbanks, PhD, who will head the 145,000-member Teachers Retirement System, replacing retiring executive director Tommy Beavers.

Most humorous button so far this election year: Attention Sarah Palin: Jesus Christ Was A Community Organizer, Pontius Pilate Was A Governor.

Dart: To Suzanne Vaughn, wife of OKC County Commissioner Ray Vaughn, for an e-mail claiming Barack Obama may be the antichrist. Quick! Somebody find a padded cell for this loon.

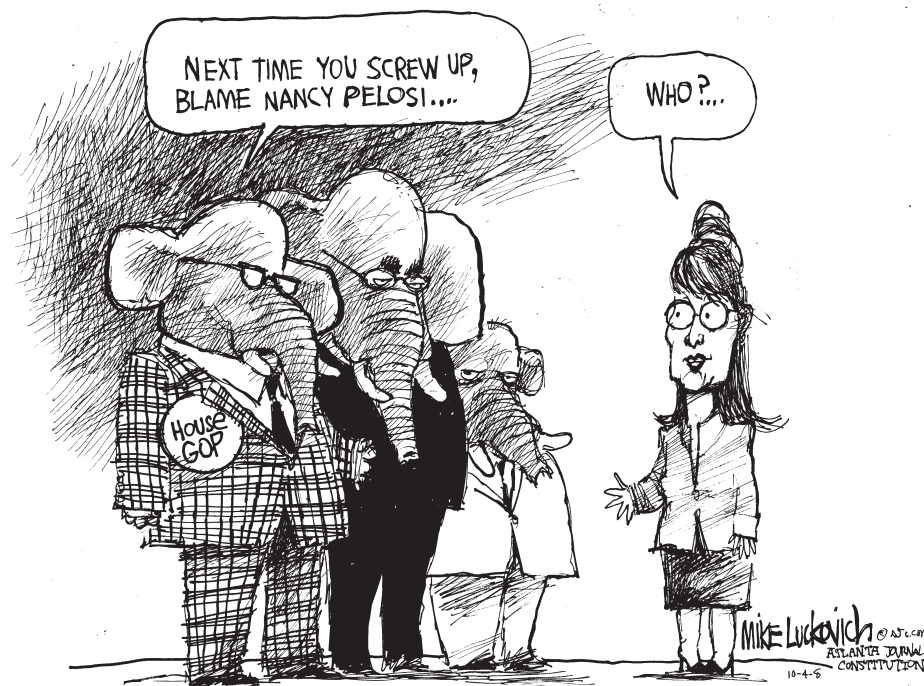
McCain Vs. McCain! John McCain's web page blasts grizzly bear DNA research but it turns out he voted for that research. Folks in their 70s often have memory glitches. Ask Frosty.

Laurel: To state Rep. Mike Shelton, D-OKC, winner of the 2008 Angie Debo Civil Liberties Award by the Oklahoma chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

If you want to look bad, send an ignorant letter to the Daily Disappointment. Such as one from Ray Robinson of Shawnee, claiming the Legislature is run by lawyers. Huh? Nine out of 101 House members, 15 of 48 Senators.

Dart: To Stacy Martin of OKC for a malicious attack on the Oklahoma Education Association. OEA said we are losing some of the best and brightest NEW teachers. They have never demeaned Oklahoma's veteran teachers.

We pause to note that the Port of Catoosa now has 65 businesses, a multi-billion cornucopia for Oklahoma that Oklahoman publisher E.K. Gaylord ridiculed, calling the author, Sen. Robert S. Kerr, "water on the brain Kerr."



Laurel: To Oklahoma's oil and gas industry, helping the state personal income grow 2.5% compared to the U.S. average of 1.8%. Our per capita income ranks 30th nationally at \$34,910.

Good news! The Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education report that 61% of graduates with a bachelor's degree are finding jobs in Oklahoma, compared to the previous high of 59%.

Dart: To Republicans who claim five ethics law violations by former Speaker Lance Cargill are sufficiently punished by a reprimand. Would they say the same if he was a Democrat?

The AP reports that the McCain's own 13 vehicles and the Obamas have one. McCain lied about his daughter's Toyota Prius. He told the media he bought it, then later said daughter Meghan bought it.

Laurel: To Attorney General Drew Edmondson for forging ahead on his poultry industry pollution lawsuit. Naturally the Farm Bureau backs pollution - they are rarely on the right side of any social issue.

Our prayers are with Muskogee's ex-Rep. Barbara Staggs, diagnosed with pre-cancerous lesions over her face, hands and arms. She is one of the finest legislators we have ever covered.

Dart: To the Tulsa World for a story on then-Gov. Frank Keating's \$250,000 "gift" from a Wall Street guru. It was for trying Jack Dreyfus' patented drug on Oklahoma prisoners. The Corrections director refused and lost his job. Does the World have archives?

The extremist Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs calls itself a think tank. You can't call yourself a think tank if you're stupid.

Laurel: To the Journal Record, a business publication that does some of the best reporting in Oklahoma. We could have lived without the over-the-top Robert Henry issue. He was easily the worst attorney general the state has ever had.

We have seen some dippy newspapers in our times, but the redesigned Oklahoman would make a screaming tabloid blush. A high school sophomore could design a better product.

Dart: To Senate Co-Leader Glenn Coffee, R-OKC, for the single worst voting record on health issues in the 2008 Legislature [43%]. He's the insurance industry's lapdog.

No surprise that State Sen. Randy Brogdon, R-Owasso, is participating in the John Birch Society national convention - the creeps who called Ike Eisenhower a communist. Brogdon will be right at home.

Laurel: To OU law professor Jon Forman who said the IRS finally let the sun shine on tax-exempt entities - 500 organizations whose records are now open for public scrutiny. Details in this issue [page 9].

Want to see an example of excessive wealth? President Bush stayed at the home of beer distributor John Cresap, 9200 N. Sooner Road in OKC. It's more than 14,000 square feet and looks more like a monastery than a residence.

Dart: To the State Chamber's Richard Rush, our "Hypocrite of the Month" for opposing the teachers' initiative aimed at being paid at the regional average. Rush led the rightwing drive for more than \$700 million in tax cuts that could have improved public ed.

We should adopt the philosophy of ancient Greek orator Demosthenes. Whenever a child made a grammatical mistake, he struck one of the parents.

Laurel: To Democrat Frosty Troy and Republican Neva Hill, honored for their commentaries on NPR's KOSU. Listen to both for a balanced view of state politics available nowhere else.

The IRS has asked a federal court to force defeated Republican County Commissioner Brent Rinehart to open his personal and corporate tax records. He says it's harassment.

Dart: To the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, nailed by the Justice Department for such "carelessness" that 76 seized weapons are unaccounted for.

Laurel: To the memory of former Rep. Barbour Cox, D-Chandler, who died at 83. He spent his tenure [1953-71] fighting for quality mental health and alcohol care. The Legislature could use his kind of passion today.

## THE OKLAHOMA Observer

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# Letters

Editor, The Observer:

If [former House Speaker Lance] Cargill were a Democrat, he would be in jail.

Al Engel  
Oklahoma City

Editor, The Observer:

Scott Thill's article [9.10.08] concerning Boone Pickens' water plan was interesting. His adding machine, like mine, apparently lacked enough zeroes to accurately show the amount of water to be mined from 320,000 acre feet of water.

Instead of 104 million gallons, someone should check to see if 118 trillion gallons is not closer to the potential.

I suspect Oklahoma City might use 104 million on a hot summer day. Should that be so, 118 trillion would last three to four years - and would interest a man wanting to make a little change.

David Williams  
Durant

Editor, The Observer:

Wake up, America! The U.S. is hemorrhaging its wealth:

- \$4 trillion additional debt during the last eight Bush years.
- Millions of homes foreclosed.
- Millions of jobs lost.
- Our automotive industry in shambles.
- Our airlines in bankruptcy.
- Our Social Security system near collapse.
- Our health system is out of control.
- The war in Iraq and Afghanistan goes on and on and on, with no end in sight.
- Our economy has tanked and our energy policy is a disaster.
- Although envied by the free world, Americans are now hated worldwide.

The American people are entitled to honest answers from their elected officials. Let's forgo the BS and beauty contests. Tell us how we can save our jobs, our homes and our country.

Tom Birbilis  
Tulsa

Editor, The Observer:

I am disturbed by the demand to drill our way out of the oil crisis. According to Bush's own Energy Information Administration [EIA], the United States has only about 2.2% of the known reserves of oil, and we consume about 25% of the world production.

It cannot be sustained no matter how much we drill. ANWR would furnish only a year and a half supply at

present consumption. If drilling were allowed in ANWR and offshore, it would be at least five years before oil would flow.

A 1997 agreement with China allows Chinese oil companies to bid on offshore oil leases. We could have Chinese oil companies drilling off our shore, with the oil being sent back to China. Big oil such as ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, BP, Shell and others sell oil to the highest bidder, so there is no guarantee that the U.S. would get the oil without an exorbitant price. We could be worse off after drilling than before.

There is a book I would recommend everyone read. *Out Of Gas: The End Of The Age Of Oil* by David Goodstein, a distinguished professor at the California Institute of Technology. I would like to quote the last sentence in the book: "Civilization as we know it will come to an end sometime this century unless we can find a way to live without fossil fuel."

Verdine Trout  
Edmond

Editor, The Observer:

I guess some would call me a traitor to those with the same roots, small town Oklahoma. However, when I hear the hand from the oil patch say, "I could do as good as those guys in Washington," I want to scream, "No, you couldn't and it's WELL, not good."

Recently, the Republican Vice President candidate said, "It's time for Joe Six-pack to be represented in the vice presidency." This is another example of the wrong-headed idea that anyone can lead the United States.

Joe Six-pack is who he is because, mostly, he makes bad decisions.

The United States has this myth that it was founded by farmers and shopkeepers. In a time when only the few elite attended college, the authors of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were mostly college graduates. The rest, like Washington, were landed gentry.

Historically, the United States has looked to the educated and accomplished for leadership. The United States early on established military and naval academies to develop such leadership. This is not to say leadership cannot come from humble origins.

The wonder of the United States is that it has been a meritocracy. From Grant, Eisenhower to Carter we have individuals from humble origins who came through these academies to become leaders and presidents. Our last president without a college educa-



tion, Harry S. Truman, had leadership skills recognized on the battlefields of World War I.

The idea that "anyone can do it" is a late 20th Century distortion of meritocracy. True meritocracy requires an individual to work and prepare for the day he or she can step forward and assume responsibility.

Now, we seem to have situations where those who yell the loudest, were born to wealth, or were beauty queens are asked to step forward, bypassing those who have prepared.

Daniel W. Humphrey  
Norman

Editor, The Observer:

I'm just a little confused and I was wondering if it is just me. Who are the Republicans running for president, Sen. McCain or Gov. Palin? He seems to have her attached to his hip on the campaign trail. I'm not sure if it is to enlarge the Republican base attendance on his stops or to make sure she doesn't make any more gaffes, such as her "the Palin and McCain ticket" at one of their campaign stops.

She seems to be all right when she is working from the script given her by the writers, but seems to lose her way when she has to wander away. She is still insisting that she said "thanks but no thanks" on the bridge to nowhere, even though that has been thoroughly de-bunked.

She does speak very confidently, but it does remind me of that old saying: "If you can't dazzle them with your brilliance, baffle them with your bullcrap [sic]." Then, the Bush Administration arranged a laundry list of "grip and grin" meetings for her with some world leaders at the opening session of the UN. If it was intended to add some credence to her foreign affairs experience, I guess that is better than "I can see Russia from my front porch."

Jack O'Connor  
Bethany

Editor, The Observer:

Am I and other people in Oklahoma better off since the Republican leadership at the State Capitol cut the state income tax? This cut has amounted to \$800 million thus far. They gave away \$800 million and then turned around and borrowed \$500 million in the form of a bond issue to fund state needs.

Road projects, which are really needed, are to receive \$300 million from the bonds. Then there are some

special interest projects such as \$25 million to Tulsa for their river project. [Tulsa voters had earlier turned this sales tax project down.] They also gave \$100 million for endowed chairs for OU and OSU while raising tuition costs to students by 9.9%.

This is a poor way to run a business; cutting income and then borrowing to run next year's business is a bummer. I am not - and I'm sure that others like me are not - better off.

The repayment of bonds will be made by me and all middle and lower class citizens through sales taxes. Those most able to pay through income taxes will be paying less.

The Republican leadership has been too haughty and dictatorial. They are accusing public schools of wasteful spending and for low student scores so citizens won't object when they withhold school funding.

They wouldn't even give Chief Chad Smith an opportunity to speak, nor would they recognize representatives of the autism support group.

The Republicans have had their chance to lead Oklahoma to greatness, but they failed miserably. The standstill budgets for education and other state departments resulted in no increased budgets despite inflation in the costs of fuels, maintenance, salaries and equipment.

Therefore, I am voting for and supporting all Democrats running and especially Eugene Blankenship for state representative District 14, where I now reside. Let us all start this house cleaning in Oklahoma City.

Raymond D. Sewell  
Muskogee

Editor, The Observer:

Anyone who shoots wolves from helicopters and thinks the polar bears are increasing does not have the judgment to be a dogcatcher.

I also do not wish to have anyone only a heartbeat away from the Oval Office who wishes to ban books from libraries. We are already having too much censorship as it is.

How can anyone know the truths about anything if we can't find information in our public libraries?

Darla Reynolds-Sparks  
Yukon

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## Frosty's Notebook

### **Do-Overs**

Are you as weary as I am of the moaning and groaning about college remediation? Oklahoma is not alone: a new study reports that one-third of American college students have to enroll in remedial classes – including Ivy League schools.

The bill to taxpayers is estimated at \$2.3 billion to \$2.9 billion annually.

Strong American Schools, which issued the report “Diploma to Nowhere” found that students coming out of high school are really misled.

It coincides with a report that trying to teach middle school kids Algebra is a losing proposition. They just don't get it.

Analyzing federal data, the report estimates 43% of community college students require remediation, as do 29% of students at public four-year universities, with higher numbers in some places.

Four in five Oklahoma community college students need remedial coursework. The cost per student runs to as much as \$2,000 in community colleges and \$2,500 in four-year universities.

Realizing that college isn't meant for every student, Oklahoma's silver bullet was the CareerTech system.

When Republicans took over the Legislature, for reasons known only to God, they went to war against CareerTech. Today there are 12,000 students on a waiting list for CareerTech classes – more than 700 school dropouts.

One businessman told a legislative committee that his firm has created 450 new jobs, importing some employees from Puerto Rico. He says he needs 95 more employees but CareerTech isn't producing them.

CareerTech jobs range from \$30,000 to \$60,000.

Another crippling maneuver was the No Child Left Behind law and the Oklahoma ACE initiative, both aimed at preparing every student for college.

For years many high school graduates avoided community colleges because



the hours were not transferable to OU and other schools. That was corrected by the late Russell Vaught while serving on Regents for Higher Education.

Students often report that the hardest aspect of the transition to college isn't the material. It's the new rhythm and structure of college-level work.

The gap between what high schools teach and what colleges expect isn't the only problem. There's often a mismatch, with high schools and colleges teaching material in different ways.

Only recently have K-12 and higher education begun talking seriously about aligning standards. It's a task long overdue. Quit blaming the teachers and college faculty. They're not speaking the same language.

### **Tattoo Warning**

Our thanks to Dr. Bernadine Healy, medical columnist for the U.S. News & World Report, for her thoughtful warning on the dangerous art of tattooing.

More than 25% of persons under 30 have one or more tattoos. Oklahoma was the last state to legalize it but had little choice – illegal tattoo parlors were spread across the state.

Dr. Healy said whether driven by the urge for personal expression or just plain youthful impulsiveness, most people get tattooed without a clue about the health implications of this invasive skin-puncturing procedure.

"I'd suggest that all tattooing require a signed consent form outlining risks – the most obvious one being a major case of remorse," she wrote.

Upwards of 50% of those who get tattoos later wish they hadn't. Their regrets become medical when they visit a dermatologist to have the tattoos removed, which is both painful and expensive.

In the July issue of The Archives of Dermatology, researchers at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center report on what's behind the change of heart: moving on from the past, problems wearing clothes, embarrassment, and concerns that tattoos could adversely affect job or career.

### **The Dues You Owe**

Too many lazy or indifferent Americans do not participate in elections. Participation in elections is essential to a healthy democracy.

Some have excuses. Job requirements keep many Americans from voting. Job requirements keep most Americans from volunteering at the polls.

Some jurisdictions make Election Day a holiday for government employees, enabling them to participate in the democratic process. Twenty-two states have some kind of time-off-to-vote statute, but only seven have strong laws.

Oklahoma pioneered extended voting and absentee balloting.

Too many Americans do not participate in elections. Only 51% of the voting age population turned out to vote in the last presidential election. This represents about a 20% decline from voter turnout levels in the 1950s and '60s.

Only about 35% of the voting age population turns out for off-year congressional elections, down from about 45% in the '50s and '60s.

By comparison, voter turnout averages 70-80% in such countries as Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Democracy, by definition, requires participation by the governed. And, rather naturally, a democratic government responds to those citizens who participate.

Over the long term, as fewer and fewer citizens participate, government policy shifts from reflecting the desires of all citizens to reflecting the desires of a few.

This can lead to a cycle of cynicism that drives participation levels even lower. For the sake of a healthy democracy, we must do everything possible to make it easier for Americans to vote. We've moved in that direction in Oklahoma but we can do more.

Beyond voting, citizens should have the opportunity on Election Day to serve as election judges, poll watchers, and volunteers for election authorities or for the candidates of their choice.

Too many elections are corrupt, such as Florida in 2000. Thousands of Democrats were turned away from the polls illegally. Four years later the same thing

happened in Ohio.

Nationwide 1.5 million voters cast ballots that were not counted in the presidential election, according to the Center for Alternative Policies.

Blacks and Hispanics are most often turned away from the polls – often illegally. They generally vote Democratic.

Voting is the dues every American owes to live in freedom.

John Greiner? His retirement is richly deserved after 42 years with the Oklahoman. It was my privilege to have worked with him since 1972 when he started covering the Legislature.

I have said in dozens of forums when I was criticizing his employer that my words were not intended for superb reporter John Greiner.

His loss to the Capitol Press Room will leave many of us without our personal memory bank. His recall was astonishing, bailing me out on many occasions when I drew a blank.

His will be more than a professional loss – I never heard him say an unkind word about any other reporter. He was quick to answer a question, even from the competition. The word "friend" is bandied about but in his case, all who know him could genuinely call him a friend.

His sense of humor was a blessing because he recalled anecdotes that kept other reporters in stitches.

Judges whose cases he covered were quick to tell you that he was the best. As one jurist put it, "He actually reads the cases." No shortcuts for John Greiner.

When I lost my beloved wife Helen among the first I heard from was a lovely note from Marsha and John Greiner.

Men don't often use the word in respect to other men, but in his case I mean it: "I love you John."

### **John Greiner**

# Reports From The DHS Frontlines

*Editor's Note: We promised you reports from the frontline as the Department of Human Services continues to be trashed by headline-hunting politicians and sensation-seeking media.*

The Oklahoma Public Employees Association [OPEA] collected information from Department of Human Services, how increasing caseloads and high turnover has affected the services they provide and their families.

The stories tell of workers who stand between the working poor and despair, who rescue abused children and rock them to sleep, who help the elderly left behind by mobile families, and bring dignity to the disabled in homes or in facilities.

## ANOTHER LEGISLATIVE SMOKESCREEN

Where is the adequate staff, adequate financing? Instead, the Republican legislative leaders duck behind an audit. Whatever happened to the Corrections Department audit?

Child welfare workers and other DHS professionals work long days, often into the night, to deliver compassionate care. How many night sessions of the Legislature?

The closing quote of one cry for help is below:

"Everyday I see people in trouble, everyday I hear people in need, everyday I work hard to help them, everyday I watch my co-workers do the same.

"If I were cavalier, I could work for a private company and make more money but I care about the people of Oklahoma in need! Does our Oklahoma government care about us?"

## WORDS FROM THE FRONT

Here are words from another DHS hero:

"I specifically remember a time when my aunt had passed away. I was out of town with my family and got a call and had to leave and come back immediately.

"There are times when my family goes places and I have to stay home because I am required to be within 30 minutes of my work county. My job takes me into homes that require the presence of law enforcement.

"I have been chased back to my car by vicious dogs. I have gone into homes that were so infested with roaches that I had to undress at my back door and immediately put my clothes into the washer.

"Every time I go out on an investigation or assessment my life is at risk."

## A FRIEND FOR LIFE

"Once I work with a child – in many cases that child is connected to me for life. I worked with one girl who disclosed to me that she had been sexually abused by her father.

"She had an eating disorder due to the abuse. I was able to get her in a safe



– Drawn by a client

home, and she worked hard and later enrolled into college.

"She continues to contact me to tell me how she's progressing I'm happy to talk with her and we're in each other's lives for much longer than a day."

## ANOTHER DHS SUCCESS STORY

"I worked with a young boy much beyond the 9-to-5 hours. There were times I spent more time with him than with my children. He'd show up on my front porch and need to talk at the most inconvenient times.

"He was moved to numerous foster homes and we had many hours on the road together.

"Today he is married, a dad and has children of his own.

"He's told me the therapeutic foster dad who he claimed to hate [because he

See DHS Page 8

# Voting Is Test Of Good Citizenship

By Joe Sweeden

With Election Day less than a month away, candidates are busy knocking doors, the debates are heating up, and signs and pamphlets are being dispersed.

Voting is one of our greatest freedoms as Americans. Our forefathers fought hard for us to have a representative democracy in which we get to choose our leaders. Unfortunately, many choose not to exercise their right to vote.

Polling numbers have been steadily falling in recent years. According to the Oklahoma Election Board, only 24% of registered voters came out for the July primary in 2006 and only 17% came out for the primary run-off in August.

Although the numbers for the November general election were better, they were still low. Only 45% of registered voters in Oklahoma participated in the democratic process by casting their vote.

I think Americans, in general, have lost touch with history. They've forgotten what it took for us to be a free nation. They've forgotten the sacrifices and blood shed by our ancestors.

Next month, history will be made in the presidential race. We'll either see the first African-American in the White House or the first woman. This is an exciting time in our history and we all have the opportunity to participate in it through

voting.

Under state law, state election officials are required to remove from the voter rolls those who haven't voted or had any other election-related activity in the past six years.

This state law conforms with the National Voters Registration Act of 1995.

Therefore, if you haven't voted, changed parties, sought an absentee ballot or notified election officials of a change of address since 2002, you are more than likely no longer a registered voter in the state of Oklahoma.

If you're interested in voting in the November presidential race, you'll need to contact your local election board before Oct. 10 and re-register.

A list of the County Election Boards can be found on the Oklahoma State Election Board website. If you have any questions about voting or registering, you can call 405.521.2391 or email info@elections.ok.gov.

I'd like to encourage the citizens of our great state to get out on Nov. 4 and let your voices be heard. Cast your vote!

– The author, a Pawhuska Democrat, represents District 10 in the state Senate

# Sadly, Hate Still Burns Brightly In Oklahoma

By Darla Reynolds-Sparks

I had an unsettling experience the other day that revealed a very hateful truth about my Oklahoma community.

I stopped to buy some tomatoes from a small farm on the outskirts of my town. During the transaction, the farmer's wife struck up a conversation. She told me she was employed in the registrar's office at our county seat. She asked if I was aware that Ohio was allowed to register and vote on the same day. She said she thought it was unconstitutional.

I realized she was "full of it" and kept my conversation on tomatoes until she went further by asking me if I knew that Obama was behind the busing of hundreds of blacks to the polls in Ohio.

Rather than be drawn into a political conversation with such ignorance and venom as I had already noted in this woman's face, I searched for a comment and

a fast exit with my purchase.

I said to her, "My goodness, when will McCain's backers get their buses rolling hauling white voters to the polls?"

I left her standing on her broken-down front porch with her mouth opened. On my way home, I thought: that bumpkin could be shredding every voters registration form of anyone she did not approve of – and our county seat is a working-class town with plenty of common folks of all colors and nationalities.

This thought was shocking to me, and I wondered if I could ever look at my community in the same manner again.

I am sorely disturbed by an ugliness I glimpsed in that woman's face. It saddens me greatly.

– The author lives in Yukon

# Gaylord Clan Ripping Off State Taxpayers?

By Nick Baker

Noticeably ignoring Oklahoma's tax credit abuses are the states two major newspapers, owned by two of the states wealthiest families, the Lortons who own the Tulsa World and the Gaylords, owners of OPUCO, the parent of The Oklahoman.

We have uncovered a connection between the Oklahoman and three of the over 100 companies recently discovered to have taken potentially as much as \$470 million in tax credit, using this fraudulent program in 2007 alone.

Clay Bennett's family owns Public Supply Company [not to be confused with PSO, the utility], one of the largest and oldest construction industry firms in Oklahoma. Bennett's wife, Louise, is a Gaylord, serving as a board member/officer of OPUCO.

## EXACT SAME AMOUNT

IIP Development LLC, with undisclosed ownership, invested \$5,045,000 in MetaMarkets OK LLC. MetaMarkets in turn invested the exact same amount, \$5,045,000, in Public Supply Company.

In the process MetaMarkets used the \$5 million investment to automatically claim tax credits under Oklahoma's rural tax credit incentive program that allows taking \$2 in tax credits for every \$1 claimed to be invested.

MetaMarkets OK LLC serves no value other than a middle man [referred to on state records as a pass-through entity or CAPCO] to claim tax credits, which it passes back to undisclosed investors.

Records reveal no Public Supply Company facilities outside the Oklahoma City and Tulsa metropolitan areas, making them ineligible for rural tax credit incentives.

## CLAY BENNETT'S BROTHER ROBERT

We have also learned that Robert Bennett, Clay's brother, and the president of Public Supply Company, used \$585,995 of these tax credits to reduce his 2007 personal taxes.

We could find no way for Robert to qualify other than as an investor in IIP Development/MetaMarkets OK scheme.

For clarification: The \$5,045,000 comes from state records showing the investments used to claim tax credits. The state records do not reveal the actual tax



credits taken or claimed for the investment.

Using a loophole this can be up to twice the amount of the investment or seven to 10 times the 30% allowed by law. The tax credits are intended to be used over a three-year period, but can receive extensions. The \$585,995 only refers to the part of those tax credits used during 2007 by Robert Bennett.

## USED TO AVOID CORPORATE INCOME TAX

There can be other partners including as a corporate tax credit for companies. Most tax credits are used to avoid corporate income taxes.

Corporate income tax returns are allowed up to a 180-day extension, and have not been compiled for 2007.

Comment: This demonstrates one of many different ways of misusing the tax credit program that we haven't often discussed. A company or its owners can move money around through different LLC's to funnel through the money laundering pass-through entity back to the company, solely for the purpose of gaining tax credits. Tax credits are then used to avoid paying personal and corporate income taxes.

– Visit the Internet blog [Clubcrony.com](http://Clubcrony.com) to leave comments. Further details and explanations can be found at <http://prowlingowl.com>

# Put Taxpayers, Not Highway Contractors, First

By Tom Elmore

Is the Oklahoma Department of Transportation really "ready" to pave its over-the-top, way-out-of-cost-estimate "New I-40 Crosstown" from Pennsylvania Avenue to Shartel in Oklahoma City?

Or is that project – said by ODOT Director Gary Ridley to be "the most expensive single contract ever let by ODOT" – simply being used as part of a nationwide highway lobby campaign to hammer Congress for more "Highway Trust Fund Money?"

At the website of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association [ARTBA] is a recent press release sounding enough like the ODOT chief's speech to the Oklahoma Transportation Commission meeting last month that you might believe Ridley – former "chief lobbyist" for the Oklahoma Asphalt Paving Association – was using that meeting as a "stage" to play his role in a concerted effort by the national highway contracting lobby to wring more money out of U.S. taxpayers by any means required.

## MORE DEPENDENT ON FOREIGN OIL

Sure – let's "borrow more money from China" to help ODOT pay for its "New Crosstown" plan to destroy the center of the state's railway network – making Oklahoma and the nation all-the-more dependent on foreign oil.

Not one word from Ridley, meanwhile, about the real problem with road maintenance and its obvious answer: The commercial trucking industry, chief overwhelming damager of U.S. public roads, needs to be forced to accurately repay the costs it inflicts on "taxpayer-owned roads."

A standard "18-wheeler" operating at its maximum legal weight inflicts pavement damage equivalent to 9,600 automobiles.

State road truck traffic growth was still accelerating through the end of the 1990s at an average rate in excess of 45% per year. Even so, the truck pays three-cents-per-gallon less state fuel tax than the auto pays in Oklahoma – and the "diesel penny" produces only one-third the revenue to the state produced by the "gasoline penny."

## WASHINGTON'S 'HOCUS-POCUS' FUNDING FORMULA

At the national level, trucking has long paid less than one-third of annual "contributions" comprising the much-vaunted Federal Highway Trust Fund. In short, the Trust Fund is actually one more Washington, DC "black, hocus-pocus curtain" behind which the unknowing taxpayers unwittingly massively subsidize Sen. Jim Inhofe's and Sen. Tom Coburn's commercial trucking pals – and then are forced to pay again to repair unrepaid road damage overwhelmingly inflicted by the trucks.

The answer is simple: Our highway network will be improved – and fair competition in the transportation marketplace will be revived – only when each public road user accurately repays its road-use cost.

But ODOT, like Congress and our own state Legislature, refuses to press that obvious answer – in favor of "band aids" that will plainly perpetuate the problem.

## ODOT SERVES HIGHWAY CONTRACTORS FIRST

You'd nearly think that perpetuating Oklahoma's road problems – thus keeping its highway contractor pals in business at a very high level – is ODOT leadership's "real business."

Plainly, Neal McCaleb, Tom Love, Bob Poe and their contractor cronies [calling themselves "T.R.U.S.T." – Transportation Revenues Used Strictly for Transportation] like things the way they are, and in their old friend Ridley, they appear to have an insider buddy making certain things go their way.

Meanwhile, railroads are a far, far better way to move heavy freight, a reality the recent fuel price tsunami has powerfully confirmed, and ODOT owns more railway – over 850 miles – than any other state in the Union.

However, instead of utilizing that asset to maximum effect, ODOT is straining every nerve to destroy the eight-block-long OKC Union Station railway terminal facility at 300 SW 7th – the obvious center of the state's rail network.

Is there "something badly wrong here?" You'd better believe there is.

## OKLAHOMA NEEDS LEADERSHIP

Oklahomans need to urgently confront the obvious questions: Do Gary Ridley and his pals work for the people of Oklahoma – or do they work for the highway and trucking lobbies?

It's high time for the nonsense to stop.

It's time for state leadership – notably Gov. Brad Henry – to exorcise unchecked highway lobby influence at ODOT, suspend and fully investigate that agency's disastrous "New Crosstown plan" to destroy OKC's Union Station railway center and call for complete, immediate reform of road use cost recovery in our state.

– The author, executive director of the North American Transportation Institute, lives in Oklahoma City

## Tag, You're It

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and David, 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake.

Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson: "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait.'"

Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "David, you be Jesus!"

## PUBLIC FORUM

# Putting Oklahoma Values Into Action

By Doris Beaton

Perhaps you like me have seen the articles this past summer about groups distributing school supplies to students, or you've read the notices in church bulletins asking the members to bring school supplies to the church for distribution.

I find it an unfortunate situation that those without the financial resources lack the necessary tools to perform in school. Their only hope is the generosity of our community and their teachers.

As a state, if we give substance to the belief that all children should be offered the opportunity to have an education in a publicly funded school, shouldn't that belief include all the necessary tools and equipment needed to receive that education?

### **OIL AND GAS BOUNTY**

As a state we have been blessed with an abundance of natural resources and a population that is able to harvest these resources. Oklahoma levies a tax on the production of oil and gas.

The gross production tax fluctuates as the price of oil and gas fluctuates.

According to the Journal Record [9.10.08], the August gross production tax for gas was 70.9% above the state estimates and 69.8% above the August 2007 revenue.

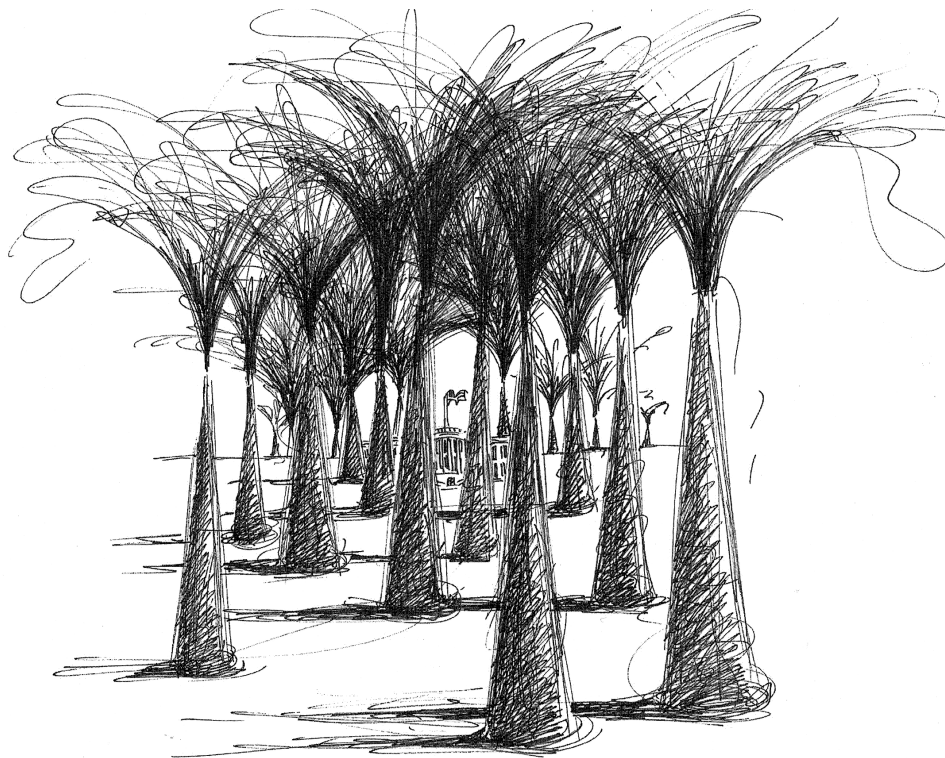
When the Legislature convenes next term, I am asking the governor and lawmakers to set aside political party lines and come together to acknowledge perhaps the greatest natural resource we have – our children.

### **A MODEST PROPOSAL**

I propose that the amount collected above the state's estimate for the August 2008 gross production tax for natural gas be set aside in a special fund for school supplies.

At the beginning of the school term an enrolled student would receive a "school supply" card. This card could only be used for the purchase of approved school supplies. Amounts could be set for each grade. Regardless of the school district, at each grade level, every enrolled student would receive the same amount. As they do now, each school would decide which supplies were needed for each grade.

These cards would work similar to the TV converter box cards limiting the application of the amount on the card to an approved list. In our age of technology this should be an easy accomplishment. Additionally, the use of the card would allow students to take advantage of the school supply sales that are held at the



various stores during July and August. Then as Oklahomans we would not be paying exorbitant amounts for basic school supplies.

### **TREATING ALL EQUALLY**

This system would not differentiate students from families with means from those whose budgets are already stretched too thin with rising fuel, utility and food prices.

Any unused funds and the related earned interest could be used the following school term.

The cost to the taxpayer – zero – since the gross production tax is not a direct tax.

Certainly it can be argued that we are paying for it – yes, indirectly in the cost at the gasoline pump, and in the cost of gas in our home heating bill. But whether or not it is used for this program it will be spent by the Legislature as part of the state budget and that budget will be signed by the governor.

### **OUR VALUES IN ACTION**

As we are in the fall campaign season, which of our Oklahoma legislators will demonstrate our Oklahoma values in action and make a campaign promise to sponsor and vote on a school supply fund this next legislative term?

And, Gov. Henry, I ask for your support and signature so that this proposal becomes a reality.

Is there a better way to demonstrate our Oklahoma values than to spend the surprise August 2008 natural gas gross production tax windfall on our children?

– The author lives in Oklahoma City

# Autism Debate Shifts To Legislative Races

By Jay Paul Gumm

The biggest battle in the Legislature last session was our fight to require health insurance to cover autism.

Now that campaign season is fully underway, that fight is being played out in campaigns across the state. Dozens of candidates for the Legislature – of both political parties – are announcing their full-throated support for "Nick's Law," while those who oppose it are desperately scrambling for any political cover they can find.

Case in point is the dog-and-pony show being conducted by the leadership in the House of Representatives. Keep in mind this is the same leadership team that killed "Nick's Law" without so much as a vote.

### **DOG AND PONY SHOW**

They have commissioned an interim study to look at health care reform. One of their first witnesses was the executive director of a Washington, DC group that exists solely to oppose policies like "Nick's Law." The term "special interest group" is a pretty accurate description of this organization.

This was hardly an unbiased first step for a supposedly fair and balanced study.

It did not have to be this way. The Republican leadership of the House of Representatives made this a partisan fight – and families with autistic children are their victims.

It was not a partisan issue in the Oklahoma Senate, senators from both political parties voted for "Nick's Law."

In state-after-state, we are seeing elected officials of both political parties put aside partisanship and work together to do the right thing.

### **REPUBLICANS ELSEWHERE 'GET IT'**

Recently, Louisiana's Republican Gov. Bobby Jindal signed a bill requiring health insurance companies in that state to cover diagnosis and treatment of autism. That new law was written by a Republican and passed the Louisiana Legislature with unanimous support from both parties.

Jindal is one of the national Republican Party's "rising stars," and he is not the first high-profile Republican governor to sign autism insurance legislation this year.

Florida Gov. Charlie Crist signed his state's autism bill, which was passed by a Republican-controlled legislature.

In Pennsylvania, Republican House Speaker Dennis O'Brien championed a

measure – which passed the House unanimously and a Republican-controlled state Senate 49-1 – that will allow parents of autistic children to pay for behavioral therapy and related services with private health insurance.

### **HOUSE LEADERS COULD HAVE BEEN HEROES**

Here in Oklahoma, House leaders could have been heroes to autistic children; we begged them to do so. Some House Republicans publicly say they will vote for the bill – if only given a chance.

It is their leadership that is denying them that chance, and denying Oklahoma's autistic children with a chance to fulfill their potential.

One thing is clear in this battle, which is now being debated in legislative elections across Oklahoma: The position of Republican leaders in the Oklahoma House is not only out-of-step with Oklahoma values, it is out of step with Republicans nationwide, and it is nothing less than shameful.

– The author, a Durant Democrat, represents District 6 in the state Senate

## **DHS**

From Page 6

insisted on structure and discipline] is now the model of the dad he wants to be for his children.

"No, these children are not in our lives for a day! A social worker is happy when a child remembers us for more than a day because we certainly remember them longer."

### **PRESS NEEDS TO FOCUS ON FUNDING**

"First and foremost I love my job at Child Welfare Services but I see problems. Most of the problems stem from lack of funding ... Someone needs to tell the press that we need more money so people will have to pay more taxes ...

"I wish someone would ask the press: Whose fault is it? It is the parents and abusers, not DHS. If parents treated their children right in the first place then we wouldn't even have a job."

### **VOLUNTEER LOVES HELPING KIDS**

"I'm retired now and work part-time in Child Welfare and I'm still getting more and more children in my life. A day in my life will probably always have a child in it at some time. That's the way it is – that's the way I like it!"

– To be continued in the Oct. 25 issue



# What Is Charity?

## IRS Going After 500 Non-Profits

By Jon Forman

After years of study, the Internal Revenue Service recently revised the tax returns that most nonprofit organizations have to file each year.

Starting next May 15, most charities and other tax-exempt organizations – except religious organizations – will have to file a new Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax. Small tax-exempts can file the simplified Form 990-EZ.

Unlike tax returns filed by individuals, the tax returns filed by these 500,000 tax-exempt organizations are open to public inspection. That way, we get to see what benefits these organizations provide in exchange for their privileged tax-exempt status.

### NO OVERHAUL SINCE 1979

Form 990 has not been overhauled since 1979, and, according to the IRS, the old form “no longer adequately served the Service’s tax compliance interests or met the transparency and accountability needs of the states, the public, and communities served by the organizations.”

The new Form 990 requires tax-exempt organizations to provide more information about their governance, executive compensation, and relationships with insiders and other organizations.

In particular, the new Form 990 expands the reporting of executive compensation. As before, each organization must list its officers, directors, trustees, and key employees, and it must report the compensation paid to the organization’s five highest compensated individuals.

### NOT JUST CHARITIES ANYMORE

The new Form 990 extends these requirements to all organizations, not just charities.

In addition, the new Form 990 requires all organizations to disclose the names and compensation of every person who receives more than \$150,000 a year.

This has lobbyists in a tizzy. According to a recent article in the trade magazine *Tax Notes*, the National Football League – a Tax Code Section 501(c)(6) organization – has 20 or 30 employees who make more than \$150,000 a year, and the NFL does not want to have their names and salaries made public.

### LOBBYISTS ATTACK IRS RULING

On behalf of some 12,000 tax-exempt trade associations, the Society of Association Executives is also lobbying to get Congress to stop the IRS from implementing this new compensation disclosure rule.

Tax-exempt hospitals are also concerned about the new Schedule H, which will require them to show how much free care they actually provide to needy families.

This month, private hospitals are also reeling from a recent court decision that threatens to take away the property tax exemptions of many private hospitals in



CAPITALISM AT WORK

Illinois.

In a case involving Proven Covenant Medical Center, the Illinois court of appeals sided with government officials who denied Proven a property tax exemption because the hospital allocated less than 1% of its revenues to charity care.

### COURT REJECTS PLEAS OF BEING “CHARITABLE”

The court was adamant that selling health care services is not in itself a charitable purpose, nor could writing off uncollectible bills count as charity.

The usual justification for giving tax-exempt status to charities, hospitals, and certain other nonprofit organizations is that that these organizations provide valuable benefits to the public.

Of course, Congress takes a pretty broad view of public benefits. Why else would the NFL, trade associations, private hospitals, fraternities, sororities, country clubs, and political action committees qualify for tax-exempt status?

All in all, it is unlikely that lobbying Congress for less disclosure will succeed. If anything Congress is likely to impose even more stringent requirements on nonprofits.

Recently, Sen. Charles Grassley, R-IA, and Rep. Peter Welch, D-VT, hosted a roundtable with the nation’s wealthiest universities to talk about their recent tuition increases, their financial aid practices and how they manage and spend their endowments.

### GRASSLEY PROPOSES A NEW MINIMUM

Under current law, private foundations must spend at least 5% of their endowments annually. Grassley also wants to make the richest universities spend at least 5% of their endowments annually, and he wants private hospitals to allocate at least 5% of their revenues for free health care.

Congressional scrutiny and the new Form 990 are slowly bringing tax-exempt operations out into the open – and bringing reforms.

Harvard, for example, which has a \$35 billion endowment, was recently shamed into providing more financial aid to offset its \$32,557-a-year tuition, and private hospitals will probably need to spend more on charity care [and less on salaries] if they want to keep their tax exemptions. Let the sun shine in.

– The author is Alfred P. Murrah Professor of Law at the University of Oklahoma. He can be reached at 405.325.4779 or by e-mail at [jforman@ou.edu](mailto:jforman@ou.edu).

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# Image Trumps Substance In Today’s Debates

By Danny M. Adkison

What do we know about presidential debates? Sometimes another question is a good answer to a question.

With that in mind, ask yourself this question: What do you remember about any presidential or vice presidential election? See if your answer is found below.

The first presidential debate between John Kennedy and Richard Nixon set the trend for all future debates. This is true for two reasons. One, it was the first presidential debate. Two, the second debate didn’t take place until 1976.

The first explanation is obvious, the second needs some explaining.

### DEBATE OVER WHO WON

In 1960, when television was still in its infancy, a lot of people still got their news by listening to the radio. So when researchers went about trying to determine who won that debate [the issue that voters tend to obsess on], they were surprised.

Researchers were surprised to find that the voters’ perception as to who won that debate was it depended. It depended on whether the voter listened to the debates on the radio or watched the debate on television.

Nixon won debating awards in college. He had been vice president for eight years under one of the most popular presidents of the 20th Century [Dwight David Eisenhower]. So, for those who listened to the debate on radio, Nixon won the debate.

For those voters watching it on television, Nixon lost the debate. The lesson from the first presidential debate was clear: it is not what you say, it is how you look [taking “look” in its broadest sense].

### TELEVISION BECAME DOMINANT

This would have a tremendous impact on future debates, primarily because the next series of presidential debates did not take place until 1976. By that time, television had overwhelmingly supplanted radio as a source of news for nearly all Americans.

Since “image” was the important lesson learned in 1960, it became the dominant concern in 1976.

In fact, there is a famous story about the 1976 debate demonstrating this. The

story goes that the Carter camp was concerned that Gerald Ford, who played football at the University of Michigan, would appear to hover, Goliath like, over the diminutive Jimmy Carter [when the TV cameras captured them together on stage].

To minimize this, the Carter camp asked that the stage be lowered when Ford stood. When the Ford camp refused the debate was seemingly off.

Here is how they got past the disagreement. They brought in a carpenter who measured from the floor to the center of the belt buckle of each candidate and then proceeded to build the podiums each would stand behind proportionate to the average of those measurements.

### MEMORABLE GAFFES AND SLOGANS

Still think these debates aren’t all about image?

As to what is remembered about that debate, it was President Ford declaring that there was no Soviet domination of Eastern Europe in the Ford Administration. That was patently false, and it was the president of the United States saying it. Forget all the specific policies each candidate mentioned or debate points each made, the most memorable moment was a gaffe.

In 1980 it was Ronald Reagan saying, “There you go again,” to President Carter and the brilliant appeal Reagan made in his summation to the voters, “Are you better off than four years ago.”

That was a brilliant appeal because it was asking the voters do so something they were quite comfortable doing: reflecting on how they felt [not thought] about the past four years.

### IT’S NOT WHAT’S SAID THAT COUNTS

Four years later when the only genuine concern was Reagan’s age, he stumbled in the first debate with a halting response that seemed to last for an eternity. He then won the voters over in the next debate by telling viewers that in spite of the fact that the age issue had been raised, he was not going to mention his youthful opponent’s inexperience.

It was classic Reagan, the debate was over, and Reagan won 59% of the popular

See DEBATES Page 10

## BOOKS

# Filkins' War Memoir 'Utterly Harrowing'

By Tim Rutten

### THE FOREVER WAR

By Dexter Filkins  
Knopf Publishing Group  
384 pages, \$25

The literature of human conflict divides itself into two schools: One – the more ancient – is bardic and celebrates war and warriors; the other is the tradition of witness, which elucidates war and records the fates of those caught up in it.

Dexter Filkins' brilliant new reportorial memoir deserves to be ranked as a classic of the latter genre and is likely to be regarded as the definitive account of how the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were experienced by those who actually waged them.

Because we associate war correspondence with mass media, there's a tendency to overlook the witness tradition's own antique roots. This writer is of the admittedly unconventional opinion that they extend all the way back to 401 BC and Xenophon's "Anabasis" ("The March Up Country"), the classic account of how he helped lead 10,000 stranded Greek mercenaries on a fighting retreat from the heart of the Persian empire.

His reportage was not only admired for the simple, unadorned quality of its Attic sentences but also was so accurate that Alexander the Great used it as a field guide when he invaded Mesopotamia.

### MODERN DAY WILLIAM HOWARD RUSSELL

What we would recognize as war correspondence of the sort upon which Filkins' book is based began in the mid-19th Century, during the Crimean War, when the editor of the Times of London became dissatisfied with the hit-or-miss dispatches of officers upon whom most newspapers relied.

The Times hired the Irishman William Howard Russell and sent him to file exclusive reports. It was a huge success. Here, for example, is the lead he wrote on the charge of the Light Brigade:

"If the exhibition of the most brilliant valor, of the excess of courage, and of a daring which would have reflected luster on the best days of chivalry can afford full consolation for the disaster of today, we can have no reason to regret the melancholy loss which we sustained in a contest with a savage and barbarian enemy.

"I shall proceed to describe, to the best of my power, what occurred under my own eyes, and to state the facts which I have heard from men whose veracity is unimpeachable, reserving to myself the right of private judgment."

### A GREAT WAR CORRESPONDENT

The declaration embedded in that second paragraph has guided great war correspondents ever since, and Filkins surely is among them.

Not long before his death, David Halberstam – whose combat journalism defined the Vietnam conflict in the same way *The Forever War* promises to do for the war in Iraq – and I discussed the quality of on-the-ground reporting coming out of this conflict.

Halberstam was careful to point out that the conditions of combat correspondence in Iraq were, on a daily basis, much more dangerous and restrictive than those he experienced in Southeast Asia. Even so, he said, Filkins' work stood out as first rate in any circumstance.

*The Forever War* validates Halberstam's judgment. Filkins first went to Afghanistan in 1998 as a reporter for the Los Angeles Times. Two years later, he was arrested and expelled by the Taliban. He joined the staff of the New York Times, reported from ground zero on 9/11, then returned to Afghanistan with the invading U.S. forces. He covered the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and continued to report from there until 2007.

### THE POWER OF METICULOUS VIGNETTES

His account of those years is unadorned in the style of Xenophon and utterly harrowing in its accumulation of detail. Rather than construct a synthetic

narrative, the author has chosen to proceed from one meticulously constructed vignette to another.

The opening sequence, for example, is a stunning reconstruction of a Marine platoon's first night in Fallujah that could stand as a pitch-perfect evocation of Carl von Clausewitz's infamous "fog of war." From there, the narrative moves between Afghanistan and Iraq in a way that perfectly captures the ambiguous, borderless struggle with the many variants of Islamic extremism and Mideastern and Central Asian nationalisms.

One strength of Filkins' account is that he refrains from political judgments but never hesitates to express a moving human solidarity that encompasses not only his fellow Americans under arms but also the tormented people of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Filkins' almost tender appreciation of the duality of life that conflict has forced on the Afghans and the Iraqis sets *The Forever War* distinctly apart as reportage. So too does his admission that a full comprehension of that duality remains outside the reach of even the most empathetic Americans there. When it comes to his more distant countrymen, a deep silence descends.

### THE PERSONAL IMPACT OF WAR

"People asked me about the war, of course," Filkins writes in a brief but un-sentimental epilogue that ends at the Arkansas graveside of Billy Miller, a Marine killed while escorting the reporter to a photo op. "They asked me whether it was as bad as people said. 'Oh, definitely,' I told them and then, usually I stopped.

"In the beginning I'd go on a little longer, tell them a story or two, and I could see their eyes go after a couple of sentences. We drew closer to each other, the hacks and the vets and the diplomats, anyone who'd been over there. My friend George, an American reporter I'd gotten to know in Iraq, told me he couldn't have a conversation with anyone about Iraq who hadn't been there. I told him I couldn't have a conversation with anyone who hadn't been there about anything at all."

We will never feel the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as Filkins and his colleagues have felt them. Now, though, thanks to one reporter's heroic act of witness and brilliant recitation of what he saw, we can see the war – as it is, and for ourselves.

© The Los Angeles Times

## DEBATES

From Page 9

vote.

The vice presidential debates have had their "defining moments," too.

Who can forget Lloyd Bentsen's statement to Dan Quayle when Quayle sought to compare himself to John Kennedy?

Examples could be supplied for every other presidential debate, but the point, established since the Kennedy-Nixon debates, is still the same: it is not what you say, but the image you portray.


That may explain why in the recent debates, it does not matter which candidate is the most rhetorical and logical and makes the most sense [in essence, wins the debate from an academic point of view].

The medium is the message, and television likes attractive images [no matter what sense or nonsense those images are uttering].

They aren't really debates but simultaneous press conferences held on the same stage [one recent candidate even asserted she would not necessarily answer the questions put to her].

Viewers are like students who attend class [even when attendance isn't required] but then pay no attention to what is being discussed. They are merely "waiting for something to happen."

– The author teaches constitutional law at Oklahoma State University



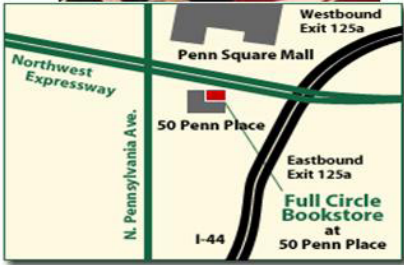
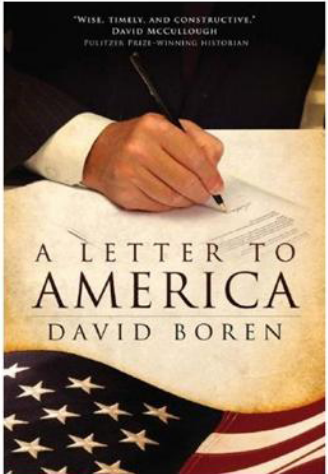
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**THE OKLAHOMA Observer**

# Democrat Versus Two Republicans

If you're a minority and you're selected for a job over more qualified candidates, you're a "token hire." If you're a conservative and you're selected for a job over more qualified candidates, you're a "game changer."

Black teen pregnancies? A "crisis" in black America. White teen pregnancies? A "blessed event."

Similarly, if you name your kid Barack, you're "unpatriotic." Name your kid Track, you're "colorful."

If you're a black single mother of four who waits for 22 hours after her water breaks to seek medical attention, you're an irresponsible parent, endangering the life of your unborn child. But if you're a white married mother who waits 22 hours, you're "spunky."

## DIFFERENCE A DAUGHTER MAKES

If you're a 13-year-old Chelsea Clinton, the rightwing press calls you "First Dog." If you're a 17-year old pregnant unwed daughter of a Republican, the rightwing press calls you "beautiful" and "courageous."

If you teach abstinence only in sex education, you get teen parents. If you teach responsible age appropriate-sex education, including the proper use of birth control, you are eroding the fiber of society.

If you kill an endangered species, you're an excellent hunter. If you have an abortion you're not a Christian, you're a murderer [forget about if it happens while being date raped.]

## WHERE YOU GREW UP VITAL

If you grow up in Hawaii, you're "exotic." Grow up in Alaska eating moose burgers, you're the quintessential "American story."

If you're a Democrat and you make a VP pick without fully vetting the individual, you're "reckless." A Republican who doesn't fully vet is a "maverick."

If you are a Democratic male candidate who is popular with millions of people, you are an "arrogant celebrity." If you are a popular Republican female candidate, you are "energizing the base."

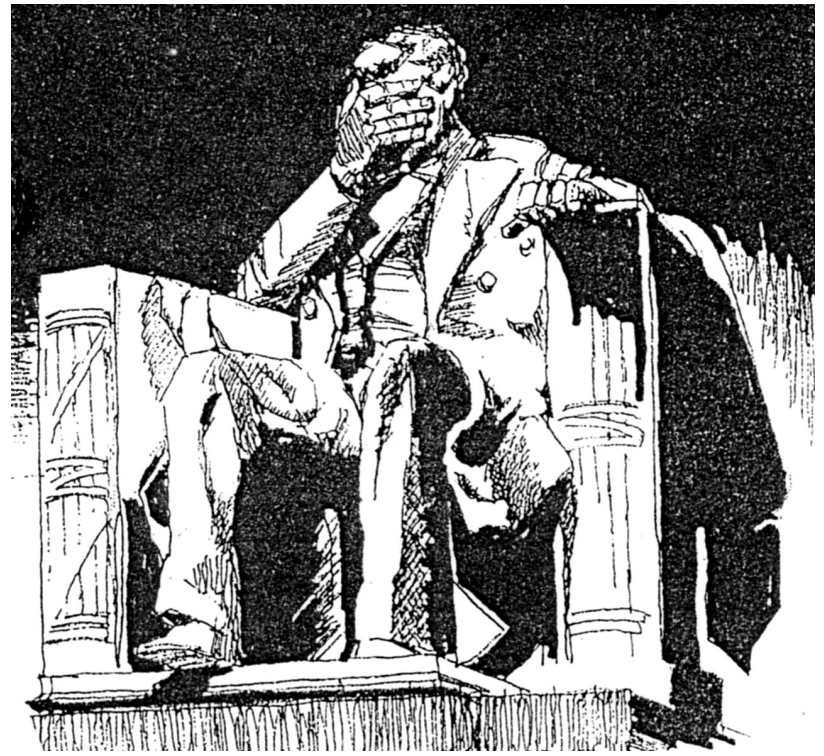
## DEFINING PRESUMPTUOUS

If you are a younger male candidate who thinks for himself and makes his own decisions, you are "presumptuous." If you are an older male candidate who makes last minute decisions you refuse to explain, you are a "shoot from the hip" maverick.

If you are a candidate with a Harvard law degree, you are "an elitist - out of touch" with the real America. If you are a legacy [Dad and Granddad were admirals] graduate of Annapolis, with multiple disciplinary infractions, you are a hero.

## EXPERIENCE COUNTS

If you strategize and manage a multi-million dollar nationwide political campaign defeating more tenured politicians, you are an "empty suit." If you were a part-time mayor of a town of 7000 people, you are an "experienced executive."



If you go to a largely African-American south-side Chicago church, your beliefs are "extremist." If you believe in creationism, don't believe global warming is affected by human activity, and see the Iraq invasion as "a mission from God," you are "strongly principled."

If you left your disfigured wife after cheating on her with a rich heiress, whom you married the next month, you're a Christian. If you have been married to the same woman for 19 years and raised two beautiful daughters, you're "risky."

## BARACK OBAMA VS. HIS OPPONENTS

If you spend three years as a community organizer growing your organization from a staff of one to 13 and your budget from \$70,000 to \$400,000, then become the first black president of the Harvard Law Review, create a voter registration drive that registers 150,000 new African-American voters, spend 12 years as a constitutional law professor, then spend nearly eight more years as a state senator representing a district with over 750,000 people, becoming chairman of the state Senate's Health and Human Services Committee, then spend nearly three years in the United States Senate representing a state of almost 13 million people, sponsoring 129 bills and co-sponsoring 545 bills and serving on the Foreign Affairs, Environment and Public Works and Veterans Affairs committees, you are "inexperienced."

If you spend four years on the city council and six years as the mayor of a town with less than 7,000 people, then spend 20 months as the governor of a state with 650,000 people, then you've got the most executive experience of anyone on either ticket, have traveled to three foreign countries, are the Commander in Chief of the Alaska National Guard of 4,000 members, you are well qualified to lead the nation should you be called upon to do so because your state is the closest state to Russia.

- Thanks to Frank Silovsky for forwarding this gem

# McCain's And Palin's 'Forked-Tongue Express'

By Edwin E. Vineyard

Too many in the media, in their efforts to appear unbiased, like to paint candidates in both parties with the same tar brush. They like to criticize both campaigns of going negative. Some may deserve this criticism more than others. Some may deserve little of it.

People in the media, and thus average citizens, are blaming Democrats as well as Republicans for the lack of progress of good legislation through Congress.

Actually, Republicans have used the lack of a 60-vote Democratic cloture majority in the Senate to stop votes on 90 progressive bills. Oklahoma senators have joined in this legislative obstruction.

Too many "truth squads" seize upon several outright falsehoods, made up and publicized by one camp, and equate this despicable conduct with use of direct quotes in critical statements from the opposite camp.

Even when quotes lack context, there is a difference.

## AIRING AND PRINTING UNTRUTHS

Too many in the media have aired repeatedly statements by Sarah Palin and by John McCain which were already checked and known to be untrue. They give free press coverage to wild accusations made by McCain, even repeatedly showing his attack ads free during news programs.

We are waiting for somebody in the media to just call "straight talk" McCain a "plain liar." We are waiting for somebody in the media to label Sarah Palin as simply a "serial liar."

That will be the day when the media regains respect as the fourth estate.

## IGNORANT INHOFE'S GUTTER TACTICS

Jim Inhofe's ads truthfully proclaim that he is a "hard-headed" and "stubborn" man. These omit "dumb," "ignorant," and "redneck."

Inhofe's dirty attack ads against his young challenger have gone from the gutter into the sewer. How could voters keep electing such a person of low ethics?

Before voting for McCain and Inhofe, people should remember that only a short while back these two, along with Tom Coburn, were avidly supporting privatizing Social Security, turning our future over to what they now call "Wall Street casinos" for management.

A number of us had their letters in answer to our protests against that. They used two pages to tell us why we were wrong and Bush was right.

Twenty-six years in the Senate as a Reaganesque anti-government, anti-regulation proponent, and with a campaign stable full of lobbyists, now John McCain wants us to believe he is a reformer and a regulator. He wants us to believe that he will go in and clean the house he has lived in for years.

## SAINT JOHN AND THE KEATING FIVE

Does anyone remember the "Keating Five" and McCain's direct intrusion into government regulation of a mismanaged savings and loan in Arizona whose CEO was a principal supporter and fundraiser for McCain?

Our "straight talk" guy was reprimanded by the Senate for ethics violations of the very sort he now pledges to clean up.

Some of McCain's ads against Obama have been not just negative, but gutter. When they make up something, or add to and distort a truth, it becomes a lie. We ought to say so.

McCain said that as an Illinois legislator Obama sponsored a bill that would put sex education in kindergarten. The sarcasm of the ad made its purpose more than clear.

Yet they knew well that the program for young kids was about avoiding and reporting adult predators. This ad "approved by" John McCain has to be regarded as a lie.

## PALIN IS A SERIAL LIAR

Ms. Palin's constant repeating of lies about her actions in Alaska have been a part of the talking points of their campaign as "mavericks" and "reformers."

"I told Congress 'No, on the bridge to nowhere.'" This statement has been discredited by mainstream media, shown to be false, and yet she repeats it over and over. But we do have a \$26 million federally funded "road to nowhere."

This and other similar statements make Palin a "serial liar." The fact that McCain stands by, even quotes her, makes him either a bumpkin or a serial liar as well.

His outright statement to an incredulous 60 Minutes reporter that Palin was fully capable of being president indicates either untruthfulness or incompetence on his part.

McCain's choice of the unqualified Palin to be his successor, should he pass

See FORKED-TONGUE Page 15

# Alaska Leads In Pork Barrel Cash

By David Morris

In her comment on the “Bridge to Nowhere” controversy, Sarah Palin appealed to the self-reliant, individualist, rugged, anti-government image most Americans have of Alaska.

“If we wanted a bridge,” she declared, “we would build it ourselves.” [Congress killed the project, which Palin supported.]

Actually, much of Alaska long ago lost the tradition of self-help. Palin might be campaigning on an anti-government, do-it-yourself platform, but her state is the most dependent on the federal government of all 50 states.

Washington sends Alaska more money per capita than any other state. Alaskans receive back from the federal government almost \$2 for every \$1 they send to Washington. It's a sweet deal.

## ALASKA IS KING OF PORK

When it comes to government pork, Alaska is king. As USA Today noted back in March, Palin's state ranks No. 1 – no other state is even close.

In 2007 Alaska received some 2.5 times as much as runner-up Hawaii and 15 times more than the national average.

Alaska has by far the most state government employees per capita of any other state and about five times as many as Obama's Illinois.

The part of Alaska not dependent on federal government largesse is dependent on big oil. Almost 90% of Alaska's general budget comes from royalties and taxes on oil, which explains how the state can be No. 1 in state government spending while ranking far down the list in taxes its residents pay.

## NO SALES, INCOME OR GAS TAX

Alaska has no income tax or sales tax. Recently, its Legislature suspended the gasoline tax.

Up to a quarter of an Alaskan's family income comes directly from the profits of oil companies. This may need a bit of explaining.

Back in the 1970s, when liberal Republicans still roamed the earth, former Alaskan Govs. Walter Hickel and Jay Hammond led a movement to create a state trust fund to bank part of the revenue derived from a nonrenewable resource to be used later to ensure that Alaska would survive its inevitable disappearance.

In part to ensure the continued political support of the Alaska Permanent Fund, the Legislature voted to use a portion of the fund's investment income to mail each Alaskan an annual dividend check.

## PREPARING FOR A DAY OF RECKONING

Hickel and Hammond hoped the fund would be used to prepare Alaska for the day of reckoning.

The day of reckoning is rapidly arriving, but contemporary Alaskan leaders like Palin aren't doing much preparing. Alaskan oil production peaked in 1988 – at about 750 million barrels.

In 2007 it was down to 250 million barrels, and it continues to fall. The exhaustion of its oil resources has not yet shown up in the economy or government coffers because of the five-fold increase in the price of oil since 1988 and by the relatively high returns the fund, now with more than \$35 billion in assets, has



earned.

Alaska has the most unbalanced and least diversified economy of all 50 states. Yet politicians like Palin do not appear to have the courage to change that imbalance.

## LITTLE MONEY FOR DIVERSIFICATION

About 95% of the Permanent Fund is invested outside the state. ExxonMobil Corp. is the fund's single highest valued stock holding. The state Legislature has appropriated little money to diversify the economy and prepare for a new age of renewable energy.

This year Alaskans will receive a dividend check of some \$2,000 for every man, woman and child. Palin requested that the Legislature add another \$1,200 to offset rising energy prices. Most legislators agreed.

The check, to go out in a couple of weeks, will certainly boost her popularity before the presidential election, and Alaskan households are definitely hurting because of their high energy prices.

But assuming that households use the money to pay energy bills, Alaska is sending part of the oil revenue it is receiving back to the oil companies to pay their customers' bills.

That may be a short-term palliative. But Palin quickly quashed legislative proposals that money be spent in a way that might help reduce a household's reliance on oil.

Palin is the chief executive of a very unusual state. Alaska is almost completely dependent on federal government handouts and oil company profits.

Of course its political leaders should try to maximize the revenue they can wring out of Washington and Exxon. But they shouldn't call that self-help.

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# U.S. Can't Afford GOP's Anti-Science Beliefs

By John Tirman

One of the peculiar oversights of the Sarah Palin media blitz is her strong anti-science views.

In keeping with her Pentecostal faith and alignment with the far right of the Republican Party, Palin is opposed to stem cell research, declaims evolution, and believes global warming to be a hoax.

Of her many controversial qualities, this anti-science ideology may be the most troubling – in fact, devastating – for the economy, ecology, and health.

If the McCain-Palin ticket is elected, we would have the prospect of an administration constantly at odds with scientific advance.

As vice-president, Palin would not only be the proverbial “heartbeat away” from the presidency, but the leading contender for the top spot eight years hence.

McCain himself shows some worrisome tendencies as well, supporting the teaching of “intelligent design” – the beard for anti-evolution propaganda – in schools, for example.

Overall, the prospect of teaching 8-16 years of this kind of bias sends a chill through the science community, even after years of dealing with the Bush anti-science agenda.

## U.S. GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE

The Union of Concerned Scientists, an independent watchdog group, has documented dozens of cases where the U.S. government has interfered with, undermined, or falsified science in public policy over the last seven years.

It is a shocking record, revolving mainly around environmental issues but ranging from abstinence-only AIDS prevention [shown repeatedly to be ineffective] to phony information about breast cancer.

Bush cut funding for the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control, among other science agencies, in his final budget. Overall, he has starved non-defense R&D at a time when China, the EU and other rivals are investing vigorously.

More of the same, and possibly worse, is likely to be in store if Republican rule

continues. The rightwing hostility to science is a mystery.

## INNOVATION FONT OF PROSPERITY

Science and engineering remain America's most powerful assets in the world economy. As we have lost steel mills and other hard-hat industries, innovation has become the font of prosperity. Without a robust scientific community, hopes for creating the new technologies and processes that fuel sustainable economic activity will surely decline.

The best young researchers facing this harsh prospect would be better off going to Britain or Germany or Singapore or the many other places where their research can thrive, and where governments recognize its value.

## GRAD STUDENTS LEAVING

The increase in recent graduates seeking employment outside the U.S. jumped by 67% in 2004 from 1997 levels. With an anti-science government in Washington, the stay rates and new applications both will surely erode further.

The McCain/Palin shakiness on science issues is not just another occasion for Saturday Night Live skits or jokes about the U.S. being the laughingstock of the world. They're life-and-death issues for global health and ecology, as well as our own well-being.

The moral setback is that we are unable, as a science community or as a nation, to help those most in need of these scientific advances, and of course the immense challenge of global warming – creating sustainable economic growth and equity – needs U.S. technological leadership.

Scientists, who are generally apolitical, are reluctant to call out the Republican establishment on its anti-science bias. But it is time for this to become a campaign issue, because the anti-science jeremiad could actually ruin the country that all the candidates profess to put first.

– The author is a Principal Research Scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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# Wall Street's Bailout Wizard Often Wrong

By Jim Hightower

There was a little news item recently about a man in Sheboygan, WI, who was sentenced to six years in prison for robbing \$20 from a child's piggy bank.

Think how much better things would have gone for him if only his name had been Freddie Mac, Bear Stearns or any of the other flamboyant figures of high finance on Wall Street. They are the ones that rigged the regulatory system so they could rob the piggy banks of millions of American homeowners.

And when they got caught in the crash of their own house of cards, here came Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson [himself a former wizard of Wall Street], sprinting toward them fast as he could – not to arrest the scofflaws, but to reward them with an 11-figure [or will it be 12?] taxpayer bailout.

## PRAISING THE FUNDAMENTALS

You might recall that Paulson is the fellow who spent the last several months poo-hooing the notion that anything was fundamentally wrong with the Street's house of cards.

Yes, he kept telling us, there are some difficulties with those tacky sub-prime mortgages, but the problem is "contained" and the market will magically correct itself – even as more and more families were losing their homes, housing values were plummeting, the home construction industry was rolling into the ditch and mortgage lenders were seeking the shelter of bankruptcy.

Only in recent weeks, when Wall Street itself began taking on a deathly pallor, did Paulson suddenly bolt upright and shriek, "The sky is falling!"

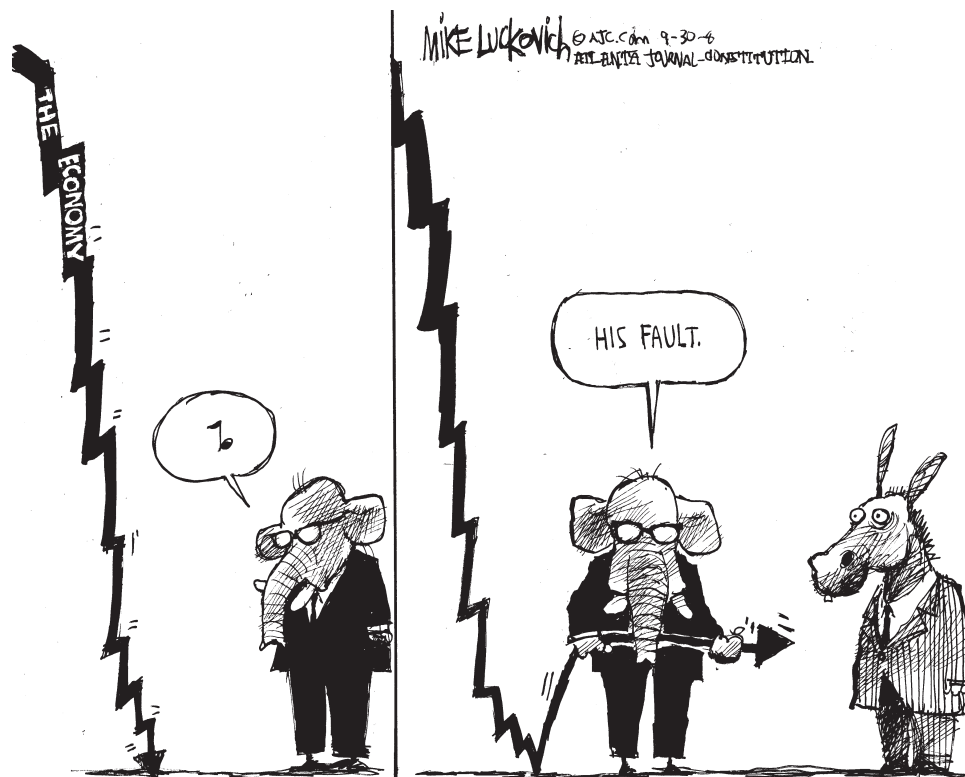
So Paulson-the-Capitalist pushed an unlimited plan of unvarnished socialism to rescue the failed greedheads who did this to America [and to countries beyond]. He wanted \$700 billion upfront from you and me [\$2,000 per every man, woman and child in America] so the government could buy up the bad bets that these speculators made.

It was essential, said the wizard, that the bailout be approved immediately, so Congress could not be allowed to ask any questions or put up any speed bumps. Just give me a "clean" bailout, he insisted. Trust me on this.

## PAULSON CONSISTENTLY WRONG

Trust me? I'd sooner trust a coyote with my last lamb chop. Here are a few reasons not to trust him: One, so far, he's been consistently wrong in his judgments and actions. Two, the \$700 billion [even more than the Bushites have dumped into the dark hole of Iraq] is just for openers – Paulson's plan had no top to it.

Three, his rescue focused entirely on salvaging the wealthy perpetrators of this robbery, with nothing for those homeowners who got robbed. Four, he would have bailed out the bankers without erecting any regulatory barriers to a repeat of their thefts, in effect telling the kleptocrats that there is no punishment for



their misdeeds – so why not do it again?

## BAILOUT'S FUNDAMENTAL FLAWS

For me, however, two other fundamental flaws in the bailout are the most damning.

First is Bush and Co.'s assertion that these financial corporations are "too big to fail," so taxpayers simply have no choice but to pay billions of dollars to preserve them. Hello.

Instead, shouldn't we be breaking them up, so America is not at the mercy of such behemoths and so we can instill a bit of competition in the system?

Second, with the Paulson plan, Congress was again rushed into subverting our country's democratic heritage by authorizing autocratic executive supremacy. Paulson himself wanted dictatorial power to allocate the money and set the rules.

Congress would get semi-annual reports, but have no control. And the judicial branch of government is preemptorily dismissed by the White House scheme, explicitly barred from considering any aspect of the bailout.

We the People would have no recourse to stop executive abuse.

## LIKE OZ, BEHIND THE CURTAIN

When the wizard in "The Wizard of Oz" was finally exposed, Dorothy angrily accused him of being "a very bad man."

"Oh, no, my dear," he responded. "I ... I'm a very good man – I'm just a very bad Wizard."

So is Paulson.

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# Blame Game: Homeowners? Or Liberal Media?

By John Giese

I'm tired of the liberal news media.

Their latest reports have John McCain supposedly using the word "reformer." I've supported John McCain one election after the other for decades as a "deregulator." He supported Phil Gramm's deregulation bill in the Senate in 1999.

I was furious when the liberal news media said Phil Gramm called us a nation of whiners. I'm sure he said we were a nation of winners.

John McCain's vote helped give the banks and mortgage companies opportunities to provide great dream homes for families regardless of their ability to pay. And now the liberal news media is blaming deregulation for our economic crisis.

## IT'S REALLY THE HOMEOWNERS' FAULT

The true blame belongs to the homeowners, who should have anticipated outsourcing and borrowed more money to tide them over from one minimum wage job to the other and still keep up on house payments.

The liberal media's commercials have convinced Americans to buy cell phones,

computers, and TV's from hard workers in China and Far Eastern countries.

Those tax and spend Democrats should be replaced by deregulators like McCain and Palin who support policies of spend and charge.

## WELCOMING MORE DEBT

I welcome the opportunity, as do my grandchildren, to have the additional \$3,200 per person for the latest bailouts of \$1 trillion charged to my debt account, as well as the accounts of each of my grandchildren.

Trickle down economics like this should continue.

For some unpatriotic reason, the liberal news media dislike privatizing profits and socializing losses.

It is truly American to willingly soak up these bad debts and pay the six figure incomes to thousands of bank loan and mortgage workers, especially the seven and eight figure incomes of their bosses.

Deregulators deserve election. The liberal news media just don't get it.

– The author lives in Bartlesville

# Dangerous Regulation Impacting Your Health

By Barbara Santee

The U.S. Health and Human Services regulation will permit medical personnel to opt out of providing services that run counter to their religious beliefs. It is aimed at abortions, but its impact is much broader than that.

Will emergency personnel refuse to transport a person to the hospital because he/she is gay? Will Jehovah's Witnesses refuse to fill prescriptions for people who have had organ transplants or blood transfusions?

Will an emergency room doctor refuse to help a woman who is bleeding to death from an abortion?

And on and on. We cannot have a patchwork quilt of medical services that depend on people's personal religious beliefs.

We have hundreds of religions in this country with literally thousands of different beliefs. At a time of crisis, no one would know whether they would get appropriate services or services at all, depending on their provider's religion.

For example, Catholic hospitals give no emergency contraception for women who have been raped. They also do not perform abortions, sterilizations [vasectomies or tubal ligations], give "artificial" birth control, and do not remove a woman's uterus unless it is dangerously diseased.

This is a dangerous regulation for all Americans, regardless of their beliefs.

– The author lives in Tulsa

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# McSame's Plan Makes Bad Situation Worse

By David Morgan

The income gap between rich and poor has widened enormously over the past three decades. The Congressional Budget Office reports that since 1979, the average income for those in the bottom half of households increased by 6% while the gains among the top 1% of earners soared by about 229%.

It's gotten so bad that some observers are comparing the past 30 years to the Gilded Age of the 1890s or to the Roaring '20s.

Many conservative economists claim there's little we can do about what some experts see as a potential threat to our democratic way of life. According to this conventional view, the growing gap, which almost every responsible economist recognizes, results from the ever-widening skill and educational levels among the nation's workers aggravated by competitive global forces.

## WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR GAP?

Presumably, then, policy makers are largely helpless in the face of these inexorable pressures. This unfortunate trend is merely the playing out of unalterable market forces.

Yet there is another explanation for the growing income gap. Recent studies by both economists and political scientists show that policy decisions made by Congress and the president matter a great deal. Policies affecting taxes and the minimum wage in fact play a crucial part in accelerating income disparities.

A recent critically acclaimed book by Princeton political scientist, Larry Bartels, offers abundant evidence from 1978 through 2004 that income disparities were significantly shaped by the contrasting policy choices made under Republican and Democratic administrations.

In brief, Bartels demonstrates that Republican presidents have consistently produced less income growth for lower- and middle-class families than for affluent families, greatly increasing inequality.

His analysis shows that the marked escalation of inequality of the past three decades simply would not have happened under Democratic presidents and policies.

## EXAMINING TAX, SPENDING PROPOSALS

With the presidential election just around the corner, this research has special significance. It calls for an objective examination of the proposed tax and spending priorities of the two nominees.

First, Republican John McCain wants to reduce corporate taxes and perpetuate most of the Bush Administration tax cuts, which especially benefited the wealthy. He also argues that Democrat Barack Obama wants to increase taxes.

# Real Horror: Return Of The Hooverites!

By Harley E. Venters

The Bushites are the Hooverites back in Washington, DC – except they are worse! They have added a Hitler slant [i.e. fascism] with peculiar religious beliefs, eager to start wars along with engaging in torture and ignoring the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

The Hooverites were in control of the government when I was born in 1922 and stayed in power through 1932 when I became 10 years old, ragged and hungry some of the time like many children today.

We have thousands of children in Oklahoma City today who go to bed hungry at night and go to school the next day without breakfast. That was true between 1922 and 1932.

As a result when the first peacetime draft was enacted in 1940, 40% of the young men drafted could not pass the Army physical. Malnutrition, bad eyes, bad teeth, and generally undetected and untreated health problems were the cause.

## WHAT GOVERNMENT INDIFFERENCE HATH WROUGHT

Today, after several years of lack of federal government concern for hunger and the handicapped, our jails and penitentiaries are full of prisoners, men and women, many of whom could not pass an Army physical and are both mentally and physically handicapped.

Today, homegrown terrorists are roaming our neighborhoods as we witness and hear every day on the evening news broadcasts.

After Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president and came into office with his New Deal in 1933, our country began to get back to health and sanity and people regained their hopes for the future. Social Security was enacted in August 1935 and aid to dependent children.

I was hoping I would not live long enough to see a return of the Hooverites to Washington and the hunger and hopelessness of so many ordinary citizens in our nation and our democracy, but no such luck.

## A RETURN TO FDR-STYLE VISION

However, I believe we are going to return a Franklin D. Roosevelt-type government to Washington this year with Barack Obama and Joe Biden and a Democratic Senate and House. It appears to me that ordinary citizens are joining the Democratic Party and its outstanding leaders to bring about the revolution needed in Washington, DC.

The Bushites must be ousted! The billions and trillions of dollars wasted in an unneeded, immoral, and futile war in Iraq must end and our troops brought home to their families. God bless them and their families, everyone.



McCain is certainly correct on this last count. Obama does plan to repeal the upper-end tax cuts enacted under George Bush, which would adversely affect the 2% or 3% of families with incomes over \$200,000.

But Obama also plans tax cuts but for those down the scale. A recent assessment of the differences between these two contrasting approaches is offered by the Tax Policy Center, a nonpartisan joint project of the Brookings Institution and the Urban Institute.

## WHO'S HELPED, WHO'S HURT?

Here's a summary of that report: Overall, people with very high incomes would benefit the most under McCain's plan, while lower- and middle-income taxpayers would do better under Obama. These differences between the two candidates should come as no surprise. This appraisal by the Tax Policy Center comports precisely with Bartels's book, entitled *Unequal Democracy*.

And just how do these differences in tax policy affect the electoral process? Bartels' research shows that elected officials pay almost no attention to the needs and preferences of families in the lower third of the income distribution.

As the rich grow richer, their political influence increases as well.

Bartels, who voted for Reagan in 1984, offers this final word: "Economic inequality clearly has pervasive, corrosive effects on political representation and policy making in contemporary America."

The growing gulf in income inequality needs to stop. Ideally, we should hope to reverse this insidious trend. The right kind of public policy can make a big difference in the lives of ordinary Americans.

And be assured, the policy changes espoused by John McCain would only make a bad situation worse.

– The author is a retired University of Oklahoma political science professor

The federal government must lead with funds in the fight to end hungry children and universal health care must be established. Public schools need to be better funded, as well as our mental hospitals.

We must have a compassionate federal government that shows concern for all our disadvantaged citizens and particularly our needy children.

The Republican political operatives are spending a great deal of time and money trying to convince voters that Barack Obama does not have the training and experience to be president and, hence, the Democratic Party should not have nominated him to be its candidate for president.

## DESPERATE TIMES FOR AMERICA

Indeed these are desperate times when our nation has been pushed to the brink of losing its democratic form of government by being shoved into fascism by the Bushites.

However, Barack Obama is from the land of Lincoln, a lawyer like Lincoln, and like Lincoln served in the Illinois legislature. After serving in the Illinois Legislature, Abraham Lincoln was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Illinois and served a total of two years.

Without any other experience in political office, Lincoln was nominated in 1860 by the Republican Party to be their candidate for president – and thank God he was elected. Being a smart lawyer and a courageous moral man, Lincoln won the Civil War and saved our nation and our democracy as he so eloquently stated in his Gettysburg Address in 1863 and his second inaugural speech in March 1865.

Barack Obama is a smart lawyer and has had, with his two years in the United States Senate, the same amount of experience in Washington as Abraham Lincoln did when he was nominated and elected president in 1860.

Obama is a patriotic American who will, with Joe Biden and the help of a Democratic Senate and House, save our nation and our democracy from the terrible legacy of the Bushites.

## WHY OBAMA, NOT MCBUSH?

Let's get out and elect them [including Andrew Rice as our United States Senator from Oklahoma.] Obama for America, another Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt in one.

Sen. John McCain, or McSame, has demonstrated early on that he is unfit to be president in at least three ways.

See HOOVERITES Page 15

## PUBLIC FORUM

# Where Are Jesus' Teachings In The Lies?

By Bob Bearden

The Internet is wonderful invention. You can purchase almost anything you want or need or desire and you don't even have to get dressed to do it. It is a great source of information; and that is both a blessing and a curse.

Especially during a presidential election year.

Anyone who can afford the price of a library card can have an affect on who is elected president, as evidenced by a particularly egregious e-mail that has been floating about attacking Barack Obama's patriotism and religion.

It even implies that he fits the profile of a Muslim terrorist, and he is taken to task for not speaking out more forcefully against his own minister's remarks, which pretty much makes their whole argument nonsensical.

The author questions Obama's beliefs in such core American values as Mom, apple pie, God and country and offers up all of this as reasons why he should not be elected president.

### FICTION ACQUIRES LIFE OF ITS OWN

It is pure fiction, and yet once it is on the Internet, it acquires a life of its own.

The scenario of the e-mail seems to be that God, country, Mom and apple pie are the exclusive domain of only a certain segment of our society and that Obama is too liberal and not sufficiently evangelical.

I disagree. I am a liberal, a veteran, a patriot and a follower of that Jewish Rabbi from Nazareth, and I firmly believe that Mom, apple pie, God and country aren't the exclusive preserve of those among us who lean in any direction.

If you live in Oklahoma it's not always a choice anyway; you tend to lean in whatever direction the wind is blowing.

Even though I do follow the teachings of Jesus, as a Native American I do sometimes ascribe to a more spiritual plain that includes a certain mysticism and a belief in the harmony of nature with humankind, which I have always felt is not in conflict with the philosophy of Jesus.

### DON'T QUESTION THIS VET'S PATRIOTISM

As a veteran who has served his country, I know I am a patriot, I love my country, and just because I don't happen to agree with someone's assessments or with my president does not make me any less of one.

And yes, he is my president, although I do have a Dixie Chicks for President bumper sticker on my car.

And from all of this clamor over Obama, his patriotism, religious philosophy and his stance on the War in Iraq, we hear the professed beliefs of evangelicals such as Pat Robertson echoed ad nausea by the likes of Rush Limbaugh and Bill O'Reilly that God is on America's side.

### GOD'S ON WHOSE SIDE?

I have always believed that God is on everyone's side. But that begs the question if She – and I do believe God is a woman; as far as I am concerned no man could have the kind of imagination and verve required to have created this world of ours – if She God only favors one side over the other, why does She favor America?

And why does anyone think that in a country founded on the principles of religious freedom, God would favor the practice of only one religion?

My friend Father John has always told me, "God loves everyone – there are no exceptions."

## FORKED-TONGUE

From Page 11

on, was really a direct insult to the nation. They can claim the slogan "country first," but it does not hold water. Who in their right mind thinks Palin is ready to be president? Our country deserves better.

Those who take "Forked-tongued" McCain and "Pit Bull" Palin inside their cloak, to their breast to cherish, will be bitten later. They will be reminded of the old admonition of the freezing serpent, "You knew what I was before you took me to the warmth of your breast."

Yes, it would indeed be better to hear a debate about the issues than name-calling or gutter politics as usual. There are problems.

It is very difficult to campaign against a foe who keeps making dirty accusations and circulating ugly, false material. About 35% of Americans believe the oft-repeated lie that Obama is a Muslim. Another 10% aren't sure, and slightly less than half are aware he is Christian.

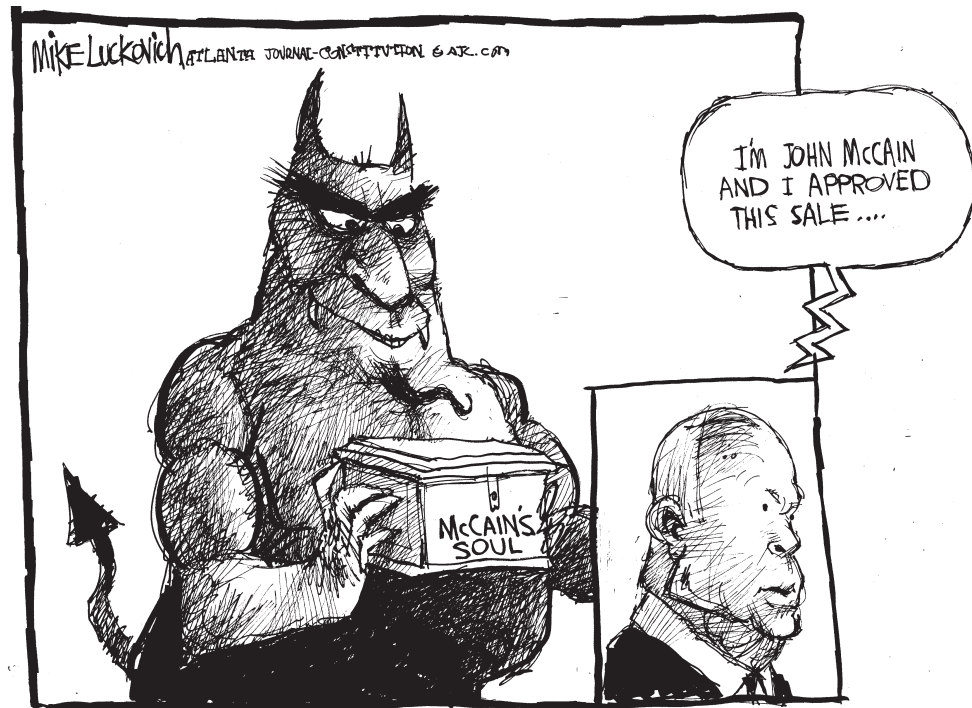
Further, it is hard to campaign against a foe who keeps changing his position. From hard-core, deregulating conservative and 95% support of the Bush presidency, McCain is now an advocate of "change" and "reform."

He wanted to fire the head of the SEC for not regulating better, while in the Senate he voted to gut the authority of regulators and to open up financial institutions to free market enterprise.

When told he could not fire the SEC chief, McCain said, "I'd find a way to make him resign. That is the kind of president I'd be."

Even George Will, conservative columnist, calls McCain "childish" and expresses doubt about his suitability as president.

Yes, Mr. McCain and Ms. Palin, we have a good idea what kind of presidential team you'd be. We have seen that kind of stubborn, misdirected, vindictive, tem-



The teachings of Jesus are of peace, love, hope and charity for all. I don't see that as a purely Christian philosophy; for to my mind, there are a number of other religious philosophies that believe in much the same principles.

### THE SCOURGE OF 'HOLY SPELL BINDERS'

I often wonder what Jesus would think if He were confronted today with all of these – as my Dad used to call them – Holy Spell Binders who claim to be His followers and yet seem to be teaching a sort of Old Testament philosophy of fire and brimstone in a Cecil B. DeMille/Charlton Heston kind of religious wide-screen concept that makes for great theater, but leaves little room for learning about Jesus and his teachings!

And like Molly Ivins, "I have never understood why any Christian would choose the Old Testament over the New!"

Having hellfire and damnation rained down upon you on a regular basis is not something I would think anyone would look forward to. My religious beliefs come easy, because I know that at least for me, God is still speaking through Jesus and his teachings.

And I would like to think Jesus might say to the likes of Pat, Rush, and Bilo – using perhaps a somewhat more modern vernacular – "Chill out, dudes. What you're saying just ain't happenin'!"

– The author is secretary of the Oklahoma State Association of Letter Carriers and a member of the Central Oklahoma Community Forum

## HOOVERITES

From Page 14

First, he is a Bushite who says our economy is sound despite an economy plagued with a combination of inflation and recession with the Bush government putting our children and our nation into massive debt to bail out failing banks and lending institutions.

Second, he is ready to keep American troops in Iraq for 20 years with all its horrors, bodily injuries and death, immorality and waste of taxpayers' money in the billions of dollars monthly.

Third, he selected a religious fundamentalist who believes in creationism to be his vice presidential running mate. She may speak in tongues, but she is not qualified to be president or vice president of our democratic nation!

– The author is a West Point graduate and attorney who lives in Oklahoma City

peramental presidency for the last eight years.

We have already seen a presidency based upon bluster, lies, and distortions.

We have seen vindictive persecution of those who fail to toe the loyalty mark, however wrong. We have seen corruption within the executive branch. We have seen a pattern of stonewalling and refusal to submit to subpoenas. We have seen secrecy in formation of policies. We have seen liars in office.

We have seen a sell-out of government to special interests. We have seen "no-bid" contracts that have lined the pockets of crooked business people at taxpayer's expense. We have seen a lack of competency in high offices to the detriment of our people.

We have seen the subversion of our Constitution, which the presidential oath swears to uphold. We do not want to see more of these last eight years.

– The author, AKA The Militant Moderate, lives in Enid

## One Happy Woman

A woman in her 50s is at home, unclothed, happily jumping on her bed and squealing with delight. Her husband watches for a while and asks, "Do you have any idea how ridiculous you look? What's the matter with you?"

The woman continues to bounce on the bed and says, "I don't care what you think. I just came from having a mammogram and the doctor says that not only am I healthy, but I have the breasts of an 18-year-old."

The husband replies, "What did he say about your 55-year-old ass?" "Your name never came up," she replied.

# Dire Shortage Of School Principals

About the authors: Gail Connelly is executive director of the National Association of Elementary Principals. Gerald Tirozzi heads the National Association of Secondary Principals.

One of the most historic presidential elections in recent history will take place in this country Nov. 4.

It is our sincere wish that no matter who the victor, the dire situation involving the growing shortage of qualified school principals and professional development funds will get due attention from the next administration.

In 2001, researchers estimated that by 2011, more than 40% of the nation's principals will have retired, leaving districts scrambling to find quality leaders for schools that are already struggling to keep up with the growing demands for high student achievement – demands that are often made without the support of necessary resources to make success possible.

## PREDICTIONS HOLDING TRUE

Presently, we are finding that these predictions are holding true as districts nationwide report they are desperate to find suitable replacements for aging school leaders.

A 1998 survey commissioned by our organizations found that the problem is widespread, with districts in rural, suburban and urban areas all reporting they are facing shortages.

Traditionally, assistant principals and teachers have stepped up to the plate, ready and willing to fill the shoes of a former principal.

Now, in the face of an ever-increasing amount of responsibility placed on the shoulders of school leaders, many assistant principals and teachers are foregoing the opportunity to take over the top spot.

## PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED

This is a problem that could more easily be solved with sufficient professional development for current and future school leaders.

If more federal funds were dedicated to recruiting and improving the training of potential school leaders, we might all be enjoying a robust number of principal candidates, instead of wringing our hands in fear of the impending crisis.

The next administration must place a renewed focus on school leadership if we hope to ensure that every child receives a high quality education.

Currently, only 3% [about \$87 million] of Title II [Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund] funds are being used for professional development for principals.

## COST OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We believe that it would take at least \$100 million to even begin to offer proper professional development specifically designed for school leaders.

Many districts are so desperate to fill vacant principal slots they are forced to hire individuals with little or no experience in school administration.

In many instances, this leads to an extremely high turnover rate and the unfortunate reality that schools are not receiving the leadership they need and deserve.

Ensuring that professional development programs and resources are available not only helps retain new leaders with talent and potential; it increases their ef-



fectiveness in leading the learning in their schools.

## IT BECOMES MORE ATTRACTIVE

This, in turn, enhances the appeal of the principalship to those considering school leadership as a profession.

Professional development programs give principals the tools needed to use data effectively, lead schools with populations of diverse learners, implement school wide literacy and numeracy initiatives and prepare students to meet challenging content standards.

Every principal should have access to programs that develop capacity in leading these areas, but unfortunately many districts simply do not have the funds to offer them.

Learning is a continuous process for the students – it should be for school leaders as well. How can we expect fledgling principals to instill the thirst for knowledge in their students if they are unable to evolve and grow due to a lack of funds?

## ROLE OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

Some schools are lucky to have an assistant principal – an individual who has worked beside the principal, day after day, gaining a unique perspective on how best to conduct the business of leading a school.

Despite this, for an assistant principal to make a smooth transition into the principal role, he or she needs continued professional development opportunities to ensure that students and teachers are being led by a confident and knowledgeable leader.

We wholeheartedly support the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in its efforts to develop a voluntary national certification program for school principals.

The proposed program would encourage and support the professional growth of administrators, and it would clarify the skills, knowledge and achievements that set highly qualified and minimally qualified principals apart.

Our organizations are eagerly awaiting the development and implementation of this program.

We urge both presidential candidates to give the matter of school leadership due diligence as they prepare themselves to take over the position of the most important job in the nation.

# 'Whole Child' Needs The 'Whole School'

By Gene R. Carter

A recent HBO documentary depicts the 2005 school year at a struggling Baltimore high school. The school's statistics are alarming: 50% of its 9th graders drop out by the end of the year, 66% of its teachers are uncertified, and its test scores are well below state averages.

Perhaps even more troubling is the documentary's depiction of the school's overall climate: chaotic classrooms and hallways, disrespectful and apathetic students, rampant truancy, and dismal turnout at events like back-to-school night.

I frequently emphasize the importance of nurturing the whole child so that all children are healthy, safe, engaged in learning supported by caring adults, and academically challenged. This doesn't just happen. It takes a "whole school" to nurture the "whole child."

## QUALITY AND CHARACTER NEEDED

A whole school is one that collaborates with its community to deliberately build and sustain a positive school climate.

The Center for Social and Emotional Education [CSEE], an ASCD whole child partner, has outlined essential dimensions of school climate that range from a school's physical environment to its expectations for learning, but the center sums up school climate as the "quality and character of school life."

Research shows that when school systems work to improve school climate, academic achievement and teacher retention increase while violence decreases. Moreover, experts contend that positive school climates prepare students to be active and engaged citizens.

## INCONSISTENTLY REFLECTED

CSEE's National School Climate Center and the Education Commission of the States' National Center for Learning and Citizenship recently released the School Climate Challenge, a white paper that underscores the importance of school climate and how that importance is inconsistently reflected in educational policy and practice.

So how does a school create a positive climate that's capable of nurturing the whole child? A logical first step is to take the pulse of the school's current climate.

The School Climate Challenge emphasizes the importance of using scientifically sound school climate evaluation tools that account for the experiences of students, parents and school personnel.

## DATA NEEDS TO BE SPRINGBOARD

But measurement alone will not fix school climate. Too often schools administer a school climate evaluation, look at the results once, and fail to use the data as a springboard for collaborative learning and improvement, says Jonathan Cohen, president of CSEE.

School climate data give us information related to social, emotional, and ethical learning that can build community and help schools create an action plan.

Incorporating school climate measures into a broader and richer accountability system is one way to ensure schools use the data to make improvements. Valid and reliable indicators of school climate and student achievement – beyond those used to evaluate school and district performance under No Child Left Behind – would provide a more complete and accurate picture of how schools are doing.

## COMPLEMENTARY FORM OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Some states, like Ohio, are developing school climate assessment as an additional and complementary form of accountability.

ASCD's Whole Child Initiative emphasizes that schools should leverage community resources to provide students with the education, health, and social services they need. Similarly, a school administrator – even one armed with the best data and intentions – can't single-handedly improve a school's climate.

Recent data show community involvement can improve. The Public Education Network conducted a national poll that captures the public's views on commu-

See **WHOLE SCHOOL** Page 17



# Diversity Is New Business Standard

It's an historic year, one in which an African-American has become the Democratic nominee for the presidency.

The political sphere isn't the only area where progress has recently been made. Just look at the ranks of upper-level management: About 720 African-Americans now hold posts within three levels of the CEO position in Fortune 500 companies, according to the Executive Leadership Council [ELC], an organization for African-American senior executives. That's up from 357 a year ago.

What's more, that number will surely continue to grow.

## NEXT FIVE YEARS WILL BRING CHANGE

"Over the next five years, we're going to see changes happening in front of us every day," says Barbara Thomas, president and CEO of the National Black MBA Association.

Businesses face a number of pressing reasons to nurture African-American managers. For one thing, the growth rate of under 45-year-olds in the workforce is predicted to slow dramatically over the next 10 years, making it especially important for companies to attract and retain top talent.

Plus, as African-Americans and other minorities comprise an ever-greater proportion of the population, they're becoming more vital to the bottom line.

In fact, the buying power of African-Americans is projected to be \$921 billion in 2008, and should increase to \$1.1 trillion by 2012, according to the Nielsen Co.

## UNDERSTANDING NEW MARKETS IS VITAL

The result: Companies recognize that they need to have African-Americans and other minorities in positions of authority to help understand and serve these markets.

"With different perspectives focused on solving a problem, you create better solutions," says Keith Bevins, a partner with Bain & Co., a New York-based management consulting firm.

The first stage in developing African-American talent is recruitment – bringing in high-potential employees who can then be groomed to join the ranks of top management.

## ANNUAL MBA EVENT FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS

To this end, Bain holds an annual pre-MBA one-day event for African-American students accepted to top business schools. Bain consultants introduce attendees to both the profession and the company.

Local offices also hold Q&A sessions for MBA students in the area. In addition, there's an annual three-day conference for Bain's African-American managers to discuss the year's successes in recruiting, lessons learned, and next steps.

# Drug War Is Lost, But Not Called Off

By David Borden

How long does a \$50 billion experiment need to continue before it's declared a failure? For alcohol prohibition it was about 13 years.

Between mafia crime, poisonings from adulterated beverages, and the dropping age at which people were becoming alcoholics, Americans decided that the "Noble Experiment" was a bad idea.

Americans of the '30s recognized the failure of the prohibition experiment, and they took action by enacting legalization of alcohol.

Industrialist John D. Rockefeller described the evolution of his thinking that led to the recognition of prohibition's failure, in a famous 1932 letter:

"When Prohibition was introduced, I hoped that it would be widely supported by public opinion and the day would soon come when the evil effects of alcohol would be recognized. I have slowly and reluctantly come to believe that this has not been the result."

While many of the people waging the drug war believe it's noble, that belief is misguided – with half a million people incarcerated in U.S. jails and prisons for drug offenses, the prohibition experiment is anything but noble.

## NARCOTICS ACT PASSED IN 1914

It was December 17, 1914, when the Harrison Narcotics Act passed the U.S. Congress – ostensibly a regulatory law to synchronize America's system with a new one being adopted by countries around the world.

Law enforcement interpreted it as prohibiting drugs – coca and opium, and derivatives of them such as heroin and cocaine, were the ones in question then – and law enforcement got its way.

Which means that drugs have been illegal for almost a century. Yet despite a century of prohibition – a century of fighting opium – the Taliban could somehow make \$100 million off of it last year, that's how much of it is still being used.

## ADDICTION RATE AT HISTORIC HIGH

Our addiction rate in the U.S. is higher today than it was at the turn of the 20th Century, while other things have certainly changed that could affect drug use. If you're fighting a "drug war" to end drug use, if addiction goes in completely the opposite direction, then you have a problem.

A recent example of things going in the opposite direction is cocaine prices on the streets of our cities, which according to DEA data is about a fifth of what it was in 1980 when adjusting for inflation and purity.

The goal of the eradication-interdiction-arrest-incarceration strategy is to raise prices in order to discourage use. Oh, and the drugs have gotten worse, too – who had ever heard of crack cocaine before 1986 – 72 years after passage of the Har-



Some companies also have formed close relationships with colleges and universities, as well as professional organizations.

## MARRIOTT WORKS WITH HIGHER EDUCATION

Take Marriott International. The Bethesda, MD-based hotel company works with many historically African-American colleges and universities to help provide scholarships, according to Jimmie Paschall, global diversity officer.

It has formed strategic partnerships with such organizations as the NMBAA and the National Association of Black Accountants that, in part, focus on recruiting.

As for development efforts, companies are emphasizing mentoring and providing opportunities to hone leadership skills. At Bain, younger associates are assigned a number of mentors, including a more senior African-American partner who can help them in navigating the organization.

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

Marriott holds regular conferences for minority and other key leaders in each of its three main regions. Last January, 800 people participated in a meeting in Washington, DC, where they attended sessions related to leadership development.

San Francisco-based Wells Fargo runs a three-day program, in which mid-level managers can learn about the leadership skills they need to "crack the corporate code," says Pat Crawford, senior vice president. The retention rate for attendees is about 95%.

These developments will continue to propel the next generation of minority leaders – and the future of U.S. business.

rison Act?

## BANNING MARIJUANA IS A FLOP

Marijuana prohibition, enacted in 1937, is an even less successful experiment than opiate and cocaine prohibition. For the harder drugs one might say at least that some young people have trouble getting them, although that's really just the kids who aren't into drugs.

Marijuana can be purchased by virtually any high school student in the country, at virtually any high school in the country, generally from other students.

When kids are dealing drugs to other kids, and that is happening everywhere, what is the result of the experiment? What is its conclusion? Is further research really necessary at that point?

No, it's not. The findings on the drug prohibition experiment are conclusive – it's a failure.

The day we legalize drugs is the day we can begin to clean up the mess that the drug prohibition experiment has created.

# WHOLE SCHOOL

From Page 16

nity commitment to helping improve education.

The public thinks business leaders and community organizations can do more to support public schools. The School Climate Challenge suggests school leaders use their school climate evaluation results as a way to promote community participation in improvement efforts.

## NARROW FOCUS IS FUTILE

HBO's grim documentary of the Baltimore high school showed how futile it can be to narrowly focus on raising test scores in the context of a dysfunctional climate that undervalues learning and relationships.

But there is hope. The climate can improve if the school listens to its students, uses reliable data to build an action plan, and marshals community resources to implement the plan.

All children deserve whole schools that promote achievement and prepare them to be engaged members of a democratic community.

Three years from now, wouldn't it be great to watch HBO's follow-up documentary about the turnaround success of this Baltimore high school?

– The author is executive director of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, VA [www.ascd.org]

# Unions Creating Their Own MoveOn

By David Moberg

After working 32 years as a security officer, Roger Lasch was angry when Target “downsized” him two years ago, just months before he could collect his full retirement package.

“There were still executives getting bonuses while I was losing my job,” he says. “I found that insulting.”

So when some young people from a group promising to fight for good jobs knocked on his door, he signed up.

A political independent from suburban Pittsburgh, Lasch soon became active in the group, publicly speaking out against corporate abuse of workers and making phone calls to other members.

## THE UNION BALL IS ROLLING

The group he joined was Working America, and its ball is rolling. With 2.5 million members, it's the second-largest labor organization in the country [after the 3.2 million-member National Education Association].

It's not a union with members and contracts at their workplaces. The AFL-CIO calls Working America its “community affiliate.”

Working America is one of the brightest new developments for a beleaguered labor movement – giving a boost to political work this fall at a time when traditional union membership has been declining in the long run [despite an uptick last year].

Canvassers are trying to contact every Working America member at the door with a field-tested, two-pronged message on behalf of Barack Obama.

They contrast the positions of Obama and John McCain on critical issues, especially healthcare, but they also talk personally about why they're working on behalf of Obama.

## INFORMATION THEY'RE NOT GETTING

“We will give people information they're not getting,” says Karen Nussbaum, the group's executive director, “but we also will communicate the way people personally make their decisions.”

The AFL-CIO launched Working America in 2003 as a pilot project in four states – Ohio, Missouri, Florida and Washington. [This year it will put over 450 organizers to work in 18 states and contact active members in four more.]

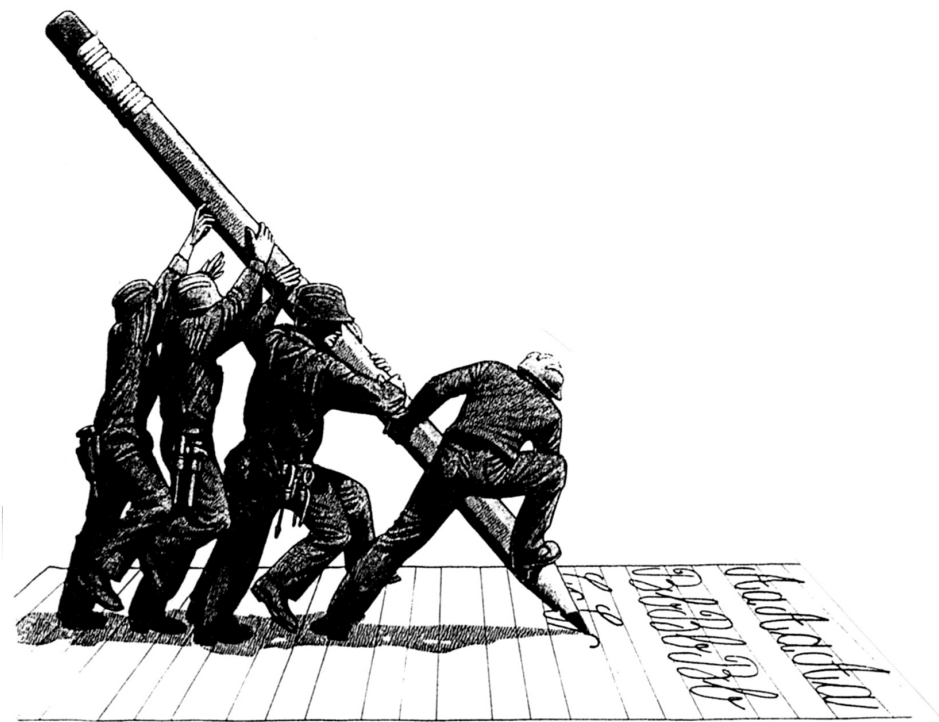
“There were changes in public consciousness, technological changes, and a readiness of the labor movement to do things in a big way,” says Nussbaum. “That was combined with a very important election coming up in 2004.”

After right-wing political dominance for decades, polls indicated American workers were increasingly sympathetic to unions, but corporate hostility and weak legal protections made organizing traditional unions in the workplace difficult.

## INTERNET FACILITATES COMMUNICATION

At the same time, the Internet made it easier and cheaper for an organization to communicate with supporters.

Individual unions and even the AFL-CIO had previously experimented with



associate members, and independent organizers had formed institutions such as worker centers. The results from these experiments outside typical union bounds were mixed and modest but intriguing.

Although Working America extensively uses the Internet [as well as telephone, direct mail, and personal contact], it recruits most members through door-to-door canvassing, like many community organizations.

This effective recruitment tactic also permits Working America to target membership geographically for political leverage, unlike purely Internet groups.

## USING BILINGUAL CANVASSERS

Increasingly they recruit in central city or suburban neighborhoods of African-Americans and Latinos, using bilingual canvassers or, as in Detroit and Toledo, reaching recruits through networks of churches.

So its members differ from those of many progressive groups: 63% have not graduated from college; 41% go to church weekly [one-third are “born again”]; one-third support the National Rifle Association; half are not strong supporters of either party.

Working America, as Nussbaum likes to say, is a mass organization with a working-class base and a strategy to build power to win.

The group trains and continually briefs canvassers about both political issues and canvassing techniques [such as maintaining eye contact, keeping it short and simple and using emotionally strong but friendly and optimistic language].

## MAINLY IT IS AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE

At the door they quickly talk to people about a broadly defined issue. Now it's primarily affordable healthcare, but it can be good jobs, retirement security, overtime pay or local issues.

Then canvassers ask potential recruits to take action, such as sending a letter supporting expanded funding of children's health insurance or signing a petition in favor of the Employee Free Choice Act to ease union organizing. And, of

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# This Year's Winners In Bad Writing Fest

For those of you who do not know, Bulwer-Lytton wrote *The Last Days of Pompeii*, which opens with the famous line, “It was a dark and stormy night.”

Hence, the creation of the Bulwer-Lytton Contest – run by San Jose State University's English department – wherein one writes only the first line of a bad novel.

These are the 10 winners of this year's contest:

10] “As a scientist, Throckmorton knew that if he were ever to break wind in the echo chamber, he would never hear the end of it.”

9] “Just beyond the Narrows, the river widens.”

8] “With a curvaceous figure that Venus would have envied, a tanned, unblemished oval face framed with lustrous thick brown hair, deep azure-blue eyes fringed with long black lashes, perfect teeth that vied for competition, and a small straight nose, Marilee had a beauty that defied description.”

7] “Andre, a simple peasant, had only one thing on his mind as he crept along the East wall: ‘Andre creep ... Andre creep ... Andre creep.’”

6] “Stanislaus Smedley, a man always on the cutting edge of narcissism, was about to give his body and soul to a back alley sex-change surgeon to become the woman he loved.”

5] “Although Sarah had an abnormal fear of mice, it did not keep her from eeking out a living at a local pet store.”

4] “Stanley looked quite bored and somewhat detached, but then penguins often do.”

3] “Like an over-ripe beefsteak tomato rimmed with cottage cheese, the corpulent remains of Santa Claus lay dead on the hotel floor.”

2] “Mike Hardware was the kind of private eye who didn't know the meaning of the word ‘fear’; a man who could laugh in the face of danger and spit in the eye of death – in short, a moron with suicidal tendencies.”

And the winner is:

1] “The sun oozed over the horizon, shoved aside darkness, crept along the greensward, and, with sickly fingers, pushed through the castle window, revealing the pillaged princess, hand at throat, crown asunder, gaping in frenzied hor-

ror at the sated, sodden amphibian lying beside her, disbelieving the magnitude of the frog's deception, screaming madly, ‘You lied!’”

## One Of Life's Curveballs

Two 90-year-old women, Rose and Barb, had been friends all of their lives. When it was clear that Rose was dying, Barb visited her every day.

One day Barb said, “Rose, we both loved playing women's softball all our lives, and we played all through high school. Please do me one favor: when you get to heaven, somehow you must let me know if there's women's softball there.”

Rose looked up at Barb from her deathbed and said, “Barb, you've been my best friend for many years. If it's at all possible, I'll do this favor for you.”

Shortly after that, Rose passed on.

At midnight the following Friday, Barb was awakened from a sound sleep by a blinding flash of white light and a voice calling out to her, “Barb, Barb.”

“Who is it?” asked Barb, sitting up suddenly. “Who is it?”

“Barb – it's me, Rose.”

“You're not Rose. Rose just died.”

“I'm telling you, it's me, Rose,” insisted the voice.

“Rose! Where are you?”

“In heaven,” replied Rose. “I have some really good news and a little bad news.”

“Tell me the good news first,” said Barb.

“The good news,” Rose said, “is that there's softball in heaven. Better yet, all of our old buddies who died before us are here, too. Better than that, we're all young again. Better still, it's always springtime, and it never rains or snows. And best of all, we can play softball all we want, and we never get tired.”

“That's fantastic,” said Barb. “It's beyond my wildest dreams! So what's the bad news?”

“You're pitching Tuesday.”

# What Liberal Bias? We Wonder Where

MSNBC has a new prime-time political show hosted by Rachel Maddow, a liberal radio host on Air America. The debut attracted more viewers than both Larry King's and Glenn Beck's programs on CNN and CNN Headline News, respectively.

After a week on air, Maddow's was MSNBC's highest-rated show on Tuesday, with Keith Olbermann's Countdown in second place.

Maddow's show is one of the few success stories in the efforts by liberals to see more progressive voices on TV. In fact, the day before Maddow's debut, MSNBC announced it was pulling Olbermann and Chris Matthews from anchoring its election coverage – a move that the York Times said was a “direct result of tensions associated with the channel's perceived shift to the political left.”

Despite Olbermann's and Maddow's rating successes, MSNBC and the other networks still don't seem to be getting the message: Americans want to hear progressive voices on television.

After 9/11, and particularly in the lead-up to the Iraq war, news programs purged their ranks of several voices seen as remotely hesitant about President Bush's foreign policy.

After political commentator Bill Maher criticized the war in Afghanistan, he was quickly alerted that he had gone beyond the bounds of acceptable discourse – even though that's his job. Remember, his show was called “Politically Incorrect.”

At MSNBC, progressive host Phil Donahue was fired in February 2003 for his anti-war views, despite the fact that his show was the network's highest-rated program.

An internal NBC memo said Donahue presented a “difficult public face for NBC in a time of war ... He seems to delight in presenting guests who are anti-war, anti-Bush and skeptical of the Administration's motives.”

It probably doesn't mean much today to Donahue but he was dead right. Too bad the moguls of the media gagged opposition to an unjust war that recently claimed the lives of three more Oklahoma soldiers in Iraq.



The same week Donahue was fired, the network brought on Jesse Ventura and rightwing shock jock Michael Savage.

Media Matters for America published a study showing the overwhelming dominance of conservative voices on the most influential Sunday political talk shows.

Analyzing guests on the shows over 10 years, Media Matters found that though the balance between progressives and conservatives was relatively equal during President Clinton's second term “conservatives held a dramatic advantage” during Bush's first term, “outnumbering Democrats/progressives by 58% to 42%.”

Counting only elected officials, the conservative advantage during Bush's first term was 61% to 39%; in the late 1990s, by contrast, the progressive advantage was only 53% to 45%.

In Clinton's second term, 61% of the ideologically identifiable journalists were conservative; in Bush's first term, that figure rose to 69%.

The study found that “congressional opponents of the Iraq war were largely absent from the Sunday shows, particularly during the period just before the war began.”

So remind us again – where is that liberal media that John McCain, Sarah Palin and fellow sloping skulls keep complaining about?

## UNIONS

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course, joining Working America.

According to Working America, two-thirds of people it contacts join, an average of about 28 per canvasser each evening, and 89% give their home phone number.

One-third give an e-mail address, 20% pledge at the door to take some action – writing a letter or making a phone call and 90% share information on their occupation.

Most of the time canvassers do not ask for the \$5 voluntary dues [although over 15% typically do contribute when asked, especially as Working America tries to renew memberships every year].

Half of Working America's \$32 million budget for the two-year election cycle comes from the AFL-CIO and Working America's own members, and the balance from other donors and reimbursements from sources such as ballot initiative advocates.

Working America faced skepticism initially from some unions, who did not want it to compete with their workplace organizing. But election results proved an eye-opener.

Hart Research polling in 2004 showed Working America members voted 69% to 30% for John Kerry over George Bush, roughly the same margin as among union members [and voted far more strongly for Kerry than the general public, including 44% higher for white men].

Polling after the 2006 Congressional balloting and in gubernatorial races in states like Kentucky and Virginia showed similar results. And tracking polls showed a shift towards the labor-endorsed candidates in the months before the election when Working America shifts from recruitment to voter education.

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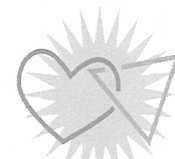
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