

25,000
Blue Chip
Readers

THE OKLAHOMA Observer

\$2.50



VOL. 41, NO. 17

An Independent Journal of Commentary

SEPTEMBER 25, 2009

'The Family' Secret Is Out Coburn's Cult

By Frosty Troy

Sen. Tom Coburn, R-OK, is at the center of a Washington religious cult intent on transforming America and the world for Christianity.

Coburn blew his cover when he led a move to hide a sex-scandal involving Sen. John Ensign, R-NV, caught flat-footed in an adulterous relationship.

"The Family" also involves Gov. Mark Sanford, R-SC. Both Sanford and Ensign had been mentioned as possible presidential candidates.

Then-freshman Oklahoma Republican Sen. Don Nickles not only worshipped with The Family when he was in the Senate, he quit the Catholic Church.

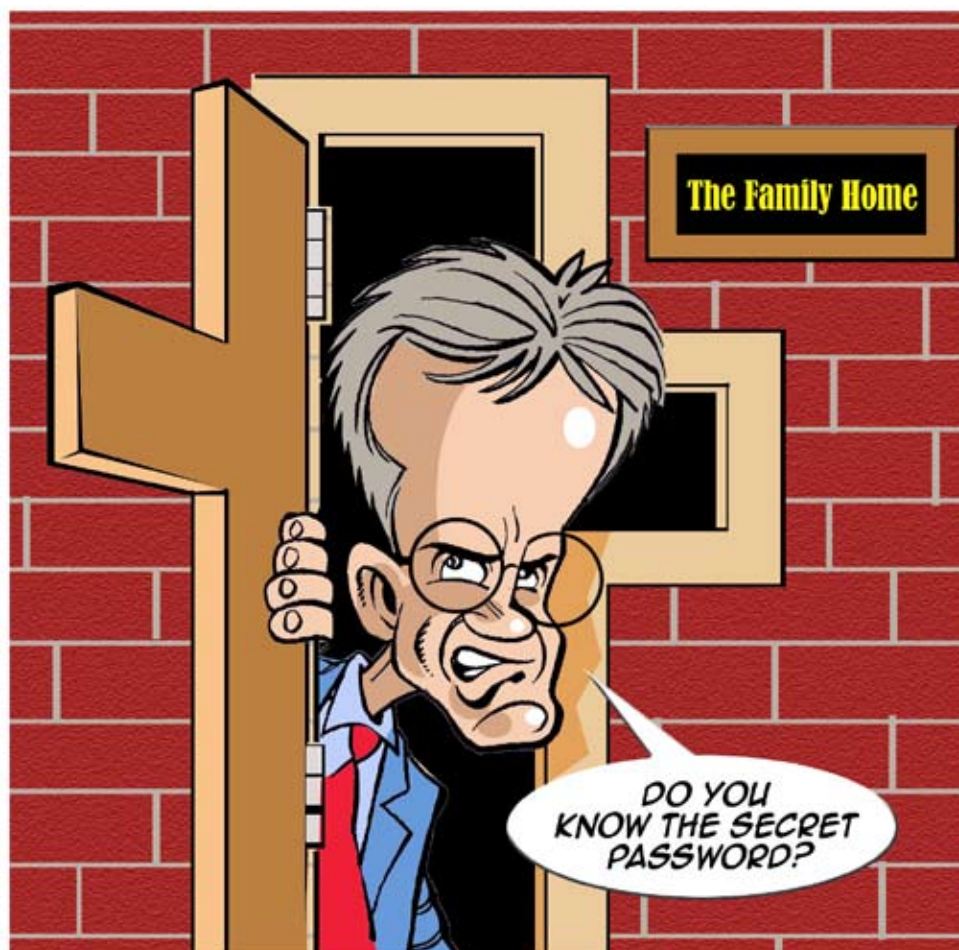
The Family's "church" is a C street row house, assessed at \$1.84 million. It fits the textbook definition of a cult - which is why Coburn, Sen. Jim Inhofe and ex-Rep. Steve Largent can deny it with impunity.

The Family believes and teaches that members can do no wrong because they are "chosen of God."

Largent said he wasn't in the Ensign huddle and was "shocked" by the money involved. When he was serving in Congress from Oklahoma he lived with The Family and still attends weekly dinner and discussion with The Family.

Talk about dense! He said he wished the organization wasn't so secretive! Steve, read our lips: That's why they exist.

The Family is registered as a church and provides Washington politicians with substantially lower than market-rate rent. Coburn and Ensign have lived at the C Street house, while Sanford has participated in its Bible study group.



- Steve Hill

It was Coburn who called the "family" huddle to cover up the nasty Ensign business, suggesting that his mistress, who was also his campaign aide, and her husband [an Ensign staffer] be paid off.

The mistress, Cynthia Hampton, and her husband, Doug Hampton, were OK with her adultery. He told an

interviewer that Coburn, to keep him quiet, instigated the payment to the couple and their two children.

At Coburn's insistence, Ensign's parents coughed up \$96,000 but the story still broke because a member of the church, Jeff Sharlet, was actually doing undercover research for a book, exposing The Family as a cult operating out of a tax-free "church."

It is a highly secretive organization. It also makes for some awkward tax and income questions for at least five, probably seven, members of Congress who live at the house in exchange for what is a substantially lower rent.

Holier than thou Coburn says he counseled Ensign but as a physician, he can't talk about it due to privileged communication! He's an OB/GYN! Was Ensign pregnant?

The "church," a former convent, is an upscale dorm for members of

Wanda Jo Stapleton on

COBURN, INHOFE AND THE FAMILY'S POWER THEOLOGY

- Page 10

Congress who are associated with the powerful group. They are the embodiment of The Divine Right Of Kings - claiming they can do no wrong no matter what they do.

The husband of Ensign's mistress says that prominent members of The Family, including sons of the group's founders, were aware of Ensign's secret affair and were involved in the effort to pay off his mistress and her husband.

According to the Washington Post, the facility is owned by Youth With A Mission DC, one of the most extensive Christian fundamentalist para-church organizations on Earth.

YWAM founding leader Loren Cunningham has publicly outlined a vision for Christian world-control.

In a 2008 promotional video, "Reclaiming 7 Mountains of Culture," Cunningham describes a vision he shared along with the late Campus Crusade For Christ founder Bill Bright and the late Christian theologian Francis Schaeffer.

He tells how Christian fundamentalists could achieve "world domination" by taking over key sectors of society.

Schaeffer is widely credited as one of the most influential theologians of the 20th Century Christian right.

Among the myriad ministries of Bill Bright's behemoth Campus Crusade For Christ is the Washington, DC, ministry Christian Embassy that targets Pentagon leaders for evangelizing.

Over the past year and a half, The Family has been under public scrutiny mainly due to journalist and Harpers contributing editor Sharlet's book *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power*.

Part of their "mission from God" is

See CULT Page 19

Observations

Say Again?

Article 31 of the Iraqi Constitution, drafted by the Bush Administration in 2005, approved by Congress and ratified by the Iraqi people, includes state-guaranteed [single-payer] health care for life for every Iraqi citizen.

Article 31 reads: "First every citizen has the right to health care. The State shall maintain public health and provide the means of prevention and treatment by building different types of hospitals and health institutions."

So, according to the American political rightwing, government-guaranteed health care is good for Iraqis but not good for Americans.

Republicans decry even a limited public option for Americans, but gleefully imposed it upon the Iraqis – what they label here as "socialism."

Guess who supported the funding for Iraqi universal health care? Yep, Oklahoma's pathetic congressional delegation which unanimously denies it for American citizens.

The Blue Dogs, including Dan Boren, D-OK, should hang their heads in shame.

Dismal Duo

The Vote Kids annual scorecard is non-partisan so it is no surprise that some members of Congress wince when it is released.

Thirty-two senators earned perfect scores of 100. Only four U.S. senators earned zeros: James Inhofe [OK], Tom Coburn [OK] Jim Bunning [KY], and Jim DeMint [SC].

What do these states have in common? A greater share of children live in poverty, perform less well in school, and remain uninsured than children nationwide.

Congressional majorities killed proposed amendments that would have harmed children by restricting health coverage, allowing greater youth access to guns in Washington DC, cutting spending to all children's programs, and providing estate tax breaks to millionaires when they in-

herit money.

The entire scorecard, which includes full descriptions of the selected votes and analysis of how each affects America's children, can be found on the Vote Kids website at VoteKids.org. For more information, contact Vote Kids President Michael Petit at 202.223.8870.

Think About It

When Bill Clinton tried to fix health care, it was 1/7th of the economy. Now it's 1/6th of our economy and soon it'll be 1/5th, then 1/4th.

How much of our economy should we let the health care monster eat before we fix it? Drug companies haul in \$20 million a year for research completed 20 years ago.

If you had a car that costs \$400 to fix in January and \$500 to fix in February and \$600 to fix in March, \$700 to fix in April and \$800 to fix in May, how many months would you let those repair bills pile up before buying a new car?

Don't let Rush and Hannity and Beck steal your life savings. Please allow logic into your decision and for Heaven's sake, turn off Fox and talk radio.

Stay Out!

Can gays and lesbians willfully change their sexual orientation? A few organizations think so, often funded by religious conservatives such as James Dobson's Focus on the Family.

They contend that so-called reparative therapy can help gays go straight. But after examining more than 80 studies on sexual orientation change, the American Psychological Association concluded that the treatments didn't work and urged psychologists to steer gay clients away from them.

At best, "certain studies suggested that some individuals learned how to ignore or not act on their homosexual



attractions," Judith Glassgold, who led the group's investigatory panel, told CNN.

At worst, the treatments backfire, leaving patients depressed, filled with self-loathing, and even considering suicide. But at the same time, the APA said, therapists cannot just disregard patients' religious faith.

To reduce the conflict between their sexual orientation and spiritual outlook, therapists can suggest alternatives to gay patients, such as embracing celibacy or finding a church that welcomes homosexuals.

The Observer's mantra? Stay out of other people's bedrooms.

Mirror, Mirror

Let's face it, Okies who cheer heartily against a public option health care system at Town Hall meetings are as ignorant as babes in arms. "Keep the feds out of our lives!" they boom.

In a typical year's federal budget half goes to transfer payments of various sorts from that awful federal government – Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, unemployment compensation, disability programs, etc.

Together Social Security and Medicare suck up nearly \$1 trillion annually and, because of the country's aging boomer population, they are the fastest-growing part of the entitlement pie.

The facts: 31% of Americans are clinically obese [Body Mass Index of 30 or more]. Oklahoma obese children rank in the top five.

Obesity leads to a legion of ills, from heart attacks and strokes to gut cancers and diabetes.

The annual cost of treating diabetes and its effects exceeds \$200 billion. Last year more than 2,000 limbs were amputated.

This number is sure to grow. Adult onset diabetes is of epidemic proportions and has reached down to hit teenagers, the vast majority of them overweight and under-exercised – except for clapping.

No News?

In the first half of 2009, 123 TV news shows were canceled, 106 newspapers folded, 110 news bureaus closed, 556 magazines died, and 12,000 journalists lost their jobs.

The old model, where journalism was heavily subsidized by advertising, is over. The recession has made the

divorce faster and more acrimonious, but the knives were already out.

Online advertising is turning out to be less than expected. Even as the New York Times' web readership grew 7% last year, online ad sales were dropping.

The big online-only shops either lose money, are subsidized by parent companies, or are supported by venture capital.

Consider overpaid anchors; if it bleeds, it leads. Newspapers that acted omniscient but practiced omission, bad apples and bad practices, combined with the stench of WMDs.

All this created a mood so toxic that even four years after Judy Miller's downfall, cheers seem few and far between.

So where does that leave us?

Honest pundits will give you the same answer: No *&\$#@ idea. America may end up with a society that doesn't have the quantity and quality of journalism we've enjoyed.

If print journalism departs and the Internet replaces it, millions of voters will trudge to the polls and cast ballots based on hot air.

Health Battle

As part of a U.S. House health insurance overhaul, employers could be presented with a mandate requiring they either contribute to their workers' insurance or pay a fee to the government.

In Massachusetts, which has such a mandate, the fee is \$295 per full-time worker and applies to firms with 11 or more workers. It is organized labor's dream.

Labor's Employee Free Choice Act [card check] was ditched. It's likely to become a compromise version despite the fact that both sides are still sticking to their "no compromise" message.

A compromise might substitute a "quickie" election for the controversial proposal to let workers say yes to a union simply by filling out sign-up cards.

Since taking office Obama has promoted former union attorney Wilma Liebman to be chairman of the National Labor Relations Board and nominated two others – both with union ties.

It is predictable that the new board will overturn decisions adopted by the Bush-era board. After all, Bush's labor board appointees overturned Clinton-era rulings.

THE OKLAHOMA
Observer

www.okobserver.net

FOUNDING PUBLISHER • Helen B. Troy [1970-2006]

[ISSN 0030-1795]

The Oklahoma Observer [USPS 865-720] is published the 10th and 25th of each month, except July 25th and Dec. 25th, by AHB Enterprises LLC, 13912 Plymouth Xing, P.O. Box 14275, Oklahoma City, OK 73113-0275. Periodicals postage paid at Oklahoma City, OK 73125.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Oklahoma Observer, P.O. Box 14275, Oklahoma City, OK 73113-0275.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 1-Year [22 issues] \$40. Send check to The Oklahoma Observer, P.O. Box 14275, Oklahoma City, OK 73113-0275. Online: Visit www.okobserver.net to use a credit card.

UPDATE ADDRESSES: Please notify us at least two weeks before your move to ensure uninterrupted service. E-Mail to subscriptions@okobserver.net or mail to P.O. Box 14275, Oklahoma City, OK 73113-0275.

LETTERS TO EDITOR: E-mail to letters@okobserver.net or mail to P.O. Box 14275, Oklahoma City, OK 73113-0275.

SPEAKERS BUREAU: To book Founding Editor Frosty Troy for your Chamber banquet, convention or other gathering, and for rates and availability, call 405.525.5582. You also may submit your request via e-mail to ftroy@fullnet.net or by U.S. mail to P.O. Box 53371, Oklahoma City, OK 73152-3371.

To invite Editor Arnold Hamilton to address your civic club, students or political gathering, contact him directly at 405.478.8700 or at ahamilton@okobserver.net.

PUBLISHER

Beverly Hamilton
bhamilton@okobserver.net
405.478.8700

EDITOR

Arnold Hamilton
ahamilton@okobserver.net
405.478.8700

FOUNDING EDITOR

Frosty Troy
ftroy@fullnet.net
405.525.5582

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

Somebody who talks slow please explain to U.S. Rep. John Sullivan, R-Tulsa, that contrary to his bombastic remarks at a Town Hall meeting, Obama didn't bail out the banks, Bush did. Sullivan is the political equivalent of an envelope without an address on it.

Dart: To the governor and Legislature for cutting the skimpy Mental Health budget. Facing a \$700 million shortfall, the mentally ill are looking at another \$15.8 million cut, curbing service to 65,000 Oklahomans in need.

CNN searched out a dumb Okie at the anti-Obama march on Washington who said we already have universal health care - "... even if you just stub a toe the emergency room will treat you."

Laurel: To the Oklahoma County Democratic Party, going on record to eliminate automatic pay raises for eight elected county officials. A public outcry stopped \$1 million in county-wide raises.

Note to women: Don't miss the Oct. 15 Oklahoma Women's Symposium at the Cox Center [doors open at 7:30 a.m.] featuring ways to empower women. OU Basketball Coach Sherri Coale is among the speakers. Details at 405.325.6034.

Dart: To Rush Limbaugh, calling for segregated public school buses. The cops said a white kid beaten up by blacks was not racially motivated, but leave it to racist Rush to blow it up.

Cheers for Oklahoma Supreme Court Chief Justice Jim Edmondson for freezing judicial salaries for the next two years. He said every branch should devise ways to live within their means during these economic tough times.

Laurel: To State Rep. Richard Morrisette, D-OKC, for his public fury at some in the Legislature continuing to junket during economic hard times. Speaker Chris Benge got the message and called a halt.

Sharp increases in the Oklahoma State and Education Employees Group Insurance have been approved. Teachers and state employees ought to thank the Lord they have insurance - 500,000 Oklahomans don't.

Dart: To OSU Regents, still refusing to allow OSU-Tulsa to offer basic subjects leading to a bachelor's degree. That could only happen in Oklahoma.

How sad to see OU's Dr. J. Rufus Fears raising money for the extremist Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, a libertarian outfit that wants to voucher homeschools without any accountability.

Laurel: To the Oklahoma Tax Commission which hopes to offer on-line renewal of vehicle tags at a cost \$1.50 per transaction. No more standing in line.

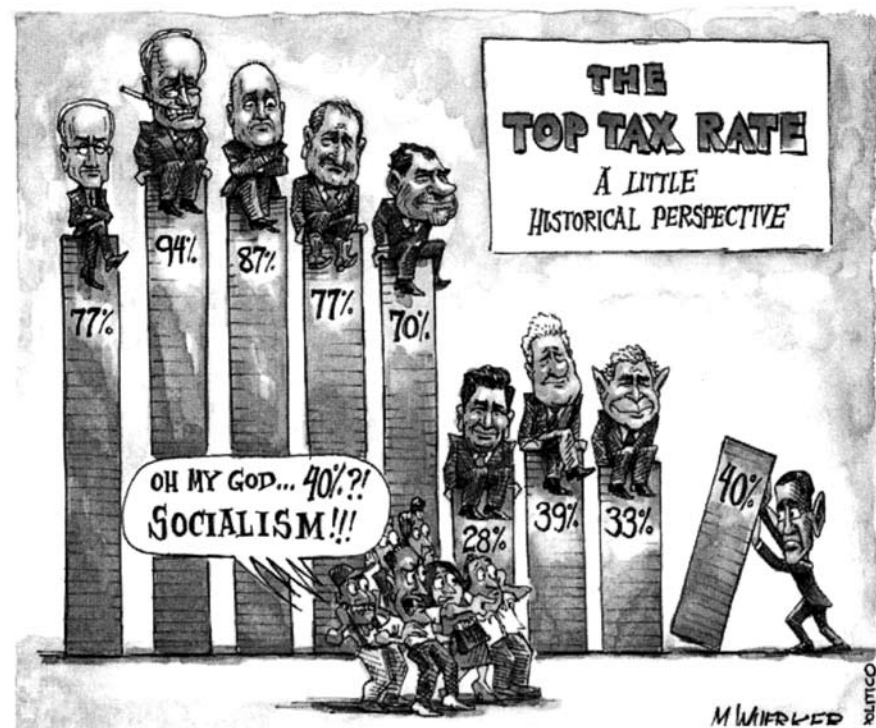
If Republicans win and lawsuits are sharply limited, who will pay for nearly 100,000 mistakes by hospitals? More than 18,000 deaths were due to medical hands not being washed. Who will pay?

Dart: To Chris Casteel, Daily Disappointment Washington correspondent, who printed the foreign travel of GOP Sens. Jim Inhofe and Tom Coburn without noting that taxpayers footed the bill while they campaigned abroad for a cult known as The Family.

More than six million children are being raised by grandparents, including 57,000 in Oklahoma. We're living in an era of the worst parenting in American history. Sure, blame the teachers.

Laurel: To The Journal Record for hiring award-winning M. Scott Carter, a superb reporter who will be covering real estate and energy.

Why health care reform today? Between now and 2050 annual spending on Medicare and Medicaid will triple to nearly 8% of total national income. Military spending is 21%.



Dart: To Stanley Hupfeld for a column in the Journal Record in which he asserts that Medicare and Social Security are "the ultimate ponzi scheme." More nutcase fear-mongering.

A reminder to those jeering the president. Health care has soared to 16% of the GDP. That's costing every man, woman and child \$7,290 a year, with nearly 50 million without insurance coverage.

Laurel: To the Tulsa World for clobbering the Republican National Committee for a fundraising letter asserting that if Democrats reform health care Republicans could be denied treatment. Quick! Get the net!

A new scientific Washington Post/ABC News Poll found a solid majority in favor of retaining Roe v. Wade - 62% to 25%.

Dart: To Sen. Cliff Branan, R-OKC, heading a taskforce on insurance mandates, but saying in advance no new mandates would be considered - code words for the GOP sell-out to the insurance industry on autism.

When it comes to the Republican Legislature privatizing workers compensation, they better read the Constitution - would going private meet the constitutional mandate?

Laurel: To Don and Joyce Harvey, winners of a \$105 million lottery jackpot, for funding a mobile metabolic pediatric diabetes research unit that will travel rural Oklahoma.

The Democratic Party has launched a website, maryfailing.com, to publicize Republican gubernatorial candidate Mary Fallin's congressional record. For a surprise, try it.

Dart: To Rep. Dan Sullivan, R-Tulsa, for his false attack on attorney John Merritt's law firm for encouraging attorneys to get their pending lawsuits filed before November when a new tort reform law is effective. There is no frivolous lawsuit epidemic.

The U.S. is the Prison Capital of the World - 2.3 million men and women [one in 100 adults] are in prison or jail. Oklahoma is fourth in the percentage of men locked up, first in women.

Laurel: To Rep. Joe Dorman, D-Rush Springs, the only Democrat who immediately nailed Rep. Sally Kern, R-OKC, for her attack on President Obama's speech to students.

Did you know the President is defunding our military? He's importing terrorists to American soil? That he plans a socialistic American government? That's Sen. Jim Inhofe's assertions. Anybody know what he's smoking?

Dart: To the Daily Disappointment, claiming the Oklahoma uninsured rate is greatly exaggerated, it's only about 500,000. Among them: the entire Oklahoman staff whose insurance was canceled.

Rep. Joe Wilson, the presidential heckler, is a former aide to racist Sen. Strom Thurmond and has picked up more than \$400,000 from the health care industry. Enough said?

Laurel: To Joe Fleckinger of the Office of State Finance for his wake-up call to the Legislature. Taxpayers could save \$2.6 million a year by going to a central payroll processing center.

A federal corruption trial in Washington heard from an attorney that then-Oklahoma Republican Rep. Ernest Istook held 22 fundraisers, followed by asking lobbyists what projects they wanted him to approve. So what else is new?

It's official: Public education in Oklahoma faces 38 mandates, most of them under-funded or unfunded. Unfunded includes the No Child Left Behind travesty. [U.S. Department of Education]

Cancer mortality in America: 166 per 100,000. In Canada: 173. Average in major nations of the world: 177. Reason? Aggressive treatment in the U.S. [Lancet Oncology]

Author Thomas Frank will appear in Tulsa Oct. 9 [Circle Cinemas] and OKC Oct. 10-11 [Oklahoma City Museum of Art] at screenings of new documentary based on his *What's The Matter With Kansas?* He also will sign copies of his book at OKC's Full Circle Books [www.fullcirclebooks.com for details.]

THE OKLAHOMA Observer

Yes! Please send me a one-year subscription [22 issues] for only \$40. This special offer includes my certificate for a free book courtesy of Full Circle Bookstore [a \$20 value]. See page 10 for details.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please make checks payable to: "The Oklahoma Observer"
Clip and mail to: The Oklahoma Observer, P.O. Box 14275,
Oklahoma City, OK 73113-0275. If you prefer to pay using a credit card,
visit us online at www.okobserver.net.



Letters

Editor, The Observer:

Hooray for Oklahoma's "Right To Work" law. It now appears that Mercury Marine used Stillwater employees to bargain with their Wisconsin union employees for contract concessions favorable to the company. Oklahoma employees may have an option to move out of state to keep their jobs with the concessions thus obtained.

From now on it can be called Oklahoma's "Right To Work for Less" law or the "Right to Work Someplace Else" law.

Walter Long
Tulsa

Editor, The Observer:

How many instances can you guys think of where anyone could have said to Joe Wilson "You lie!" and been absolutely correct? I know you don't have time to answer this and that's OK. I would just like to express my hope that you guys nail the disrespectful individual. No one ever yelled that at Bush while he was lying, often, in such circumstances. Is there no decorum left? In the midst of all this incivility that stunt truly did cross the line.

Keep irritating' the hell out of 'em!
Mike Rogers
Moore

Editor, The Observer:

I was off work today so I had the opportunity to listen to President Obama's speech to school children. What a brilliant, encouraging speech!

Thanks to all the ignorant racist Republicans for calling attention to this speech. I'm sure a lot more people saw this speech due to the attention you provided. And the children who were prevented from seeing this speech due to their bigoted parents will be watching it on YouTube to see what all the hysteria was about.

Republicans, you are the gift that keeps on giving.

Deborah Lewis
Garland, TX

Editor, The Observer:

President Obama's speech for health care reform reminded me that the electoral victories of November were votes for justice, generosity, community, and government we can believe in.

More than 70% of Americans support health care reform including universal access for everyone. So do a majority of physicians, the American

Medical Association, the AARP, and growing numbers of national organizations and religious denominations. It's not socialism if doctors, hospitals and insurance companies remain private.

Choice will guarantee that, for those comfortable with their current plan, nothing need change. To those already insured, the plan guarantees that they may not be denied coverage because of pre-existing conditions or cut off because their care becomes too expensive. Small businesses and self-employed individuals will be extended affordable coverage that will not bankrupt them or leave them uncovered.

Obama's speech may be watched again on the Internet and studied in its detail. Let's include universal health coverage among other services Americans rely upon including Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Let's do it. Yes, we can.

Nathaniel Batchelder
Oklahoma City

Editor, The Observer:

The problem [almost one-third of Oklahoma children are certified for food stamps and one-half qualified for Medicaid last year] has as much to do with Oklahoma's Republican stranglehold on our Legislature as it does on any other factor.

Oklahoma, under the current leadership in this state, believes in cutting government services down to nothing and then throwing it away.

They care not that our state is on the bottom of the barrel when it comes to protecting, supporting, nourishing and educating our poor children. Poverty [due to economics, inequality of pay and lack of decent jobs] leaves Oklahoma one of the least progressive states in our union.

It is disgraceful but the 1% living behind locked gates and passing impossible legislation, incarcerating more women than any other state in the union, and keeping wages lower than any state in the union must take the responsibility for a third of our children because they are the cause of it.

Darla Reynolds Sparks
Yukon

Editor, The Observer:

Re: Former Vice President Dick Cheney's back surgery:

There are several elements to this story that are worth observing. Cheney is going to be using his really, really



bad for us, but really, really good for him socialized medicine, government run health insurance plan to cover this elective procedure.

Then there's the part of the story that describes the condition he's having treated. This may be just a red herring. After all the time Dick Cheney spent covering in his hidey holes - called "undisclosed locations" - during the past eight years, I have serious reservations about him actually having a spine.

Kenny Belford
Tulsa

Editor, The Observer:

You know too many Republicans believe that Minimum Wage is redistribution of wealth.

Next subject. There were reasons to come down on G Bush, lying about the war four ways, ripping off our treasury for rich buddies, torture, not protecting the environment.

But what do we have today? Calls to impeach a man before he takes office, people bringing guns and assault weapons to presidential speeches, pastors praying for the president's death, signs saying kill Obama on one side, kill Michelle on the other, keeping kids out of school so they wouldn't hear the president tell them to stay in school, talk of death panels, crocodile protests of spending when they spent us to death on the rich, a Texas governor talking of seceding, biting a finger off at a health rally, frequently calling him Marxist, communist, Hitler, socialist, saying he's violating our Constitution, saying "you lie" when he was just now presenting his plan, screaming disrupting Town Hall meetings, hundreds saying he is not a citizen.

If there is any decency in the GOP leadership, why weren't the decent ones telling these citizenship lunatics to stop. The answer is apparently there isn't any decent Republican leadership.

I haven't said it, but a long time ago I predicted much hostility, even violence. The above portends it.

I have only room to tell you one thing about President Obama: More than any Republican President since Lincoln, he cares about each and every one of us.

Jim Stodola
Denton, TX

Editor, The Observer:

An open letter to Rep. Mary Fallin, regarding her criticism of President Obama's policy czars:

Mary, Mary, Mary - Shame on you for demagoguery on this issue. You know

very well that your Republican President Bush had 47 so-called "Czars" and that Republican President Nixon was the first to use "Czar" as a term to simplify a legitimate appointive office.

You just can't resist preying on gullible, uninformed voters, can you?

Frank Silovsky
Oklahoma City

Editor, The Observer:

I'm responding to the statement in the Sept. 10 Observerscope saying that if the \$2 billion grant from the Obama Administration is funded, we could have a rail link between Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

Consider these facts. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation [ODOT] is applying for 25% of all funds available nationwide for high-speed rail; that's unreasonable.

Next, ODOT proposes to purchase new right-of-way paralleling I-44 and install new rail, although the state owns an existing line and right-of-way between Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

And, of course, the line will stop at Tulsa instead of connecting with other lines eligible for the high-speed rail grants.

It's my opinion and that of others familiar with this issue that ODOT is submitting a pie-in-the-sky application with the intent of getting a rejection letter.

This dead-end application will "document" ODOT's "interest" in rail while this agency wantonly destroys the invaluable, irreplaceable Union Station rail yard in Oklahoma City - thus severing the rail connection between Tulsa and Lawton.

The City of Oklahoma City bought the Union Station rail yard in 1989 with a Federal Transit grant because the city vowed to use this spacious rail yard as a regional transit center. Now ODOT is ramming a yet-to-be-built highway straight through the rail yard when a slight correction in the highway would save both.

Looks like a complete collapse of both state and city leadership to me.

Wanda Jo Stapleton
Oklahoma City

EDUCATION

America's Greatest Success Story

Despite an avalanche of social problems - drugs, alcohol, teen pregnancy, dysfunctional families gangs - American education today is more successful than than at any other time in history. If you doubt it, sit back and listen to America's foremost champion of education, Frosty Troy, founding editor of The Oklahoma Observer. He not only tells it like it is, he backs up his words with facts - which is more than the critics do. Everything America is or ever hopes to be depends upon what happens in our classrooms. Call Frosty at 405.760.1843 to book a speech.

What's up @ the
Capitol?

Follow The Observer
up-to-the-minute on ...

twitter

<http://twitter.com/okobs>

Frosty Troy's Notebook

Payday Loans



FROSTY TROY
Founding Editor

While schools are busy teaching algebra, geometry and advanced math, millions of Americans continue to fail the simple calculation required to compute interest rates.

Check-cashing and payday-lending outlets in America outnumber all the McDonald's, Burger Kings, Targets, Sears, JC Penneys, and Wal-Marts combined – 33,000 versus less than 29,000.

It's a vast and rapacious network offering easy access to the financially strapped – even those who can compute interest rates. Excess fees and interest charged by these fringe services drain resources from vulnerable communities. They erode the value of modest paychecks and of federal programs seeking to lift people out of poverty.

For example: \$2 billion is stripped off the Earned Income Tax Credit benefits for the working poor annually by tax providers and

their refund-advance products.

Check-cashing fees can cost two weeks' salary over the course of a year. Payday loans extract more than \$4 billion a year in fees. With the lure of small weekly payments, rent-to-own businesses [RTO] offer appliances, furniture, and electronics at prices many times retail.

For example, a computer retailing for \$851 can be obtained at an RTO shop – after 91 payments [that's 21 months] it will be all yours for just \$4,449; miss a payment and you risk forfeiting the item and all payments made.

At their best, these services address basic needs at exorbitant fees, but without features that help build financial security. Use of fringe financial services doesn't build credit histories or money management tools, and savings vehicles are almost unheard of.

In their worst forms, alternative financial services compound low-income families' economic hardships. The standard payday loan has a 400% annual interest rate.

A typical sub-prime credit card with a \$300 limit arrives with \$250 in fees already charged against it. Or consider the mainstream banking alternative – courtesy overdrafts.

This benevolent-sounding service earns banks more in fees – \$17.5 billion a year – than the amount of funds actually covered [\$15.8 billion]. In 2006, it accounted for 74% of banks' total consumer-fee income, subsidizing the cost of serving other consumers.

The law making payday loans legal in Oklahoma, with no ceiling on interest, was authored by then-state Sen. Angela Monson, D-OKC.

A Congress beholden to the financial sector [the same ones who brought us the Wall Street crash] continued to ignore the ripoffs until the Pentagon rebelled – so many military and their dependents were being victimized.

An act of Congress prohibits the military and dependents from being charged outrageous interest rates. At one time there were a dozen payday loan firms on Air Depot leading into Tinker Air Force Base.

Defenders of such practices assert that these products help lower-income people meet urgent needs and that, when used correctly, they make sense.

They further extol the virtues of consumer choice. But the profits made in the predatory economy are disproportionately derived from people who don't use the products "correctly" and don't have any choice.



Who, given a full range of options, would choose usurious interest rates and late charges?

Debtors are at the mercy of creditors. A typical payday-loan customer has no more money at the next payday and must pay to renew. Cardholders' fees and punitive interest rates pile on, cross-subsidizing those who use credit cards for free.

Nearly half of all overdraft, or "NSF," fees are incurred on small debit card and ATM transactions. The typical NSF debit card purchase of \$20 results in an NSF charge of \$34.

The vast majority of banks simply let these go through without warning – even at the ATM machine. When you check your balance at some ATMs, the figure includes the overdraft cushion.

In the mortgage market, low and moderate income borrowers given sub-prime loans are several times more likely to default than like borrowers under similar conditions who took over prime mortgages.

Why do lower-income people take on such high-cost debt? Critics – especially on the far right – say it's a lack of impulse control, financial illiteracy, and naivete.

While a small percentage of households might use fringe services because of ignorance or profligacy, the majority of households resort to parasitic lenders for one reason: They don't have enough money to make ends meet.

Between 2001 and 2007, the median income of the bottom 40% of earners rose only \$300 in the face of rapidly rising costs for housing and health care.

Overwhelmed by debt, they are said to be irresponsible. Thus debt has the pernicious effect of masking class inequality by increasing the short-term purchasing power of the poor, while at the same time reinforcing it by decreasing their long-term economic prospects.

Congress passed a bit of financial reform but made sure it didn't go into effect until next February. Credit card companies are hurriedly raising fees and other onerous penalties before the law takes effect.

Blessing In Disguise

Old age, I decided, is a gift. I am now, probably for the first time in my life, the person I have always wanted to be.

Oh, but not my body! I sometimes despair over my body, the wrinkles, the baggy eyes, and the sagging butt.

And often I am taken aback by that old person that lives in my mirror [who looks like my mother/father!], but I don't agonize over those things for long.

I would never trade my amazing friends, my wonderful life, my loving family for less gray hair or a flatter belly.

As I've aged, I've become more kind to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend.

IF I WANT THAT EXTRA COOKIE

I don't chide myself for eating that extra cookie, or for not making my bed, or for buying that silly cement gecko that I didn't need, but looks so avante garde on my patio. I am entitled to a treat, to be messy, to be extravagant.

I have seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon – before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it if I choose to read or play on the computer until 4 a.m. and sleep until noon?

I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the '60s and '70s, and if at the same time, wish to weep over a lost love, I will.

I will walk the beach in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body, and will dive into the waves with abandon if I choose to, despite the pitying glances

from the jet set. They, too, will get old.

WHEN THE MEMORY BEGINS TO SLIP

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And I eventually remember the important things.

Sure, over the years my heart has been broken ... How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when somebody's beloved pet gets hit by a car?

Broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turn gray, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer your question, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be.

And I shall eat dessert every single day. [If I feel like it.]

May friendships never come apart, especially when they are straight from the heart! May the old always have a rainbow of smiles on their faces and in their hearts forever and ever!

– Anonymous

There's More To Budget Crisis Than Recession



ARNOLD HAMILTON
Editor

One year ago, I marveled at the chutzpah of Oklahoma's political leaders.

All sang from the same page, with straight faces, an upbeat ditty about how the state – thanks to the sage financial stewardship of its elected officials – was basking in relative prosperity while other less prudent states were languishing in budget quagmires.

It was as if they resided in an alternate universe – unaware or unwilling to acknowledge the dark economic clouds building on the horizon.

At the time, I asked David Blatt, the extraordinary numbers cruncher at the Oklahoma Policy Institute, his assessment: He predicted at least a \$200 million less revenue by year's end and likely more by the time lawmakers opened their 2009 session.

As it turned out, even Blatt's realism – a stark contrast to the Sunshine Boys and their voodoo economics – didn't fully capture the magnitude of Oklahoma's looming crisis.

Eight consecutive months of declining revenues. Two straight months of 5% across-the-board budget cuts for state agencies. More than 65,000 facing loss of state mental health services. The Office of Juvenile Affairs submitting plans to furlough staff up to 22 days.

It's true that Oklahoma would have suffered from America's worst economic crisis since the Great Depression just like everyone else. But what exacerbated Oklahoma's problems is something almost no one in leadership is willing to acknowledge: \$720 million in ill-advised, pandering tax cuts when oil and gas revenues were booming.

Remember the bumper stickers in the early 1980s? They went something like this: Lord, just give me one more boom – I promise not to p--- it away this time! Well, guess what? The lessons of just how far and how fast Oklahoma revenues can fall was lost on those focused primarily on the next election or gaining – and keeping – political power.

Ironically, the only thing that cushioned the blow this year to Oklahoma's government services – from education to highways, corrections to child welfare – was federal stimulus money.

Of course, the peacocks in the Legislature strutted against it ... early on. Then happily accepted the largesse when it meant they didn't have to face constituents irate that high school football or band budgets were squeezed.

I'm not automatically opposed to tax cuts, but the state clearly couldn't afford them. Driven on Oklahoma roads lately? Crossed bridges routinely ranked among the nation's worst? What about crowded, crumbling prisons? When are lawmakers going to keep their commitment to boost teacher pay to the regional average? When are they really going to fund education first? When are we going to hire enough child welfare workers to give them a reasonable, rather than a crushing caseload that is three times the national average?

What makes the tax cuts particularly galling is that they are virtually impossible to reverse, thanks to the bill of goods [known as SQ 640] sold to voters. If you want a glimpse of Oklahoma's future under SQ 640 and a staggering economy, look at California.

The not-so-Golden State is strangling under the constraints of a similar, artificial spending-and-taxing governor known as Proposition 13. The result: a \$26 billion budget hole. Isn't it remarkable that so many Okies love to disparage California as a den of liberalism and iniquity, yet blindly followed their Left Coast brethren off a similar financial cliff?

There is nothing to suggest Oklahoma's revenue crisis will abate any time soon. Between February and August, month-to-month collections when compared to last year plunged between 19.1% and 31.6%. The question instead is when pressure will reach the point where legislative leaders and the governor agree to tap the state's nearly \$600 million rainy day fund. It is no small gamble: The timing better be right or the state could end up with no safety net, a nightmare scenario similar to when Gov. Brad Henry took office.

Both Republicans and Democrats are to blame for approving tax cuts that made a bad economic situation worse. Rightwing, anti-government Republicans drove the legislative agenda [with nary a peep from many Democrats] and Democrat Henry signed the cuts into law.

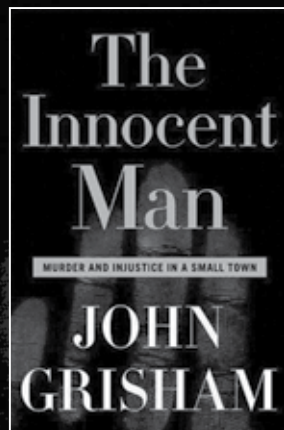
Of course, this fits beautifully the mindset of some GOP lawmakers, disciples of the Grover Norquist doctrine that favors shrinking government as much as possible, then drowning the rest in the bathtub.

Interestingly, Oklahoma City won much national acclaim in recent years for investing – Egad! Using tax dollars! – in itself, vastly improving its quality of life and remaking its crumbling public schools. Given the chance when state coffers were flush, state leaders chose to pander.

The next legislative session is apt to be scarier than anything Stephen King could imagine.

An Evening with JOHN GRISHAM

"The Innocent Man" and
Wrongful Convictions in America



7:30 p.m., OCTOBER 13, 2009

OCU Henry J. Freede Wellness and Activity Center
N.W. 27th & N. Florida

Bestselling novelist John Grisham -- author of the nonfiction blockbuster "The Innocent Man" -- will speak about efforts to combat wrongful convictions.

Attendees will have an opportunity to contribute to a fund to establish a program at OCU LAW to address wrongful convictions (suggested minimum contribution, \$25).

Contributors of \$100 or more are invited to attend a post-event reception (photo opportunity with John Grisham included).

Seating is limited. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

OCU LAW
OKLAHOMA CITY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

For more information, contact
lawevents@okcu.edu or 405-208-5197.

www.okcu.edu/law

How We Know What We Know

"Americans still support the idea of a free press as a watchdog on government, and turn to traditional news sources on major news stories despite skepticism about bias in the news media ... Television was the first source for major news stories for about half of all responding [49%], followed by the Internet at 15%, radio at 13% and newspapers at 10% – which places traditional news media [TV, radio and newspapers] as the first source for 72% of Americans. Twitter, e-mails and social-networking sites each were named by 1% of those responding. Similarly, for 48% of Americans TV is the primary source for follow-up reports on those news stories, followed by the Internet at 29% and newspapers at 9%." – Freedom Forum 13th State of the First Amendment Survey, released for National Constitution Day, 9.17.09

Payne County Democrats Proudly Host Their 10th Annual BRAYFEST

Tuesday, October 13, 2009

Keynote speaker: **Frosty Troy**

Stillwater Community Center

Doors open at 6:30 – reservations required

Silent Auction & Live Entertainment

Tickets and Information Contact

Bernadean Lilly 405.714.0707

Angela Spotts 405.707.9653

OSSAA Must Be Accountable To Taxpayers

By John M. Wylie II

We're not sure what the most shocking revelation was when Danny Rennels, who served for a decade as the chief regulator of Oklahoma high school athletics and activities, was charged with felony embezzlement. Among the revelations contained in a probable cause affidavit used to secure an arrest warrant:

- The total amount taken is at least \$457,500 – almost five times the amount acknowledged by his employer, the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association, when it fired him in March. According to the affidavit, Rennels has admitted embezzling the funds.
- The man responsible for ensuring legal and ethical conduct of student athletes admitted to OSSAA officials that he spent the money on Internet gambling.
- He apparently took \$100,000 – the first installment under a five-year endorsement deal with Reebok that required all Oklahoma schools to use their basketballs in tournament play even though the schools weren't consulted – that school officials were told would provide catastrophic injury insurance for high school athletes.
- Even though OSSAA is governed by a board composed of school officials, "Rennels had exclusive control over the day-to-day handling and expenditure of OSSAA funds."
- Rennels' fund diversions began with \$16,000 in rights fees from an Oklahoma City television station in 2005 and escalated to \$174,000 in rights fees and sales of a prime billboard location in 2006. He obtained an OSSAA credit card in 2007 which he used for personal expenses totaling \$26,000 over two years and embezzled another \$14,000 in TV rights fees. In 2008 it was \$217,000 [including the Reebok money] and in 2009 – when he was employed for just three months

– \$161,000.

- Although the DA investigator handling the case wanted 10 felony counts filed, his boss filed only one and bond was set at a measly \$2,000.

Why is the last point important? Because it reeks of a deal in the works, and since OSSAA is classified as a "private, non-profit" organization it is not subject to the state's Open Records act. [New Executive Secretary Ed Sheakley said no one has ever submitted a request for records and he is uncertain how such a request would be handled.]

Never mind that OSSAA regulates the lives of every student athlete and activity participant in the state.

Never mind that it wouldn't have a dime without drawing funds from taxpayer-supported programs ranging from football to debate.

Never mind that taxpayers have no way to ensure that OSSAA is properly handling their money.

The Rennels case makes it abundantly clear that OSSAA must be classified as a public agency. It is funded with public money and should be subject to all the laws that go with that – including annual state audits. Giving OSSAA the discretion to choose what state transparency laws it follows would clearly be a case of letting the fox guard the henhouse.

We hope lawmakers will make OSSAA's status clear in the next session. Lawmakers who balk can expect stiff opposition in November 2010.

It is the public's money, not OSSAA's, and the public has a right to know that it is being spent responsibly.

– The author is editor of the Oologah Lake Leader, where this column first appeared

How's Right-To-Work Looking Now Oklahoma?

By Steve Booher

Used... played like a piano. That's what Mercury Marine did to union workers at its Fond du Lac, WI, plant during recent wage negotiations. As bad as the company treated its union workers, it was even more callous in its treatment of non-union workers at its Stillwater plant.

First, Mercury told its Wisconsin workers they would have to accept concessions or have the plant shut down and its jobs moved to Stillwater. That immediately brought out the worst in Oklahoma's right-to-work crowd who, with the leadership of former Gov. Frank Keating, convinced Oklahomans a few years ago that passing right-to-work would bring thousands of jobs to the state.

"See," the right-to-workers said, "rejecting unions and passing right-to-work paid off." What they meant to say was, "Too bad, Wisconsin, Oklahoma's workers are paid less and big business will always choose low wages over a union work force."

Well, after three votes by the union, which feared it would lose its plant to Oklahoma, concessions were made and the Wisconsin plant will remain open.

That was probably a hard pill for Oklahoma right-to-workers to swallow, but they probably choked on the next announcement: the Stillwater plant would be closed and its 380 jobs moved to Wisconsin!

Those thousands of jobs Oklahoma was promised by Frank Keating and the right-to-work crowd – mostly big business – have never materialized. "Wait a minute," they argue, "we now need workers compensation insurance reform to bring jobs to Oklahoma."

That may or may not be, but Oklahoma just learned a valuable lesson: big business, all too often, cares more about itself than its employees. Sure, there are exceptions, and we applaud companies that make a profit, but not on the backs of their employees.

We just celebrated Labor Day, a holiday dedicated to the nation's working men and women. No doubt the Mercury Marine executives probably patted themselves on the back for getting concessions from their union workers in Wisconsin and for saving big bucks by closing down their plant in Oklahoma. I wonder if they rewarded themselves with a bonus and took the weekend off to celebrate?

You can bet it wasn't a happy "Labor" Day for hundreds of Mercury's Stillwater employees who make an average of \$3 an hour less than the company's Wisconsin workers.

Don't be misled. We're not advocating the formation of unions all across Oklahoma. They too have their faults. But businesses – big and small – need to remind themselves that while their investment may be risky, they must share in the loyalty they expect from their employees.

It's a two-way street and Mercury Marine just showed us an example of callous disregard for its employees. The company can rest assured that its Wisconsin union workers have been taught a valuable lesson – never trust Mercury Marine and watch your back.

– The author is publisher of the Cherokee Messenger and Republican, where this column first appeared

King Jim: An Angry Old Obstructionist

By Norm Rourke

King Jim Inhofe continues to berate everything the present administration is trying to do to bring America out of the mess the former dismal leadership created.

While he takes pot shots at attempts to improve the economy, health care reform [both of which were ignored previously] and get us out of two wars Mr. Arrogant started, he conveniently chooses to forget HE AND HIS PALS were in charge for eight years.

And they're counting on the fact that voters will forget as well.

The Arrogant One started two un-winnable wars, let his Wall Street pals almost destroy the economy, insulted and angered every friend we had in the world and turned a great political party [GOP] over to loud mouth hate mongering talk show hosts who became self proclaimed "experts" in government and world affairs. These pseudo intellects continue to destroy what was once a strong and healthy political party.

Meanwhile King Inhofe & Co. sat on their expensively clad behinds and did and said nothing. They rubber stamped everything Mr. Arrogant proposed [or more correctly was proposed by his handler the VP and the war monger in the Defense Department. Mr. Arrogant was the empty suit front man for these two.]

They never questioned, nor did they propose alternatives that would avoid costing American lives, billions of dollars and the rise of Wall Street crooks. In fact, King Inhofe hasn't offered any worthy legislation since he's been living the good life in Washington. He's generally considered a lightweight by his Senate

colleagues.

Sadly, Oklahoma has little or no respectable representation in Washington. What we have is an angry old man, an obstructionist, a perennial gubernatorial candidate allegedly representing Oklahoma in Congress and other lesser lights. Meanwhile, Frank Keating is waiting in the wings. God help us!

The last serious representation Oklahoma had was when Bob Kerr and Mike Monroney served.

Shouldn't Oklahomans expect more than cheap shots from these people? Don't they have anything constructive to offer? Obviously not. They feed the discord being spewed out by the pseudo intellects and forget who got us in the mess we're in.

They are shallow self serving politicians who, as a Robert Ludlum terrorist character says in one of the author's books: "American politicians are more interested in being re-elected than they are serving their country and people." How sad but true.

So how about it Mr. Inhofe? Have you got something constructive to offer? Or are you going to sit on the sidelines like a spoiled, pouting brat and bellyache?

Show some leadership for a change. God knows you and your cohorts certainly didn't in the previous past eight years.

FYI: As a registered Independent, I've voted for as many Republicans and Democrats – until this last election.

– The author lives in Beggs

24,000 Payroll

Oklahoma's Jewel Is Tinker Air Force Base

Time and again you will hear references to Oklahoma's oil, gas and agriculture as the primary anchors of our economy.

Often lost in the mix is Oklahoma's pivotal role as home for America's military – Tinker Air Force Base, Fort Sill, McAlester's Army Depot and Enid's Vance Air Force Base.

The Crown Jewel is Tinker, with more than 24,000 civilian and military working at the base. Those are superb jobs with great benefits.

Contrary to the Town Hall claptrap, all full-time federal workers, including Congress, enjoy health benefits.

NAMED FOR AN OKLAHOMA HERO

Tinker was named in honor of Maj. Gen. Clarence L. Tinker of Pawhuska, OK, who lost his life while leading a flight of liberators in World War II, striking against the Japanese at Wake Island.

Location of Tinker is no accident. Tinker's history began in 1940 when a group of Oklahoma City civic leaders and businessmen learned that the War Department was considering the central United States as a location for a maintenance and supply depot.

On April 8, 1941, the order was officially signed awarding the depot to Oklahoma City. It was a local entrepreneur, Bill Atkinson, who quickly gobbled up land adjacent to the location picked for Tinker. It was named Midwest City.

KEPT PLANES FLYING DURING WWII

During World War II, Tinker's industrial plant repaired B-24 and B-17 bombers and fitted B-29s for combat. Throughout the Korean conflict Tinker continued its output – keeping planes flying and funneling supplies to the Far East.

The base also played an important role in the Berlin and the Cuban crises.

During the Vietnam War, Tinker provided logistics and communications support to Air Force units in Southeast Asia.

Tinker and OC-ALC began the decade of the 1990s providing front-line support to the forces engaged in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

In 1999 Tinker was awarded the largest engine repair contract in the history of the Air Force, valued at \$10.2 billion over 15 years.

LOGISTICS ONLY PART OF THE MISSION

Today with nearly 24,000 civilian and military assigned to the base, logistics work is just part of Tinker's mission.

After the arrival of the Navy, Tinker became one of the DOD's premiere interservicing facilities.

Not only is total support of America's defense systems a priority, but protecting and enhancing the environment is a top concern as well.

Through the use of aggressive and innovative technologies, Tinker has become a national leader in pollution prevention.

Tinker's largest organization is the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center, one of three depot repair centers in the Air Force Materiel Command.

WORLDWIDE IMPACT

The ALC is the worldwide manager for a wide range of aircraft, engines, missiles, software and avionics and accessories components.

The center manages an inventory of 2,261 aircraft including the B-1, B-2, B-52, C/KC-135, E-3, VC-25, VC-137 and 25 other Contractor Logistics Support aircraft.

The center also manages an inventory of nearly 23,000 jet engines that range from the Korean Conflict vintage J33s [T33] to state-of-the-art B-2 engines such as the F118.

Missile systems managed by the center include the Air Launched Cruise Missile, Conventional Air Launched Cruise Missile, Harpoon and Advanced Cruise Missiles.

Airborne accessories management includes responsibility for some 24,000 different avionics and accessories components.

72nd WING IS HOST ORGANIZATION

The 72nd Air Base Wing is the host organization for Tinker Air Force Base. From the initial planned site of 960 acres in March 1941, Tinker's physical plant has become by many standards a "mega-facility."

Today, the base is made up of 5,020 acres with 732 buildings containing 15.5 million square feet of floor space, including 136 acres of indoor maintenance area, 254 acres of ramp space all supported by the Wing.

The base is comparable to a city with a population of 30,000 which includes Air Force and Navy active duty personnel, civilian employees and military retirees.

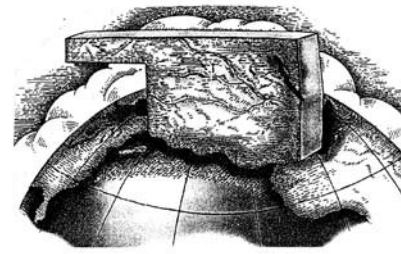
The Wing provides critical base functions including: security, fire protection, medical services, civil engineering, communications, supply, transportation and air field operations.

The base offers a variety of recreational and leisure activities including Officers' and Enlisted Clubs, 18-hole golf course, picnic grounds, library, movie theater, swimming pool, fitness centers and a bowling alley.

ORGANIZATIONS ASSIGNED TO TINKER

Organizations assigned to the Wing include 72nd Medical Group, 72nd Support Group, 72nd Operations Support Squadron, Civil Engineer Directorate, 72nd Logistics Directorate, the Base Chapel, the offices for Plans, Military Equal Opportunity, International Military Students and Arms Control.

Tinker is home to seven major Department of Defense, Air Force and Navy activities with critical national defense missions. The 552nd Air Control Wing flies the E-3 Sentry aircraft and is part of the Air Force's Air Combat Command mobile strike force. The E-3's radar and other sensors provide deep-look surveillance, warning, interception control and airborne battle management. The Navy's Strategic Communications Wing ONE is a one-of-a-kind unit in the Navy.



This Wing provides a vital, secure communications link to the submerged fleet of ballistic missile submarines. OC-ALC airframe artisans perform depot work on the Navy's E-6 Mercury airplanes while sailors perform field level work.

The 507th Air Refueling Wing is an Air Force Reserve flying unit. OC-ALC is the primary source of depot maintenance for the wing's KC-135R aircraft and engines.

MILITARY AND NATO AIRCRAFT SUPPORTED

The Wing also supports U.S. military and NATO aircraft with aerial refueling and Airborne Warning and Control System missions worldwide.

The 3rd Combat Communications Group provides deployable communications, computer systems, navigational aids and air traffic control services anywhere in the world.

The 38th Engineering Installation Group has worldwide responsibility for engineering and installation of all communications and electronic facilities for the Air Force.

The Defense Distribution Depot Oklahoma provides the receipt, storage, issue, inspection and shipment of material, including material quality control, preservation and packaging, inventory, transportation functions and pick up and delivery services in support of OC-ALC and other Tinker-based organizations.

The Defense Megacenters Oklahoma City is the local branch of the Defense Information Systems Agency. The Megacenters operate computer systems for the base and serves 110 other bases in 46 states.

Tinker holds an open house annually, featuring many of the aircraft serviced or stationed there.

Given the phenomenal Oklahoma economic impact and what it contributes to the safety of America, isn't it time we held an appreciation day for Tinker?

THE OKLAHOMA Observer

THE INSIGHT AND ANALYSIS YOU'VE COME TO EXPECT ...

... NOW DELIVERED THE WAY YOU WANT

The screenshot shows the Oklahoma Observer website interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for HOME, ABOUT US, CURRENT ISSUE, SEARCH, OBSERVERSCOPE, SPEAKERS BUREAU, BLOG, CONTACT, and COLUMNISTS. Below this is a search bar and a 'Subscribe Now!' button. The main content area features a 'LATEST HEADLINES' section with three article teasers: 'Just Say No' by Proffy Troy, 'Remembering Bush-World' by Kenny Belford, and 'The Spirit Of The Season' by Edwin S. Vineyard. On the right side, there is a 'Subscribe Now!' button, a 'LOGIN' section with fields for Username and Password, and a 'RECENT POSTS' section listing several articles.

IN PRINT
- OR -
ON-LINE

SUBSCRIBING
TO
THE OBSERVER
IS AS EASY AS
1-2-3

1. TOTAL ACCESS
Only \$60 for a full year

Unlimited access to
The Oklahoma Observer
on-line and in print.
One-year subscription includes 22
issues of our award-winning print
edition sent to your mailbox, on-line
access to each issue as it becomes
available and on-line access to our
national columnists and special features.

2. DIGITAL
Only \$40 for a full year

One-year subscription includes on-line access to 22 issues of The
Observer as it becomes available and on-line access to our national
columnists and special features.

3. PRINT
Only \$40 for a full year

22 issues of our award-winning print edition sent to your mailbox.

TO SUBSCRIBE, VISIT
WWW.OKOBSERVER.NET

Helping State's Bottom Line And Waistlines

By Sharon Martin

When I graduated from ninth grade at Kiowa High School in the Middle Ages [actually, 1967] there was not a single fat girl in our class of 27 students. What girl graduating from an Oklahoma junior high this year can say the same thing? What's changed in the last 40-plus years?

Then, I walked the mile or so to school every day. It wasn't just walking that kept me thin, though, because I got a driver's license at 16 just like most everyone else in my class.

Sure, we spent less time watching television and playing video games then, but the biggest change, I believe, is in what and where we eat. Most of our food was cooked at home. Most of it was produced at home, too. Fast food was a treat, not a regular occurrence.

HOMEGROWN VEGGIES, FRUIT AND MEAT

Our family took a trip to Stilwell every spring for strawberries. Mom and Grandma grew and put away tomatoes, peaches, and green beans. Grandpa raised Herefords, but he also fattened a litter of pigs every year. Grandma had chickens for eggs and meat. We picked up pecans in the fall and spent the winter shelling them.

We bought at the grocery store what we didn't grow – coffee, sugar, oranges, bananas. It didn't make sense, however, to buy from someone else what we could produce for ourselves. All this brings me to agriculture and free trade.

A few months ago I was mixing up honey and peanut butter for a sandwich when I noticed this proclamation on the honey label: Product of Vietnam and Argentina.

HONEY FROM ANOTHER HEMISPHERE?

What, we have no honey bees in Oklahoma? Since when is it economically feasible to ship honey across the ocean instead of across the state?

I immediately got online and found a source of Oklahoma honey. In the process, I discovered the most delicious Oklahoma peanut butter. I found a new sense of purpose, as well.

Now, almost all the food I buy comes from Oklahoma farmers and value-added

producers. My family eats grass-fed beef and bison from Oklahoma ranchers. I buy milk and butter from Oklahoma dairies such as Braum's and Hiland.

When I have time, our bread comes from my kitchen made with Oklahoma wheat, but I keep Wonder Bread on hand, too, baked in an Oklahoma plant. Fruits and vegetables come from a CSA [community supported agriculture], roadside stands, and the Oklahoma Food Cooperative. Eggs, tomatoes, okra, and squash come from the back yard.

Now, when we go out to eat, even for hamburgers, it is an occasion.

SHEDDING THE POUNDS

On my mostly local diet, I've shed 25 pounds.

Not everything grows in Oklahoma. That's where free trade comes in. Our neighbors to the south produce good coffee, and several Oklahoma roasters purchase organic beans directly from Mexican and South American farmers.

Some things are even closer to home. Rice grows in Arkansas and Louisiana. Sugar cane grows in Florida. Oranges and grapefruits grow just south of here in Texas. The fewer miles our food has to travel, the smaller our carbon footprint. So, not only does eating locally make food sense, it makes economic sense.

SUPPORTING OKLAHOMA SERVICES

When you buy locally produced goods, the money you spend stays close to home. Local farmers and producers pay taxes, and local taxes support Oklahoma roads, schools, and services.

Not everyone can spend as much time in the garden as I do, but we each can do a little something to help foster the Oklahoma economy and improve our state's bottom line [and its citizens' waistlines].

Start by reading labels. Look for the Made in Oklahoma emblem. Plant a tomato in your yard. Visit a farmers' market in your area. Become a member of the Oklahoma Food Coop.

You can call it common sense if you want, but I call it patriotism. Food patriotism. It has a ring, doesn't it?

– *The author lives in Oilton*

I Want My Country Back, Too!

By Edwin E. Vineyard

"I want my country back." This plaintive outburst of a woman at one of those rowdy Town Hall meetings in August still concerns this writer. She seemed quite emotional. It was puzzling.

The logic of this woman's self-proclaimed misery may be difficult to discern. From time to time one is prone to ponder this woman's dilemma, and to wonder what inner turmoil could lie behind that woman's words. The video clip showed her in the midst of those shouters and rude haranguers. She sounded off in a loud, assertive, emotional manner in the meeting. Since then we have noticed those words on signs carried by protestors.

What is missing that makes this not her country any longer? Who has stolen her country? If this is an outcry against change, as it seems to be, then what change? What change makes one so emotional – political, economic, social, religious, or what?

'WHO' TOOK 'WHAT' AWAY?

For some time we have heard outcries from religious fundamentalists that "they" have taken their country away. Their complaint is not having officially sponsored prayers in classes or at formally scheduled school events.

These same people think that Christianity is guaranteed by the Constitution, while "freedom of religion" actually guarantees that there will no official compunction to worship in any prescribed way.

Sometimes, simple is not simple enough for simpletons.

Unfortunately, there are those out there on the rightwing fringe who encourage paranoia about the banning of religion. They say "God" and Christians are being persecuted. They circulate false rumors and e-mails about taking "in God we trust" off coins, "under God" out of the pledge of allegiance, and other similarly weird ideas – wrongs they attribute to Democrats. They do not always appreciate being corrected.

PERSECUTED BY TAXES?

How about taxes? There are some nowadays who seem bent on trying to make us feel persecuted by taxes. This is confined primarily to Republicans who object to paying taxes during Democrat administrations.

While they did not object to deficits of \$1.6 trillion resulting from tax-cuts for the wealthy, nor the \$1.2 trillion spent on an unnecessary war, somehow they now object to a lesser deficit putting money out to consumers, cities, and states for priming the pump to start up an economy left on the brink of disaster by the last administration.

Some of these people come from the group that has health insurance, and they oppose health care reform because they are afraid they might have to pay a tax on theirs in order for the uninsured to have similar health security.

The "tea party" extremists believe that government is an enemy, and they get people all worked up emotionally. That group has become seditious and unpatriotic in its rhetoric. Mix this with a few gun-toting nuts and you have an armed insurrection. Do we not understand this?

Q. Who is paying the freight to promote "tea parties?" A. Wealthy persons and

corporations who are enjoying lower tax rates while middle class and lower class burdens increase.

OKLAHOMA'S RICH PAY LESS TAX

Latest stats show that in Oklahoma, the wealthier are paying a much lower percentage of their income for state and local taxes than the middle and lower groups. [The primary reason is high sales taxes and low income taxes.] Oklahoma ranks 42nd in tax burden as a percent of income, yet we have all those weird people out protesting. Our tax-cutting Legislature is killing public services in Oklahoma.

Although the notion is repugnant to most of us, some may feel their country has been taken away because a person of color is president. We overhear remarks of that nature, and about the number of black or Hispanic people now in government positions. Some have questioned whether a Congressman from South Carolina would ever have yelled insulting accusations at a white president appearing before a session of Congress.

President Carter has joined others in saying openly that the intensity level of the health care and anti-government activists has a racial basis. Sadly, these observations appear to be correct.

Indeed our country is changing. It is always changing. Some changes are progressive in nature, but nevertheless difficult for some people to take. Most people in our nation wanted change, and President Obama promised change. We elected him. Why should we be tolerant of the false and character impugning attacks being made on him and on the agenda of change that he promised? We wanted our country back from those who drove us to ruin.

AFRAID OF CHANGE

Some people do not want change. Those with vested interests in the status quo do not want change. Some of those have no ethics and no morals. Some have very little love for their country if it is not run to serve and to please them. Some want to exploit the rest of us for profit.

Those most prosperous among us too often have little concern for the less fortunate. Many of them consider government an ally in doing business their way, and they pay for that help by campaign donations and through lobbyists. These consider the government an enemy if it regulates their activities, takes back tax subsidies, or threatens their corporate or personal favors.

Those who do not like government prey upon consumers, who are dependent upon government for protection. Sometimes they fool ordinary people into becoming their allies. Without these deluded ones they might lose power.

Many of us would indeed like to have our country back – one that is free of lies, distortions, and nutty conspiracy theories. We'd like a country ruled by a process of civil democracy. We would like our democracy uncorrupted by money and corporate powers.

Yes, we too would like to have our country back.

– *The author, AKA The Militant Moderate, lives in Enid. A full version of this essay may be read at www.okobserver.net.*

BOOKS

Trickle-Down Fundies: One World, Under God

By Wanda Jo Stapleton

THE FAMILY

The Secret Fundamentalism At The Heart Of American Power

By Jeff Sharlet

HarperCollins Publishers

454 pages, \$15.99

Both of Oklahoma's U.S. senators, Tom Coburn and Jim Inhofe, are closely involved with a group called "The Family," some of whom live on "C Street" in Washington DC – a group and address recently tied to three adulterous affairs and a totalitarian idea of Christianity.

Gov. Mark Sanford, R-SC, got counseling at C Street after admitting to cheating on his wife, as did Sen. John Ensign, R-NV. Finally, the estranged wife of former Rep. Chip Pickering, R-MS, filed a lawsuit against Chip's alleged mistress claiming an adulterous relationship while he lived at the C Street house.

Coburn lives at the C Street house, too, and counseled Ensign, a fellow resident. Six other congressmen also live in this house that is registered as a church and is, therefore, tax exempt.

TAXPAYER FUNDED 'MISSION' TRIPS

Meanwhile, Sen. Jim Inhofe has made at least 20 trips to Africa since 1999, at a cost to taxpayers of over \$187,000.

It was The Family's longtime leader, Doug Coe, who first urged Inhofe to go to Africa; so Inhofe "travelled across Africa on The Family's behalf, insisting that the continent's leaders hear him out about his American Christ before any business could occur," according to *The Family*, a recent book further detailed below.

In explaining the cost of his trips, borne by taxpayers, Inhofe said that he went because it was "a Jesus thing" and that he was "a Jesus guy." The question is what kind of "Jesus guy"?

The Jesus envisioned by The Family prefers obedience and power above all other characteristics, according to Jeff Sharlet, a writer who was temporarily associated with The Family and produced the New York Times best seller.

My article attempts to explain the power theology that Coe promoted.

THEY ARE 'THE CHOSEN'

Family members, Sharlet said, consider themselves "the chosen," the inner circle, the elite fundamentalists to whom Jesus reveals much more of himself than to the masses in churches.

So churches become irrelevant and the name "Christian" too narrow for these followers of the real Jesus whom they encounter through small, publicly invisible, prayer groups called "cells."

Coe advocates that those praying together in each small cell develop covenants that bond them so powerfully that each member even has veto power of the other members' lives.

The Family's long-term goal is "worldwide government under God" – in other words, theology.

TRICKLE DOWN FUNDAMENTALISM

While Jesus holds "the door to power open," key men go out and empower even third-world dictators to help them distribute their trickle-down fundamentalism.

The Family's key man in Africa is Yoweri Museveni, dictator of Uganda, "a corrupt but stable regime" and a frequent destination for Inhofe. Photos of the two

The Truth About Oklahoma's Senator NO

Republican Sen. Tom Coburn blows so much smoke on cutting federal spending, he deliberately obscures one of the worst voting records in the U.S. Senate. Here are a few examples out of hundreds:

He voted NO on S 896 to help families save their homes in bankruptcy; NO on S 386, the Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act; NO on HR 1, the American Recovery Act which included the child tax credit, corporate accountability and education stimulus.

He voted NO on HR 2, the Children's Health Insurance program; NO on S 181, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay for Women Act; NO on HR 5867, the Unemployment Compensation Extension act; NO on S 3186, the Warm In Winter, Cool in Summer Act; NO on HR 6331, the Medicare Improvements Act; NO on HR 60459, the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act.

He voted NO on HR 4137, the Higher Education Opportunity Act; NO on HR 4040, the Consumer Product Safety Act; NO on HR 3221, the Foreclosure Prevention Act; NO on HR 3963, the Children's Health Insurance Program [SCHIP] covering an additional 55,000 poor Oklahoma children.

He voted NO on HR 3580, the FDA corporate accountability, drug safety, food safety and safe drugs act; NO on HR 2669, the College Cost Reduction Act; NO on the amendment to keep the inheritance tax on the super rich; NO on the Employee Free Choice Act to let workers form unions.

He voted NO on HR 2, the Fair Minimum Wage Act [first increase in 10 years]; NO on S 3, the Medicare Fair Prescription Drug Price Act; NO on an amendment to allow negotiating Medicare drug prices; NO on a resolution on the "sense of the Senate" supporting Social Security.

taken during Inhofe's April 4, 2007 visit appear on the Republic of Uganda's official website.

While there, Inhofe commended Mrs. Museveni for her dedicated fight against HIV/AIDS, but he voted the next year [2008] against a bill to provide financial assistance to Africa for combating HIV/AIDS.

Museveni attends the National Prayer Breakfasts [surreptitiously sponsored by the Family], events where foreign leaders are offered access to certain politicians.

For example, Museveni met with "Ronald Reagan at the White House" in 1987. At the 2007 breakfast, Museveni gave a \$500 million, no-bid contract to AES, a global power company.

DEMOCRACY CONSIDERED 'REBELLIOUSNESS'

Despite what Inhofe and Coburn say about democracy, they belong to a crass group, The Family, which calls democracy "rebelliousness" and considers rights as an infringement on God's sovereignty.

Further, The Family doesn't care much about sin and understands salvation in terms of nations, not souls; so this group cultivates the powerful, especially foreign leaders empowered by either bullets or ballots. Finally, The Family works for unfettered capitalism without unions and without institutional help for the poor.

Neither senator is going to vote for health care reform. Apparently, helping ordinary people isn't "a Jesus thing" to use Inhofe's words to describe his motives.

During a recent Town Hall meeting, a desperate woman begged Coburn for help because her husband's health insurance wouldn't cover his traumatic brain injury. Coburn's reply was that neighbors, not government, should be helping in situations like this – with bake sales and car washes, I suppose.

It's very scary that Inhofe and Coburn represent us in the Senate.

– The author is a former Democratic state representative who lives in Oklahoma City

SUBSCRIBE NOW AND RECEIVE A FREE BOOK!!!
(see restrictions below)

FIND TODAY'S HOTTEST CURRENT AFFAIRS TITLES AT

Full Circle

1900 NW EXPRESSWAY
OKC OK 73118
405/842.2900

THE OKLAHOMA Observer

New subscribers only — Limited time offer
Non-transferable — Must be redeemed in person
Merchandise must not exceed \$20

IMPORTANT RESTRICTIONS
Once you've subscribed to The Oklahoma Observer, you will receive via U.S. Mail a certificate from Full Circle Books for a free book [\$20 limit]. The certificate is not transferable and must be presented in person at Full Circle Books in order to receive your free book. No facsimiles, printouts or photocopies will be accepted as a substitute for the original Full Circle certificate. This book offer is for new subscribers only. Not valid with any other offer.

When Will Whites Get Over Racism?

By Andrew M. Manis

For much of the last 40 years, ever since America “fixed” its race problem in the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, we white people have been impatient with African-Americans who continued to blame race for their difficulties.

Often we have heard whites ask, “When are African-Americans finally going to get over it?” Now I want to ask, “When are we white Americans going to get over our ridiculous obsession with skin color?”

Recent reports that “Election Spurs Hundreds of Race Threats, Crimes” should frighten and infuriate every one of us.

Having grown up in “Bombingham,” Alabama in the 1960s, I remember overhearing an avalanche of comments about what many white classmates and their parents wanted to do to John and Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

ASSASSINS DO MORE THAN TALK ABOUT IT

Eventually, as you may recall, in all three cases, someone decided to do more than “talk the talk.”

Since our recent presidential election, to our eternal shame we are once again hearing the same reprehensible talk I remember from my boyhood.

We white people have controlled political life in the disunited colonies and the United States for some 400 years on this continent. Conservative whites have been in power 28 of the last 40 years.

Even during the eight Clinton years, conservatives in Congress blocked most of his agenda and pulled him to the right. Yet never in that period did I read any headlines suggesting that anyone was calling for the assassinations of presidents Nixon, Ford, Reagan, or either of the Bushes.

WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE

Criticize them, yes. Call for their impeachment, perhaps. But there were no bounties on their heads. And even when someone did try to kill Ronald Reagan, the perpetrator was a non-political mental case who wanted merely to impress actress Jody Foster.

Elect a liberal who happens to be black and we’re back in the ‘60s again. At this point in our history, we should be proud that we’ve proven what conservatives are always saying – that in America anything is possible, EVEN electing a black man as president.

But instead we now hear that school children from Maine to California are talking about wanting to “assassinate Obama.”

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

Fighting the urge to throw up, I can only ask, “How long?”

How long before we white people realize we can’t make our nation, much less the whole world, look like us?

How long until we white people can – once and for all – get over this hell-conceived preoccupation with skin color?

How long until we white people get over the demonic conviction that white skin makes us superior?

How long before we white people get over our bitter resentments about being demoted to the status of equality with non-whites?

How long before we get over our expectations that we should be at the head of the line merely because of our white skin?



How long until we white people end our silence and call out our peers when they share the latest racist jokes in the privacy of our white-only conversations?

DON'T STAND FOR RACIST LOUDMOUTHS

I believe in free speech, but how long until we white people start making racist loudmouths as socially uncomfortable as we do flag burners?

How long until we white people will stop insisting that blacks exercise personal responsibility, build strong families, educate themselves enough to edit the Harvard Law Review, and work hard enough to become president of the United States, only to threaten to assassinate them when they do?

How long before we start “living out the true meaning” of our creeds, both civil and religious, that all men and women are created equal and that “red and yellow, black and white” all are precious in God’s sight?

HE HAS A THREE-POINT PLAN

Until this past Nov. 4, I didn’t believe this country would ever elect an African-American to the presidency. I still don’t believe I’ll live long enough to see us white people get over our racism problem. But here’s my three-point plan:

First, every day that Barack Obama lives in the White House that black slaves built, I’m going to pray that God [and the Secret Service] will protect him and his family from us white people.

Second, I’m going to report to the FBI any white person I overhear saying, in seriousness or in jest, anything of a threatening nature about President Obama.

Third, I’m going to pray to live long enough to see America surprise the world once again, when white people can “in spirit and in truth” sing of our damnable color prejudice, “We HAVE overcome.”

– The author is associate professor of history at Macon State College in Georgia.

Backlash Brews Among Right’s Natural Allies

By Susan Estrich

Conservative loudmouths are crowing that they are driving Barack Obama’s popularity ratings below 50%. They are very proud of themselves. They shouldn’t be. Destroying what is best about our country is not something to brag to your children about. And the other shoe is dropping.

“I’ve stopped using Claritin,” one of my friends told me. “Zyrtec is just as good, and besides, you can buy generic versions of Claritin.”

This is not a column about allergies. I really don’t know if Zyrtec is just as good or not. But they don’t advertise on Fox News. Claritin is, I am told, No. 1 on this month’s boycott list.

Getting rid of Van Jones, the co-founder of one of the groups now organizing the boycotts, is not going to slow the movement. Quite the contrary. It may strengthen the cause. When folks start telling someone who has been a contributor at Fox for 10 years [me] to cut out the Claritin, you know it’s spreading.

ANGRY OBAMA SUPPORTERS

The same day, I found myself sitting with a group of people who share my strong commitment to the security of the state of Israel. To a one, they supported Hillary or McCain. To a one, they have “issues” with President Obama: These folks are worried about the economy and the deficit, worried about terrorism around the world and, yes, deeply worried about what they see as ambivalence from this administration to the threats faced by Israel.

But – and this is my point – despite all of that, every one of these people is now an angry Obama supporter. Not just an Obama supporter, but an angry one.

LACK OF CIVILITY, RESPECT, DECENCY

The right may be mad as hell, but I’ve got news for Congressman Joe Wilson and his know-nothing cronies: You have turned your natural allies, people who might have agreed with you on properly raised criticisms, who might have agreed with you on substance, into your enemies.

Not critics, enemies.

Not people who won’t vote for you or contribute to your cause or watch your show, but people who would like to see you driven from the television, driven from office, recognized as pariahs in a culture of civility, respect and decency.

New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd was right when she said out loud what so many of us have been thinking. “Boy.” That’s the subtext here. I don’t use the term lightly. Just because you disagree with someone who is black doesn’t make you a racist.

John McCain is not a racist. Cal Thomas is not a racist. Mike Huckabee is not a racist. These are men I know, whose integrity I respect, even if we disagree. But Joe Wilson? And others who shall remain nameless here, but you can easily fill in the blank?

BUSH WASN’T HECKLED

Obama has made mistakes. Every president does. But thousands of brave men and women died as a result of George W. Bush’s mistakes, and no Democrat ever stood in the back of the Congress and attacked him as a liar during a joint session of Congress.

Respect? Dignity? Integrity? Honor? These people have none.

It’s too bad. At a time when the country might be proud of its commitment to equality, we are torn apart. At a time when the country so needs to pull together to deal with the problems we face, the divisions among us are becoming deeper and uglier.

At a time when those of us who are parents struggle to teach our children to live with honor in a difficult world, powerful men are celebrated for acting like the worst kid on the playground.

May God protect this president, not only for his sake, but for all of ours.

© Creators Syndicate

Tell Them, Obama: We Can't Get Along

By James Clingman Jr.

Looks like Rodney King is living in the White House these days, y'all. Before you start writing your letters and e-mails to me for having the nerve to say something negative about our president, consider our current situation.

We need to open our eyes and our minds to the reality of politics, once and for all by understanding the nature of the beast.

You've heard the story about the frog and the scorpion, to get on his back for a ride across the pond. The frog said he would do it if the scorpion would not sting him.

The scorpion assured the frog he would not harm him in return for the ride across the water. When they reached the other side, the scorpion stung the frog; and as the frog lay dying he said, "You promised you wouldn't sting me," to which the scorpion replied, "I was just being true to my nature."

WHAT POLITICIANS DISPLAY

Lying, backstabbing, grandstanding, accepting bribes, assassinating one's character, cheating, stealing, cursing and fighting are among the characteristics on display among many of our politicians.

In other words, "they are a mirror of our society." Way too often, we hold them up as paragons of integrity, ethics, and morality, only to be let down when they fall from grace.

We send them to Washington with more financial security than most of us could ever dream of having; and they pass laws that adversely affect us but have no effect on their lives.

They debate Social Security and health care but are not required to participate in the same programs they legislate for us. They determine how we will live, without having to be subjected to those same rules, and without having to pay a price for being wrong.

What a life, huh?

COMMON SENSE WILL PREVAIL?

Now we have a president who seems to think he can change the political landscape; he seems to believe that hundreds of years of political gamesmanship can be swept aside, and common sense will prevail.

He subscribes to the notion that all he has to do is make a speech, do a Town Hall meeting, or an interview explaining his agenda, and all will be well in Washington and in this country.

He seems to be asking the Rodney King question over and over again. And coming from the president of the United States, someone who knows how politics works, it sounds even more ridiculous.

Barack Obama was swept into office by a riptide of emotion, hope, and exasperation at the previous eight years. He was ballyhooed and ushered in on the fragile wings of instant stardom and fame, so much so that it seems even he believed the hype.

CRAZIES OUT TO GET OBAMA

But now that he is in office and the crazies have come out of woodwork, he finds himself having to respond to the ire of many of the same folks who hailed him as their new chief on Jan. 20.

Obama is busy plugging holes in the dike and is fast running out of fingers. He was forced to take time to have a beer with two guys who had a spat, and offered it to us as a teachable moment that would demonstrate we can indeed all

Irate Republican Blisters The GOP

By Bruce Bartlett

I got an e-mail from a prominent Republican asking why I am so anti-Republican these days. Since many of my friends ask the same thing I thought I would share my reply:

I think the party got seriously on the wrong track during the George W. Bush years, as I explained in my book *Impostor*. In my opinion, it no longer bears any resemblance to the party of Ronald Reagan.

I still consider myself to be a Reaganite. But I don't see any others anywhere in the GOP these days, which is why I consider myself to be an independent. Mindless partisanship has replaced principled conservatism.

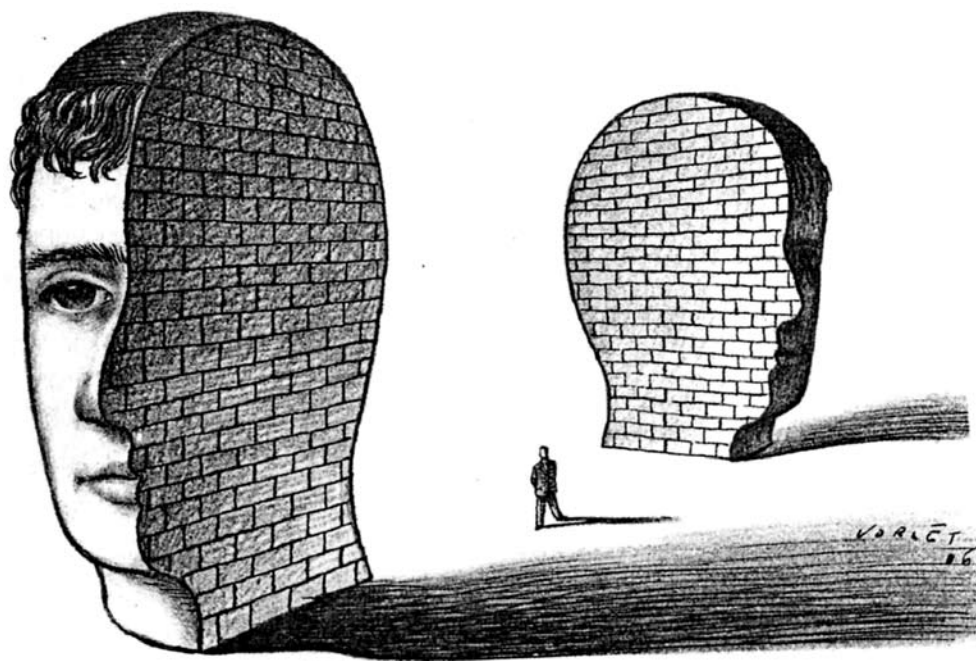
What passes for principle in the party these days is "what can we do to screw the Democrats today." How else can you explain things like that insane op-ed Michael Steele had in the Washington Post last month?

OLD TIMERS FED UP WITH THE GOP

I am not alone. When I talk to old timers, many express the same concerns I have. But they all work for Republican-oriented think tanks like AEI and Hoover and don't wish to be fired like I was from NCPA. Or they just don't want to be bothered or lose friends. As a free agent I am able to say what they can't or won't say publicly.

I think the Republican Party is in the same boat the Democrats were in the early '80s - dominated by extremists unable to see how badly their party was

See **REPUBLICANS** Page 14



get along.

He is on the road explaining his health care plan, trying desperately to get his opponents to get on board and get along with him as well.

He is attempting to be all things to all people, albeit disciplinary when it comes to black people; but that's another article. All of this in his Utopian endeavor to have us all get along.

RODNEY KING'S MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Memo to President Barack Obama: After Rodney King was beat senseless by those police officers, all he could utter is "Can't we all get along?" All he could muster the nerve to say before the cameras of the world, before a public shocked beyond their imagination at what happened to him, recorded for everyone to see, was, "Can't we all get along?"

It was his time to shine, his time to teach, his time to enlighten; but he blew it big time and squandered his 15 minutes of fame with that immature, naive, rhetorical question.

In this country, Mr. President, as you well know, the political system of which you are now at least the titular leader is a system grounded in rancor and adversity, a system that reeks of discord, a system comprising childlike adults who always want their way, and a system based on a 250-year struggle for the ultimate aphrodisiac: power.

IT IS THE WRONG QUESTION

You are in charge of a system whose participants have fought like cats and dogs over every little thing, and now you pose the question, "Can't we all get along?"

After years of being beat up, all while watching it take place before our eyes on the evening news, most of the folks who elected you are not down with the Rodney King inquiry.

We expect much more from you. Get some backbone, stand up to the political thugs and do the right thing. Don't go down as simply a "big-baller," be a true "shot-caller." And how about looking out for black folks every now and then, too? After all, you are the president.

Politicians have been battling for centuries, and have demonstrated in no uncertain terms that the answer to the question "Can't we all get along?" is an emphatic, unequivocal, unapologetic, "NO!"

- The author, an African-American, is a guest contributor to *The Oklahoma Eagle* in Tulsa

Bill Moyers Disses Dems As Spineless

PBS's Bill Moyers issued a tough critique of the Democratic Party on HBO's *Real Time With Bill Maher*.

Moyers, whose comments focused on the recent health care debate, said that "too many Democrats have had their spines surgically removed."

Moyers, a White House press secretary during the Johnson Administration who went on to win over 30 Emmys and countless other awards during his subsequent journalism career, has been a frequent critic of the Republican Party over the years, making his critique of the Democratic Party on *Real Time* more exceptional.

"The problem is the Democratic Party," said Moyers. "This is a party that has told its progressives - who are the most outspoken champions of health care reform - to sit down and shut up."

"That's what Rahm Emanuel, in effect, the chief of staff of the White House, told progressives when they stood up as a unit in Congress and said, no public insurance option, no health care reforms."

CORPORATE INTERESTS LURE DEMOCRATS

Moyers said that, over the years, the Democratic Party "has become like the Republican Party - deeply influenced by corporate money."

"I think Rahm Emanuel, who is a clever politician, understands that the money for Obama's reelection would come primarily from the health industry, the drug industry and Wall Street, and so he is a corporate Democrat who is destined, determined that there would be something in this legislation - if we get it - that

See **DEMOCRATS** Page 14

Health Insurance Reform

We're Old And Fat And Fear Lawyers

By John Goodman

This is how President Obama should start a speech on health care – “My fellow Americans: We are old. We are fat. We are afraid of lawyers.”

Our PC President would never begin a speech like that. But with his polls plummeting, maybe he should. I think the country is in the mood for such straight talk.

Here are the facts about so-called mandatory entitlement spending: Out of a typical year's federal budget about half goes to transfer payments of various sorts – Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, unemployment compensation, disability programs, etc.

Together Social Security and Medicare suck up nearly \$1 trillion annually and, because of the country's aging boomer population, are the fastest-growing part of the entitlement pie. That figure promises to triple by 2040 if a health care plan isn't adopted.

CHECK THE FACTS ABOUT OBESITY

Here are the alarming facts about obesity: Nearly one-third [31%] of Americans are clinically obese [Body Mass Index of 30 or more].

According to American Sports Data, “3.8 million people are over 300 pounds, over 400,000 people [mostly males] carry over 400 pounds, and the average adult female weighs an unprecedented 163 pounds.”

Obesity leads to a legion of ills, from heart attacks and strokes to gut cancers and diabetes. The annual cost of treating diabetes and its effects exceeds \$200 billion.

This number is sure to grow. Adult onset diabetes is epidemic in some communities and has reached down to hit teenagers, the vast majority of them overweight and under-exercised.

BORROW AN IDEA FROM JACK KENNEDY

President Obama should borrow a page from John F. Kennedy and commit our public schools to vigorous fitness goals. And parents: Stop driving your kids to school! Buy a computer game called “Go Outside and Play.”

The biggest cost is not malpractice awards, which annually drive up U.S. health care costs by 1% to 2% – \$20 billion to \$40 billion a year – although that's bad enough.

Most costly is the individual doctor's perceived threat of a career-ending malpractice award and his or her incentive, therefore, to practice defensive medicine.



This occurs when a doctor, fearing a lawsuit, orders a battery of costly diagnostic tests to rule out the highly improbable, even when the obvious cause of sickness or injury is staring him in the face.

DEFENSIVE MEDICINE IS COSTLY

A Massachusetts Medical Society study discovered that in one year Massachusetts wasted \$1.4 billion on defensive medicine. Prorated for the entire U.S. population, the cost would be about \$66 billion a year.

Another study cited by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons puts the cost of defensive medicine much higher – \$100 billion to \$178 billion per year.

Two years ago I took my limping son, then age 11 and who had been injured in a flag football game, to an orthopedist who prescribed \$14,000 in brain and spine scans to rule out a brain tumor.

Brain tumor? I witnessed the crackback block on the football field that caused my son's injury.

The doctor admitted that a brain tumor was an extremely remote possibility. She didn't admit that her real motivation for ordering the scans was to cover her behind.

Age, obesity and defensive medicine are the trillion-dollar elephants in the room. Whether your preference for health care reform springs from the political left or right, you have to start with these three facts, otherwise you're just a political bloviator.

Editor's Note: If you want to learn more about market-based solutions to the health care cost crisis, go to the National Center for Policy Analysis [ncpa.org].

Not Worthy To Carry The Founders' Quills

By Danny M. Adkison

You would think, on the basis of nothing but common sense, that the answer to the question, “How often is a constitutional regime genuinely threatened?” would be: rarely. Thinking of our own constitutional regime, Watergate comes to mind. McCarthyism. Obviously, the Civil War.

But now?

Surely the “proper guardians” would know. That is how our Framers described those we elect to represent us in government. Here is how two “guardians” recently spoke of our regime.

The first is Republican U.S. Rep. John Sullivan of Tulsa. He recently noted, “People are disgusted because [of] all the stimulus money that's not working.” Continuing, “Now they're trying to take over the health care system.”

This was all stated at one of these Town Hall meetings that dominated the news last month, and which highlighted people shouting things like “they need to give the government back to the people the way our Founding Fathers wanted it.”

IGNORANT OF FACTS

At the very same Town Hall meeting [over which Sullivan presided], Sullivan admitted that even though he had read the health care bill [one wonders, which one?] he didn't really understand all of it. If the people's “guardian” couldn't understand the bill, the people themselves would probably have comprehension problems, too. That, if one wants to go by the Framers' design is a big reason for having the “guardians.”

At the same Town Hall meeting one participant read something about how the Obama Administration was ignoring the Constitution. Apparently Sullivan could not hold that analysis in his mind because although he described it as “great,” he requested the participant leave a copy behind for him. Something he does understand is Medicare and Medicaid. These he explained to his audience [one has to think mostly supporters who were also shouting that our nation is becoming a fascist state] aren't working.

The other half of our legislative “guardians” are in the Senate. Not to be outdone, Republican Sen. Jim Inhofe also had a Town Hall meeting.

INHOFE AS CHEERLEADER

Unlike Sullivan, the senator doesn't just nod in agreement with those who can't see anything good with our present constitutional regime, he is a cheerleader at these meetings.

For example, Inhofe peppers his comments with asides such as “I never

dreamed” and “I have never seen,” and finishes them with statements like this: “Every institution that has made this country the greatest nation in the world is under attack.”

Let's hear some different opinions. Think about these comments.

“The moment we launch into conjectures about usurpations about the federal government, we get into an unfathomable abyss and fairly put ourselves out of the reach of all reasoning.” “Whatever may be the limits or modifications of the powers of the Union, it is easy to imagine an endless train of possible dangers; and by indulging an excess of jealousy and timidity, we may bring ourselves to an absolute state of skepticism.”

These words, you may have guessed, were not spoken by a current representative or senator. They were written by those who wrote our Constitution. It's rather easy to spot the difference in sophistication in rhetoric and thinking. Just as important, it is as relevant today as it was when it was written in 1788.

Think about something else they wrote, and try denying it doesn't remind you of the recent controversy surrounding the proposed health care laws. “It is a misfortune, inseparable from human affairs, that public measures are rarely investigated with that spirit of moderation which is essential to a just estimate of their real tendency to advance or obstruct the public good; and that this spirit is more apt to be diminished than promoted by those occasions which require an unusual exercise of it.”

NEEDED: FOUNDERS' BRILLIANCE

Would that we could witness this level of prescient and well-reasoned comment coming from present-day politicians. It is because our Framers were so thoughtful that we are still living under the regime they created over 215 years ago. A regime made even more impressive considering that it has been formally changed only 27 times [10 of which came within the first three years of its beginning].

As if reporting on the proposed health care laws, our Framers wrote this about making important legal changes: “In some it has been too evident that they have [reacted to it] not only with a predisposition to censure, but with a predetermination to condemn.”

The Framers' ideas are as impressive today as our present-day “guardians” statements are disappointing. We could use a lot more of the former and a lot less of the latter.

– The author teaches constitutional law at Oklahoma State University

Health Insurance Reform

Your Opinion? Yes Not Your Own Facts

By Jack Bryant

I've spent the last few days watching and reading about the "debate" over health care reform. It's not much of a debate, i.e. it's not much of a structured discussion of the merits of different positions with the aim of discerning the truth.

Too much of it is just angry shouting. Too much of it is a reminder that a person is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts. That's unfortunate because I believe the challenge of health care reform is – at its heart – a religious and ethical question.

I think it's important to begin by recognizing that "health care reform" is something of a misnomer. What's actually being proposed is "health care system reform."

Those who say America has the best health care in the world are correct. Unfortunately, we have the worst health care system in the world amongst all the industrialized countries.

IT IS A MORAL PROBLEM

That is a moral problem because it has left us with 47 million uninsured. It has left us with "death panels" not of government bureaucrats, but of insurance company bureaucrats who decide to drop people from coverage when they become sick or to refuse to pay for life saving medical procedures – not on the basis of what would be "good" healthcare, but on the basis of bolstering the profit margins of insurance companies.

The recent charge that health care reform would establish "death panels" takes chutzpah to new levels because what is being proposed would move those kinds of decisions out of the hands of insurance company bureaucrats and back into the dialogue between patient and physician with the advice of their spiritual and ethical counselors where they belong.

IT HAS LONG TROUBLED TRADITION

I believe the foundational issue is a moral issue that has long troubled the Anglo-Saxon judicial tradition. That issue is the proper role of insurance. Stripped to its economic barebones insurance – including health insurance – is gambling, no different than what happens in a casino.

Obama Figures On Taxes Were Correct

As a result of his address to a joint session of Congress President Barack Obama has been challenged on his claim that his plan would cost less than the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy. The critics are dead wrong.

"Add it all up, and the plan I'm proposing will cost around \$900 billion over 10 years – less than we have spent on the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and less than the tax cuts for the wealthiest few Americans that Congress passed at the beginning of the previous administration."

The president's exact words.

A report from Citizens for Tax Justice documented that the Bush tax cuts cost almost \$2.5 trillion over the decade after they were first enacted [2001-2010].

Preliminary estimates from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office show that the House Democrats' health care reform legislation is projected to cost a trillion dollars over the decade after it would be enacted [2010-2019].

OBAMA PLAN LESS THAN HOUSE BILL

President Obama said during his address to Congress that his health care plan would cost a little less than the House plan, at "around \$900 billion over 10 years."

As the President said, even the Bush tax cuts "for the wealthiest few" cost more than his health care plan. The direct cost of the tax cuts for just the richest 5% of taxpayers over the 2001-2010 period is \$979 billion.

REPUBLICANS

From Page 12

alienating moderates and independents.

The party's adults formed the Democratic Leadership Council to push the party back to the center and it was very successful. But there is no group like that for Republicans.

GLENN BECK LUNATICS IN CHARGE

That has left lunatics like Glenn Beck as the party's de facto leaders. As long as that remains the case, I want nothing to do with the GOP.

I will know that the party is on the path to recovery when someone in a position of influence reaches out to former Republicans like me. We are the most likely group among independents to vote Republican. But I see no effort to do so.

All I see is pandering to the party's crazies like the birthers. In the short run that may be enough to pick up a few congressional seats next year, but I see no way a Republican can retake the White House for the foreseeable future.

Both CBO and OMB are predicting better than 4% real growth in 2011 and 2012. If those numbers are even remotely correct Obama will have it in the bag.

Also, Republicans have to find a way to win some minority votes because it is not viable as a whites-only party in presidential elections. That's why I wrote my *Wrong on Race* book, which no one read.



That is why centuries ago insurance contracts were illegal. They were eventually allowed in Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence on the theory that, properly regulated, they could serve the moral purposes of allowing people to share risks in a way that would serve the common good.

I believe where our current system has failed is in its abandonment of that moral justification and its replacement with the idea that a person who is sick is the opportunity to make a profit.

There can be honest differences of opinion about the form that health care system reform should take, but I believe a return to that moral purpose is an ethical and religious imperative. Given the fact that our country will be bankrupted by medical costs under the current system within 15 years we have no choice but to act.

– The author is minister at the Hope Unitarian Church of Tulsa. This first appeared in their bulletin.

The cost is even greater if one includes interest payments that resulted because the Bush tax cuts were deficit-financed. In 2010, when all the Bush tax cuts are finally phased in completely, an incredible 52.5% of them will go to this wealthiest 5% of taxpayers.

Oddly, many of the lawmakers who claim to be concerned about the cost of the president's health care plan are the same lawmakers who supported the Bush tax cuts, despite their much greater costs.

These figures make clear that costs cannot be the real concern of lawmakers who oppose health care reform and yet supported the Bush tax cuts. Their position seems to be that showering benefits on the wealthiest 5% of taxpayers and leaving the bill for future generations is preferable to making health care available for all at a much lower cost and paying that cost up front.

That demonstrates a different set of priorities than most Americans have, but it doesn't demonstrate much concern about costs.

DEMOCRATS

From Page 12

will turn off those powerful interests."

Moyers had some advice for President Barack Obama, as well.

"There's a fear that Barack Obama will become the Grover Cleveland of this era," said Moyers. "Grover Cleveland was a good man, but he became a conservative Democratic president because he didn't fight the interests ..."

"I would much rather see Barack Obama be Theodore Roosevelt. Theodore Roosevelt loved to fight. He came into office and railed against the malefactors of great wealth, and he was glad to take them on ..."

"I think if Obama fought, instead of finessed so much, he stood up and declared for what is really the right thing to do and what is really needed instead of negotiating the corners away, instead of talking about bending the curve, and talking about actuarial rates, if he were to stand up and say, 'We need this because we're a decent country,' I think it would change the atmosphere."

Moyers said that conservatives have dominated the debate over health care lately.

"In the last few weeks, the rightwing has been winning the debate. How [Obama] lost control of the narrative, I don't understand. Well, yes, I do. He didn't find the right metaphors, as you were just saying, and he didn't speak in simple powerful moral language. He was speaking like a policy wonk to the world of Washington, not a country of people who are hurting ..."

"Here's the party that lost and the conservative movement that was discredited over the last eight years ... They're setting the agenda for a Democratic Party that controls the White House, the Senate and the House. Something's wrong in that," he said.

Health Insurance Reform

Canadians Support Single-Payer System

By Ron du Bois

First Of Two Parts

Although we live in Stillwater, we have for the last 27 years owned a cottage on Lake Winnipeg, Arnes, Manitoba, Canada. We have spent almost as many summers there over the years. This year was no different ... with the exception that there is raging battle going on in the U.S. in regards to healthcare reform.

Wherever I went in the big city of Winnipeg or in smaller cities like Gimli or Arnes I interviewed ordinary Canadians about their thoughts about the U.S. health care controversy, a historical repeat of Canada's health care reform some 50 years ago.

Canadians, I learned, are not losing any sleep over the push for U.S. health care reform. Their attitude seems to be, "We've got ours, you get yours."

Gerry Cowie, a senior citizen and long-term acquaintance said, "I think they're stupid for not having it before. I worked for doctors before Medicare [1962] and they couldn't collect from patients who couldn't afford to pay. After Medicare came in doctors were paid for all their patients."

My niece, Laurie Stirton, said, "Canadians laugh their heads off that Americans are so afraid of health care." Her son Cary Stirton added, "For such a wealthy society, it's criminal."

CANADIANS LOVE SINGLE-PAYER

In the same way some Americans think they have the best care in the world most Canadians feel their single-payer system in place for 50 years puts our for-profit system in the dust bin of history.

They may complain but 96% wouldn't have it any other way. The complaints of Canadians pale beside the big time complaints of Americans, who are mostly blind to the fact that the Canadian system costs a fraction of ours and covers everybody.

Andrew Schultz, a Canadian filmmaker, told me about getting sick after a heavy meal. He went to the hospital where they found a 4-mm kidney stone. He will have surgery in a few days. He will never see a bill that in the U.S. could cause bankruptcy.

No Canadian goes bankrupt because of medical bills and Canadians don't lose their health insurance because they don't have a job. Regarding U.S. healthcare reform, he remarked, "The level of discussion is at rock bottom." He asked, "Americans have no experience of national health care so how can they know anything about it?" He added, "The most conservative Canadian politician would never think of opposing public health care. It is not a political issue."

GIVE JACK A CALL

Jack Hinchey, a retired 77-year-old and his wife Audrey live next door to our cottage and have been good neighbors for 25 years. He had a knee replacement a few years ago and is now having multiple internal problems - his gall bladder and a tumor were recently removed. He has had five colonoscopies and now has a collapsed colon.

In a few days he will have surgery to remove and reconnect the colon. Over the years he and his wife have had only praise for their medical care for which they have never received a bill. I couldn't get them to say anything negative; both are grateful for Canadian healthcare.

Should you wish to contact them their number is 204.642.7739.

Delayed Treatment Kills Real Norma Rae

The North Carolina union organizer who was the inspiration for the movie Norma Rae died of brain cancer after a battle with her insurance company, which delayed her treatment.

She was 68.

Crystal Lee Sutton, formerly Crystal Lee Jordan, was fired from her job folding towels at the J.P. Stevens textile plant in her hometown of Roanoke Rapids, NC for trying to organize a union in the early 1970s.

Her last action at the plant - writing the word "UNION" on a piece of cardboard and standing on her work table, leading her co-workers to turn off their machines in solidarity - was memorialized in the 1979 film by actress Sally Field. The police physically removed Sutton from the plant for her action.

Her efforts ultimately succeeded, as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers won the right to represent the plant's employees on Aug. 28, 1974.

SHE BECAME A UNION ORGANIZER

Sutton later became a paid organizer for the union, which through a series of mergers became part of UNITE HERE before splitting off this year to form Workers United, which is affiliated with the Service Employees International Union.

Several years ago, Sutton was diagnosed with meningioma, a type of cancer of the nervous system. While such cancers are typically slow-growing, Sutton's was not - and she went two months without potentially life-saving medication because her insurance wouldn't cover it initially.

Sutton told the Burlington, NC, Times-News last year that the insurer's behavior was an example of abuse of the working poor.

"How in the world can it take so long to find out [whether they would cover the medicine or not] when it could be a matter of life or death," she said. "It is almost like, in a way, committing murder."



My advice to Americans is to call individual Canadians rather than be influenced by American anti-Canadian propaganda paid for by the private, for-profit health insurance industry.

Canadians at all levels are willing to talk about health care, but few think they should get involved or be telling us what to do.

AMERICA NEEDS A VISIONARY LEADER

Shirley Bookbinder, B.A.S., a retired social worker, believes in Canada's medical system. She said, "America needs another Tommy Douglas [father of Canadian health care], someone with the vision to look to the ordinary person. You have to listen to what's important for your country, not what's good for your party."

Barry Asgeison, my brother-in-law's son said, "For a government that provides the best health care in the world for its soldiers ... but not for its citizens is infantile thinking that will block national health care."

He added, "The U.S. worships the bottom line and is willing to sacrifice the well-being of the nation in order to line the pockets of powerful corporations."

I asked a retired family member whether a really expensive [\$400,000] bone marrow transplant necessary for myelodysplasia - the cancer that killed my son - would be covered in Canada. His answer was, "It doesn't matter ... it would be covered ... cancer care is superb."

A Winnipeg waitress said, "Americans have to pay big fees to see a doctor; here we can see a doctor any time."

FEAR-MONGERING IN AMERICA

Dr. Anne Doig, president of the Canadian Medical Association, whose father took part in the strike of doctors in 1962 because they thought public health care would infringe on their basic rights, said in a CBC interview [Aug. 19], "Can-

See CANADIANS Page 16

Though Sutton eventually received the medication, the cancer had already taken hold. She died Sept. 11 in a Burlington hospice.

"Crystal Lee Sutton was a remarkable woman whose brave struggles have left a lasting impact on this country and without doubt, on me personally," Field said in a statement.

Field won an Oscar, a Golden Globe and the Best Actress award at the Cannes Film Festival for her portrayal of the character based on Sutton.

The film in turn was based on the 1975 book *Crystal Lee: A Woman of Inheritance* by New York Times reporter Henry P. "Hank" Leiferman.

Sutton was only 17 when she began working at the J.P. Stevens plant in northeastern North Carolina, where conditions were poor and the pay was low.

A Massachusetts-based company that for many years was listed on the Fortune 500, J.P. Stevens is now part of the WestPoint Home conglomerate.

COPIED A RACIST FLYER

In 1973, Sutton, by then a mother of three, was earning only \$2.65 an hour. That same year, Eli Zivkovich, a former coal miner from West Virginia, came to Roanoke Rapids to organize the plant and began working with Sutton, who was fired.

She had copied a flyer posted by management warning that blacks would run the union. It was that incident which led Sutton to stand up with her "UNION" sign.

"It is not necessary I be remembered as anything, but I would like to be remembered as a woman who deeply cared for the working poor and the poor people of the U.S. and the world," she said in a newspaper interview last year.

"That my family and children and children like mine will have a fair share and equality."

Many Don't Believe In A Biblical Hell

By Greg Garrison

Just when it seemed to have cooled off, the topic of hell is back on the front burner – at least for pastors learning to preach about a topic most Americans would rather not talk about.

Only 59% of Americans believe in hell, compared with 74% who believe in heaven, according to the recent surveys from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

"I think it's such a difficult and important biblical topic," said Kurt Selles, director of the Global Center at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School. "There's a big change that's taken place as far as evangelicals not wanting to be as exclusive."

At the recent annual Beeson Pastors School, Selles led two workshops to discuss "Whatever happened to hell?" He asked how many of the pastors had ever preached a sermon on hell. Nobody had, he said.

"I think it's something people want to avoid," he said. "I understand why. It's a difficult topic."

PASTORS SHY AWAY FROM HELL SERMONS

The Rev. Fred Johns, pastor of Brookview Wesleyan Church in Irondale, AL, said after a workshop discussion of hell that pastors do shy away from the topic of everlasting damnation.

"It's out of fear we'll not appear relevant," he said. "It's pressure from the culture to not speak anything negative. I think we've begun to deny hell. There's an assumption that everybody's going to make it to heaven somehow."

The soft sell on hell reflects an increasingly market-conscious approach, Selles said.

"When you're trying to market Jesus, sometimes there's a tendency to mute traditional Christian symbols," he said. "Difficult doctrines are left by the way-side. Hell is a morally repugnant doctrine. People wonder why God would send people to eternal punishment."

SALVATION VS. DAMNATION

Speakers said the seriousness of Jesus dying for man's sins relates to the gravity of salvation vs. damnation, according to Johns.

"If you don't mention God's judgment, you are missing a big part of the Christian gospel," Selles said. "Without wrath, there's no grace."

Pope John Paul II stirred up a debate in 1999 by describing hell as "the state of those who freely and definitely separate themselves from God, the source of all life and joy."

Although the Pope was reflecting official Roman Catholic teaching, some U.S. evangelicals expressed misgivings about the implication that hell is an abstract separation from God rather than a literal lake of fire as described in the Book of Revelation.

The Pope's comments on hell stirred up the ancient debate about whether hell is a real place of burning fire or a state of mind reflecting a dark, cold emptiness and distance from God.

MAJORITY OF AMERICANS HELL-BOUND?

Evangelical Christians have traditionally offered a sterner view of salvation and damnation. A Southern Baptist Home Mission Board study in 1993 estimated that 70% of all Americans are going to hell, based on projected numbers of those who have not had a born-again experience.

Human ideas about hell were still in ferment as the Bible was being written. The theological concept of hell has a rich cultural heritage, according to historian Alan Bernstein, author of *The Formation Of Hell*.

The ancient Hebrews focused on the afterlife following their Babylonian captivity, when they experienced the torment of ungodly enemies who seemed to have an unjustifiably good life on Earth.

During the Babylonian exile, Jews were exposed to Zoroastrianism, which asserts there is an eternal struggle between good and evil, with good triumphing in the end.

GREEK MYTHOLOGY LINKED

The Hebrew concept of "Sheol" – the realm of the dead – may also have been influenced by the Greek mythology of Tartarus, a place of everlasting punishment for the Titans, a race of gods defeated by Zeus.

From about 300 B.C. to 300 A.D., those influences combined with Hebrew speculation about an eventual comeuppance to the worldly wicked.

In translating the Bible from Hebrew to Greek, the Greeks used the terms Tartarus, Hades and Gehenna. In Greek thought, Hades is not a place of punishment; it's where the dead are separated from the living.

The term Gehenna referred to a ravine outside Jerusalem that was used as a garbage dump. It had once been a place of child sacrifice and became a symbol of pain and suffering, Selles said.

As a garbage dump, it was probably often a place of fire as trash was burned, emphasizing the symbolism of the flames of eternal damnation, he said.

Jesus never soft-pedaled the concept of hell, Selles said. "It's not metaphorical in Jesus' mind; it's a real place," he said.

AUGUSTINE'S FOUR STATES OF AFTERLIFE

In 410 AD, St. Augustine defined four states of afterlife: those so good they go to heaven; those so bad they go to hell; those who deserve some relief in their eternal torment; and those who deserve to be lifted out of torment after repenting for their sins. That set the stage for the doctrine of purgatory in 1237 AD.



The Bible contains a litany of colorful images of hell as both fire and darkness, as in the Gospel of Matthew, which refers to "the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" and "the outer darkness" where "men will weep and gnash their teeth."

Either way, Selles said, pretending that hell doesn't exist, or trying to preach around it, short-circuits the Bible.

"This is a doctrine, a teaching, that's being neglected in churches," Selles said. "It needs to be preached. It's part of the Gospel."

© Religious News Service

CANADIANS

From Page 15

ada's doctors are not opposed to public health care ... they think more market-based health care would make things worse ... the debate in the U.S. with words and pronouncements such as 'socialism,' 'public,' 'private,' and 'we don't want the country becoming another Russia' are meant to scare, rather than evidence based ..."

My great nephew, Eric Torfursion, broke his leg playing baseball. It took four casts before the bone healed. He never received a bill.

Amanda Torfason, my great grandniece, remarked, "I don't understand why Americans wouldn't want what we have. If you have a baby here it doesn't cost anything, but in the U.S. it does."

Tony Pesee, owner Tony's Academy Auto Service, Winnipeg, expressed perplexed amazement, "Why wouldn't they want better health care? Why wouldn't they want the same health care as their legislators and their military just like we do? Why can't they see through the baloney?"

His staff, listening in, was equally amazed at the American opposition to single-payer healthcare because it is considered to be "socialism."

BOTH LEGS AMPUTATED

Nick Ternette, a Winnipeg journalist, developed a flesh eating disease that required amputation of both legs. He wrote an article for the Winnipeg Free Press [8.22.09]. He writes, "Thanks for saving my life. There is no question that if it weren't for the fantastic doctors and nurses of the Health Science Centre, I would not be here writing this today."

I might add he received no bill for the amputation of his legs.

In the U.S., without good insurance, that could have caused death or bankruptcy.

When people refuse to accept a health care system that covers everyone and costs less, it is the consequence of profound mind control by the very corporations that profit from ignorance.

- The author lives in Stillwater

Crusader Fights Texas Executions

By Kelly Epstein

Since 1982, more than 425 executions have taken place in Texas. It is a state where anti-death penalty activists are a lonely bunch.

Dave Atwood has led the fight to abolish the death penalty in Texas for more than 15 years. He is founder of the Texas Coalition to abolish the death penalty.

He is a member of Pax Christi and a tireless advocate for restorative justice – justice both for the victims of crime and the condemned.

In his book *Detour to Death Row*, Dave takes us on his faith journey from Corporate America to Texas Death Row where he has come to know many death row prisoners and their families.

He describes how the faith community and the international community have helped in the struggle to end the death penalty.

FLAWS NOTED IN TEXAS SYSTEM

He also describes the flaws in the Texas criminal Justice system, including biases against the poor and minorities, and the execution of those actually innocent of the crimes for which they were condemned.

Particularly appalling is the treatment of the mentally ill in the Texas criminal justice system. Dave singles out four men and one woman for discussion, each with a history of documented mental illness: Larry Robison, James Colburn, Kelsey Patterson, Andrea Pia Yates and Scott Panetti.

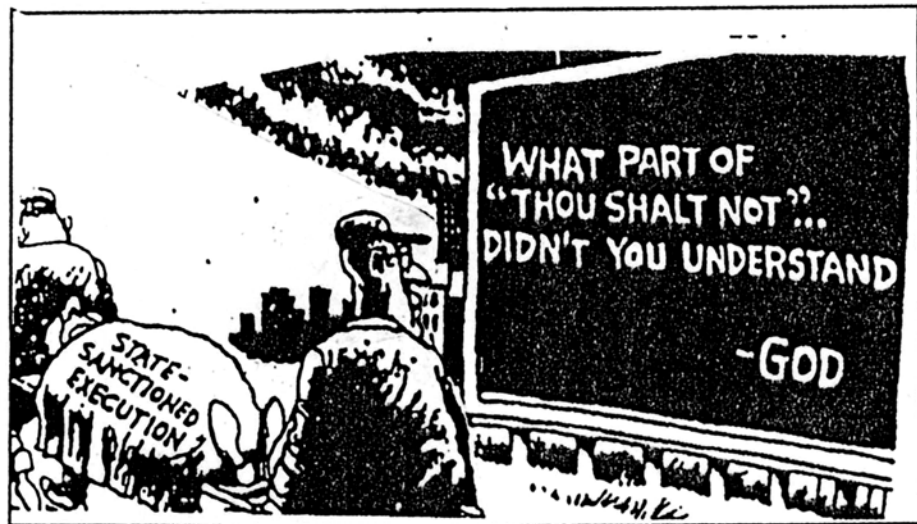
Robison, Colburn and Patterson have been executed by the state. Yates, a profoundly disturbed woman, killed her five children in 2001.

JURY REBUKES PROSECUTOR

Even though the district attorney sought the death penalty, a jury sentenced Andrea Yates to life in prison. In a subsequent trial, she was finally found “not guilty by reason of insanity” and sent to a mental hospital for treatment, which, as Dave points out, should have been the outcome of her first trial.

The case of Scott Panetti is still in the courts. Convicted of the murder of his mother-in-law and father-in-law in 1992, he had been hospitalized 14 times between 1981 and 1992 for symptoms of schizophrenia, manic depression, auditory hallucinations and paranoid delusions.

Ironically, as *Detour to Death Row* points out, Texas has spent millions of dollars on expensive death penalty trials for mentally ill defendants while its mental health system remains chronically under-funded.



Texas ranks 47th in terms of per capita spending on mental health care, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Dave also answers the question many of us in the abolitionist community are frequently asked: “What if the victim was a member of your own family?”

In his chapter on “Sacred Lives,” he gives examples of families of murder victims who have been able to overcome their feelings of anger and betrayal and reach toward peace and healing in their daily lives.

Many of these family members are now active members of Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation or Murder Victims Families for Human Rights, and participate in a speaking tour called “The Journey of Hope ... From Violence to Healing.”

Dave Atwood is a very well-regarded figure both nationally and internationally for his work against the death penalty and for teaching the principles, clearly emphasized in his book and rooted in his Catholic faith, of nonviolence, mercy, and respect for the dignity of every human being.

HE HAS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

In *Detour to Death Row*, he shares with us his experiences earned through many years of fighting the death penalty in Texas, and his hope for the future.

The book is an important and timely addition to the debate on the death penalty in Texas and across the nation. The 135 pages include many resources in its appendices, including statements by the U.S. Catholic Bishops, the Dominican Sisters of Houston and the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

A compelling homily given by the Rev. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy following a double execution in Texas in 2000 is also included as an appendix.

The book was published by the San Antonio Peace Center and is available by going to the following website www.salsa.net/peace/ebooks.

A ‘Smart Choice’ That Isn’t Very Smart

By Jim Hightower

Smart is the new cool thing. There’s a smart car, cities now tout smart growth, and you can buy a smart refrigerator. Now comes another breakthrough: Even your breakfast cereal has gotten smart.

At least that’s what we consumers are being told by a group of major food corporations that are hoping to cash-in on the growing public concern about nutrition. Your concern is their concern, they say, so these eager-to-serve marketers have launched a snappy food labeling campaign to guide your nutritional choices. They’ve designated hundreds of their food products as being not just tasty, zesty and zowie – but also good for you.

You’ll know which ones to reach for on the supermarket shelf because they’ll be labeled with a snappy green checkmark on the front of their packages, along with the phrase, “Smart Choices.”

SAVING SHOPPERS TIME

The industry says that this seal of approval is all about helping today’s busy shoppers save time. No need to read those tedious lists of ingredients on the backs of food boxes, bottles, jars and cans, for the simple green checkmark is your one-glance reassurance that you’re making the smart nutritional choice for your family.

You know, smart choices like Froot Loops, Fudgesicle bars and Frosted Flakes. Yes, all of these sugar-saturated concoctions and many more have received the industry’s good-for-you checkmark.

Well, snaps one of the designers of the labeling scheme, it’s not a matter of selecting foods that are the best for you, but of helping consumers choose products that are better than those that would be the nutritional worst. For example, she says: “You’re rushing around, you’re trying to think about healthy eating for your kids, and you have a choice between a doughnut and a cereal. So Froot Loops is a better choice.”

DOUGHNUTS OR FROOT LOOPS?

Uh ... no, ma’am. Not necessarily so. A serving of Froot Loops is 41% sugar. Good grief – there are plenty of doughnuts with a better nutritional balance than that. And, by the way, the average American supermarket does not limit our breakfast choices to doughnuts or Fruit Loops.

What we have here is yet another corporate PR scam. This supposedly independent nutritional certification program was created and is paid for by such purveyors of unhealthy sugars, fats, salt and chemical additives as Coca-Cola, ConAgra, General Mills, Kellogg’s, Kraft and PepsiCo. Each of them pay fees of up to \$100,000 a year to get to use the Smart Choices label, and the fees are based on the total sales of products that bear the label.

This means that the more food items certified by the Smart Choices program, the more money it collects, which gives it an incentive to apply the label liberally. Thus, we get such absurdities as this: “light” mayonnaise, which contains less fat than regular, has been granted the better-for-you check mark; but so has

regular mayonnaise!

Still, the industry and its apologists insist that even highly processed foods deserve to get a nutritional star because many of them are fortified with essential vitamins and other nutrients. But, as pointed out by Dr. Michael Jacobson of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, “You could start out with some sawdust, add calcium or Vitamin A and meet the [Smart Choices] criteria.”

INDUSTRY DECIDES ON STANDARDS

Jacobson, who served on the initial panel to develop standards for the Smart Choices program, resigned last year noting “[the panel’s] main decisions are determined largely by industry members.”

Among the decisions that troubled him was one that allows the Smart Choices label to be applied, as Jacobson wrote, to foods “containing caffeine, food dyes, the preservative BHA, artificial sweeteners [particularly saccharin, aspartame and acesulfame-K] and other additives that are suspected of causing or have been shown to cause adverse reproductive, behavioral, or gastrointestinal effects or cancer.

Sanctioning these foods is not smart, it’s stupid. And deceptive.

© Creators Syndicate

Don’t Mess With This Lady

One morning, a husband returns after several hours of fishing and decides to take a nap. Although not familiar with the lake, his wife decides to take the boat out. She motors out a short distance, anchors, and reads her book.

Along comes a Game Warden in his boat. He pulls up alongside the woman and says, “Good morning, ma’am. What are you doing?”

“Reading a book,” she replies [thinking, “Isn’t that obvious?”]

“You’re in a Restricted Fishing Area,” he informs her.

“I’m sorry, officer, but I’m not fishing. I’m reading.”

“Yes, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment. I’ll have to take you in and write you up.”

“For reading a book?” she replies.

“You’re in a Restricted Fishing Area,” he informs her again.

“I’m sorry, officer, but I’m not fishing. I’m reading.”

“Yes, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment. I’ll have to take you in and write you up.”

“If you do that, I’ll have to charge you with sexual assault,” says the woman.

“But I haven’t even touched you,” says the game warden.

“That’s true, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment.”

“Have a nice day ma’am,” and he left.

Charter Schools 'Need Improvement'

By Walt Gardner

President Obama has made charter schools the mainstay of his education reform movement. Although such schools are heavily promoted, concerns need to be addressed before their potential to shape a new course in U.S. education can be fairly evaluated.

Charter schools represent a compromise for taxpayers who are frustrated over the glacial pace of improvement by public schools despite the expenditure of \$667 billion on K-12 education last school year, up from \$553 billion the prior year.

Publicly financed but operating free of many of the regulations applying to traditional public schools, they have grown in popularity since the first charter school began in Minnesota in 1991.

They now total 4,600 nationwide and educate some 1.4 million of the nation's 50 million public school students,

STUDY CASTS DOUBT ON CLAIMS

Yet despite the claims made by supporters, a study released by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University in Palo Alto, CA, casts doubt on whether the academic performance of students in charter schools is any better overall than that of their peers in regular public schools.

Though some states did have better overall results than others, researchers found nearly half of the 2,403 charter schools across the country involved in the study have results no different from regular public schools.

In fact, more than a third of the charter schools posted results significantly worse. Only 17% provided superior educational outcomes. Advocates of charter schools assert that the study was slanted, but offer no convincing supporting evidence.

THE BEGINNING OF UNIONIZATION

Whatever potential charter schools have to improve their performance will be affected by increasing pressure to unionize.

Because most of the nation's charter schools operate without unions, they have been free to innovate by lengthening the school day and year, dismissing ineffective teachers at will, and implementing merit pay.

Disaffected by the long hours, high turnover, and lower pay than in other public schools, teachers are beginning to unionize.

In recent weeks, in part because of urging from Washington, several states

Religious Bigots Take Crusade Into Schools

By Charles C. Haynes

The school year started off with an unpleasant bang in Gainesville, FL, when a fifth-grader showed up on the first day wearing a t-shirt with "Islam is of the Devil" inscribed on the back.

Administrators sent the 10-year-old home to change clothes. But the next day several other students at two high schools and a middle school arrived wearing the same message. All were told to cover it up or go home.

The local church responsible for the t-shirt, Dove World Outreach Center, is unapologetic about the school campaign. Church members had already erected a sign on church property proclaiming "Islam is of the Devil" to passersby. According to the pastor, the church has a Christian duty to expose Islam as a "violent and oppressive religion."

ISLAM IS TARGET

Missing no opportunity to drive the message home, Dove World marked the eighth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks with a rally to whip up outrage – not at what some extremists did in the name of Islam, but at Islam itself.

Under the First Amendment, Dove World has the right to proclaim its beliefs about Islam, no matter how much it offends others. But the kids in the congregation may have to wait until after school to put on the t-shirts.

Students do have some free-speech rights in schools. But the Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld the authority of school officials to draw the line at student speech that they can reasonably forecast will cause a substantial disruption. It's very likely that the Dove World t-shirt crosses that line, especially since Muslim students attend Gainesville schools.

HATRED AND DIVISION

Beyond the constitutional issues, however, the controversy points to the larger, more difficult question of how we engage one another in a public square that is increasingly poisoned by hatred and division. Dove World's anti-Islam initiative is not unique. Post-9/11, a growing number of churches inspired by some evangelical leaders such as Ron Paisley and Pat Robertson have condemned Islam in harsh terms. As Robertson puts it, terrorists don't distort Islam – they are "carrying out Islam."

Apart from the fact that these ugly generalizations are distortions of Islamic teachings and wildly misrepresent the views of the vast majority of the world's one billion Muslims, Islam-bashing on this scale threatens American Muslims and undermines the common good.

It's impossible to measure the effect of anti-Islam rhetoric on those who take it to the next level and commit acts of violence. But we do know that attacks targeting Muslim Americans are a significant problem across the country.

Last month, for example, a Philadelphia business owned by Muslim Palestin-



have lifted their restrictions on charter schools, Tennessee, for example, raised the number of charter schools allowed from 50 to 90. Illinois doubled the number permitted to 120, and Louisiana abolished its cap.

COULD IT BE THE ADMINISTRATION?

Charter school advocates charge that teachers' unions are largely responsible for obstacles to future growth. But a more likely explanation is that sloppily administered schools can harm students and undermine taxpayer confidence in the entire process.

California learned this lesson in 2004. The California Charter Academy, the largest chain of publicly financed but privately run charter schools, slid into bankruptcy after mismanaging money, leaving 6,000 students with no school to attend.

To guard against recurrence, reformers recommend the establishment of multiple independent authorizers with a proven record of academic results. Without safeguards in place, charter schools could become martyrs in the reform movement, instead of pioneers. That would be a severe setback for quality education.

– The author taught for 28 years in the Los Angeles Unified School District and was a lecturer in the UCLA Graduate School of Education

ian-Americans was ransacked and covered with angry graffiti telling the owners to "go home." And in Smithtown, NY, a man was arrested for threatening to kill a Muslim mother and her daughter and trying to run them down with his car. Both incidents are being investigated as hate crimes.

MORE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS

Most Americans recognize the problem. According to a recent survey by the Pew Research Center, nearly six in 10 adults say U.S. Muslims are subject to more discrimination than any other major religious group.

Back in Gainesville, some local residents living near Dove World are countering the anti-Islam message by speaking up for their Muslim neighbors and fellow citizens. Soon after the first sign went up in July, an interfaith group of Christians, Jews and others gathered in front of the church to protest intolerance and call for mutual respect.

On a national level, many Christian and Jewish leaders – including some leading evangelical ministers – have reached out to Muslims by calling for peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding. In fact, Southern Baptist Pastor Rick Warren delivered a message of reconciliation between Christians and Muslims to the annual convention of the Islamic Society of North America in July, around the time Dove World was erecting its sign.

"You know as an evangelical pastor, my deepest faith is in Jesus Christ," Warren told a crowd of some 8,000 Muslim Americans. "But you also need to know that I am committed not just to what I call the good news, but I am committed to the common good."

Warren then defined what Americans share across our differences: "America is a country not built on race, not built on a creed, but built on an idea – liberty and justice for all."

– The author is senior scholar at the First Amendment Center in Washington

Folk Wisdom

"Sometimes we have to sort of re-examine classical values. Caring about one another, helping each other, wanting a better, safer world – those are values that haven't changed for thousands of years. ... I have a sort of sampler in my head that – paraphrasing the rabbinical scholar – says, 'It's not your duty to finish the task, it is your duty not to neglect it.' If war and hunger and racism were easy things to get rid of, I would assume we would have gotten rid of them already. ... The nice thing about folk music is that if you don't get it today, it'll wait for you. The music has power; that's why it survives. It just has to be passed on." – Mary Travers [1936-2009], folksinger, one-third of Peter, Paul & Mary.

Labor Department Enforces The Law

By Melanie Trotman

Labor Secretary Hilda Solis spent her first few months in office focusing on handing out \$46 billion in stimulus money. Now her department is adding staff and signaling it will soon begin putting in practice the more assertive regulation of business she promised early in her tenure.

Solis has begun hiring 670 new investigators to enforce labor regulations. There will be 150 investigators added in the Wage and Hour division to enforce wage rules and child-labor laws. Another 100 staff will be added to ensure contractors on stimulus projects are in compliance with applicable laws. The additions will boost the division's staff by more than one-third.

The Employee Benefits Security Administration, which helps to regulate private retirement, health and other benefit plans covering 150 million Americans, is adding 75 staffers to conduct nearly 600 more criminal and civil investigations.

BUSH LAST MINUTE DECISIONS STOPPED

Solis and President Barack Obama also have reversed or postponed some policy decisions made under former President George W. Bush.

In April, the department postponed a last-minute Bush-era rule that would have required unions to disclose more about their finances. The agency will take more time to consider the rule, which businesses praised and unions said was excessive.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration recently formed a task force to design an enforcement program for severe violators. OSHA will conduct an intensive examination of an employer's inspection history and any systematic problems would trigger additional, mandatory inspections.

OSHA also launched a program to step up inspections of construction sites in Texas after a series of injuries and fatalities.

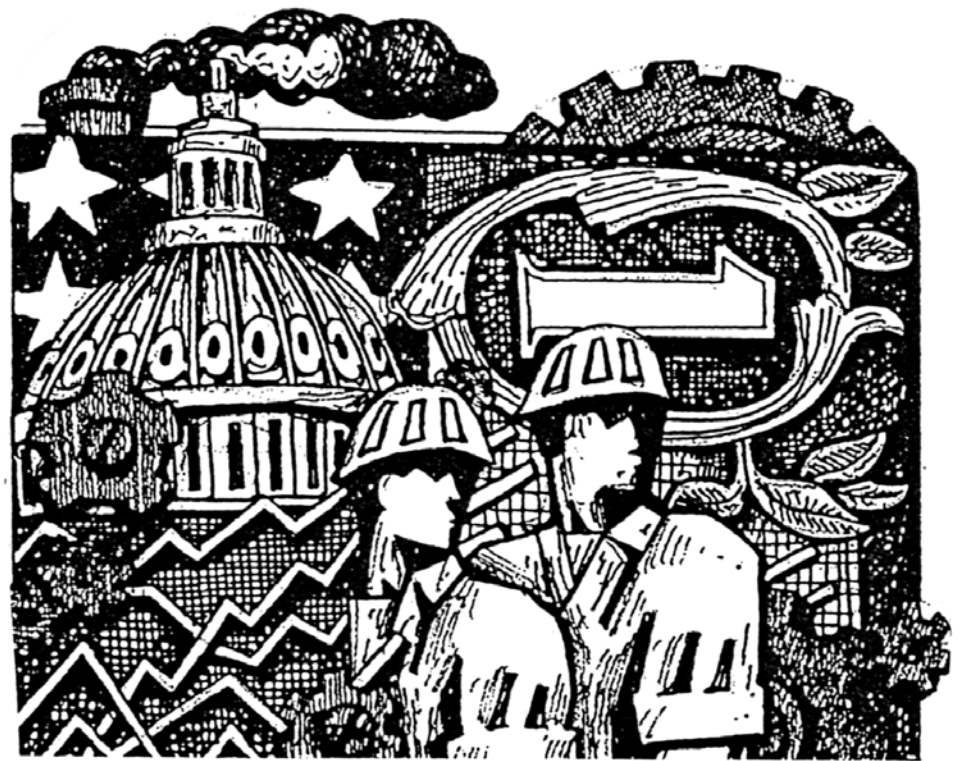
"The previous administration was not prone to fight on the side of worker protection and we're going in that direction to level the playing field," Solis said.

BUSINESS FEARS LAW ENFORCEMENT

Whiny business groups are wary that the playing field will tilt too far, at a time when many businesses are still fighting their way out of economic hard times.

"Employers, especially smaller ones, are really looking for help in terms of understanding the requirements and making sure they're doing things right," said Marc Freedman, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's executive director of labor law policy. Instead, the department's "rhetoric" on workplace safety "seems to be heavy-handed enforcement and generation of more regulations," he said.

Unions want the agency to get tough on employers and push through new



regulations on workplace safety and other issues they say the previous administration ignored.

As part of the federal stimulus program, the administration was allotted \$575 million for fiscal 2009 to help train workers who have lost their jobs due to foreign trade, and has distributed more than \$470 million since January.

MORE TYPE OF WORKERS INCLUDED

The Bush Administration was allotted \$220 million in such funds for fiscal 2008. In addition, the program was expanded in mid-May to include more types of workers.

The Obama Administration is also naming more of the people who will hold senior posts in the Labor Department, few of whom have business backgrounds, a shift from most of Bush's appointees.

M. Patricia Smith, the nominee to be the department's top lawyer, is commissioner for New York State's labor department, and is known as a tough regulator who has stepped up worker protection.

Obama's nominee to head OSHA, David Michaels, is an epidemiologist and research professor at George Washington University known for studies on the health effects of occupational exposure to toxic chemicals.

Solis has made a succession of appointments that have big business worried. The business sector is fearing a new era of over-due regulations.

CULT

From Page One

to burrow into every nook and cranny of the federal government to root out nonbelievers.

The Family runs the yearly National Prayer Breakfast and maintains a network of Capitol Hill prayer groups that have enjoyed the participation of both top GOP but also top Democratic Party U.S. House and Senate members.

The Family runs but does not own the C Street house, according to a June 26 Washington Post story, by Manuel Rolg-Franzia, "The Political Enclave That Dare Not Speak Its Name. The Sanford and Ensign Scandals Open a Door On Previously Secretive 'C Street' Spiritual Haven."

Youth With A Mission is a global Christian evangelical organization founded in 1960 which declares YWAM is "currently operating in more than 1,000 locations in over 149 countries, with a staff of nearly 16,060."

Cunningham introduces Reclaim 7 Mountains of Culture: "It was August 1975 ... and the Lord had given me that day a list of things that I had never thought about before. He said, 'This is the way to reach America and other nations for God.'"

The video continues with a narrator who declares, "In every city of the world, an unseen battle rages for dominion over God's creation and the souls of people.

"This battle is fought on seven stra-

tegic fronts, looming like mountains over the culture, that shape and influence its destiny.

"Over the years, the church slowly retreated from its place of influence on these mountains, leaving a void now filled with darkness. When we lose our influence, we lose the culture and when we lose the culture we fail to advance the kingdom of God.

"And now, a generation stands in desperate need. It's time to fight for them and take back these mountains of influence."

Reclaim 7 Mountains of Culture outlines seven areas of influence for Christian fundamentalists to reclaim:

- The Mountain of Government, "where evil is either restrained or endorsed."
- The Mountain of Education, "where truths, or lies, about God and his creation are taught."
- The Mountain of Media, "where information is interpreted through the lens of good or evil."
- The Mountain of Arts and Entertainment, "where values and virtue are celebrated or distorted."
- The Mountain of Religion, "where people worship God in spirit and truth, or settle for a religious ritual."
- The Mountain of Family, "where either a blessing or a curse is passed onto successive generations."
- The Mountain of Business, "where

people build for the glory of God or the glory of man."

The last is the key mountain, proclaims the video: "Those who lead this mountain influence what controls our culture."

Youth With A Mission also runs a global Christian evangelism educational ministry headquartered at the University of the Nations' 45-acre campus in Kona, HI.

As one example in which organizations such as YWAM are implementing the Reclaiming the 7 Mountains agenda, the university has developed programs to provide its students with real world skills such as media and film production.

One of the graduates from the university is Loren Cunningham's son, David Loren Cunningham, who founded the Film Institute in 2004 with oth-

er University of the Nations students.

Their goal: to place students in the film industry in order to transform Hollywood from within.

David Loren Cunningham directed Path to 9/11, the controversial television film that aired on ABC on Sept. 10 and 11, 2006.

Editor's Note: A tip of the hat to Jeff Sharlet and Rachel Maddow for doing the job newspapers are supposed to do but didn't.

The Observer broke the Don Nickles story when he was in the Senate but were led to believe he had just gone Pentecostal.

Thomas Frank's excellent book, *What's The Matter With Kansas*, nails The Family, but he didn't follow up on that aspect of the story.

The Observer continues to follow up.

**ARE YOU A MEDICAL MARIJUANA PATIENT?
ARE YOU TIRED OF BEING A CRIMINAL
JUST TO GET SOME RELIEF?
LET'S WORK ON ENDING THIS MADNESS!**

405.714.1236

DPFOK@SBCGLOBAL.NET

New website!
www.TTemple.com

Tom Temple
Sustainable Design

1230 N.E. 70th • Oklahoma City, OK 73111
405/478-4936 • www.TTemple.com

Friends Meeting (Quakers)

Oklahoma City (Sunday evening) 405-632-7574
Worship at 7:00 p.m. (use west entry)
Wesley Methodist Church 1401 NW 25 (at Classen)

Stillwater (Sunday morning) 405-372-4839
Tulsa (Sunday afternoon) 918-743-6827
Norman (Sunday morning) 405-321-7971

Video Producers

Marketing Presentations For Corporations

Since 1980

Bill Hellams 405 843-1400

Great Public Schools are a *Basic Right* for Every Child



Oklahoma Education Association
www.okea.org

BEN F. SANDERS
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

5700 N. Portland, Suite 304
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
405/843-0037

Income Tax Preparation * Accounting * Consulting

Oklahoma Retired Educators' Association



The only organization that works for Retired Educators

405-523-4370
1-800-522-8091
www.orea.org

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 1141

405/670-4777



WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Only a fool would try to deprive working men and women of the right to join the union of their choice. —Dwight D. Eisenhower

Auto Service Technology



Metro Technology Centers
Preparing for Life



(405) 424-TECH
www.metrotech.org

WORSHIP AT MAYFLOWER CHURCH

For religion that is biblically responsible, intellectually honest, emotionally satisfying, and socially significant. Services at 8:45 and 10:45 a.m.— Full church school. Radio broadcast 9:30 a.m. on KOKC AM 1520 Located on NW 63rd Street, one block west of Portland, 405/842-8897.

Dr. Robin Meyers, Minister
Mayflower Congregational Church
3901 NW 63 Street, Okla. City, OK 73116

Additions, Renovations & Repairs

Gresham Construction

BOB GRESHAM
405.659.6812

3309 N. OLIE
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73112

Christopher W. Venters
New Bankruptcy Conditions
Preliminary Means Test by Phone
Reasonable Rates
Bankruptcies, Wills & Trusts
Call 405-277-3139

THE OKLAHOMA OBSERVER

Your Passport To Oklahoma's Most Progressive, Socially Responsible And Intellectual Audience

Advertising rates start as low as \$20 per issue.

Call 405.478.8700 for details.



Mark Mills
Acupuncture
Chinese Herbal Medicine

1818 W. Lindsey, Suite C-160
Norman, OK 73069
405.321.5546

National Board Certified (NCCAOM)

Transforming People Who Transform the World

First Unitarian Church of Oklahoma City
13th and Dewey ♦ www.uuokc.org



Jean's
PLUMBING
HEAT & AIR

RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL
FOR ALL YOUR PLUMBING, GAS & AIR WORK
WE WORK BY THE JOB... NOT BY THE HOUR

BEST FLAT RATE PRICE
www.jeans-plumbing.com
OKC & Surrounding Areas **844-1951**

DentalConfessions.com

LEARN ABOUT DENTISTRY'S BEST-KEPT SECRETS...

Gingival Sulcus | Fluoride Fraud | Mercury Deception

Jim Maxey D.D.S.

THE OKLAHOMA OBSERVER

Your Passport To Oklahoma's Most Progressive, Socially Responsible And Intellectual Audience

Advertising rates start as low as \$20 per issue.

Call 405.478.8700 for details.

REX FRIEND
Attorney at Law

Immigration
General Practice of Law
3801 N. Classen Blvd., Suite 8
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

(405) 557-1277
Reasonable Fees — Terms Available