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Abuse Is Rampant Oklahoma's Drug Woes

By Frosty Troy

From meth and pills to anabolic steroids and marijuana, Oklahoma has a colossal drug problem.

The state's jails and prisons are overflowing with drug felons and law enforcement continues the never-ending battle against meth.

Seldom mentioned is the collateral damage. In Oklahoma County alone, more than 1,200 new cases of confirmed "substance involved" cases of child abuse and neglect were reported in the past year.

In the current fiscal year 628 women have been diverted from prison to drug and mental health courts. Among them were 811 children.

More than 26,000 inmates in Oklahoma prisons were sentenced for drug offense - including 7,900 non-violent drug offenders.

On the meth front, the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs [OBN] added a date of birth to better track sales of pseudoephedrine at pharmacies.

Pharmacies are required to alert drug enforcement agencies, leading to the growth of denials from 2,000 a month to more than 7,000 a month. Thanks to that law, OBN has blocked more than 35,000 sales.

The latest meth fad is "shake and bake" one-pot meth labs. OBN Director Darrell Weaver described it to a legislative committee.

"Pop bottle" meth consists of using a single bottle to produce a single hit, accommodating smaller amounts of the cold remedy pills. He said they often burst into flames.

Of those denied the purchase of the cold pills, 62% had prior criminal re-



ords, with 44% of the total being for drug charges.

Much of the meth is coming via Mexico where dealers are so bold they have set up their distributors in many states, including Oklahoma.

A recent bust in a Tecumseh residence recovered 6.5 pounds of meth, obviously one of the Oklahoma distribution points.

Oklahoma passed a law that requires a \$5 fee on wire transfers of up to \$500. Transfers of over \$500 requires a fee of 1% of the total. More than \$3.7 million has gone to the OBN Laundering and Wire Transmitter Revolving fund.

A scary new drug development involves young people raiding their medicine cabinets, pooling the drugs, holding "pill parties" to consume them.

Oklahoma leads the nation of 12- to 17-year-olds abusing painkillers, according to the Morbidity and Mortality Report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

One method of fighting the pill parties is a call by OBN for a prescription drug take-back program. The latest call had Oklahomans turning in more than 70,000 drugs - narcotics, painkillers, antidepressants and antibiotics.

Overdoses of prescription drugs have grown by 226% in recent years. Counseling services are part of the take-back program to help those who feel they need help. Many of the drugs are addictive.

Prescriptions for oxycodone can be called in by a patient and refilled without a written prescription - a worrisome thing at OBN.

[That's the drug that led to Rush Limbaugh's addiction. He received a slap on the wrist.]

Deaths attributed to overdoses often go unreported because users die in their sleep or in a hospital from respiratory failure. Oklahoma is one of the states using stimulus money to fight the problem.

Fourteen states have legalized medical marijuana, but the debates rage on whether it is a gateway drug.

Nationally, there were 7.2 million marijuana-related arrests last year - one out of every 18 felony convictions. It continues to be big business in Oklahoma and across the nation.

Highly effective marijuana is going for up to \$6,700 a pound. Locals say it is the largest cash crop in southeastern Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Air National Guard no longer spots fields of marijuana, notifying local law enforcement.

First legalization was California's Compassionate Use Act, the brainchild of Dennis Peron, who returned from Vietnam in 1969 with two pounds of marijuana in his duffel bag and became a dealer in San Francisco.

In 1990, when his companion was dying of AIDS, Peron began his drive for legal medical use of marijuana.

The age of Obama saw Attorney General Eric Holder tell the federal DEA to give low priority to harassment of valid medical marijuana clubs in the states - 14 so far, plus Washington, DC - that give marijuana some form of legality.

Remember, in the U.S., there is federal law, and there are state laws - marijuana is illegal in Oklahoma. Federal law trumps state law, but it's still up to the U.S. Attorney General to

Observations

Nutty

Although an Oklahoma Health Care Authority official recently said the federal overhaul of health care would save the state money, State Rep. Mike Ritze, R-Broken Arrow, says it won't.

He says the "OHCA's statement cannot be taken seriously based on the assumptions they make to support their claim. First, federal government cost projections are never accurate and always understate actual costs – just look at the history of Medicaid and Medicare."

Ritze is nuts. Any way you slice it, the new law covers 250,000 uninsured Oklahomans for a bargain-basement cost of \$63 million a year.

As for Medicare and Medicaid, we could cover that shortfall by simply eliminating the huge tax breaks given the super rich under George W. Bush – a Ritze hero.

Yes, individuals will face a 2.5% tax if they fail to purchase private or government insurance under the new federal health care law.

Contrary to his pals in the Tea Party, there will be no jail time involved for non-compliance – only a higher tax bill.

The Obamacare law is far from perfect but it is a vast improvement over the Republican position – if you're not affluent would you please help your country by dying.

Bad News

After consistent and steady declines beginning in the early 1990s, birth rates in the United States are on the rise. The teen birth rate has increased 5% across the United States.

Unfortunately, compared to other states and the District of Columbia, Oklahoma ranks 6th highest [worst] in the nation for birth rates to teen girls ages 15-19 and females ages 18-19.

Oklahoma ranks 7th highest [worst] for younger teens, ages 15-17 [National Vital Statistics, 2006 data].

A 16-year-old girl attending Emerson Alternative Academy in Oklahoma City already has two children. The Legislature cut funding used to help train young mothers.

That's what you get when you substitute real sex education with abstinence only – something Oklahoma has done since the Keating Administration.

Results from the 2009 Oklahoma Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicate that 51.1% of Oklahoma public high school students 9th through 12th grade have had sexual intercourse.

Teen childbearing in the United States costs taxpayers at least \$9.1 billion, according to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2006.

In 2004, teen childbearing cost Oklahoma taxpayers \$149 million, according to the Oklahoma Department of Health.

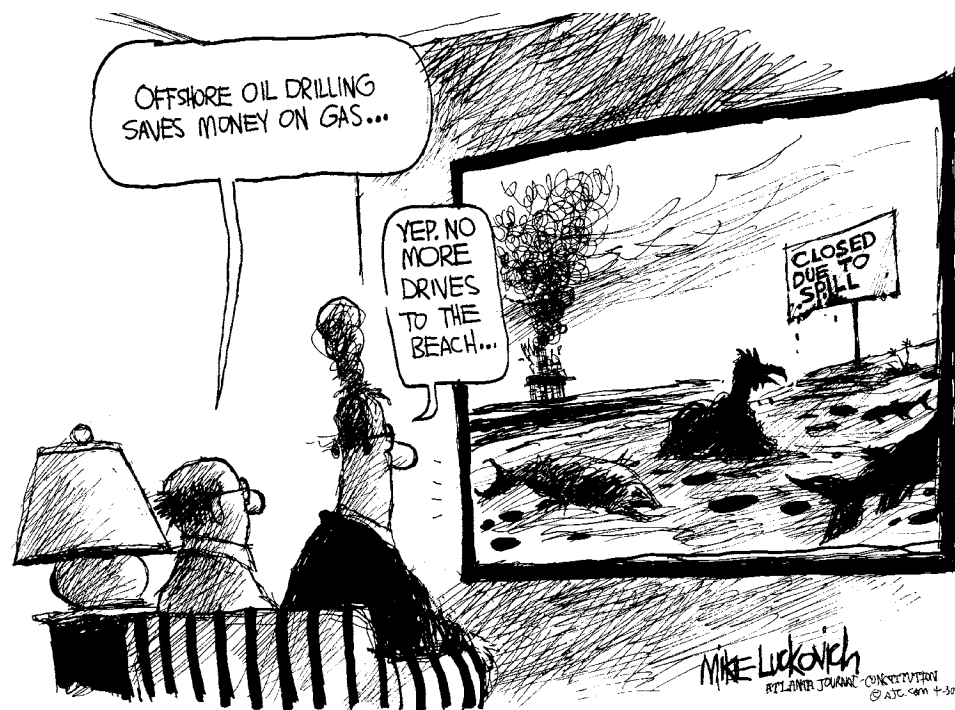
Many teens say they are concerned about pregnancy, but still think, "It can't happen to me." But it does – Oklahoma females 19 and younger gave birth to 7,616 babies in 2007. Of those babies, 6,079 were born to unmarried females. The birth rate for the same age group was 61.3 per 1,000 female population – a 10.8% increase since 2005.

Don't you wish the Republican-led Legislature was as concerned about teen births as they are about abortion?

Names

In answer to numerous requests concerning the Democrats who voted to override Gov. Brad Henry's vetoes on the two abortion bills, here's the list:

House: Brannon, Brown, Cannaday, Carey, Dorman, Glenn, Hamilton, Harrison, Hilliard, Inman, Kouplen, Lamons, Luttrell, Morrissette, Proctor, Pruett, Renegar, Rousselot, Sherrer, Shoemaker, Smithson, Walker.



Excused from doing what they were elected to do: Buck, Morgan, Pittman. Senate: Bass, Burrage, Corn, Easley, Ellis, Garrison, Gumm, Ivester, Laster, Paddock.

Good Decision

Congratulations to Americans United for their winning lawsuit striking down the congressionally mandated National Day of Prayer.

U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb of the Western District of Wisconsin ruled that the federal law violates the constitutional separation of church and state.

Crabb held that the sole purpose of the federal law "is to encourage all citizens to engage in prayer, an inherently religious exercise that serves no secular function in this context. In this instance, the government has taken sides on a matter that must be left to individual conscience."

We're all for people praying, but the government should never attempt to mandate it.

The Constitution forbids the government to meddle in religious matters. Decisions about worship should be made by individuals without direction from elected officials. That's what freedom is all about.

The National Day of Prayer is of recent vintage. It was created by Congress in 1952, and is now sponsored by The Family, a cult to which Oklahoma's two U.S. senators belong.

Tax Breaks

In 2006, the Treasury Department identified over \$900 billion in tax expenditures, about equal to all discretionary spending by the federal government that year.

Put another way, we lose almost as much money from federal tax breaks each year as we generate in federal income taxes. This is a huge sum. Yet we hear little about it.

In Oklahoma there are \$5.6 billion in tax "incentives" on the books, many ostensibly to lure new jobs to the state.

By one estimate, \$2 billion haven't landed a single job.

That needs to change in Oklahoma and the country for at least two reasons. One is that the vast majority

of current tax breaks are destructive. The other is that this harm can be easily alleviated, if we have the political will.

Federal tax breaks as currently designed are fundamentally unjust. A \$1,000 tax deduction might be worth \$400 to a wealthy household in the 40% tax bracket, \$200 to a middle-income household in the 20% tax bracket, and nothing at all to a family that pays no income taxes.

[Keep in mind that 43% of all U.S. households have no income tax liability.]

Tax breaks are justified as encouraging socially beneficial behavior, such as buying a home, going to school, expanding renewable energy. But since they reward the rich far more than the middle class or the poor, they are based on the bizarre and nonsensical presumption that the rich have a higher propensity to engage in socially beneficial behavior.

If you want to simply test this proposition, ask any waitress or waiter who tips them better – the wealthy or the working class.

The Tea Party has it wrong. Taxes are the lowest in 50 years but tax breaks are expanding.

Go Figure

It's ironic that so many in the media are picking on Congress which, according to the Gallup Poll, is at an historic low of 12% approvability.

Newspapers, which a decade ago ranked at 41%, are now at 25%. Nor should business – especially banks – take heart in the criticism of Congress – it comes in at 32%. For banks, it's down 50% from 2004.

Gallup has been conducting approvability ratings for 35 years but the latest is the most gloomy. It is another indicator of the division in the country.

We hasten to add that Gallup also did a poll a few years ago and most folks loved their members of Congress – it was those representing other states they deplored.

Oklahoma has one of the most negative delegations in America but the majority of Okie voters keep sending them back. Most of the media are ardent supporters.

You get what you vote for.

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

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

- Adapted from Thomas Wolfe

Observerscope

Tulsa philanthropies have put up \$1.1 million to help released teachers with their health insurance for 18 months after they are forced to leave due to budget cuts.

Laurel: To the 63% of public school teachers nationwide who report they buy food for their students every month with their own money. [Reuters]

Rural Oklahoma has lost more than 100 nursing homes and a number of the remaining 350 are in jeopardy due to incredibly low reimbursement rates.

Dart: To BP for lack of a \$500,000 automatic shutoff system that would have stopped the worst ecological disaster in American history. The U.S. is the only country not requiring it. Guess why? \$\$\$\$\$\$

Oklahoma Child Support Services has 190,000 active cases, bringing in about \$300 million a year – \$2 from the feds for every dollar collected, a proposed 10% budget cut would curb about \$33 million a year in collections.

Laurel: To legislative Democrats for pushing hard for a reduction of some of the so-called tax incentives Republicans have put on the books – \$5.6 billion worth, with \$2 billion not creating a single job.

If the Legislature spent half as much time on critical budget issues as they do guns and abortion they would find a way to save programs such as mental health, nutrition centers and other vital programs.

Dart: To critics of ObamaCare when America spends \$6,719 per person on a broken under-served health system compared to \$639 per capita in the rest of the world.

House Speaker Chris Benge is still playing errand boy for corporations – a tax break for compressed natural gas vehicles. Somebody tell him that there's already \$5.6 billion in tax credits, spelling economic disaster for the state.

Laurel: To Oklahoma Historical Society Director Bob L. Blackburn, named to the Alumni Hall of Fame at Southwestern State University, Weatherford.

Even by George W. Bush's low standards, his appointments to assure mine safety led to an astonishing 82,000 safety violations without any remedial action. He has blood on his hands.

Dart: To Freda Deskin, promoter of charter schools. Can't she promote them without ripping public schools with a malicious diatribe in the Daily Disappointment?

Whether you are for or against abortions, that bill calling for a woman to fill out a questionnaire is vicious beyond belief.

Laurel: To Rep. Mike Shelton, D-OKC, for his amendment making it a crime to recruit for unauthorized militias – up to five years in prison. Oklahoma is already over quota in wingnuts.

The Energy Information Institute reports that the U.S. has enough oil for 42 years, natural gas for 57 years, coal for 137 years and uranium for 85 years.

Dart: To parents who blame everyone but themselves for Oklahoma's rank as the fifth most obese children in America. On average, obese parents raise obese children.

Will Tulsa ever wise up and switch to a city manager form of government? It's not perfect but it's head and shoulders above the mayor/council system – a perpetual soap opera.

Laurel: To the Legislature for stiff penalties on the books for cell phone talking and/or texting while driving. SB 1908 passed the House 73-24 [which means there are 24 numbskulls in the House.]

Nearly 10,000 people were victimized last year due to race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability. [FBI report]



Dart: To the Daily Disappointment and U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe, welcoming former President Bill Clinton to Oklahoma City for an awards ceremony by grossly insulting him. Meld them and they wouldn't make one good intellect.

Military doctors have diagnosed more than 20,000 returning soldiers with "personality disorder," thus leading them to fake their conditions. The Pentagon is cheating our wounded servicemen.

Laurel: To Rep. Paul Roan, D-Tishomingo, for nailing Rep. Rex Duncan's bill to opt out of federal control any gun or ammo made here. A retired OHP trooper, Roan said it would "make law enforcement ... a very, very dangerous job."

The House voted to kill a Senate bill that would have self-assessed insurance premiums one-half of 1%, providing health insurance coverage for every man, women and child in Oklahoma. Talk about intellectual vacuity.

Dart: To a Legislature cutting vital programs but still providing tax incentives of \$150 million for Oklahoma's oil and gas industry. Poor widdle Devon and Chesapeake need their allowances.

ObamaCare would make a difference in Oklahoma – just \$1 of Oklahoma money to capture \$8 of ObamaCare, wiping out \$1 billion a year in Oklahoma uncompensated care, mostly in emergency rooms.

Laurel: To Reporter Megan Rolland for pointing out that the State Question 640 constitutional amendment preventing any tax hikes without a three-fourths legislative majority came from the Daily Disappointment campaign after passage of HB 1017.

Talk about misogyny – the Daily Disappointment editorial said it was no big deal that women are paid less than men for the same job.

Dart: To Senate Leader Glenn Coffee, attacking a lawsuit filed against the state by the Center for Reproductive Rights over HB 2780 forcing an ultrasound even for women seeking an abortion as the result of incest and rape.

We were sad to learn of the death of James H. Boren, humorist, author, politician. Old timers will remember his columns in the early days of the Observer. He was 84.

Laurel: To Wisconsin for being the first state to name an official state microbe. We could be second if we'd name the editor of the Daily Disappointment editorial page, J.E. McReynolds.

"Dumb Okie" applies to the 63.6% replying to a Sooner Poll, wherein they said the new ObamaCare law would hurt the economy. How many had read the 2,000-page bill?

Dart: To showboating House Speaker Chris Benge and Senate Leader Glenn Coffee for wasting tax dollars appealing ObamaCare. Fifteen suits have already been filed that apply nationally.

The Sooner Poll has Republican U.S. Rep. Mary Fallin a 50-point favorite over State Sen. Randy Brogdon for the gubernatorial nomination. He was damaged by the armed militia talk.

Laurel: To the Democratic Congress for voting to eliminate the failed DC voucher scheme. Of course the turgid twins, GOP Sens. Tom Coburn and Jim Inhofe, voted with the minority.

Instead of curbing some of the \$5.6 billion in tax breaks for Fat Cats, the GOP Legislature prefers to further cut mental health – more than 15,000 seriously mentally ill would be dropped.

Dart: To a state leadership that passed huge tax cuts for the rich while new Health Department figures show that more than 5,300 poor Oklahomans die each year due to untreated health problems.

State Sen. Tom Adelson, D-Tulsa, commented during debate on a bill to prohibit human-animal hybrid cloning: "It's too late. Look around this room and you see it's already happened."

Laurel: To Newsweek Magazine, writing that Sen. Tom Coburn was "awesome" in his criticism of Fox "News" for lying about "Obamacare." Of course Fox trashed him for telling the truth.

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Letters

Editor, The Observer:

Since legislators knew Oklahoma had so many children at risk, why did dominating women become their priority project?

It is bad enough that insurance companies intrude into doctors' offices. Now the Oklahoma Legislature orders a doctor to rape a female in his/her office, as if some poor girl being raped once wasn't enough to satisfy them. The state will probably spend thousands of tax dollars defending this cruel law.

Do we have any reasonable people in leadership in the Legislature who can decide to use those dollars in a more humane way? The state needs more social workers to defend already-born unwanted children from abuse, neglect and starvation.

What kind of future will Oklahoma's children have if these problems aren't the real priority?

Nadine Jewell
Norman

Editor, The Observer:

Nuclear power legislation is coming up for a vote in the state Senate. SB 831 will force Oklahoma ratepayers to finance \$5 billion-\$12 billion in nuclear plant construction costs in advance, with another rate increase when the plant goes online.

Nuclear reactors generate 20 tons of radioactive nuclear waste per year, which kills at high doses and causes cancer and birth defects at low doses. The U.S. Department of Energy has failed to find storage sites for highly radioactive nuclear waste for more than 10 years.

By 2020, taxpayers will have paid an estimated \$12 billion in court judgments brought by nuclear utilities forced to store nuclear waste on their facility sites. They know it's dangerous. That's why they're suing.

Nuclear power is cost-prohibitive and dangerous. We don't need it in Oklahoma. Ask your senator to vote "no" on SB 831 today.

Phyllis Bryant
Bethany

Editor, The Observer:

The discussion of the "propriety" in mocking the founder of Islam [Dare anyone say his name lest one receive death threats?] is beyond the pale. Why should the irreverent South Park have its content censored because the writers choose to make a satirical comment regarding the alleged Mohammed, blessed be his name?

If one takes his/her religious point of view seriously and values that freedom of expression yet simultaneously finds that the point of view of others made in a peaceful, legal way to be abhorrent, I would suggest that this country is not the one you should be living in.

The parallel of self-righteous Islamic fundamentalists threatening those who would mock it and the use by Christian fundamentalists of the police power of the state to block gay and lesbian citizens from protection of their rights and property is striking.

I find this uproar over religious superiority to be especially egregious in that as a gay man I'm unable to marry my partner of 33 years under civil law because my state has imposed the religious dogma of totalitarian denominations as the civil law of the state, forced into the state Constitution in violation of the First Amendment to the federal Constitution.

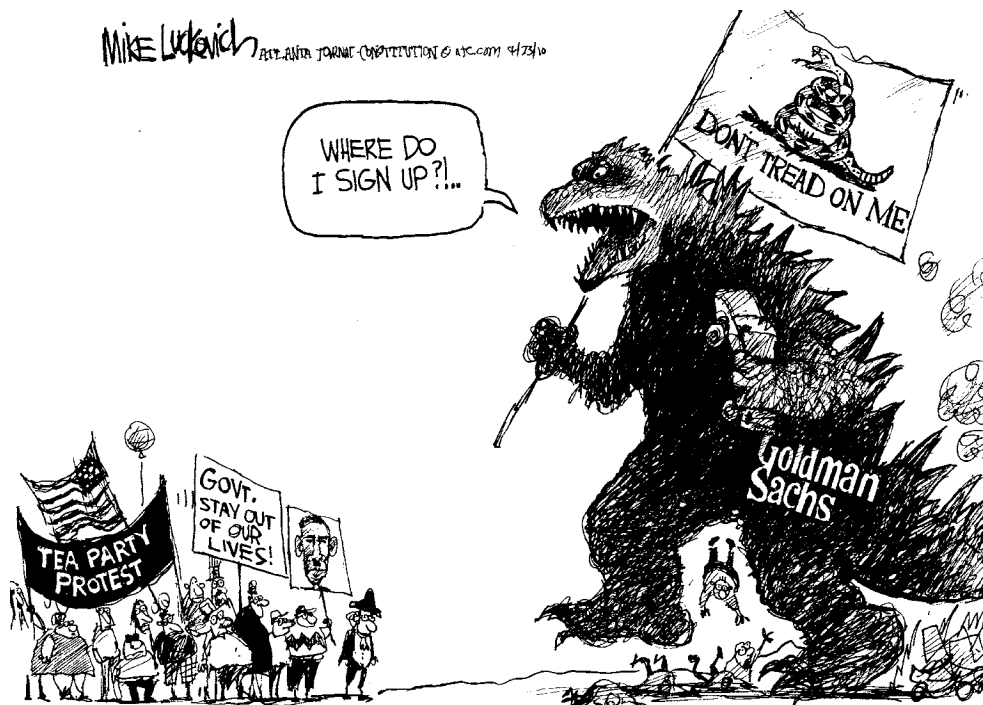
Many states have passed similar laws and amendments inhibiting the full expression of the rights and benefits of America's gay and lesbian taxpayers even as we pay the full price of citizenship.

James Nimmo
Oklahoma City

Editor, The Observer:

In the article [4.10.10 Observer] about how the threat from Mexican drug cartels justifies the shooting of drug smugglers and the 10-year incarceration of their customers, I think Norm Rourke should have considered more history. People have been and are being executed around the world for the crime of smuggling with a particularly high frequency in countries ringing South Asia. While the cost of jail space keeps most users from serving much hard time, there is the occasional example made of individuals. Despite the executions and hard time, drug gangs and drug use continue around the world. Rourke's ideas have been tried and found to be both expensive and less than adequately effective.

Perhaps we should consider the possibility that some portion of our problems are due to the way we are punishing ourselves over our bad habits. We tried beating ourselves up for our own good back in Prohibition and decided that we were better off letting business handle the commercial side of that bad habit while the government taxed, regulated, and picked up



some of the pieces.

Our government was not founded to make us good people or to punish us for what we do to ourselves. Whether we get it right, get it wrong, or just manage to get by, freedom should mean we get to do it to ourselves even if the neighbors don't care to indulge. Letting criminals provide our bad habits sets the stage for what we are currently seeing in Mexico.

Clinton Wiles
Oklahoma City

Editor, The Observer:

An open letter to the Tulsa World:

I don't mean to nag, but once again an anti-abortion rally was put on the religion page. It is not a religious rally. It is a political rally sponsored by the Republicans. When pro-choice meetings are held, the notices generally are not put on the religion page; but with the political news even though the Democrats have never sponsored any of them.

Why does this political rally merit being on the religion page? There is not a word in it about religion. Are anti-abortion rallies automatically religious whereas pro-choice rallies aren't? Is a rally at the Mabee Center automatically more religious than our rallies at All Souls or Fellowship Congregational? That's the subliminal effect this kind of editing has.

Every year, the Oklahoma Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice puts an ad in your newspaper with hundreds of names of pro-choice people who stand up for their religious beliefs on this issue. I can't tell you the personal risk some of the people take in making their names public.

With this rally, the Republicans are using abortion as a political tool. They will demonize the doctors and the clinics; and we have seen where that leads. By putting this on the religion page, you are aiding and abetting them. The pro-choice forces have a hard fight out here, and you're not helping us one little bit.

Barbara Santee
Tulsa

Editor, The Observer:

Anybody noticed all the fancy, high dollar [congressional] mailouts we're getting from George W. Bush's head cheerleader, Rep. Mary Fallin? Seems

odd since her term is almost over? Mary Fallin was in one-inch print. The note that "this mailing was prepared and published at taxpayer expense" was in 1/32nd inch print.

She's not running for governor on the taxpayers' money, is she, as concerned over the national debt as she is?

Since she has sent us tips on how to keep our family safe and be prepared for tornado season, I wish someone would tell us how to keep our family safe if she's elected governor.

How can we be prepared for that?

Al Engel
Oklahoma City

Editor, The Observer:

What is it now - seven, eight, nine or 10 bills against abortion?

This Legislature seems to think someone is going to put up a road block and force you to have an abortion. And how about this Bible reading in schools bill? These kooks are out of control.

On March 2, 2009, the Senate passed a resolution making Oklahoma's official rock song "Do You Realize." Earlier, the House had rejected it because a member of the Flaming Lips band had worn a t-shirt that had a hammer and sickle on it [a symbol of the Communist Party].

Also they said that earlier Wayne Coyne, lead singer of the Flaming Lips, had used the F-word at a dedication in downtown Oklahoma City of "Flaming Lips Alley."

Thank God Gov. Henry stepped up and said he would issue an executive order making the song official.

Coyne later said in an interview that "the House was represented by a small minority of religious wackos that wanted to tell everyone what shirts they could wear or what kind of music they could listen to."

In my opinion, Mr. Coyne got one word wrong - minority. It is larger than that.

My new bumper stickers read: "Dump the small minded religious wackos."

Tom Magdalena
Tecomseh

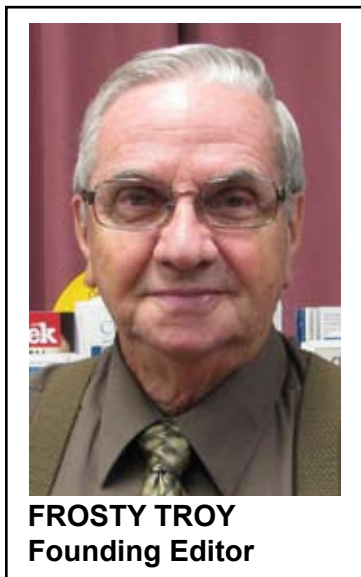
Editor's Note: Our friend, Tom Magdalena, passed away suddenly on April 28. This letter was dated April 13.

Frosty Troy's Who Killed Free Enterprise?

For more than 50 years Frosty has covered the Legislature. He tells the truth - fact for fact - about the so-called free enterprise system in Oklahoma.

Call Frosty at 405.760.1843 to book a speech.

Social Justice



FROSTY TROY
Founding Editor

I might fuss about some of the Catholic Church's positions, but never on social justice. That's why I was stunned when Fox's Glenn Beck told his audience to "run as fast as you can" if they find their church preaching "social justice," claiming it is a "perversion of the Gospel."

Hello? Is anybody in there? I don't often tune in Beck's drivel, but this was over the top even for this radical rightwinger.

"Social justice was the rallying cry," he argued, "on both the communist front and the fascist front. This is not an American idea."

The misty-eyed Beck told his audience to "report preachers of social justice to the authorities. If you have a priest that is pushing social justice, go find another parish. Go alert your bishop."

Talk about a living example of a dumbass. Christian leaders of all denominations – from

progressive Jim Wallis to arch-conservative Southern Baptist theologian Albert Mohler – have challenged Beck's attack on social justice.

Religious scholars of Beck's adopted faith have explained that social justice is essential to Mormonism.

Bread for the World is asking Beck to "quit using [his] bully pulpit to spread misinformation and fear." Wallis initiated a petition at Sojourners, his social justice organization, for people to let Beck know they are social justice Christians.

In response, Beck has announced that the "hammer is coming" down on Sojourners and Wallis, whom he claims is a "Marxist."

Despite Beck's threats, Wallis has repeated his invitation to sit down and have "an open and public discussion on what social justice really means."

Why does this man have a huge following – especially in Oklahoma? The reason is simple. Oklahoma is way beyond average when it comes to ignorant people.

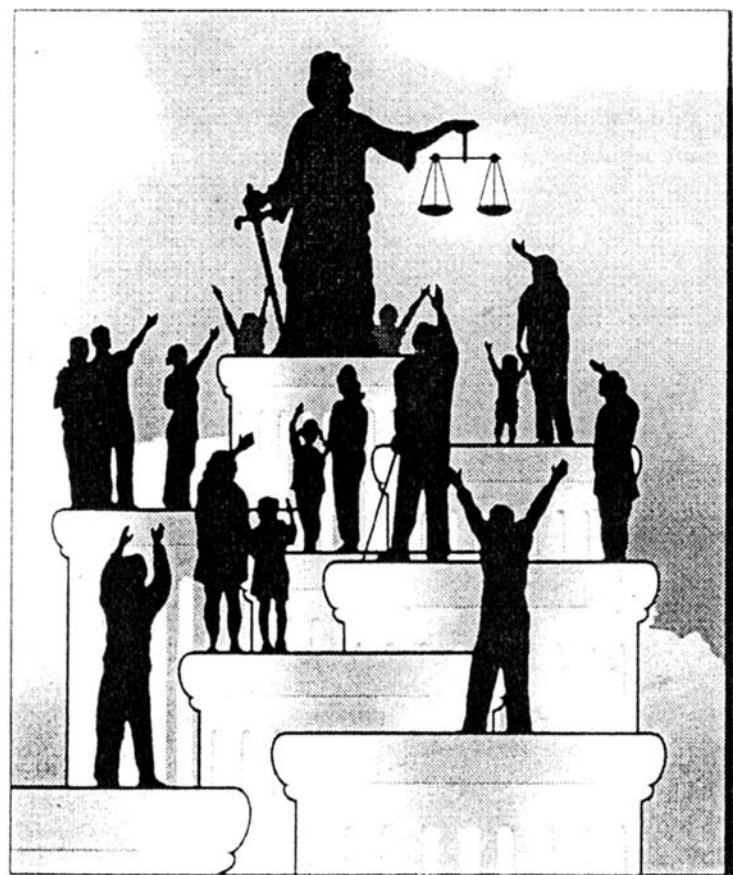
The concept of social justice runs throughout the Old and New Testaments and includes such virtues as "caring for the poor and speaking about human rights," explains Pastor Michael Hidalgo.

Social justice, the Center for Social and Economic Justice defines, "is the virtue which guides us in creating those organized human interactions we call institutions."

"The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation," writes the Catholic Office for Social Justice.

If you want to see it in action, visit Neighbor for Neighbor in Tulsa or Oklahoma City. Stop by the Jesus House in Oklahoma City and witness one of the few refuges for the mentally ill outcasts.

Social justice necessarily involves the government and the economy. As Peg Chamberlain, president of the National Council of Churches, explains, "one cannot claim to be following the teachings of scripture while also saying that Jesus and the prophets cared nothing for economic justice and that a discussion of



such principles has no place in the church."

I grant you there are certainly disputes among progressive and conservative religious traditions about the proper application of social justice, particularly between the role of material needs and faith. However, to reject the concept entirely is to reject the church – not one parish or priest, but all.

"What is really broken in our economy," writes Center for American Progress Senior Fellow Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, "is that it no longer works for all the people."

Churches and synagogues are on the front lines of providing financial advice to those abused by the mortgage industry. More than 40 different religious denominations and faith traditions are part of PICO, "a national network of faith-based community organizations" working "to increase access to health care, improve public schools, make neighborhoods safer, build affordable housing, redevelop communities and revitalize democracy."

When several Oklahoma City Catholic parishes signed on to community justice, rightwingers raised an immediate stink. Several parishes are torn apart because "community organizing" is Barack Obama politics.

Nonsense! President Obama was once a community organizer as part of the Gamaliel Network, a "multi-faith, multi-ethnic, multi-political, multi-cultural" non-partisan group that works for comprehensive immigration reform, health care for all, and economic opportunities for low-income people.

The critics should do as much. You will search for them in vain where real Christianity is practiced one on one.

Glenn Beck claims his attacks on social justice are based on his support for "separation of church and state." That proves how really ignorant he is.

A Handshake

Dad was stomping a press for a McAlester dry cleaners when the owner told Dad he was retiring and thought Dad ought to buy him out.

As Dad later told the story, he laughed out loud. The Troys lived from paycheck to paycheck.

The owner, O.J. Finley, asked Dad to accompany him to the First National Bank where he explained to bank President Pete Priddy that Dad ought to buy him out if the financing could be arranged.

Priddy quizzed Dad, who was more than willing to make the leap. All three stood up and shook hands. That was it. No note to sign, no paperwork, only a handshake.

My Dad parleyed it into a large dry cleaners at 9 East Choctaw, which was no accident since it was across the street from the corner where Marines and sailors from the Naval Base caught the bus. He had all of their business.

He gradually added three substations, three Triple Nickel laundymats and two apartment buildings.

The success was based on hard work – up at 4 a.m. to fire the boiler so the steam line would be ready. Home at 6 p.m. six days a week.

Dad was an artist at a sewing machine [alterations were free] and ended up representing Chicago Tailoring – tailor-made suits for the richest men in town. He also launched curb service – no need to leave your car.

It took all that sweat to feed nine kids [Mom also lost twins who died shortly after they were born].

I was reminded of this by a notice in the newspaper that Ann Connors Priddy had died at 105 years of age. She was the widow of Cecil L. "Pete" Priddy – the banker who launched my father's career.

When he died in 1988 he left \$250,000 to the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation. Because she was moved by his support of the Foundation, she, too, left \$250,000.

These days when you read about banks, it's all bad news. It was banks that nearly brought down Wall Street, leading to the worst financial crisis since the

Great Depression.

Local banks are the life's blood of a community. It was a small bank that launched The Oklahoma Observer with an \$18,000 loan.

That handshake with my Dad was a simple act of honesty – the kind of business honesty in short supply these days.

Class Of '10 Makes Oklahoma History

The Class of 2010 has already made Oklahoma history. A record number of graduating seniors are Oklahoma Academic Scholars.

This year, there are 2,398 seniors who are being recognized for their outstanding academic achievement. This is more than double the number of scholars [1,122] identified using the same criteria in 1991.

Each Oklahoma Academic Scholar received a certificate of recognition and an Academic Scholar lapel pin. The honor has been recorded on their official transcripts and a gold seal will be affixed on their diplomas.

In addition, as of this year, 91,000 students have now qualified for Oklahoma's Promise, also known as the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program. According to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, this is a 537% increase in just eight years. This program allows students to earn free college tuition if their family incomes are \$50,000 or less.

This year's graduating seniors are the first class of high school students to graduate meeting state college preparatory/work ready mandates as defined in the Achieving Classroom Excellence Act.

– State Superintendent Sandy Garrett

Oklahoma Really Can't Afford These Bills



ARNOLD HAMILTON
Editor

The Oklahoma Legislature all-too-frequently is fodder for late night television jokes and scorn.

Whether it's Birthers or Tenters, theocrats or nativists, gun lovers or gay haters, the Big Top rarely disappoints those who love to stereotype our state as ground zero in Wingnut World.

Arizona did all it could recently to knock Oklahoma off its perch, displaying a xenophobia and bigotry that had talk show tongues wagging from coast-to-coast.

Yet, even before Arizona's new anti-immigration law could be challenged in court, Oklahoma's House reclaimed its ignominy, lapsing into heated debate over whether to force an on-the-record vote on a resolution commemorating the National Day of Prayer.

Two legislative days later, I watched in disgust as representatives prattled on over Sand Springs Republican Rep. Rex Duncan's proposed open carry law that would thrust Oklahoma back to the frontier days of the 19th Century.

Unfortunately, the debates were a microcosm of a session gone bad, precious time that could have been spent resolving the state's real problems – crumbling highways, overcrowded prisons, under-financed schools – squandered as lawmakers jockey for political advantage.

The atmosphere in the Legislature is so poisonous that it's no longer uncommon to hear legislators say they're thinking of quitting because they see so little hope for serious, honest debate, much less actual compromise that could help build a more prosperous state and lift us from the bottom of almost every socioeconomic measure.

All too often ideology rules, not necessarily what's in the best interests of most Oklahomans.

It's a costly way to do business.

At a time when the state faces a \$500 million to \$800 million hole in next year's budget – *when every penny really counts* – the legislative majority can't resist pandering to the electorate's noisiest segments by passing one constitutionally dubious measure after another.

They vote to crack down on undocumented workers, tighten restrictions on abortion and mandate Bible teaching in public schools, knowing full well that these matters are so contentious that they are guaranteed to trigger a flurry of lawsuits the state must defend.

Who ends up paying the legal tab? The taxpayers.

More often than not, it's money wasted.

• Remember Haskell County? Even though cooler heads warned against it, religious zealots – including county commissioners – insisted on locating a Ten Commandments monument on the courthouse lawn in Stigler. It was promptly challenged in court as an unconstitutional government endorsement of religion.

The Tenth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals not only ordered the monument removed, but also slapped the county with the legal bill for those forced to mount the challenge. The tab is still being totaled, but there's no doubt who's on the hook for the payment – the county's taxpayers.

• Remember HB 1804, the immigration reform measure approved in 2007? It, too, was challenged in federal court. A three-judge federal panel ruled earlier this year that two provisions of the law were unenforceable and returned the case to federal district court in Oklahoma City where a judge will decide whether to make permanent her 2008 preliminary injunction against the law.

Now HB 1804's author, Rep. Randy Terrill, R-Moore, is threatening to one-up Arizona's preposterous law – another costly legal battle in the making.

• Remember the myriad efforts to restrict abortion? Two years ago, with a majority in both houses for the first time, Republicans [with the help of some Democrats] rammed through some of the nation's most restrictive anti-abortion language. Among the requirements: Women – even victims of rape and incest – must first undergo an ultrasound during which the doctor or technician is required to position the monitor so that the woman can see it and to describe the fetus's organs, heart and limbs.

The restrictions were successfully challenged in court, one case overturned when a judge ruled the law violated the state Constitution's requirement that bills deal with a single subject.

This year, lawmakers broke the anti-abortion measures into a half-dozen or so separate bills in an attempt to address the court's rulings. The Center for Reproductive Rights quickly filed suit challenging some of the new laws – and a judge already has delayed implementation of the nasty ultrasound requirement.

It's not clear how much it has cost the state so far to defend the immigration and abortion lawsuits. The costs, for the most part, are absorbed by the attorney general's regular budget and cases aren't logged like a private law firm that bills by the hour.

This much we know: At the Legislature's request, the attorney general's office hired special outside counsel to defend two of the 2008 anti-abortion laws. The contracts cost the taxpayers \$75,000 for one case and \$15,000 for the other.

"And those were very simple lawsuits," says Tanya Cox, program director and legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Oklahoma. "This upcoming lawsuit, it's going to be more complex."

And even more costly.

So why are lawmakers so willing to risk flushing the taxpayers' precious money down the lawsuit toilet?

The fact is, some legislators are so convinced of their own righteousness that they simply must do all they can to reshape Oklahoma in their own image. If the courts don't see it their way, then, activist judges are to blame – and they must be replaced.

[Remember: state Reps. Mike Ritze, R-Broken Arrow, and Mike Reynolds, R-OKC, tinkered this session with legislation aimed at usurping judicial power. Do they understand separation of powers?]

Others, including some legislative leaders, embrace these constitutionally dubious measures as good old-fashioned horse-trading that secures the zealots' votes on most other legislation. Further, they view it as good politics: It fires up the faithful, in this case social conservatives that have proven such a key component in Oklahoma becoming the reddest state in the union.

Ironically, the passage of these controversial measures – and the legal challenges they spawn – also serve to create something of a Full Employment Act for lawyers, a group loathed by corporatist Republicans that control of both houses of the Legislature.

At least Attorney General Drew Edmondson displayed common sense when he declined to file a lawsuit over the new federal health care reform. More than a dozen states already are tilting at that windmill.

Oklahoma taxpayers can't afford any more elective lawsuits – especially those that, truth be told, are primarily about the pursuit of political advantage.

THE OKLAHOMA Observer

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PUBLIC FORUM

Oklahoma History: The Right Lessons?

By William W. Savage Jr.

State secondary school teachers are now required by law to add material about the April 19, 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City to the Oklahoma history curriculum.

Gov. Brad Henry, upon the occasion of signing the Legislature's bill into law, said, "History is a powerful educational tool, if we teach the right lessons."

Oh, I agree, governor. We must teach the right lessons. We must teach our students that a bad American white guy killed a lot of people, not only because he was politically motivated, but also because he had a personal agenda, he was a racist, and he was probably nuts.

We must, therefore, teach them about Andrew Jackson and his genocidal Indian removal policy, important because it began our state's history as a territorial death camp.

WHAT ABOUT CUSTER?

And we must teach our students about George Armstrong Custer murdering women and children on the banks of the Washita River.

And we must teach them about the Tulsa Race Riot in 1921, which the state has been trying to ignore for nine decades, on account of the dreaded word "reparations."

Shucks, governor, we could throw in some information about the Great Depression. We could talk about Karen Silkwood.

We could have the kids contemplate the one overriding question in all of Oklahoma history: How do rich people manage to persuade poor people to support programs and policies that benefit only rich people?

Not the right lessons, huh?

DON'T BUY THE BOOK

Nine years ago, the Murrah bombing wasn't the right lesson, either. The Legislature passed a resolution encouraging Oklahomans not to buy copies of *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing* by Lou Michel and Dan Herbeck.

The resolution said, in part, "This book senselessly reopens wounds for the surviving victims, family members of victims and all Oklahomans who are being subjected to another intensely painful reminder of the horrible event."

But I guess the Legislature, in its finite wisdom, has decided that things are all better now. Wounds are thoroughly scabbed over, and intensely painful reminders are no longer intense or painful.

OK, listen up, gentlemen, ladies, Sen. Brogdon and Rep. Kern. When you start messing with history, you will discover that history has a way of messing back. Open a can of worms, and worms will crawl out.

MCVEIGH: MILITIA MARTYR?

Here's a question for Oklahoma history students: Name two 33-year-old convicted criminals executed by the state in cruciform position.

Answer: Jesus Christ and Timothy McVeigh.

Yeah, you'd have thought that good ol' Bible-thumping Attorney General John Ashcroft would have said, "OK, we have a potential martyr to militia crackpottery here, and we didn't kill him by lethal injection when he was 32, so now, by golly, we're going to wait until he's 34 to spread him out and do it, just in case somebody might want to make something out of his execution."

Ashcroft was too busy fretting over nude sculpture in the Justice Department, perhaps. Anyway, 33 it was.

WHERE MCVEIGH IS SPENDING ETERNITY

Here's another question: Name a person who killed 168 people, including 19 children, then died and went to Heaven.

Answer: Timothy McVeigh.

Or so said Father C. John McCloskey III in the Wall Street Journal in 2001. McVeigh had received the holy sacraments shortly before his demise, and, according to church doctrine, that was that.

McCloskey was director of the Catholic Information Center in Washington, DC,



in 2001, and a priest of Opus Dei. So it could be said that he knew his onions.

THE INFLUENCE OF MONEY

For less ethereal stuff, students could read Edward T. Linenthal's book, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory* and find out about all the vituperative contentiousness surrounding planning for the Oklahoma City National Memorial.

Or they could learn about how businesses were encouraged to stay in the area because the memorial would draw tourists, and tourists were potential customers. Money, don't you know.

What, exactly, were our legislators thinking? What, exactly, are the "right lessons" the governor had in mind?

I taught Oklahoma history at the university level for more than three decades, and during that time I encountered hundreds of graduates of Oklahoma high schools who never heard of Jackson's removal policy or the Tulsa race riot or the horrific effect of the Depression on Oklahoma.

They did not know that Boomers and Sooners were two names for criminals.

WOODY ON WATER TOWER

Why, I once had a student who was born, reared, and educated in Okemah, but had never been taught who Woody Guthrie was, or why his name was on the water tower.

Oklahoma history is supposed to be taught in the public schools because it builds good citizens. What, from a politician's perspective, is a good citizen?

An ignorant boob, I'd bet.

Because that's what the schools are producing when it comes to Oklahoma history.

The Oklahoma City bombing does indeed belong in the Oklahoma history curriculum. So do a great many other things. Maybe those other things don't come under the heading of "right lessons."

They should. Maybe we just need more laws.

- The author lives in Norman

Improving Arne's Education: Visit Oklahoma

By Sharon Martin

An Open Letter to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan:

I wish to extend an invitation to you, Secretary Duncan. I want you to visit the school where I taught for a number of years, a school without a librarian. Oh, we had one on the books, and he did a wonderful job at the other two schools in the system. That left him with about 15 minutes a week to drop in at the high school.

We had a pretty good system there anyway. Students could wander into the library, pick a book from the shelf [including many first editions from the '50s], and write his or her name and the name of the book on a legal pad. Of course, all our students are conscientious, so the books were always returned on time.

To supplement this library, two of the English teachers in the school bought hundreds of books on their own, read them, recommended them, and checked them out to the students. The third English teacher was in charge of moral training. She posted Bible verses on her door and walls.

Because this system worked so well, our Legislature is considering a bill that would get rid of the expense of a librarian entirely. This should increase our dropout rate even more and make education spending go down even farther. Our legislators seem happy with this, but they'll be hurting when these dropouts end up in one of the state's prisons or as a recipient of public assistance. But, hey, the reduction will help us get through this downturn.

We have a live-for-the-moment Legislature.

In this atmosphere, the one thing I could count on as a teacher was my branch of the National Writing Project. In a state where teachers and students rank at the bottom of all the money charts, it is a superb support system. The teacher consultants of the writing project take their research to the classroom. We receive advanced training and share what we learn with other teachers in our local school systems. For the cost of training one exemplary teacher, many

See EDUCATION Page 13

Legislature Blistered Over Abortion Issues

By Janice P. Dreiling

If you kept up with what happened recently in Oklahoma, you know it hasn't been dull. In fact, the actions of the Legislature and the governor put Oklahoma on the national news several nights in a row. And, the news has been all about abortion.

In trying to sort out my own thoughts about what the Legislature has done, I realize how very thankful I am that my own granddaughters do not live in Oklahoma.

Focusing on what is becoming the harshest state law in the nation and the most blatant effort to deny a woman's constitutional right to an abortion in the first trimester, I couldn't help thinking about a recent speaker at Rotary.

The speaker heads a Tulsa-based agency that does adoptions. An impressive lady, she has dedicated her life to helping pregnant women who choose to carry their babies to term.

PREGNANT AT ELEVEN

She spoke of the youngest "woman" being 11 years old. Eleven. No matter what your position on abortion law is, I believe one has to conclude a pregnant 11-year-old is a rape victim.

Let's just call her Kate. What did Oklahoma legislators do for Kate? They created new law so that if Kate wants to terminate her pregnancy, Kate has to submit to a medical procedure she does not want. She has to submit to an ultrasound procedure within an hour prior to having an abortion. And, in order to have an effective ultrasound procedure, she may have to submit to an invasive vaginal probe.

One way to look at it is Kate is raped again. But who cares? Oklahoma legislators are protecting "life," just not Kate's life.

The other bill vetoed by Gov. Brad Henry and overturned by the Legislature protects doctors from malpractice lawsuits.

UNABLE TO SUE DOCTOR

For example, in the event a doctor chooses to withhold information from a pregnant woman that the fetus has gross abnormalities, something that might influence the woman to choose to have an abortion, she is precluded from suing the doctor for damages once the child is born. Sen. John Ford, R-Bartlesville, was one of the sponsors of this bill in the Senate.

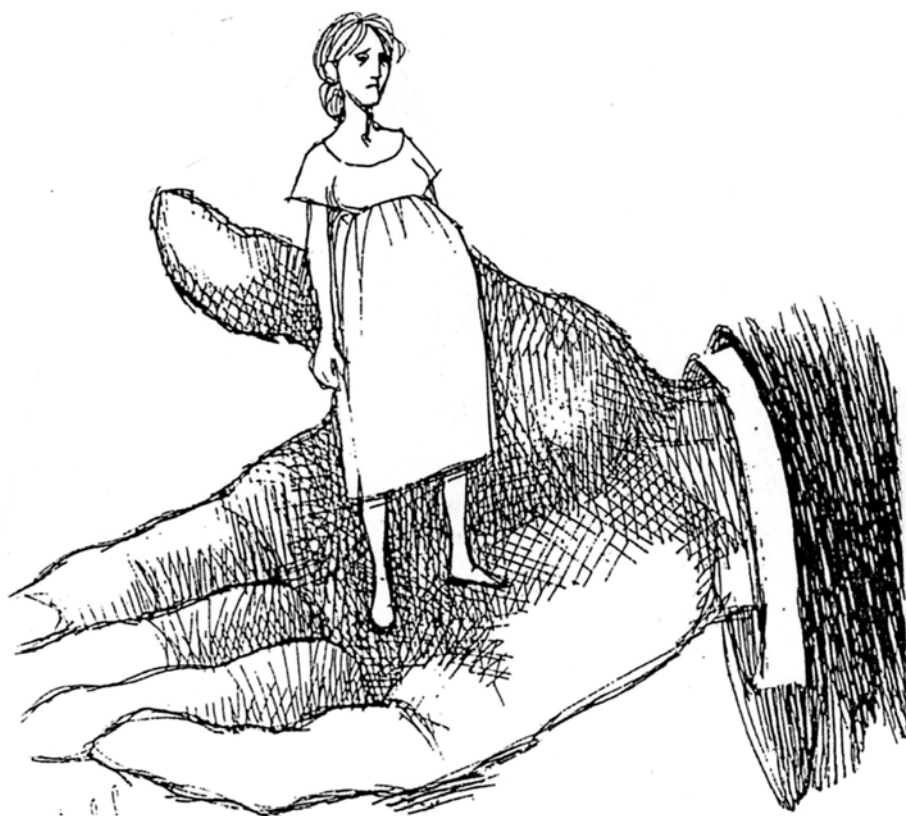
But, again, who cares? The legislators are protecting "life," just not the real lives of pregnant women.

Still pending in the Legislature is a bill that forbids private citizens from obtaining medical insurance from a private insurance company to cover abortion. Scratch your constitutional head on that idea. The Oklahoma Legislature is going to make it illegal for a private health insurance company to sell medical coverage for abortion. The Legislature is going to make it illegal for an Oklahoma woman to be able to purchase such coverage.

PRE-EXISTING CONDITION

Carrying that concept a step further, if you can't have insurance coverage for abortion, then if you had life-threatening complications due to an abortion procedure, you likely wouldn't be covered for those medical expenses because you would have had a pre-existing condition.

But, again, who cares? The legislators are protecting "life," just not the real



lives of pregnant women.

Still pending is a bill that requires a doctor to interrogate a pregnant woman seeking an abortion to find out "her reasons," reasons the doctor is required to report to the State Health Department. Thus, the confidentiality of the pregnant woman's physician-patient privilege is totally destroyed. To protect doctors, if nothing else, the physician-patient privilege statute needs to be amended to exempt pregnant women who choose to have an abortion. But, surely this oversight will be the subject of new legislation in 2011.

ANY RIGHTS AT ALL?

But, again, who cares? Why should a woman who chooses to have an abortion have any legal rights at all? The legislators are protecting "life," just not the real lives of pregnant women.

And who cares if the pregnant woman is a rape victim?

Who cares if the state of Oklahoma will spend millions of tax dollars in litigation expenses because of the new law? Who cares if hundreds of thousands of tax dollars are spent to support the new reporting requirements placed on doctors, both who perform abortions and doctors who may treat a woman for complications after she has had an abortion?

This is invasive government in the most personal aspects of our lives.

But, again, who cares? As long as it isn't you, your child, or your grandchild who is raped and pregnant. As long as it isn't you, your child, or your grandchild whose pregnancy is life-threatening due to a medical condition. As long as it isn't you, your child, or a grandchild carrying a hopelessly deformed fetus. Who cares?

All three of our local legislators have, to the best of my knowledge, voted for all the new abortion legislation.

I used to dream about my granddaughters someday moving to Oklahoma. No more.

- The author is a retired judge living in Bartlesville. This column first appeared in the Bartlesville Examiner Enterprise

Health Care Reform Good News For Oklahoma

By Walter Jenny

Recent enactment of major health care reform legislation will provide unprecedented growth in the health care professions, as more doctors and nurses will be needed to serve tens of millions of newly-insured Americans in coming years. Is Oklahoma up to the challenge?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services believes there's already a national shortage of 17,000 primary care practitioners and 16,000 dentists and mental health professionals to meet today's needs. The Association of American Medical Colleges says the United States needs a 30% increase in medical students to add 5,000 new doctors each year.

Everyone knows the recent reforms will mandate insurance coverage for almost everyone by 2014. That means a half-million currently uninsured Oklahomans will become insured. Insurance companies can no longer deny coverage due to pre-existing coverage, preventive care is expanded, and lifetime and annual maximum benefits are abolished. Children up to 26 will be covered under their parents' plans, and small businesses will be eligible for a 35% tax credit for premiums they pay.

STATE'S POOR RANKINGS

All that should mean good news in Oklahoma. The Census Bureau reports Oklahoma ranks 49th among the states in the ratio of medical doctors for every 100,000 residents. A Kaiser Foundation study indicates 15.4% of Oklahomans are underserved, compared to 11.8% nationally. Worse, one AARP study showed the number of Oklahomans underserved by primary care physicians grew by 43.4% between 1995 and 2005, against a national rate of only 14.7%.

Our number of emergency room visits grew three times as fast as the national average, contributing to the soaring cost of health care. We would need to add 3,420 new doctors in Oklahoma just to match the national average, much less to

meet the demands of the future.

Every one of those new doctors will mean more jobs. More receptionists, more nurses, more physicians' assistants, more bookkeepers, more custodians and more people just to mow the lawn. An Oklahoma State University study indicated that every rural physician creates 17 new jobs and pumps hundreds of thousands of dollars into the community. In a state where 36 counties have lost population since 1980, that's powerful medicine.

HIGH COST OF MEDICAL EDUCATION

One barrier to increasing the number of doctors is the cost of medical education. The American Medical Association reports that a medical degree today leaves young doctors with student loan debts as high as \$150,000 to \$200,000. That's an awful burden with which to begin a stress-free professional practice.

Despite all these bad numbers, one of Oklahoma's great success stories is the Physician Manpower Training Commission. Among other programs, that state agency provides student loans for medical and nursing students; if they proceed to work in rural and underserved areas of Oklahoma, most if not all of their debt will be forgiven.

Since its inception in 1975, PMTC has provided financial aid to over 900 medical and osteopathic students, with 75% of them remaining in rural areas in Oklahoma. They have also helped over 5,200 nursing students and, since 2005, 51 physician assistant students. Oklahoma ranks third in the nation in keeping our medical school graduates in the state instead of moving to more lucrative practices elsewhere.

RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR STATE

Passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act presents a rare opportunity. See REFORM Page 12

Remembering Jim Boren

A Serious, Accomplished Man Of Humor

By Art Cox

The Jim Boren everyone knew was a funny guy. His gentle satire punctured pomposity around the world.

He loved practical jokes – not the cruel ones, for he was a gentle man, but incidents he or others had crafted that brought forth bemusement or a laugh or two. Jim loved his family, his friends, and any number of dogs who seemed to accept him as one of their own.

His life not only touched – and sometimes touched off – the powerful, but also brought clean water, schools, decent housing, hospitals, economic and agricultural development to sections of Latin America that had never been given aid of any sort.

Boren, who died in Tahlequah the morning of April 24, was much more than the merry prankster he liked to portray. A friend of presidents and paupers, he treated both alike. I knew him for 35 years and to this day remember something he told me when I was a young man in my 30s.

“When I was a young man,” he said, “I decided to bank experience rather than money.”

His “banking” activities took him to 58 different countries and economically changed the lives of thousands in Latin America.

Boren was born in a parsonage, the son of a Methodist minister and educator, Dr. James H. Boren. His father was a past president of Southwestern Oklahoma State University and founded Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, TX. His mother, Una Hamilton Boren, had grown up in Fletcher and was valedictorian of her high school graduating class.

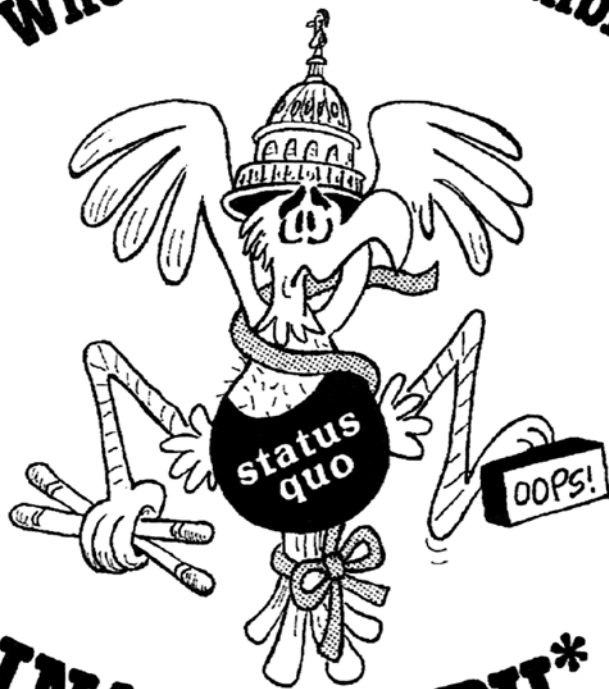
As a boy, Boren was a typical farm kid, chopping cotton, milking cows, digging potatoes. During World War II, the 17-year-old joined the Navy and became a sailor on the USS William C. Cole on anti-submarine escort duty in the Pacific. The ship helped form a protective screen for the first aircraft carrier group to arrive at Okinawa on “invasion day,” April 1, 1945.

The Cole weathered the invasion only to be set upon by Kamikaze planes little more than a month later. On May 25 of that year, the Cole was attacked. One plane hit the ship, but it survived and proceeded to Saipan for repairs, dodging a typhoon along the way.

After the war, Boren enrolled in college, along with thousands of his peers in the Greatest Generation. He completed his work on a bachelor's degree at the University of Texas in Austin with a double major in economics and political science. With the help of the GI bill, he became a member of the first graduating class at California State University-Long Beach, where he earned a second bachelor's degree in education and psychology.

Simultaneously, he also studied for and received a master's degree in economics from the University of Southern California. After teaching

When in doubt, mumble



INATA PROBU*

*International Association of Professional Bureaucrats



Above, the logo for Boren's International Association of Professional Bueaucrats. At left, a bumper sticker from Boren's unsuccessful 1996 bid for U.S. Senate.

high school for two years, in 1952 Boren returned to the University of Texas for his PhD. After achieving his doctorate, in 1954 Boren became department chairman at what is now the University of Texas-Arlington.

It was then he decided to leave academia and enter politics as the state campaign manager for Judge Ralph Yarborough in his race for governor of Texas. Yarborough lost the race by a mere 3,100 votes. In 1957, Boren directed Yarborough's successful campaign for the U.S. Senate, becoming the senator's chief of staff for four years. The two men made major inroads with legislation as varied as GI Bill issues, the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and environmental laws.

Throughout his life, Boren was proud of two particular achievements with Yarborough – the establishment of Padre Island National Seashore and Big Thicket Natural Preserve. He also met then-Sen. John F. Kennedy, who – with Yarborough – was trying to persuade the Senate to use federal funds for education.

Boren was fond of recalling his friendship with Kennedy and how that bill got through a conservative Senate. Boren called a senior senator from the south for advice.

“He told me to call it the National Defense Education Act because the Congress would pass anything with ‘national defense’ in the title. That's what we did, and it passed,” Boren recalled.

As his relationship with Kennedy deepened, Boren became actively

involved in his 1960 presidential campaign. In 1961, Kennedy appointed him deputy director of the U.S. Economic Mission to Peru, responsible for developmental programs in education, criminal justice and agriculture.

“I became fluent in Spanish and later learned to mumble in Portuguese,” he joked in a later interview.

During his travels in Peru and most of Latin America, Boren was taken aback at the poverty in the hemisphere. He got an idea that has now been a part of U.S. foreign policy for more than 30 years – partner private businesses in the United States and Latin America together in a grassroots campaign to improve that region of the world.

President Kennedy approved his plan and Partners of the Alliance was born. Today, it is still helping to build schools, potable water systems, hospitals and initiate economic development projects in that part of the world. Only the name has changed: it is now Partners of the Americas. Boren's work in Latin America earned him the government's Meritorious Honor medal, while a private school, Nathaniel Hawthorne College, recognized his achievements with a Doctor of Humane letters [LHD].

In November 1994, the Oklahoman was honored again, by the organization he founded. Twenty-eight member nations, including the U.S. State Department, sent representatives. Partners of the Americas remains the largest program of working vol-

unteers in the hemisphere, 30,000 strong.

After leaving government service, Boren decided to poke a little fun at his former employer – the federal government – by challenging it to a race. What he proposed was simple: Boren would mail a letter in Washington, DC, to Philadelphia. A second letter would go by his personal “pony express.” Even though he rode a horse from Washington to Philadelphia, the Oklahoma humorist still beat the mail by at least two days. In 1990, he repeated the experiment, this time with turtles. He won, again.

Boren's publicity stunts were of legend and all done through a tongue-in-cheek organization he founded, the International Society of Professional Bureaucrats. Its aim, Boren recounted, was to “cut red tape lengthwise,” and its symbol a three-foot-high metal statue, The Order of the Bird, personally sculpted by the organization's founder.

Throughout the years, Boren, by using subtle wit and satire, poked fun at politicians and other public officials, often resulting in needed reforms. He spoke in 58 different countries, led the first exchange of Soviet and U.S. humorists and, as a result, was recognized by Heidelberg College in Tiffin, OH, where he was awarded a second honorary degree, Doctor of Laws.

Even though he had a burgeoning speaking schedule, in 1990 Boren agreed to become Scholar-In-Residence and a political science professor at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, where he met his current wife, Norma, who survives him.

Other survivors include his two sons, Stan and Richard; his stepsons, James and John; three grandchildren, Emmett, Catie and Todd; his brother and sister, Gene and Marilyn Boren. He is also first cousin to David L. Boren, former U.S. Senator and currently President of the University of Oklahoma.

For many years, Jim and Norma lived on their beloved 35-acre “tick ranch” in Tahlequah. Visitors ranged from the former head of the KGB to politicians, faculty members and his beloved students.

His quips and quotes were legendary and were usually woven into his speeches. He would give audiences this Boren Guideline:

“When in charge, ponder. When in trouble, delegate. When in doubt, mumble.”

And for readers, his Boren Dictum: “If you're going to be a phoney, be sincere about it. [It should be noted that phoney is spelled with an ‘e’ ... in keeping with the retrospelling of the ancients.]”

It's likely he's in heaven now – pondering, delegating ... mumbling. And cutting red tape lengthwise.

– The author, a former newspaper editor in Enid, Fort Smith and Sapulpa, lives in Tulsa. He served as campaign manager for Boren's U.S. Senate bid.

BOOKS

The New Jim Crow

Mass Incarceration Belies Our Image Of Colorblindness

By Wanda Jo Stapleton

THE NEW JIM CROW

Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness

By Michelle Alexander

The New Press

304 pages, \$27.95

The Oklahoma Department of Corrections is in crisis. Budget-busting funding cuts [with more expected] have produced a shortage of 700 corrections officers when prison beds are filled to a 99% capacity. This dangerous situation results, in part, from the Legislature's "tough on crime" stance which has produced a very low felony threshold for minor crimes. For example, writing a bad check for \$1,000 could result in a felony accompanied by a 10-year prison sentence and a \$5,000 fine [Oklahoma Statute 21, Section 1541.2].

Michelle Alexander, former civil rights attorney, now a legal scholar, offers a powerful and stunning explanation about what is causing the explosion in prison populations in Oklahoma and throughout the nation. Her book, published this spring, is titled *The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.

I was impressed by her recent interview by Bill Moyers and bought her book. "Felon" is the new N-word, Alexander says. Then, she documents how the "War on Drugs" has produced mass incarceration of black men and has achieved racial inequality similar to that during the "Jim Crow" days in our country.

REMEMBERING 'JIM CROW'

In the late 1940s, I personally experienced "Jim Crow" segregation when I worked part-time in the bus station in Checotah, OK, while attending high school. Restrooms and water fountains were in the back and labeled "whites" and "colored."

The "colored" who wanted to eat were segregated behind the kitchen near the toilets and water fountains. Occasionally, an African American came up front and asked me for an ice cream cone. I dipped it quickly to avoid detection, if possible, because I knew it was against the "rules."

If caught, I got scolded by the bus station's owner.

President Ronald Reagan was a key player in causing the prison explosion from about 350,000 inmates to 2.3 million today. Without mentioning the word "race," Reagan talked about criminal predators, vehemently promised to be tough on crime, announced his administration's "War on Drugs," and carefully orchestrated a media campaign saturated with images of black men handcuffed in courtrooms.

POLITICS OF RACE

In addition, Reagan gave to law enforcement agencies huge cash grants plus a share of property [cash, cars, homes, etc.] seized during drug crimes if these agencies were willing to make arresting drug offenders a priority.

Drug sweeps were easier and politically safer in ghetto neighborhoods occupied by poor, powerless African Americans – not in upscale white suburbs or fraternity houses even though "people of all races engage in illegal drug activity at similar rates; but black men are locked away for crimes that are largely ignored when committed by whites," according to Alexander.

Ironically, though "drug use and abuse was on the decline, not on the rise, when the War on Drugs began," Alexander asserts. But Reagan's concern was not accuracy. He succeeded in exploiting racial hostility and got political support from poor, working-class whites in the south. They voted for him in large numbers because they opposed integration and felt threatened by the Democratic Party's support for civil rights.

UNEVEN JUSTICE

Few Americans today recognize this new Jim Crow for what it is – mass incarceration which creates a racial caste system hidden from sight, hidden mainly because it's legal. Up front, many saw President Obama and Oprah Winfrey rise to the height of wealth and power, then assumed that the age of colorblindness was upon us.

However, behind the scenes, felons throughout the United States are subject to a lifetime of legal, Jim-Crow-type segregation, even after they are through with jail, prison, probation, or parole.

For example, they are barred from public housing, could end up homeless and have their children placed in foster care; ineligible for food stamps and other public benefits; denied student loans for education; told "no" for certain professional licenses like for barber, counselor, or gardener; must "check the box" on job applications to indicate a felony conviction; possible loss of driver's license; racially segregated in ghettos; stripped of basic political rights by being excluded from juries and denied the right to vote.

Severe consequences, indeed, for what could be a minor drug offense.

RACIAL DISPARITIES IN OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma suppresses African American political power by disqualifying felons from ever serving on juries, the most fundamental right in a democracy. Also, the instruction on voter registration forms is confusingly negative. It says: Felons Not Eligible – a convicted felon may not register for a period equal to the time of the original sentence.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates Oklahoma's 2008 population to be 8% black and 78.1% white. However, 30.3% of the offenders in state prisons and county

jails are black and 53.2% white, according to the state Department of Correction's March 31 report.

President Reagan's "media campaign was an effort to sensationalize the emergence of crack cocaine in inter-city [black] neighborhoods," per Anderson. Reagan's influence apparently continues in the Oklahoma Legislature.

Oklahoma law allows possession of a tiny amount – five grams [about one-sixth of one ounce] – of crack cocaine to net a fine of \$100,000 and for the third offense, life without parole. [Title 63 2-414 C 7a and D3]. I documented the law because these penalties are so hard to believe.

Powder cocaine [associated with whites] has a far less severe penalty in Oklahoma law, although crack and powder cocaine are two forms of the same substance.

In conclusion, Anderson declares that "nothing short of a major social movement can successfully dismantle this new caste system," and she offers her book to begin the needed conversation toward that end.

– The author is a former Democratic state representative living in South Oklahoma City

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Will Dreadful Arizona Law Yield Fed Action?

By Froma Harrop

President Obama is right that Arizona's tough immigration law is "misguided." And Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer is right that her state has been "more than patient waiting for Washington to act." The two are not unrelated.

Enforcing our immigration laws is a federal responsibility, which Washington has failed to meet. It's too bad that the Arizona law comes just as the Obama Administration had started doing what must be done – and a plan for effective immigration reform has some Senate support.

After eight years of passivity under the Bush Administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement is actively going after companies found to be employing illegal workers. That and a weak economy are credited with having slowed the surge of illegal immigrants into this country. [Note that ICE is managed by Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, a former Arizona governor.]

PATIENCE IS EXHAUSTED

But as Brewer said, patience is gone. Border states like Arizona have long served as highways and convenient havens for illegal immigrants. Meanwhile, locals fear with good reason that the drug war in Mexico is unleashing a new wave of entrants and violence. The recent murder of rancher Robert Krentz, presumably by an illegal immigrant, pushed many Arizonans over the edge.

The result is a policy that is disturbingly unfair to Latino populations. The law makes it a crime to move around without immigration documents and lets police demand such papers from anyone suspected of being in the United States illegally.

You know who that means: people from Mexico or who look like they could be from Mexico. And although the governor has promised to train officers against racial profiling, how could there not be? What would make an Arizona law enforcer suspect that someone is here illegally other than that person's ethnic appearance?

HUMANE TREATMENT

Stopping brown people in the street is not the way to address the problem. The great majority of illegal immigrants come for work. Though they shouldn't be here, these are mostly good people supporting their families. These poor folk deserve to be treated humanely.

Arizona doesn't need a new law to capture and deport the criminal element. As in many other states, police already check the immigration status of anyone charged with a crime. Those here illegally are referred to ICE.

Harassing countless innocents alongside illegal immigrants is a callous and

Bill Moyers, Giant Of Television, Retires

By Eric Alterman

Nearly 20 years ago, I spoke to Edward R. Murrow's top producer, Fred Friendly, who told me he thought of Bill Moyers as "the Murrow of our time ... the broadcaster who most upholds his mantle."

While Murrow remains television journalism's most admired historical figure, it's all but inarguable that Moyers long ago surpassed his achievements.

This is no knock on Murrow, who, after all, spent most of his career on radio. His See It Now – the program that helped take down Joe McCarthy in 1954 – enjoyed just four years of life in a regular prime-time slot before it gradually disappeared as an occasional series, unable to find a sponsor.

GAVE UP ON NETWORK NEWS

Defenestrated at CBS, Murrow gave up on network news entirely and accepted John Kennedy's offer to head up the USIA in 1961.

When Bill Moyers likewise found his brand of journalism unwelcome on network news, he had another option. He was able to return to PBS, where he had begun his career as a broadcaster 15 years earlier.

With his decision to found his own production company, Public Affairs Television [PAT], together with his wife and executive producer, Judith Davidson Moyers, he assured himself complete editorial independence, and in the quarter-century that followed, he fashioned a body of work without parallel in the medium's brief history.

Who but Bill Moyers could have devoted so much time to the work of Joseph Campbell and Robert Bly; done television's most hard-hitting reporting on the Iran/Contra scandal; investigated the media's failure in Iraq; defined the human impact of economic inequality; examined the ability of corporations to manipulate the "public mind;" evaluated the real-world impact on local communities of corporate-driven "free trade" agreements; devoted hours and hours of TV to a poetry festival, to the Book of Genesis, to the sources of addiction and to the relationship between the environment and religion, etc.?

ONLY HALF THE STORY

The variety of topics, moreover, is only half the story. Moyers' methods were unique. Where else but on a Bill Moyers program were Nobel laureates and laid-off steelworkers invited to speak at length to America, without interruption or condescension?

Bill and I have been friends – and frequent professional collaborators – for nearly two decades. We first met in Managua in 1987, where he and his crew were talking to protesters outside the U.S. Embassy for his landmark PBS special on The Secret Government: The Constitution in Crisis.



futile way to stop massive flows of undocumented workers. The more successful approach is to remove the job magnet by fining and possibly jailing their employers.

It is already against the law to hire illegal aliens, but the giant loophole is the lack of a counterfeit-proof form of identification. If the job-seeker presents a reasonably good-looking document, a company can't be held liable if that person is found to be working illegally.

ENDING THE DODGE

An immigration reform proposal put together by Sens. Charles Schumer, D-NY, and Lindsay Graham, R-SC, would end that dodge by creating a Social Security card that contains fingerprints, eye scans or other biometric markers unique to every individual. Employers would check the information against a national database for all new hires, be they immigrant or native born.

No, Arizona is not going about this the right way. But its radical law may spur overdue action. Now is the best time for it, when a slow economy has deflated the cheap-labor argument that only illegal immigrants will wash dishes or mop floors.

Effective immigration controls are not impossible. Canada has a large immigration program and virtually no illegal workers. Until the federal government creates a rational system, states are going to pass laws out of anger and panic. It's time for Washington to do its duty.

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Not long afterward, I spent months speaking to his co-workers at CBS and elsewhere for a magazine profile of him. All were eager to talk, as we were in the midst of one of many brief "Draft Moyers for President" movements, though a few were conflicted.

Some felt abandoned by his decision to leave CBS and quit fighting the good fight for network news; but most remained grateful for the opportunities his work had offered them. Onetime CBS Morning News producer Jon Katz told me, "When you work with Bill, it ruins you for everyone else."

HARD TO HANDLE

Yes, Moyers would "drive the executives berserk with his agonizing over everything, and getting him on the morning news was like a three-month Kabuki dance every time. But the end result was the most brilliant stuff we ever had."

If I were forced to name a single broadcast emblematic of what Bill Moyers brought to our national conversation – and what we stand to lose with his retirement from regular broadcasting as of April 30 – it would be his amazing 1986 CBS documentary The Vanishing Family: Crisis in Black America.

Taking on so sensitive a topic – one that had remained taboo in public discussion since the furious leftist attacks on the now infamous 1965 Moynihan Report had traumatized Pat Moynihan and nearly destroyed his career – Moyers waded into waters no one else wished to enter.

Confronting a problem that had metastasized after two decades of liberal silence in the face of a relentless right-wing war on the poor, Moyers walked into the ghetto to give its residents the chance to speak for themselves.

IT WAS DIFFERENT

The program was remarkable in what it did not contain. It had no "responsible" black political voices explaining away the problem of fatherless children, no white liberals offering excuses, no conservative condemnation and no experts framing the issue with sociological theory.

It was just one struggling teenage single mom after another, along with more than a few absent fathers, trying to explain how they coped and why they had made the choices they had. In an age before cable, the Internet or much talk-radio, its impact was explosive, comparable, perhaps, to Murrow's famous 1960 "Harvest of Shame" report on migrant farm workers. [Ironically, both men did their best work at the network with one foot out the door.] Like Murrow, Moyers deployed television's unmatched power to focus attention on the voiceless, forcing Americans to confront the humanity of those who are usually demonized or

See MOYERS Page 19

Sexual Harassment, Bullying In Schools

By Lisa Walls

Editor's Note: Oklahoma was the first state to enact a law against bullying in public schools. It has curbed bullying but it still happens.

Two years ago Barry Loukaitis, a junior high student in Moses Lake, WA, walked into his algebra classroom carrying a high-powered rifle under a trenchcoat. He pointed the gun at a student sitting near the door and pulled the trigger. The boy died instantly.

During the next 15 minutes he shot two more classmates and his teacher. Only one victim survived the attack. The first student he killed, Manuel Vela Jr., was popular, athletic, and had often bullied him.

ON THE HONOR ROLL

Loukaitis's name was listed on the honor roll before he brought national attention to his small town. His classmates described him as a shy and serious loner, someone with few friends who was a much-used target for harassment.

According to students "his outsized feet, his gangly build, his studiousness, and his cowboy clothing" were attributes that made him ripe for bullying.

In just the past two years, there have been at least five shootings at U.S. schools, killing 18 and wounding several more – an average of about one death every five weeks. The attackers' ages ranged from 11 to 17.

Ronald Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center, said, "As we look at the profile of perpetrators, the majority were first victims.

RESORT TO VIOLENCE

"When spurned, rejected, or bullied, some adolescents resort to violence. They want to resolve their problems quickly and with a measure of finality that is oftentimes rather scary."

A rash of shootings at schools shows that an alarming number of students use violence as a panacea for the difficulties riddling their lives. Loukaitis was no exception.

Many researchers agree that decreasing social violence lies in the prevention of bullying behavior.

Across North America, violent crime has risen sharply over the past 40 years. Most of this violence is committed by young people.

This trend is sobering and sadly believable; half the households in the United States now contain firearms, some within a child's reach.

Even if a student isn't pushed to aim a gun at a classmate and pull the trigger, the consequences of bullying are potentially crippling. Victims of prolonged bullying can find their dreams suffocated as day-to-day survival takes precedence over academic achievement.

STUDENT MOTIVATION

A hierarchy of needs explains how a student's motivation can become sabotaged if she's having to deal with constant harassment at school.

A student whose sense of safety is destroyed won't feel like she belongs, will have a diminished sense of self, and will be thwarted in reaching any goals. A school that silently condones such behavior creates an environment toxic for



its students.

Children's behavior usually falls somewhere on the spectrum between bully and victim; the majority have acted in both capacities. A small percentage are regularly engaged in bullying, either as oppressor or victim.

Some 78% of students reported being bullied "in the past month" in a survey the Committee for Children recently gave to 338 children in grades 3 through 8. A small percentage – 6% – suffered severe bullying.

HARSH, REPEATED BULLYING

These statistics are within the bounds of similar surveys' findings, that 5%-15% of children are suffering harsh and repeated abuse at school.

What makes a bully? Bullies abuse power either physically, psychologically, or sexually. They tease and taunt others, purposefully exclude certain classmates, and spread rumors. A bully's abuse is abrasive, and wears down a victim's self-esteem.

A child's distress at an attack fuels a bully's sense of importance and can act as a catalyst for future instances of abuse.

Parents, teachers, and caregivers can play a role in fostering and encouraging bullying behavior. Rewarding aggression and using inconsistent, excessive force as a disciplinary measure can produce a child who responds to an accidental bump as an antagonistic act.

What distinguishes bullying from developmentally appropriate behavior? Normal quarreling or teasing happens between classmates of equal stature or popularity, and it's not prolonged.

There is a power differential between a bully and a victim [bullies are often

See BULLYING Page 13

Edwards, Clinton Hit Anti-Feds Rhetoric

Speaking on a 9/11 panel following former President Bill Clinton's speech, ex-Oklahoma Republican Congressman Mickey Edwards warned a national audience that the current wave of anti-government sentiment may be "something very different" and more "ominous" than the movement of the 1990s.

"We see now not just people out in their community advocating they're upset about whatever policies are being promoted, but you see members of Congress on the balcony egging on demonstrators outside," he said.

It was a reference to U.S. Rep. Mary Fallin, R-OK, who waved a banner that declared, "Don't Tread On Me." Fallin is a Republican candidate for Oklahoma governor this year.

"It has become an abdication of responsibility by the people on the inside that is helping to fuel and stir up the people on the outside," Edwards said.

DEMONIZING GOVERNMENT

Indeed, many leaders have found it expedient in the past year to demonize the government and specifically its employees.

During the health care debate, rightwing lawmakers [i.e. U.S. Rep. John Sullivan, R-Tulsa] pushed baseless myths designed to scare people about bureaucratic "death panels" that would decide who could receive care, and repeatedly warned that Democrats wanted to put a "Washington bureaucrat ... between you and your doctor."

More recently, Republicans and rightwing media figures have advanced the wildly inaccurate claim that 16,000 IRS agents – "a health Gestapo" – will supposedly be "tasked with breathing down the necks of 300 million Americans every month."

Implicit threats have also been lodged against Census Bureau workers. Clinton noted that he, too, used to refer in a "disparaging way" to faceless federal bureaucrats.

CLINTON CHANGED BY OKC BOMBING

"I have never done it again. You could not read the stories of the lives that perished in Oklahoma City and not respond that way," he said.

"Most of the people killed that day were employees of the federal government,"

Clinton wrote in an op-ed in the New York Times.

"They were men and women who had devoted their careers to helping the elderly and disabled, supporting our veterans and enforcing our laws," he added.

Nineteen children also lost their lives, and 170 children lost a parent, while 30 lost both parents. Clinton was introduced by Michael Reyes, who worked in the Murrah building and fell four stories and suffered serious injuries in the bombing.

REFORM

From Page 8

portunity to significantly address chronic health care problems in Oklahoma. Instead, state and federal Republican lawmakers want the federal law repealed or declared unconstitutional. They also want to continue cutting funding to agencies like PMTC as part of their campaign to shrink the size of state government.

That's short-sighted thinking. Without public incentives, doctors won't be inclined to provide family care in rural Oklahoma. The free market doesn't work naturally to our advantage in this situation. Getting the government out of the health care business won't help solve a problem that's been largely ignored for too long.

We should expand our medical schools to train new health care providers. We should increase funding through programs like PMTC to make a career in health care more affordable. We should set a goal of at least being average in the number of doctors we have to serve our people. Not only will that improve the quality of life for Oklahoma citizens, but it will boost local communities, create new and better-paying jobs and turn over dollars in the economy.

That's an approach every Chamber of Commerce and every lawmaker should appreciate and support.

– The author lives in Edmond

A Little Secret: Who Is Really Poor In America?

By Leo Hindery Jr.

Editor's Note: Oklahoma is the fifth poorest state in the nation where 630,000 have no health insurance and one in five children goes to bed hungry.

Two old friends, civil rights activist David Mixner and former U.S. Senator [and my oft co-author] Don Riegle, D-ML, believe that in the economic recovery, not enough attention is being given to “who’s really poor” now.

David and Don have for years advised me – and others – on the issue of poverty in America, and they are worried that too many people, and especially too many people in the administration and Congress, are missing this imperative.

To help make their point, they referred me to poverty activist Marsha Timpson, who describes today’s poor as “America’s dirty little secret, hidden in the backyards of America’s shining homes, the hollows, the reservations, the border towns and the dark ghettos of the city where they are the lie of the American dream.”

STARTLING NUMBERS

I agree with my friends, and with Ms. Timpson’s view, and everyone else should as well, for right now in America:

At least 50 million people are ill-fed – up from 37 million just a year ago – including 17 million children. Hunger in America is now at an all-time high, and there are currently entire national geographic regions – the very large 15-state “South” being one of them – where more than half of all public school students are poor and ill-fed.

Although I myself grew up in a fairly hardscrabble environment, as the father of a daughter who was in fact able to create a successful life from the opportunities her mother and I could give her, it is hard for me to imagine what it must be like to have your child needy and hungry.

Yet all of us need to “imagine” this, because each night in America millions of children do in fact go to bed hungry and under-nourished, while also lacking proper housing, needed clothing, and the basic education required to develop and ultimately find gainful employment.

And while I wholeheartedly support the First Lady’s new “Let’s Move” effort to improve the nutrition of America’s children, we must first react to basic hunger rather than to food quality.

Thirty percent of the nation’s 50 million homeowners own a home whose value is below its mortgage balance, and this number could rise to an almost unbelievable 50% by year-end 2011. It would cost about \$745 billion, more than the size of the original 2008 bank bailout, to restore these borrowers to the point where they were breaking even, which there is no obvious political will to find right now.

Despite the truly dismal “real unemployment” figures with which most everyone now agrees – a staggering 30 million workers and 19% of the labor force – very little attention is being paid to the particularly adverse effects the recession is having on people of color, recent immigrants, and out-of school youth.

LOSS OF INCOME

Almost no one is acknowledging the sad reality that even the nation’s 130 million full-time workers have had an average economic loss of 15% just since December 2007 – an average effective work week of 34 hours rather than 40 – which means that the number of unemployed workers, measured economically, is actually as high as 50 million.

The overwhelming problem today for most workers isn’t this recession, as horrible as it is – it’s the fact that for every earned income level except the top 10%, average household income hasn’t changed a bit for 10 years, and that for the bottom 60% of wage earners it hasn’t changed for more than 20 years.

Through economic expansions and recessions – and bull and bear markets

– alike, 90% of workers in America have been standing still earnings-wise.

And 100 million people, fully one-third of the entire U.S. population, are at or below “200% of the federal poverty line of \$21,834 for a family of four,” which is a needs-measure made lame by the fact that no family of four can actually comfortably live on such a low annual income.

The best response to this scourge would be for our government to embrace in today’s troubled time the same “economic bill of rights” that FDR, in his last State of the Union Speech in January 1944, demanded for his.

Roosevelt’s “bill” sought to guarantee, in addition to health care and education, rights to:

- “a job with a living wage ... that would earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation;
- “protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident and unemployment; and
- “a decent home.”

TYPICAL SENSITIVITY

And with his typical sensitivity, FDR concluded his last SOTUS, when he knew that he was dying, by saying that, “We cannot be content, no matter how high the general standard of living may be, if some fraction of our people – whether it be one-third or one-fifth or one-tenth – is ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed and insecure.”

In the two decades after the War, with a burgeoning middle class clearly in hand, our government, in order to help those Americans still living on the outer ring, established very powerful employment AND training, education, home mortgage, and small business assistance programs, while freely allowing labor unions to advance and protect workers’ rights.

The problem with how we have reacted so far to the Great Recession of 2007 is that most of the recovery programs are, as in the ‘50s and ‘60s, only for those Americans living in the outer ring: programs such as “cash for clunkers,” first-time homebuyer credits, expanded Pell Grants, etc.

MIDDLE CLASS NEEDS HELP

In 2010, however, after decades of wide-spread wage stagnation, the entire middle class needs help as well, and the simple proof of this is that overall income inequality in America is now the greatest since 1928, when we first began to measure it.

Without an immediate all-of-government commitment to creating upwards of 30 million new jobs [not the nine million that the administration has identified], without stimulus efforts that specifically target the entire struggling middle class, and without very specific initiatives aimed at breaking the back of general wage stagnation, there is not even a medium-term prospect of anything approaching real full employment and healthy economic growth that benefits all Americans.

So, the answer to the question of “who’s really poor” now is that we all are in one way or another, because, as FDR would have said if he was here, “some [way too large] fraction of our people is.”

Addressing this reality – this now virtual pandemic of poverty – must be at the core of our current economic recovery efforts, because a vibrant middle class that grows from the bottom up will always be central to the continued health of America’s democratic society.

– *The author chairs the U.S. Economy/Smart Globalization Initiative at the New America Foundation and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He is the former chief executive of AT&T Broadband.*

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BULLYING

From Page 12

physically larger than other students]. They find enjoyment in continuously harassing the same few classmates, and intend harm – a goal lacking among schoolchildren engaged in normal conflict. The sufferers feel isolated and unsupported.

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

Every morning there are students who dread the approaching school day. Their apprehension stems from the treatment they receive at the hands of classmates.

These are the children positioned on the bottom rung of the social ladder, severely victimized by bullies. Long term effects on a child bombarded with insults and taunts can include diminished self-esteem, declining grades, dropping out of school, and depression.

Research shows that victims of prolonged bullying will eventually become either withdrawn or aggressive; in extreme cases suicidal or violently retaliative.

A child suffering from constant harassment might think his actions caused the bully to single him out. He can blame himself for the bully’s behavior.

Often a child at the mercy of the playground bully will fail to report the abuse, fearing retaliation.

The downtrodden tend to fall into two categories: those who are provocative, and those who are passive. The passive victims are anxious, insecure, cry easily when attacked, and avoid confrontation.

Peter Miner developed a Sexual Respect curriculum, and teaches his students “actions that alienate and hurt people are unworthy of people of intelligence and integrity.

Should these types of curricula become standard fare in American schools, educators and staff will have concrete strategies for creating a climate of respect, where every person’s dignity is honored.

EDUCATION

From Page 7

teachers receive training.

All the teachers of the writing project are working on or have advanced degrees. Among our ranks are many National Board Certified teachers and dozens of local teachers of the year. One of our colleagues was state teacher of the year in 2008-2009.

Your proposal will kill my lifeline and the lifeline for under-served students in this state.

You say that we can compete at the state level for funds to keep this national organization alive. Is that possible? Even if it were so, our shortsighted state Legislature would probably opt out of any federal funding. They’ve already voted to opt out of health care reform.

Please visit our state, Secretary Duncan. And after your visit, I hope you’ll rethink some of your ideas on school reform. If we continue with current plans, a Third World country and its education system are starting to look awfully good to me.

– *The author lives in Oilton*

Court Choice Will Define Obama Legacy

By Alexander Cockburn

With the impending departure from the U.S. Supreme Court of Justice John Paul Stevens at the age of 89, we lose one of the nation's last substantive ties to the Great Depression and to the effect of that disaster on the political outlook of a couple of generations.

Stevens' father, Ernest, owned a famous hotel in Chicago – the Stevens, with 3,000 rooms, now the Hilton. It was built in 1927, and there, young John Paul met Amelia Earhart, Charles Lindbergh and Babe Ruth.

But by 1934, hard times took their toll. The hotel went bankrupt. John Paul's father, grandfather and uncle were all indicted on charges that they'd diverted money from the Illinois Life Insurance Co. [founded by the grandfather] to try and bail out the hotel. The uncle committed suicide, and Stevens' father was convicted. The Illinois Supreme Court exonerated him two years later, stating, "there's not a scintilla of evidence of any concealment or fraud."

SKEPTICISM OF POLICE, PROSECUTORS

Thus did John Paul, still in his teens, acquire his life-long skepticism of police and prosecutors.

Between the year he went on the Court [put up by Gerald Ford in 1974 on the recommendation of Ford's attorney general, Chicagoan Edward Levi] and 2010, Stevens voted against the government in criminal justice and death penalty cases 70% of the time.

Only one justice – William O. Douglas, whose seat Stevens took over – served longer on the Court. When Justice Harry Blackmun retired in 1994, Stevens became the senior associate justice and thus able to assign opinions to the justice of his choice.

Stevens played his field expertly, time and again maneuvering the swing vote – Anthony Kennedy – onto his side by assigning him the task of writing the opinion.

STEVENS' LEGACY

The most famous case of this sort was the 2003 decision *Lawrence v. Texas*, which became the equivalent for gay rights as *Brown v. Board of Education* for racial discrimination. Among other Stevens-written or Stevens-influenced landmark opinions: *Atkins v. Virginia*, where Stevens successfully won the necessary majority for the view that executing the mentally retarded constituted cruel and unusual punishment.

Stevens was also the Court's most powerful opponent of the so-called doctrine of unitary executive power, which takes the view that the U.S. president and his executive branch wield constitutionally unchallengeable power.

Stevens – again, a true conservative – opposed all such assertions and extensions of dominance by the executive. The relevant case was *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*.



Stevens wrote the majority opinion that Bush Jr. could not unilaterally set up military commissions to try detainees in Guantanamo.

SELF-DESCRIBED CONSERVATIVE

Stevens described himself as a conservative, and in one sense, he was because he tried to preserve the spirit of the progressive Warren court through the decades-long swing of the court toward the right, both among the Republican nominees and the ones put up by Clinton [Breyer and Ginsburg] and by Obama [Sotomayor].

As Stevens himself has said to law professor Jeffrey Rosen, "Including myself, every judge who has been appointed to the Court since Lewis Powell [1971] has been more conservative than his or her predecessor."

As Obama and his counselors ponder potential nominees, the air is filled with counsel that Obama should avoid a protracted fight and should pick "a moderate" – i.e., pro-business, pro-government – nominee, like Elena Kagan, 49, now solicitor general and, in earlier years, head of the Harvard Law School and, before that, Clinton's deputy domestic policy adviser, in which capacity she oversaw, among other assignments, welfare "reform."

One of her colleagues at the White House at that time was Christopher Edley, now the Dean at Boalt, the law school at UC Berkeley. Edley says of Kagan that her politics were "center to center-right."

REDRESSING RIGHT-WING TILT

In the Clinton Administration, Kagan helped formulate the Democratic equivalent of what became, in the subsequent W. Bush years, the assertion of unitary executive power.

There's zero evidence that Kagan would do anything to redress the right-wing
See **NOMINEE Page 15**

Serious Debate Would Expose GOP Extremism

By Joe Conason

Choosing a Supreme Court justice has become a deplorably dishonest process that hides ideological disputes behind petty and often personal matters.

Nominees pretend to have no opinion about controversial issues such as abortion, when everyone listening knows they certainly do. Politicians pretend to worry about nothing except judicial qualifications, temperament and balance.

It is a summer exercise that often descends into ugly insinuations and cheap shots while evading real questions. But perhaps this time will be slightly different, as the president nominates – and the Senate considers – a replacement for retiring Justice John Paul Stevens. For once, the nation may confront fundamental differences with a degree of candor.

OPPOSE, OPPOSE, OPPOSE

Influential pundits on the right are advising the Senate Republican leadership to mount a sustained opposition to virtually any nominee chosen by President Obama. The time has come, they argue, for a partisan showdown on the most basic issues that divide the country.

"I think Republicans should want to have a serious debate on the Constitution," says William Kristol, editor of *The Weekly Standard*, Fox News commentator and Republican strategist. "I'm struck when you listen to the Tea Party activists. They often talk about, 'We need to be constitutionalists, we need to be constitutional conservatives.'"

The aim of such a debate would not be to influence the court, since the Senate's majority seems certain to overcome opposition to an Obama nominee – as it did when Sonia Sotomayor ascended to the highest bench last year.

MID-TERM ELECTION STRATEGY

The purpose would be to drive votes for Republicans in the upcoming midterm election – because Kristol and others in his camp plan to introduce health care reform and other legislative controversies into the nomination debate as "constitutional issues."

What exactly do they mean by "constitutional"? On the increasingly powerful fringes of the Republican right, a category that includes some Tea Party activists, the Constitution is interpreted as prohibiting every social and political advance since before the Civil War. They would outlaw the Federal Reserve System, the progressive income tax, Social Security, Medicare, environmental protection, consumer regulation and every other important federal initiative of the past cen-

tury.

Targets of the "constitutional conservatives" would certainly include civil rights legislation that guarantees equal protection under law to minorities and women, with right-wing zealots, especially in the South, speaking openly again about state's rights – the old code for racist oppression and segregation.

HIGHLIGHTING EXTREMISM

A serious debate would highlight this extremism, which Democrats, independents and Republicans alike have rejected for most of the past five decades. [Retiring Justice Stevens was a Republican nominee, placed on the court by Gerald Ford and confirmed unanimously.]

A serious debate might also reveal the incoherence of a right-wing jurisprudence that deprives government of the power to address basic national problems even as it empowers the president in wartime with absolute and monarchical authority.

In a recent memo on the upcoming Supreme Court battle, political theorist William Galston, pollster Stan Greenberg and demographic analyst Ruy Teixeira urge their fellow Democrats not to back away from a constitutional debate. They warn that the judicial agenda of the Republican right would undermine not only Social Security and Medicare but the separation of church and state and the very rule of law in America.

LET THE DEBATE RIP

"Democrats can – and must – respond firmly and categorically to this extremist philosophy," write the three strategists. "They must respond by saying that the Democratic Party proudly upholds the traditional American view of the Constitution – the view of the founding fathers of this country – George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton and John Adams."

Upheld by Republicans as well, from Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt to Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, those principles encompass religious freedom for everyone regardless of sect or creed; the capacity of elected representatives to legislate for the common good; and the protection of individual liberty within a framework of enforceable laws.

So yes, let the debate rip – and let the exposure of the radicalism of the right begin.

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With Gender, Justice Not Always Blind

By Armin Rosen

When Legal Momentum, a U.S. advocacy group that works with all aspects of gender in the legal system, started its National Judicial Education Program in 1980, gender discrimination was an unacknowledged problem in the country's courtrooms.

Thirty years later, the New York-based NJEP has produced dozens of reports and educational programs for U.S. judges and lawyers, including an authoritative 500-page handbook on gender discrimination in the legal system.

Legal Momentum started its judicial education program with the goal of changing a legal culture unwilling to challenge or otherwise address its atmosphere of sexism.

CASUAL SEXISM

In the 1980s, when the group started publishing educational materials, even casual sexism would pass without comment in courtrooms, according to NJEP director and founder Lynn Schafran.

But today, says Schafran, both attitudes and legal procedure have changed. The NJEP led to over 40 state and federal-level task forces on gender equality in the legal system, as well as important amendments to the American Bar Association's code of judicial conduct.

Now, according to Schafran, ABA standards forbid judges from "manifesting anything that even looks like bias" in their courtrooms.

Marsha Freeman, a professor at the University of Minnesota Law School, edited and helped write Minnesota's task force on gender equality in the legal system in 1989.

COURTS DISPLAY BIAS

She says that at the time, Minnesota had one of the more progressive legal systems in the country. Even so, judges were shocked to learn about how courts could display bias in family law and domestic abuse cases.

"It was a real eye-opener for the judges," she told IPS, "and the task force got the word about what was happening out there."

Thanks to the task forces and reforms that Legal Momentum helped initiate in the 1980s, overt sexism is far less common in the U.S. legal system – but experts and activists say that it is no less insidious.

Schafran identified several issues on which sexism in the legal system is still disconcertingly relevant: in two U.S. states, expert witnesses are unable to testify on a rape accuser's behavior, leaving judges and juries to depend on often-sexist assumptions and preconceived notions in assessing a rape victim's actions.

VICTIMS VULNERABLE

Rape and sexual abuse victims in general are vulnerable to this kind of subtle, unofficial sexism – sexism that sometimes has a tangible impact on women's safety.

Schafran described a recent case in Maryland in which a woman was denied

an order of protection for her children because she had had sex with her abusive husband shortly before requesting the order.

But the court was unwilling to differentiate between consensual sex [which, for the court, proved the health of the couple's marriage] and sex under the indirect threat of immediate physical violence, using an outdated sense of marital and sexual mores as a basis for a decision that could have threatened an entire family's safety. Cases like this are unfortunately common, says Schafran.

"There are assumptions that women are lying or making it up," in abuse or protection cases, she says, or "are trying to get the father branded as a sex offender."

EXPLICIT SEXISM

Schafran and Freeman say that implicit sexism can even be seen in the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 2009, retired associate justice Sandra Day O'Connor criticized her former colleagues for making light of the experiences of a 13-year-old petitioner who had been strip-searched at her public school.

Although the court eventually decided that the girl's constitutional rights had been violated by the search, some of the male justices' comments trivialized the experience of getting strip-searched as a 13-year-old girl, revealing how male judges were capable of misunderstanding some cases' crucial gender dynamics.

Freeman identifies a 2007 Supreme Court case as another damning example of implicit sexism in the nation's highest court.

In the so-called Ledbetter decision, the court ruled that gender or race-based pay inequality could not serve as the basis for a lawsuit if the alleged discrimination occurred over six months before legal action was taken.

WHY WOMEN DELAY

According to critics, the justices had not only thrown out a potentially far-reaching discrimination suit on what appeared to be procedural grounds, they also failed to recognize potentially legitimate reasons women may have for not immediately bringing gender discrimination to a court's attention.

Freeman was shocked by the decision. "It made me think 'oh my God we have so far to go,'" she said. She attributes the endurance of sexism in the U.S. legal system to social norms that extend far outside the legal system itself.

"Where we are sitting," says Freeman, "is that that are still far too many people in power who don't quite understand that equality means that their model for how life is lived may have to change."

That means that the NJEP is probably incapable of quashing legal discrimination once and for all. But Schafran realizes that legal equality is an ongoing struggle. After all, judges are constantly retiring and being replaced.

"We're working with a moving target," she says.

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NOMINEE

From Page 14

tilt of the Court and plenty that she might exacerbate it, in the areas of executive power, civil liberties and assertion of presidential war powers. In her confirmation hearings as solicitor general, she so entranced the right with her proclamations in favor of the War on Terror, indefinite detention and against any pursuit of war crimes investigations, that Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota said, "it sounded like she was getting a standing ovation from the Federalist Society."

Kagan is the worst possibility thus far to surface, but the other potential nominees are scarcely inspiring. There's the mainstream liberal Diane Wood, who sits on the Federal Appeals Court in Chicago, and Merrick Garland, a neoliberal Clinton appointee in the mold of Justice Stephen Breyer, corporate America's judicial representative on the Court. [Stevens, by contrast, began his legal career as an anti-trust lawyer.] Garland, another Chicagoan, is now on the Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia.

OBAMA'S LAST CHANCE

These are the three frontrunners. The left has put up no preferred nominee, expressing concerns that the Republicans might filibuster. So, why not provoke just such a filibuster with a decent candidate? This appointment, remember, is Obama's last chance to vindicate the hopes of the left that our African-American president is, at least, as liberal as Gerald Ford and would leave as enduring a legacy as Stevens.

Come November, the Democrats will lose control of the House and Obama's legislative powers will be extinguished, unless he goes into full Clintonian triangulation. It is now, and only now, that Obama can actually install a nominee with the ability to defend and advance progressive interpretations of the Constitution over the next 40 years.

Who could the left put up, as an assertion of what a truly progressive justice might look like?

How about Stephen Bright, of the Southern Center for Human Rights, the country's leading anti-death penalty litigator from Kentucky? Or David Cole, professor of law at Georgetown? Or Pamela Karlan at Stanford, a former counsel for the NAACP and openly gay?

Or Jonathan Turley at George Washington, who is particularly strong on civil liberties and the environment? Turley defended Sami al-Arian and the Rocky Flats workers, and attacked warrantless wiretapping. Or, within the administra-

tion, Harold Koh, Korean-American and one of the principle legal appointments of the torture policies of the Bush years? Koh was originally a Reagan appointee to the Office of Legal Counsel. Turley says Koh is the closest we have to Justice Brandeis.

SHREWD CHOICE: ELIZABETH WARREN

There's one more name that has been nervously circulated among progressive circles, that of Elizabeth Warren, currently head of the Congressional Oversight Panel on the banking bailout. Warren originally hails from Oklahoma and is a professor at Harvard Law School.

Warren is as close as we can now get to Stevens' economic populism and has been eloquent on the topic of corporate skullduggery and on the pro-bank tilt of the bailout. She would actually be a shrewd choice for Obama because it would turn the Supreme Court confirmation hearings into a debate on economic justice, consumer protection and regulation of Wall Street, where Warren's Republican opponents would be forced to take the side of the rich at a moment when the rich are not popular with a large number of Americans.

Don't hold your breath.

Editor's Note: This column was written with Jeffrey St Clair.

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TEA – HEE

Is it a coincidence that both the Tea Party and toilet paper have the same two initials?

No, not when you consider that they are both filled with the same "material."

How many Tea Party patriots does it take to change a light bulb? Ten million and five: One to go to Wal-Mart and buy a light bulb [and a gun because he's going to the store anyway], one to scoff at global climate change, one to draw a rally poster making fun of Al Gore, one to complain about the socialist conspiracy to bring light to all Americans, one to change the bulb, and 10 million to sit in the dark even though the light is on.

Christian Terrorism Is On The Rebound

By Mark Jurgensmeyer

When Scott Roeder, the murderer of Wichita, KS abortion clinic provider Dr. George Tiller, had his day in court, he spent much of his rambling self-defense quoting the words of another abortion clinic assassin, Rev. Paul Hill.

In the 1990s my own research had brought me into conversation with others in the inner circle in which Hill and Roeder were at that time involved.

It was a chilling experience for me to realize that this awful mood of American Christian terrorism – culminating in the catastrophic attack on the Oklahoma City federal building – has now returned.

Christian terrorism has returned to America with a vengeance. And it is not just Roeder. When members of the Hutaree militia in Michigan and Ohio recently were arrested with plans to kill a random policeman and then plant Improvised Explosive Devices in the area where the funeral would be held to kill hundreds more, this was a terrorist plot of the sort that would impress Shi'ite militia and al Qaeda activists in Iraq.

EXTREMISM ON THE UPSWING

The Southern Poverty Law Center, founded by Morris Dees, which has closely watched the rise of rightwing extremism in this country for many decades, declares that threats and incidents of right-wing violence have risen 200% in this past year – unfortunately coinciding with the tenure of the first African-American president in U.S. history.

When Chip Berlet, one of this country's best monitors of right-wing extremism, warned in a perceptive essay that the hostile rightwing political climate in this country has created the groundwork for a demonic new form of violence and terrorism, I fear that he is correct.

Though these new forms of violence are undoubtedly political and probably racist, they also have a religious dimension. And this brings me back to what I know about Rev. Paul Hill, the assassin who the similarly misguided assassin, Scott Roeder, quoted at length in that Wichita court room. In 1994, Hill, a Presbyterian pastor at the extreme fringe of the anti-abortion activist movement, came armed to a clinic in Pensacola, FL.

TWO DEAD, ONE WOUNDED

He aimed at Dr. John Button, who was entering the clinic along with his body-guard, James Barrett. The shots killed both men and wounded Barrett's wife, Joan.

Hill immediately put down his weapon and was arrested; presenting an image of someone who knew that he would be arrested, convicted, and executed by the State of Florida for his actions, which he was in 2003. This would make Hill something of a Christian suicide attacker.

What is interesting about Hill and his supporters is not just his political views, but also his religious ones. As I reported in my book, *Terror in the Mind of God*, and in an essay several months ago, Hill framed his actions as those of a Christian warrior engaged in sacred battle.

"My eyes were opened to the enormous impact" such an event would have, he wrote, adding that "the effect would be incalculable." Hill said that he opened his Bible and found sustenance in Psalms 91: "You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day." Hill interpreted this as an affirmation that his act was biblically approved.

The more significant Christian position advanced is related to the End-Time

Beware Shared Monopoly's CEO-Friendly Skies

By Jim Hightower

Golly, whatever happened to America's good ol', bold-and-brassy, can-do competitive drive?

To see a troubling sign for our nation's famed, free-enterprise frontier spirit, sneak a peek at the downward flight path of America's major airlines. These corporations have become no-can-do, anti-competition behemoths, whining that there are too many airlines, too many planes, too much competition.

"It's a jungle out there," wail top executives of the airlines. So, to enhance their "competitiveness," they are urging a rash of mergers that would consolidate the industry into fewer and even bigger corporations. Yes, in their alternate [and perverse] universe, airline CEOs say that the only way they can compete is to ... well, have less competition!

HEARD THIS BEFORE?

"The industry needs to evolve into a more rational structure," asserts a top official at American Airlines. "We have an industry that is too fragmented, with too many competitors and with different ideas of capacity, pricing and strategic activity."

Hmmm. Where have we heard that before? Oh yes, from Adam Smith, the 18th Century Scottish economist who is considered a founding guru of the free enterprise system.

The notion of "many competitors ... with different ideas of capacity, pricing and strategic activity" is precisely what Smith hailed as the proper model for free enterprise.

But the competitiveness that Smith celebrated as beneficial to society is what today's timorous airline leaders see as an irritating barrier that they simply can't hurdle. Better just to lower the competitive hurdle.



theology of the Rapture as thought to be envisaged by the New Testament book of Revelation. These are ideas related, in turn, to Dominion Theology, the position that Christianity must reassert the dominion of God over all things, including secular politics and society.

THEIR POINT OF VIEW

This point of view, articulated by such rightwing Protestant spokespersons as Rev. Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, have been part of the ideology of the Christian Right since at least the 1980s and 1990s.

At its hardest edge, the movement requires the creation of a kind of Christian politics to set the stage for America's acceptance of the second coming of Christ.

In this context, it is significant today that in some parts of the United States, over one-third of the opponents of the policies of President Barack Obama believe he is the Antichrist as characterized in the End-Times Rapture scenario.

Rev. Paul Hill, Rev. Michael Bray, and other Reconstructionists – along with Dominion theologians such as the American politician and television host Pat Robertson and many other rightwing Christian activists today – are postmillennialists. Hence they believe that a Christian kingdom must be established on Earth before Christ's return. They take seriously the idea of a Christian society and a form of religious politics that will make biblical code the law of the United States.

For most of the rest of us, even a little violence is a price too high to pay for these fantastic visions of Christian politics and for America's recent return to Christian terrorism.

– The author is professor of sociology and director of Global and International Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara

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College Campus Rape Is Finally Addressed

A college campus isn't the first place that comes to mind in a discussion about violent crime.

But research funded by the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that one out of five college women will be sexually assaulted.

NPR's investigative unit teamed up with journalists at the Center for Public Integrity [CPI] to look at the failure of schools – and the government agency that oversees them – to prevent these assaults and then to resolve these cases.

When a woman is sexually assaulted on a college campus, her most common reaction is to keep it quiet. Laura Dunn stayed quiet about what happened in April 2004 at the end of her freshman year at the University of Wisconsin.

"I always thought that rape was when someone got attacked by a stranger and you had to fight back," she says.

THEY RAPED HER

That night, Dunn was drinking so many raspberry vodkas that they cut her off at a frat house party. Still, she knew and trusted the two men who took her back to a house for what she thought was a quick stop before the next party.

Instead, she says they raped her as she passed in and out of consciousness. She didn't report it.

Fifteen months later, she was sitting in class. The professor was talking about how, in wartime, rape is used as a weapon of terror.

"And this professor, who I'll forever respect, stopped the lecture and said, 'You know, I want to talk about rape on this campus.'"

The professor said that more than 80% of victims stay silent.

"And she said, 'I want you to know this has happened in my class to my students, and there is something you can do about it, and there is someone you can talk about it with.' And she told me about the dean of students."

SHE FINALLY REPORTED IT

With that, Dunn made a decision. "I know it was rape, and now I know that there's something I can do about it. And so the moment that lecture let up, I walked across to the dean of students' office and I reported that day."

Colleges and universities got their current-day responsibility to investigate and prevent sexual assaults as a result of an April 1986 crime, after a hard-fought advocacy campaign by the family of Jeanne Clery.

In the more than 20 years since Jeanne Clery was raped and killed in her dorm room at Lehigh University, her parents, Howard and Connie Clery, fought to make college campuses safer.

"What happened to Jeanne was so amazingly unreal," her mother, Connie Clery, says. "She was in the right place where she should have been – in her own bed in the dorm at 6 o'clock in the morning, fast asleep."

"There were three automatically locking doors that should have been locked, which she thought were locked, and she didn't have an enemy in the world. And Lehigh was such a safe-looking place, you know?"

Jeanne Clery was 19 and a freshman at Lehigh University. A stranger – he was

When Reputation Is As Vital As Raw Power

By Joe Conason

As approval ratings for Barack Obama decline at home, world opinion of the United States is rising steadily under his stewardship.

A new international survey by the British Broadcasting Company reveals that views of the U.S. around the world have "improved sharply" during the first year of the Obama presidency, with positive opinion outweighing negative for the first time since 2005, when the BBC first polled this question.

Whether the improvement helps him politically or not, Obama's popularity abroad – and the contrast between his policies and those of the preceding administration – will enhance American influence and advance American interests.

AMERICA'S IMAGE RECOVERS

The BBC's findings, derived from a four-month survey that reached nearly 30,000 people in 28 nations, clearly demonstrate the significance of what pollsters call "the Obama effect."

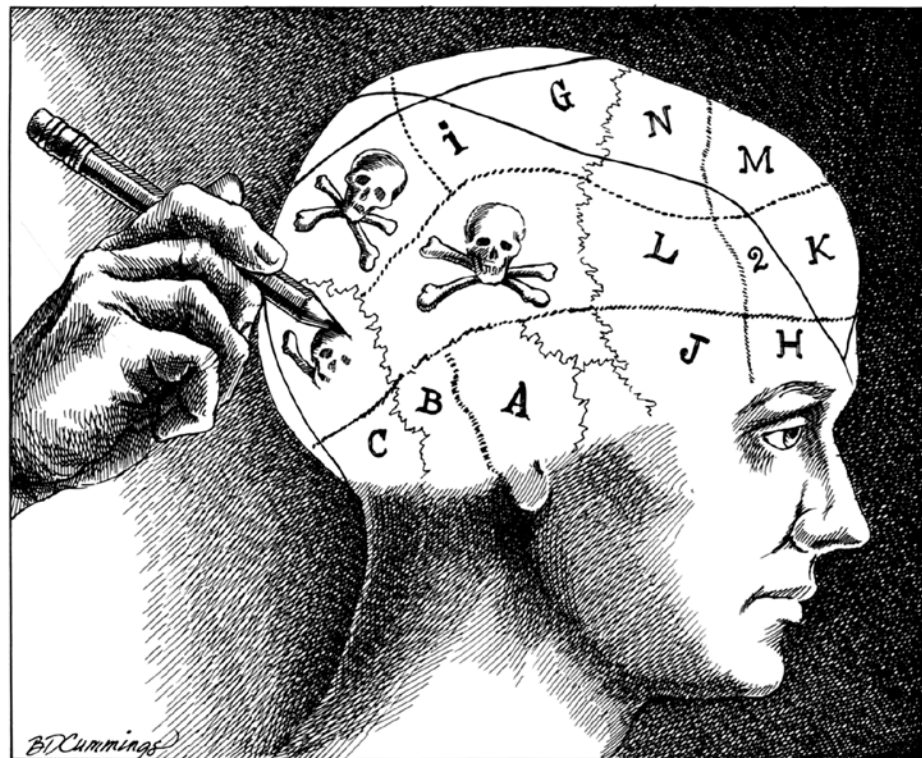
In half of the nations surveyed, positive views of the U.S. had fallen to a record-low average of 28% in 2007, from 38% in 2005, but began to recover to 35% in 2009 and 40% this year. Of all 28 countries surveyed – which ranged from Mexico, Brazil, Germany, Italy and Portugal to Turkey, Pakistan, Indonesia and China – only six now show a negative view of the United States, with two neutral and 20 favorable.

In a single year, since 2009, upbeat views of the U.S. rose by 21% in Germany and 18% in Russia; downbeat views dropped by 23% in Spain, 14% in France and 10% in the United Kingdom, with the result that all three lean toward a positive view of the country.

PAKISTAN AND TURKEY: THUMBS DOWN

In two of the countries surveyed, more than 50% were found to have a negative view of the United States – and those, unsurprisingly, were Pakistan and Turkey, where the war in Afghanistan is probably driving down our reputation. Around the world, however, the upward trend is unmistakable.

At a time of global economic dislocation, much of which can fairly be blamed on American corporations and policies, such recuperation is remarkable. It is even more notable because world perceptions of China and Russia are simultaneously worsening.



a student – raped, tortured and strangled her. In their grief, Connie Clery and her husband devoted the rest of their lives to making college campuses safer.

SAVING OTHERS FROM HORROR

"So if it happened to Jeanne, it could certainly happen to somebody else," Connie Clery says from the dining room of her home overlooking the St. Lucie River in Florida. "That's why I decided I had to do something to save others from such a horror."

Connie's husband, Howard, sold his successful business to underwrite their work. Connie, who had been terrified of speaking in public, went on TV morning shows and testified before lawmakers.

Their idea was simple: Force schools to disclose all crime that happens on campus. Then students – and their parents – would be informed.

That would make the campus safer because faced with public scrutiny, college presidents would have no choice but to get serious about preventing crime.

Twenty years ago, Congress passed that disclosure law, now known as the Jeanne Clery Act.

A BIG DROP REPORTED

Over a recent 10-year period, the U.S. Department of Justice says campuses have reported a 9% drop in violent crime and a 30% drop in property crime, according to S. Daniel Carter, the public policy director of Security on Campus Inc., the nonprofit group started by the Clerys.

One out of five women will be sexually assaulted during her college years. And despite federal laws created to protect students, colleges and universities have failed to protect women from this epidemic of sexual assault.

Even after they've been found responsible for sexual assault, students are rarely expelled or suspended. NPR News Investigations and the Center for Public Integrity teamed up to examine this ongoing problem on college campuses.

America did not always lag behind Europe in global popularity, as we do today. Our global economic and political influence remained stronger than that of any other country in history through the end of the Bill Clinton presidency, despite the tension, cynicism and often lethal stupidity of the Cold War era.

POST 9/11 SUPPORT SQUANDERED

Following the Sept. 11 attacks, that traditional approval was bolstered by a wave of international sympathy, extending even to such traditional adversaries as Cuba and Iran. But the goodwill that could have been harnessed in service of our best purposes was simply wasted by the Bush Administration, whose invasion of Iraq, use of torture and disregard for the rule of law inflicted grave damage on our reputation.

But why should any of this matter to Americans, who have long cultivated a reputation for disdain world opinion? Why should we care about "soft power" or "smart power," as such influence is known in foreign-policy jargon, when we still maintain the most powerful armed might ever known to humankind?

The answer is that we live in an increasingly interdependent world, where military force is almost never sufficient and often irrelevant to addressing the problems we confront.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Whether seeking to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons and fissionable materials, erecting sanctions against the mullahs in Iran or reducing the effects of climate change, we will find reputation is at least as important as raw power. Having squandered so much of our economic strength in mindless war and wasteful speculation, we must rely on lenders and customers in other countries to rebuild.

Obama knows he cannot reach any of his foreign-policy objectives without international cooperation. More important, he understands that the future of America's children is connected inextricably with that of their generation around the world.

Restoring a reciprocal esteem with the rest of humankind – a deep aspiration of this country's founders – will benefit them for decades to come. He deserves great credit for the success he has achieved so far.

Paycheck Fairness Act: Equal Pay For Women

Equal Pay Day has come and gone and still women earn less than men for equal work – 77 cents for women, \$1 for men.

The average woman must work an extra 100 days to earn what the average man took home the previous calendar year.

In this economy, we don't have 100 hours to spare, let alone 100 days.

Even with a very recent uptick in job creation, the U.S. economy has shed more than seven million jobs since December 2007.

The recovery of the American middle class begins and ends with good-paying jobs, but that cannot happen if women continue to earn less than they deserve – 77 cents on the dollar, on average, compared with men at last count, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

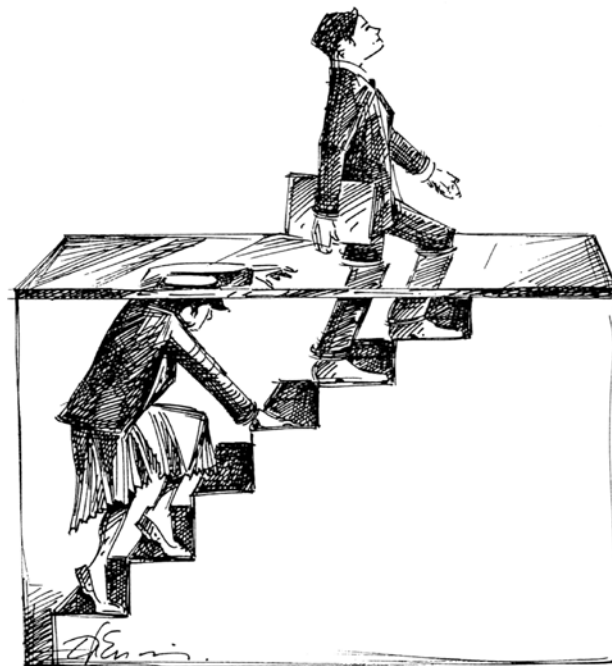
Passing equal pay legislation – approved by the House more than a year ago – is the next logical step following the 2009 enactment of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which restored the ability of working women to have their day in court to combat wage discrimination.

In other words, pay equity is not just a moral issue; it is an economic imperative with enormous implications not just for women but also for working families, communities, and the nation's recovery.

A Senate committee held a successful hearing on the updated Pay Fairness Act. The American Association of University Women has been leading the charge on this bill for more than a decade, and they have never been closer to seeing it become law.

The stars have never been aligned this well – the time to pass this bill is now.

Every April, we're reminded that women must work nearly 16 months to be on par with what men earn in 12 months. Economically and ethically, we can no longer allow this inequity to stand. AAUW will not rest until the Paycheck Fairness Act finally becomes law.



When it does, we see a chance at a future where Equal Pay Day will represent a celebration rather than a shortcoming.

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There Once Was A President ...

By Danny M. Adkison

There was a president. He was different. In fact, one could say, without any argument, there had been no other president like him. A great deal of what was written and said about him dealt with his difference even though he mostly sought to downplay it.

At first he was popular, his approval ratings soaring, but some argued he tried to do too much too quickly. Perhaps because of this, his popularity began to decline. There was talk that he could not win reelection.

From record approval and adoration and tremendous expectations that he would bring change to a nation in desperate need of change to genuine doubts that he could win reelection.

Before that, though, there would be the midterm congressional elections. The political pundits were predicting a huge loss in his party's seats in Congress.

NEW MOVEMENT

In addition to the regular criticism coming from the opposing party and its leaders, there was a new "movement" gaining in popularity that seemingly was stimulated by his presidency. They met throughout the United States in rallies and gatherings and spoke of defending property rights and liberty. They had a de facto leader, a tenacious zealot who, in ubiquitous public appearances with endless speeches, spoke of declaring war against the President and his advisors, those "enemies of the Constitution."

All of which was repeatedly brought to the attention of the public by the press that seemed obsessed with the movement, highlighting every action the group took.

Yet, was the movement prospering because its attacks on the president were striking a chord with the typical American voter, or was the press creating an artificial fascination with the movement who found it difficult to accept this novel president?

After all, the Democrats, led by this president, were proposing legislation that was unconstitutional. That, at least, was the message of the opposing party in the government and the leadership [including the "professional zealot"] of the group holding seemingly endless rallies attacking the president.

COMPARED TO HITLER

What would you expect from a president who the movement considered to be

AIRLINES

From Page 16

Also, Tilton is hardly an inspirational figure for American workers. In fact, he's a poster boy for rapacious CEOs who try to profit by knocking down employees. He used our country's skewed bankruptcy laws to abrogate contracts, forcing flight attendants, mechanics and pilots to take massive cuts in pay, health care benefits and pensions. He did, however, exclude one employee from the pain: himself. He pocketed \$6,471,062 in 2008.

You'll also be glad to know that he's been an industry leader in slashing service at United and socking customers with a plethora of new fees. Now, Tilton wants to bring his executive magic to Continental – and who knows what after that?

Thank goodness the airline chiefs are not trying to run a hot dog stand or taco trailer.

The competition would kill them.

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a socialist? They even compared him to Hitler. If they were right, the American voter should be extremely concerned for his nation. After all, the nation was being run by an autocratic leader similar to Hitler who had no compunction about ignoring the nation's Constitution as he pursued his Socialistic agenda.

Those state leaders making vague references to seceding from the Union should start making definite plans to do so because the president would, if he could, assume all state powers.

Even worse, these unconstitutional powers were at the center of his major legislative agenda. Now it was law, and those in the movement were urging states to sue to challenge its constitutionality.

WHO WAS IT?

The President? Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt's popularity began to slide in 1935 and was becoming a major concern near the end of the year. Outwardly, FDR was unique because he was our only president who, due to this polio, could not stand [something he took great pains to conceal from the public].

There was a national movement attacking his presidency called the American Liberty League. The tenacious zealot leading that movement was Richmond Hobson, a former member of Congress. It was a group of conservatives led by some of the great business leaders of the era whose stated purpose was defending the Constitution [which, in their minds, was the same thing as attacking the president].

Just as President Obama's health care legislation has been attacked as unconstitutional, nearly all of FDR's New Deal legislation was attacked as unconstitutional. When early Supreme Court decisions did, in fact, strike down New Deal legislation as unconstitutional, FDR responded with his court-packing plan. This was not the first time the court had been severely criticized for declaring laws unconstitutional.

JUSTICE CHANGED VOTING PATTERN

In 1917 Robert Owen, a U.S. Senator from Oklahoma, proposed an amendment stating that any Supreme Court justice who declared a law unconstitutional should be removed from the court.

In the end FDR did not have to pursue his plan due to the "switch in time that saved nine." Justice Roberts changed his voting pattern in 1937, no longer voting with the conservatives on the court. The result was a turnaround for FDR's New Deal.

Why did Roberts switch? Maybe it was the fact that Roosevelt was re-elected in a landslide in 1936 [one of four such landslides in the 20th Century].

Few would have predicted that in 1935.

– The author teaches constitutional law at Oklahoma State University

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS

What do Fox News and pâté have in common? They're both popular with crackers.

Did you hear about the new e-Beck from Amazon? When you click "download" it whines about socialism for an hour and then breaks into tears.

Wall Street Grins While Washington Fiddles

By Jim Hightower

Performing a public service was undoubtedly the last thing on the minds of the geniuses who created Abacus 2007-ACI – but I, for one, am grateful to them.

Abacus is an infamous investment package created by the financial alchemists at Goldman Sachs. It fell into infamy because it is the convoluted scheme that has recently caused mighty Goldman to get its tail caught in a crack.

According to fraud cops at the Securities and Exchange Commission, Abacus is a scam. Yet I find it an enormously useful tool, for it sheds light on a dirty little secret that the banking behemoths definitely do not want us outsiders catching onto: They have become casino dealers – only without the ethics.

In the past few years, Wall Street has radically shifted its function in our society. Rather than being the financier of productive, job-creating enterprises, the Street has transformed itself into a glitzy global gambling house for the super-rich – and Abacus is bare-naked proof of this.

The idea for Abacus came from a billionaire hedge fund huckster named John Paulson, who had scoured regional mortgage records and picked out a whole mess of them

that were destined to go into default. At his urging, Goldman bankers gladly created an investment instrument in 2007 that it could sell to pension funds and wealthy speculators. This instrument allowed “investors” to place bets that the Abacus package of mortgages would go up in value. Paulson paid a \$15 million fee to Goldman to market Abacus and put the GS imprimatur on it.

One little detail unmentioned to Abacus buyers was that Paulson had handpicked each of the mortgages in the package specifically because they were headed to foreclosure. Nor was it mentioned that Paulson had quietly placed his own big bet against the mortgages he had packaged. In the end, bettors who were bullish on Abacus lost a billion dollars, and – big surprise – Paulson raked in a billion.

Not only did Goldman pocket fees for taking each of the bets, but it also collected unrevealed millions by placing its own insider wager that the package it was selling would go bad. How ethical is that?

Abacus is what Wall Street has become. This is not investing, it's a craps game, pure and simple. There was no actual value in Abacus – neither Goldman nor Paulson owned

any of the mortgages in question. Abacus was a paper construct that simply allowed rich people and huge investment funds to roll the dice on whether struggling homeowners would make it or not. It enriched Paulson and Goldman, but it contributed absolutely nothing of social value to our nation.

With the unfolding Abacus scandal as a backdrop, President Obama marched boldly up to Wall Street to confront the narcissistic banksters who've turned America's financial system into Las Vegas East. In the audience, the barons of the Street were braced for some presidential heat, possibly including a populist proposal to shut down their games.

But, the longer Obama spoke, the broader the grins became on the bankers' faces.

Far from punishing these fat-cat plutocrats, the president was hailing them as “titans of industry” and pleading for their help in passing a package of modest banking reforms. Obama meekly noted that his propos-

als are “in the best interest of the financial sector.”

I'll say! His reforms, for example, do not ban such abusive gaming schemes as Abacus, instead limiting regulators to gathering information on the scams and reporting their concerns to Congress.

This will be as effective as using a feather for a doorstep, which is why the bankers were grinning. The only way to stop Wall Street's excesses is not to “regulate” them, but to restructure the financial oligopolies that inevitably produce the excesses.

One step in this direction has been proposed by Sen. Sherrod Brown in S.3241, a bill that would prevent huge banks from threatening our whole economy by cutting them down to size, making them small enough that their failure won't harm the rest of us.

For more information, contact a small business network called the Main Street Alliance: mainstreetalliance.org.

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DRUGS

From Page One

decide on priorities in enforcement.

On March 25, California officials announced that 523,531 signatures – almost 100,000 more than required – had been validated in support of a state initiative to legalize marijuana and allow it to be sold and taxed, no small fiscal allurements in budget-stricken California.

The California initiative will be on the November ballot. Various polls last year indicated such a measure enjoyed a 55% approval rating.

At a recent Teach-in at the University of Oklahoma, the history of addictive substances ranged from Prohibition, giving rise to Moonshine and everyday bootleggers.

Anabolic steroids refer to synthetic hormones that mimic testosterone. They can be an oil or water based injection or in a tablet and capsule form.

Why would parents feed steroids to their children – some as young as middle school? The ingestion of steroids causes protein synthesis in muscle tissue leading to increases in muscle size and strength. Sports.

Sports. Sports.

Human Growth Hormone [HGH] is a naturally occurring hormone in the body which signals growth. Athletes take HGH because it can cause muscle growth and the metabolizing of fat.

Only state legislator leading a passionate pro-active anti-drug drive is Sen. Constance Johnson, D-OKC, pushing legislation to create a Non-Violent Offender Alternative Placement Program.

“We can afford \$503 million for the Department of Corrections but we can't afford enough schoolbooks for kids to take home because they have to share them at school.”

Programs that treat addiction have been shredded by the Legislature, from health and mental health programs to those in prison.

Authorities know legislation will never eliminate addictive behavior, but Oklahoma and other states continue the battle they can't win. Who would have thought a beer bottle or a pop bottle would one day host a single hit of meth?

MOYERS

From Page 11

ignored.

As even a conservative New York Times reviewer noted at the time, the program's “intelligence and grace ... redeems television journalism.”

INDEPENDENCE OVER INFLUENCE

In choosing PBS over CBS, Moyers opted for independence over influence. This freedom has allowed him to earn a deserved reputation for being the last unapologetic liberal anywhere in broadcast television.

His most significant legacy is that, also like Murrow, he treated his audience as adult citizens of a republic, who bear collective responsibility for the society we share. The notion that television can both entertain and educate – even to the point where it challenges our most powerful ideas and institutions – was crucial to the medium's founders.

Yet it has all but disappeared in our current political culture, together with the democratic self-confidence necessary to sustain it. For the better part of 40 years, Moyers and his co-workers have demonstrated, time and again, just what such self-confidence looks like.

In doing so, they've shown the rest of us how rare and valuable this resource has become. – The author is a Distinguished Professor of English, Brooklyn College, City University of New York, and Professor of Journalism at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism

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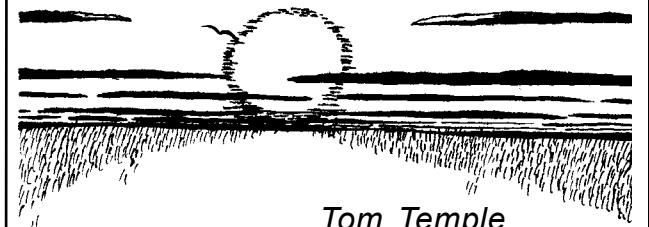


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