

25,000
Blue Chip
Readers

THE OKLAHOMA Observer

\$2.50



VOL. 42, NO. 10

An Independent Journal of Commentary

MAY 25, 2010

GOP Governing Plan Painfully Clear **Corporate Champions**

By Arnold Hamilton

No matter what happens with the 2010-11 state budget – whether in regular or special session – Oklahoma voters now know with certainty what they'll be getting from Republican legislative majorities.

In GOP world, government is a tool to enrich the haves. Period. Any government function that does not advance that agenda must be starved – at least until it can be privatized.

For two years, lawmakers have blamed the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression for Oklahoma's fiscal woes. Actually, they need look no further than the mirror.

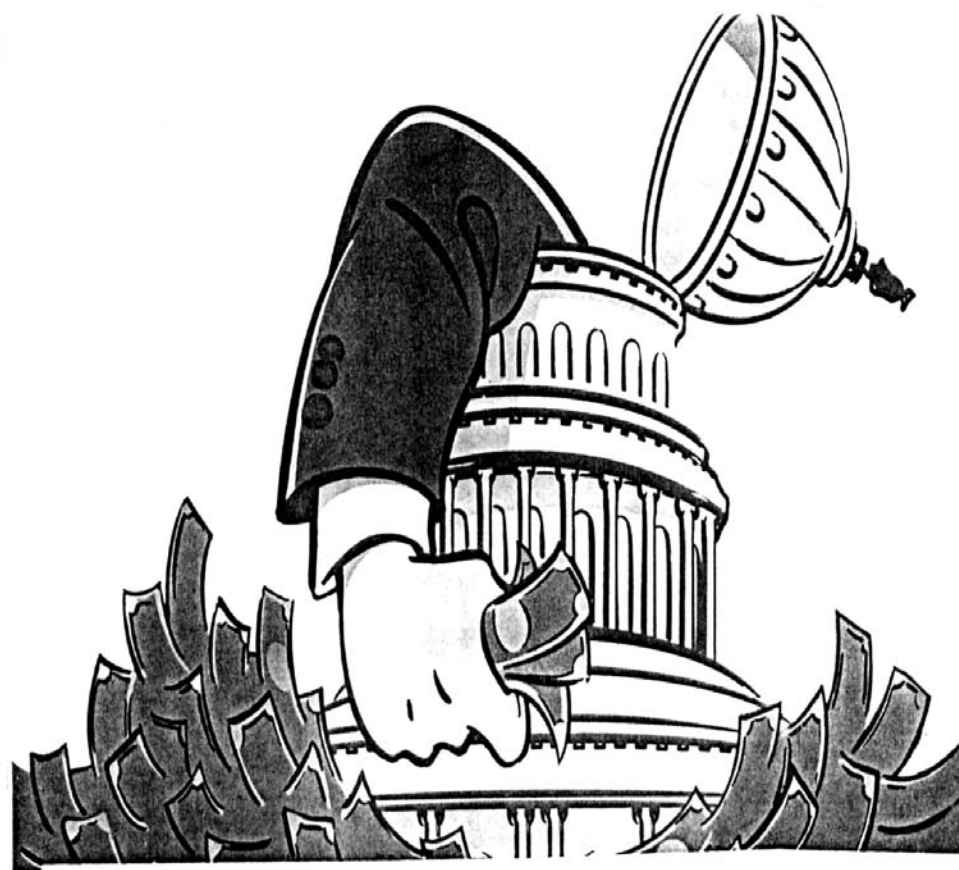
Since Republicans first claimed control of the state House in 2004 – then the Senate in 2008 – they championed more than \$700 million in tax cuts, most benefiting the richest Oklahomans.

They also ignited a corporate welfare bonfire that diverted hundreds of millions of dollars from the state treasury into the pockets of well-heeled, politically-connected elites – while putting seniors, school kids, poor people and essential state services at risk.

The tax cut-tax credit frenzy all but obliterated a safety net [think Rainy Day Fund, among other protections] carefully woven together after a series of Oklahoma's painful economic meltdowns, including the oil bust of the 1980s and the post 9/11 downtown.

As House Minority Leader Mike Brown put it, "Whenever you give away that base ... you have undermined the ability of that [safety net] to work properly."

How could the recent lessons of



history be forgotten so soon?

The government-haters are in control. Woe be it to anyone who doesn't kneel before the Ronald Reagan, Grover Norquist, drown-that-evil-government-in-a-bathtub orthodoxy.

Nothing underscores this reality more than the budget brinkmanship displayed in the session's final weeks, as negotiators for Democratic Gov. Brad Henry, House Speaker Chris

Benge and Senate President Pro Tem Glenn Coffee intensified efforts to sketch out a spending blueprint.

Henry, who unfortunately acquiesced to many of the tax cuts and credits, offered a credible strategy to close the \$1.2 billion budget hole, deploying Rainy Day funds, federal stimulus dollars and about \$700 million in revenue enhancements such as eliminating or freezing some tax credits.

Legislative Democrats, not welcome at the negotiating table, offered their own plans for bolstering the budget, ranging from 10% reductions in the corporate tax breaks to a hospital provider fee that could leverage hundreds of millions in federal dollars.

Republicans remained locked into budget cuts. Benge and Coffee, both lame ducks, might have been willing to cut a deal, in order to get on with the next phase of their lives, but intra-

party politics made it all but impossible – both faced intense pressure from their most conservative colleagues who remain convinced government is still too bloated.

It's a dangerous strategy long-term for the GOP, even in a state as red as Oklahoma, because eventually, lawmakers will face the reality that budget cuts are more than just numbers on a spreadsheet. They reflect the lives of real people – their neighbors, children, seniors, those needing a hand-up not a hand-out – victimized by a government-hating, cut-at-all-costs approach to governing.

The truth is, there's absolutely no reason to fire 5,000 teachers and cram our children into classes with 30, 40 or more students. There's also no reason to force 5,600 people into nursing homes – the most expensive treatment option – because of reduced funding for home health care.

And there's no reason to leave millions in federal matching dollars untapped just because a few hardheads in leadership equate a provider fee on hospitals – a fee endorsed by the hospitals themselves and already imposed in 20 states – to a tax increase.

The state's budget woes are easily solved: Repeal, delay or freeze some – repeat, *some* – of the \$5.6 billion in tax credits that state lawmakers enacted to reward special interests [read: deep-pocketed campaign donors] during times of plenty.

The budget cataclysm finally awakened legislative Democrats from their long slumber. They joined forces with Henry, strengthening his bargaining position as he worked to protect common education – by limiting further cuts to about 1% or 2% – and reduce cuts for other essential services, already reeling from 7.5% across-the-board cuts in the past year.

Democrats wrestled for weeks with a tough political decision: Help save Republicans from themselves by working with the governor to force a more compassionate budget that protects core services, especially for children, seniors and the poor? Or

See **REPUBLICANS** Page 19

Observations

Priorities

What work do we value most? Les Leopold asked himself that question, then did the math.

In 2009, the worst economic year for working people since the Great Depression, the top 25 hedge fund managers walked off with an average of \$1 billion each.

With the money those 25 people "earned," we could have hired 658,000 entry level teachers. [They make about \$38,000 a year, including benefits.] Those educators could have brought along over 13 million young people, assuming a class size of 20. That's some value.

What do hedge managers do? They run funds into which very rich people put money to make even more money. Hedge fund managers move the money around in very risky ways to get the most enormous yields possible.

The wealthy will have placed an estimated \$2 trillion into hedge funds by the end of this year. That's about \$6,500 for every man, woman and child in the U.S.

In the 1970s the marginal rate on those with incomes above \$3 million [in today's dollars] was 70%. Today, the effective rate on the 400 richest Americans is 16%, according to the most recent IRS data.

Try explaining to your kids why school programs in Oklahoma and across the nation are being cut while 25 shrewd gamblers are living like Pharaohs.

Root Cause

The Observer's general rule is "Stay Out of Other People's Bedrooms." But when it comes to social issues, we're there.

A new analysis by the Guttmacher Institute reveals that women living below the poverty line make up an increasing share of those seeking abortion care in the United States.

When you consider that Oklahoma is the fifth poorest state in the Union,

it becomes an Oklahoma issue.

In what the authors called the "most striking finding" of the report, Characteristics of U.S. Abortion Patients, 2008, the share of abortion patients who were poor increased by almost 60% over an eight-year period – from 27% of all women seeking abortion care in 2000 to 42% in 2008.

The analysis is based on a nationally representative survey of women obtaining abortions in the United States.

The authors note that while the data permitted the researchers to calculate the proportion of women obtaining abortions in each socioeconomic category, it did not provide the number or rate of abortions in the United States.

Aside from the shift in income status relative to choices about unintended or unwanted pregnancies, little changed in the profile of women obtaining abortions between 2000 and 2008.

Women in their 20s, cohabiting, black or poor "remain over-represented among abortion patients."

As in 2000, the vast majority of women seeking abortion in 2008 were in their 20s and 30s and already had children.

Women 20 years old and younger made up roughly 18% of all abortions, while those younger than 18 made up less than 7%.

This report is one of the reasons we have campaigned to get rid of tax credits and quit feeding the oil and gas monster – \$155 million this year.

How many poor Oklahoma women are suffering through the agony of abortion while Chesapeake, Devon, et al, rake in unprecedented profits?

Sad Report Card

Administrators across the nation are facing the reality of eliminating an unprecedented number of teaching jobs for the 2010-11 school year.



Oklahoma is no exception.

The projected cuts stem from the twin factors of a tight economic environment at the state and local levels and the end of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act [ARRA] dollars, which had been instrumental in saving jobs in 2009.

The new survey, which documents prospective personnel cuts state by state, is based on responses from 1,479 school administrators in 49 states, and finds that 82% of districts will eliminate 27,516 education jobs in 2010-11, and 53% will freeze hiring.

Based on survey results, AASA estimates that the national total for education layoffs will be 275,000 in 2010-11, representing 92% of the 300,000 jobs saved by ARRA.

With both houses of Congress already considering a second round of stimulus funding targeted to education jobs, the results of this survey make a startling case to bolster support for additional federal funding.

Experts calculate that 275,000 education job cuts will translate into an additional 82,000 job losses in other sectors, bringing the total job losses to 357,000.

Charter Myth

Just as the Republican Legislature – with a little help from a few Democrats – expands charter schools, they didn't do their research.

The majority of the 5,000 charter schools nationwide appear to be no better, and in many cases worse, than local public schools.

Celebrities and philanthropists rally around the few highly successful charters, but even in the present favorable climate, the challenge of reproducing these high-flying schools is daunting.

Observations by The New York Times at six charters in Cleveland and New York State yielded the insight that high- and low-performing schools "seemed to take pages from the same playbook": student uniforms, a longer day and academic year, frequent testing to measure learning, and tutoring for students who fall behind.

The difference is in how schools are

run, classes are taught, and school culture is nourished: It is like watching two couples dance a tango, one with poise and precision, the other stumbling to execute the intricate footwork.

It turns out that you need government accreditation and accountability to drive quality, and the human capital to make schools go.

Thus far it's just one more way to drain funds from the 47th lowest per capita student population in America.

PE A Must

Physical exercise is as important as math or English. Few American children need PE as much as Oklahoma kids – fifth most obese in the nation.

A new study from Ohio State University finds that eight out of every 10 preschoolers from two urban areas showed significant developmental delays in basic motor skills such as running, jumping, throwing, and catching, putting them at risk of becoming obese teenagers and adults, according to Science Daily.

"These fundamental motor skills – running and catching and throwing and kicking – are the movement ABCs," said Jackie Goodway, lead author of the study.

If children don't learn the ABCs, they can't read. And if they don't learn basic motor skills, they won't participate in sports or exercise.

The researchers studied 469 preschool students enrolled in urban, state-funded programs serving disadvantaged youth.

The children participated in tests of locomotor skills that included running, jumping, hopping, leaping, sliding, and galloping. They were also evaluated on object control skills through tests of throwing, catching, kicking, striking, dribbling, and rolling.

Results showed that 86% of the children scored below the 30th percentile of children nationwide, which is considered developmentally delayed.

Most people, even many educators, believe that motor skills just naturally develop in children, but this study shows that's clearly not true.

THE OKLAHOMA
Observer

www.okobserver.net

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

[ISSN 0030-1795]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PUBLISHER

Beverly Hamilton
bhamilton@okobserver.net
405.478.8700

EDITOR

Arnold Hamilton
ahamilton@okobserver.net
405.478.8700

FOUNDING EDITOR

Frosty Troy
ftroy@fullnet.net
405.525.5582

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

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

- Adapted from Thomas Wolfe

Observerscope

An early death has claimed OKC Radio Host Mark Shannon, a raging homophobe and racist. We hope he finds liberals in heaven because they are foremost in doing God's work.

Dart: To Republican legislative leaders for killing two bills that would have protected people living in trailer and RV parks – one to have an evacuation plan, another to provide a storm shelter. Both died in GOP-headed committees.

Approximately 1.4 million Americans, including over 25,000 Oklahomans, have lupus and 90% are women. Lupus usually strikes women between 15 and 45 and is two-to-three times more common among black women.

Laurel: To Rep. Lee Denney and Sen. Patrick Anderson for finally winning a law governing commercial puppy mills. It's the Commercial Pet Breeders Act – a beginning but not a total answer to cruelty.

Beware of web pages claiming to be crisis pregnancy centers. Forty-one are listed in Oklahoma but they are often deceptive fronts for anti-abortion groups.

Dart: To an outfit calling themselves Restore Oklahoma Public Education, issuing a press release claiming current per pupil average spending is between \$10,000 and \$11,000. It's actually less than \$7,000.

Twins sisters Allison and Margaret Engel have written a play, *Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit Of Molly Ivins*. It opened to rave reviews in Philadelphia, starring Kathleen Turner.

Laurel: To Sen. Jim Wilson and Rep. Mike Brown, both D-Tahlequah, for SB 1251 which prohibits insurance company's considering domestic abuse a pre-existing condition.

Fifty-nine of the state's 77 counties do not meet national standards of one physician for every 3,000 people. Thousands of doctors will be needed in the next 10 years.

Dart: To Republicans for pushing abstinence-only sex education in public schools. In 1965 7% of U.S. births were to unwed mothers. Last year it was 40%. An astonishing 72% of black births were to unwed moms.

Ex-Sen. Gene Stipe, 83, can't stay out of the headlines. He settled a federal case accusing him of selling title insurance after a felony conviction. It cost him \$100,000. The feds will think of something else to charge him with.

Laurel: To Currie Ballard, Assistant Secretary of the Senate, on being inducted into the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame.

Bravo! Sen. Mike Johnson, R-Kingfisher, who said so-called tax incentives and exemptions are all on the table. He proved it by passing out of committee a cut of \$31.5 million in "incentives."

Dart: To Franklin Graham, son of Billy Graham, who had an invitation to a Pentagon Prayer meeting revoked after he called Islam "evil" and said Muslims are headed for hell. Judge not lest ye be judged. Do we judge Christianity by the KKK?

The scandal-ridden Catholic Church, with 1.1 billion members, is losing four American Catholics for every new adherent. The decline now numbers 400,000. [The National Catholic Reporter]

Laurel: To Oklahoma House Democrats for turning up the heat on a sickening \$5.6 billion in tax incentives. Have the GOP corporate lackeys in the Legislature no shame?

Aw, shucks! Rep. Randy Terrill, R-Moore, won't get to show off with his proposal to pass an immigration law tougher than Arizona's. Speaker Chris Benge said no, so Randy had to hang up his clown suit.

Dart: To Oklahoma fat cat oil and gas operators picking up \$155 million in tax exemptions this year while the developmentally disabled face severe cuts.



Oklahoma City made the bottom 10 in projected job creation over the next three years, coming in at 197 out of 200 cities. [Forbes 5.19.10]

Laurel: To State Sen. Constance Johnson, D-OKC, named Public Official of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers. She works tirelessly for the have-nots of Oklahoma.

If the Legislature wants to show Oklahomans good faith, they will order the Tax Commission to quit withholding names of those receiving exemptions or tax credits.

Dart: To Senate Leader Glenn Coffee, hiring at \$5,000 a month a flunky for "advice" on redistricting the Legislature. Democrats are fighting mad about the waste of \$60,000 a year when elderly nutrition stations are closed.

The Legislature has wasted innumerable hours working on legislation and a constitutional amendment providing for an opt-out from ObamaCare. Wanna bet federal law prevails?

Laurel: To Dr. Michael Weisz, given the \$15,000 Stanton L. Young Master Teacher Award at the OU College of Medicine.

The Department of Human Services has spent \$2.1 million thus far defending a federal court lawsuit alleging that 11 foster kids were abused or neglected.

Dart: To those who worry that eliminating tax incentives would hurt the state attempting to attract films. How about the mentally ill? Nutrition centers, health care professionals, social workers?

Of course the Daily Disappointment opposes eliminating tax incentives. One of their owners received \$60 million over four years for bringing the Thunder to town.

Laurel: To ex-State Rep. Susan Winchester, R-Chickasha, celebrating because her bill that permits leaving babies at a public facility just saved twins babies left at a fire station.

Working pregnant women can now sue for discrimination in the workplace, thanks to Sen. Brain Crain, R-Tulsa, and his bill closing that loophole.

Dart: To legislative leaders declining a floor vote on a bill by Sen. Jerry Ellis, D-Valliant, taxing syrup used to make soda pop, raising \$60 million a year for the ailing Teachers Retirement System. [Our kids are the fifth most obese in America.]

Senate Leader Glenn Coffee, R-OKC, is honest about one thing – his habit of scheduling votes to make Democrats uncomfortable. "We've always done that," he said. That includes seven anti-abortion bills this session.

Laurel: To McAlester public school teacher Brenda Calahan, given the OEA's Political Activist Award. She had breathed new life in the Pittsburg County Democratic Party.

Tom Daxon, flunky writing for the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, proposes eliminating the OETA and the Arts Council budgets. OETA has the best TV newscast in the state at 6:30 each evening. We prefer eliminating Tom Daxon.

Dart: To Senate Minority Leader Charlie Laster, D-Shawnee, for ducking the vote on that disgraceful bill to require women seeking a legal abortion to answer a highly personal questionnaire.

Scary numbers: Public spending for federal, state and local governments was 24% of the Gross Domestic Product in 1950, 35% before the Great Depression, and is expected to hit 44% this year.

Laurel: To ex-State Sen. Darryl Roberts, D-Ardmore, attempting a comeback to replace the term-limited Johnnie Crutchfield. He is superbly qualified.

More than 98,000 Chinese students are enrolled in American colleges and universities – up 21% from last year. More than 60% are grad students and than 700 are in Oklahoma institutions.

THE OKLAHOMA Observer

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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



Letters

Editor, The Observer:

Just like a family that cuts back on luxuries when the breadwinner gets laid off, it's time for the Oklahoma Legislature to get their budget priorities straight. Cuts in the state budget are destroying essential services – programs for seniors, children and people with disabilities – while big business continues to get \$2 billion in tax credits and exemptions that keep them from paying their fair share.

The total exceeds the state budget shortfall for both 2010 and 2011.

For example, tax giveaways to venture capital companies have actually increased over 1,600% since the Republicans took over the state House of Representatives and Senate. Small business capital company credits have increased 1,326% since 2006.

Gov. Henry's 2011 budget identifies \$103 million that could be saved by eliminating or suspending carefully selected tax credits. This money could continue to fund meal programs and care givers for seniors and people with severe disabilities, who would otherwise end up in nursing homes at a much greater cost to taxpayers.

When lawmakers say they want to shrink the size of government, they think that only government workers will be affected. The truth is the impact falls heavily on the most vulnerable citizens who are already suffering due to a bad economy.

Oklahoma legislators, say no to subsidizing corporate greed. Say yes to the people of Oklahoma. Please get your priorities straight before it's too late.

Jackie Gaston
Yukon

Editor, The Observer:

I was horrified to read "Mexico's Drug Cartels Enriched by U.S. Dopers" by Norm Rourke in your April 10 issue. I am so irritated by the way people like Rourke casually connect drug cartels and cannibus consumption.

The primary reason drug cartels deal cannibus is because it is illegal. If the U.S. government were to legalize, regulate and tax the production of cannibus, there would not be a problem with cartels pushing the drug.

Over and over I have heard that cannibus is a gateway drug to more dangerous substances. The only relation between cannibus and substances like cocaine is that they are both controlled by illegal cartels. If cannibus were taken out the hands of cartels, there would be less likelihood that casual cannibus users would become interested in cocaine or other hard

drugs peddled by predators.

Alcohol is legal in the United States. If a person overdoses on alcohol, he or she is likely to die. Cannibus is illegal in the United States. If a person overdoses on cannibus, he or she will simply pass out.

There have been a number of studies linking crime to cannibus use. What those studies fail to recognize or publicize is that the perpetrators of those crimes were not simply under the influence of cannibus, but were additionally consuming substances like alcohol, cocaine or crack.

Most people who simply use cannibus are very mellow in nature. The most notable side effect from their use of the drug is that they get the munchies.

There has been much publicized research about a link between cannibus and lung cancer. Unfortunately, this research fails to account for the fact that most of the cannibus users tested were also heavy cigarette smokers.

I am sick and tired of people like Rourke publishing screeds that do not include all the facts. Cannibus should be decriminalized, regulated and taxed. Its users should be left in peace by the government.

Michael Camfield
Oklahoma City

Editor, The Observer:

Stay strong Obama supporters. I, too, have been the victim of some idiot yelling at me, "How's that hopey changey thing working for you?" I ignored the fool, but if it ever happens again, I'm ready. Hope and change is working just fine! Thank you for asking.

In the future, I will get out my cell phone and take a picture of any moron who yells at me like that. And his car tag, too, if I can. I encourage you to do the same.

Do these people really think our country would be in a better place if Grandpa McCain and that acid tongued bimbo Sarah Palin had won the election? Please!

I saw the video of Palin advising the teabaggers to harass people with Obama stickers on their cars and even going so far as to encourage them to hit any vehicle with an Obama sticker. But she is the Republican/teabagger darling which should tell you a lot about them.

Democrats do not act like that. As Chris Matthews said, "If the 2000 election had gone the other way the Republicans would have gone all Seven Days in May on us." And he's right. But Al Gore took it like a man



and moved on. For the Republicans, tyranny is losing an election, and having a black man in the White House is socialism.

Deborah Lewis
Garland, TX

Editor, The Observer:

I finally found time to finish reading the April 25 issue of The Observer, including all the little "filler pieces."

I was extremely disappointed to read the "Just So You Know ..." copy at the bottom of page 18. It should be considered beneath The Observer's long-standing tradition of integrity and decency. It is no more acceptable to pray for the deaths of Bill O'Reilly, Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, Ann Coulter and Sarah Palin than it is to pray for the death of President Obama.

When you print things like this, even in the spirit of humor, you lower your standards to the likes of the Wingnut that created the Facebook page [with over a million hits, last time I heard]. You can't have it both ways.

Please be more thoughtful about the items you select to fill space in The Observer. Surely there was something more appropriate you could have used.

Ronda Talley
Stuart

Editor, The Observer:

The article, "No Nukes in Oklahoma," [4.25.10] presents an interesting morality for one of those accumulating "we did this to ourselves" dilemmas. In this case, we are informed that the remains of our radioactive industry are so hazardous that we must keep the waste around for millions of years.

We aren't going to get rid of this material in any place that isn't part of our home world and it will be a hazard to some part of our future no matter how we deal with it in the here and now. That there is every indication that it will be part of our present for a goodly time leaves an active problem for consideration.

We created this particular problem as we were trying to address other problems. It seems the adult thing to do would be to admit we have a problem with one of our creations and mitigate it as much as possible to avoid afflicting our descendents with it.

It turns out that the portion of the problem with a persistence of millions of years is the fuel we created much of the stuff for in the first place. If we

are intelligent enough to extract and utilize the useful material from its own ashes, the truly useless residue will be effectively radiation free inside of 10,000 years. Since the problem material after the fuel is gone will be less hazardous and shorter lived, it seems more reasonably possible that we could isolate it from our descendents.

Picking up after ourselves will not necessarily be easy but there would be side benefits. The CO2 free power would be of some assistance in addressing an atmospheric/climatic matter we also seem to be implicated in. The practice at being responsible stewards of the planet might even have benefits in other areas.

Clinton Wiles
Oklahoma City

Editor, The Observer:

Al Gore and Co. promote nuclear expansion, now essentially out in the open, under the guise of greenhouse gas abatement. This murders fetuses, babies, children and older people.

How liberal is that?

Above Gore, ubercapitalists Gates and Buffett – nukes, nukes, nukes and greenhouse gas abatement. Nukes clearly increase global warming.

Greenhouse gases are a small part of the problem. Their abatement will do very little to solve the problem.

Yes, Gore sounds and looks good – but you will hate yourself in the morning. Say no to these creeps. Have some stones – look beyond the pretty words and faces.

Let's unscrew our grandkids.

Morton S. Skorodin
Stillwater

Editor, The Observer:

Wanda Jo Stapleton's "Mass Incarceration Belies Our Image of Colorblindness" [5.10.10] is a wonderful article revealing the injustices that seem to be swept under the rug by the worthless news media in this state.

My cousin did mission work in some of our Oklahoma prisons during her temporary stay in Purcell while care-taking her elderly mother. I have heard much from her regarding the sad situations in our prisons. I am forwarding your article to her as she no longer is in the Purcell area but has returned to her home in Texas. I know she will be most appreciative, as am I, for your article. I really enjoy reading your works! I am thankful for

See LETTERS Page 19

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.

Frosty Troy's Notebook

Prison Numbers



FROSTY TROY
Founding Editor

I grew up in McAlester, known for its vigorous fight to land the Oklahoma State Penitentiary at statehood. Colleges weren't much in those days but criminals were a cash cow.

I knew about what was happening at the prison when I was a youngster – my Dad's sister, Kate, was married to the man who headed the guards for decades.

He told many a wild tale of employees carting off food and other trinkets from the prison.

When I returned from Korea in the spring of 1952 Editor Howard Cowan of the McAlester News-Capital hired me until OU took up in the fall. My duties included Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at the prison.

I became fast friends with the chaplain, Rev. R.R. Reed. We would set on the steps of the chapel watching the men on a break, milling about the prison yard. Even then they separated themselves by race.

I played chess with a prisoner on death row who ended up being the last inmate to die in the electric chair – or as the locals called it, “ol’ sparky.”

When we were kids sleeping outside on pallets during hot summer days, when there was an electrocution, the legend had it that lights would dim in McAlester. It never happened.

When I went to work for the Tulsa Tribune I was eventually sent to the State Capitol. Before I knew it, I was covering prison stories again – including a legislative investigation of prison corruption.

I covered the riot in which inmates burned as many buildings as they could. I broke the story of the “hole” where inmates were slammed into a small storage facility covered with urine and feces. Gov. David Hall ordered it closed.

I broke the story of the deputy warden raiding the prisoners' accounts in the canteen fund – unless they wanted to be sent to the hole. He resigned.

I broke the story of a prison official and a local drug store getting fat selling drugs to inmates. I testified before a grand jury.

I have always maintained an interest in our prison system. I figured it was time for an update for Observer readers.

Just about everybody in Oklahoma knows we lock up a higher percentage of women than any other state. We rank fourth in the male prison population.

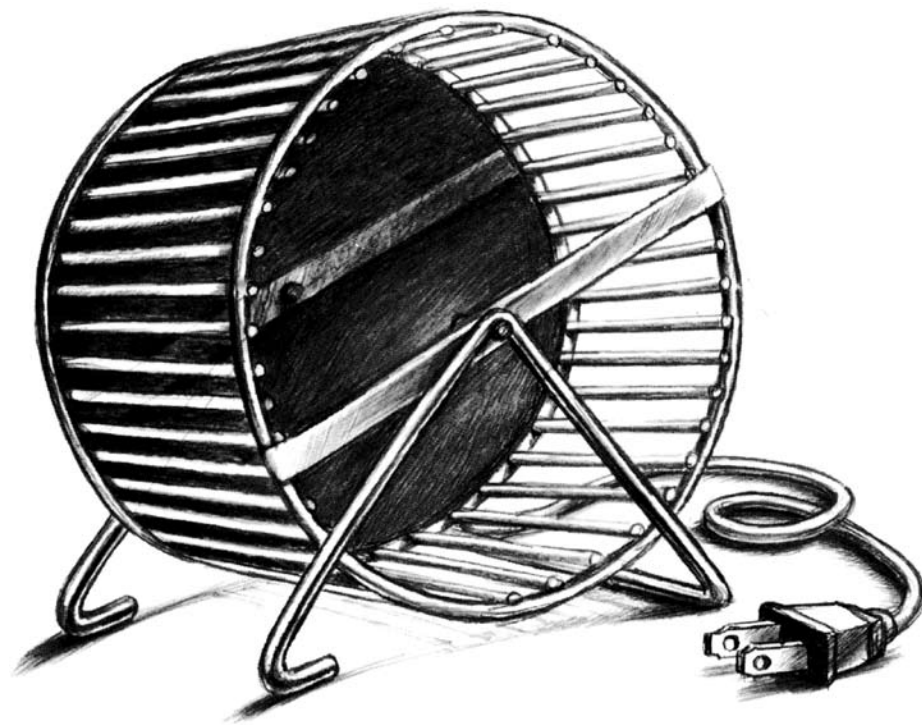
The prison system breakdown shows 22,855 males, or 89.2%, and 2,755 females, or 10.8%. Of the total, 13,591 are Caucasian [53.1%]; 7,788 are African American [30.4%]; 2,277 are Native American [8.9%]; 1,828 are Hispanic [7.1%].

It costs about \$64.35 per day or \$23,486 annually per inmate in maximum security. Medium security prisoners cost \$44.93 or \$16,000 a year. Minimum security prisoners cost \$44.93 per day or \$16,299 a year. Community-based prisoners cost \$47.99; work center inmates cost \$37.94 a day or \$13,847 a year; probation and parole inmates cost \$2.75 a day or \$1,002 a year.

There are 78 males and one female on death row. Of the total, 42 are white, 30 are black, two are Hispanic, four are Native American. The female is Caucasian.

Ever been curious about who they are and what they did? Here are the top five crimes:

- Distributing a controlled dangerous substance accounts for 4,268 prisoners – 16.7% of the population.
- Possessing or obtaining a controlled dangerous substance accounts for



2,846 inmates, or 11.1% of the population.

• Assault accounts for 2,741 prisoners or 10.7%; robbery 2,142 or 8.4%; rape 1,871 or 7.4%; non-violent crimes 13,499 or 52.7% and violent offenses 12,111 or 47.3%.

How many learned their lesson? The recidivism rate within three years was an astonishing 23.44%.

The department is justifiably worried that further budget cuts will harm the pitifully few programs inmates attend behind the walls.

More than 2,517 signed up for substance abuse programs; 1,566 entered the Thinking For A Change program, 3,374 attended education programs and 82 completed their GED.

The news isn't all bad. The cumulative number of offenders receiving community sentencing hit 16,840. As of February, latest figures available, 3,296 were in active community sentencing programs.

Prisoners in maximum security lockup hit 1,548, shy of the total Corrections capacity of 1,628. There are four maximum security facilities: Lexington, Mabel Bassett, McAlester state prison and the Mabel Bassett death row.

Medium security is provided for 5,944 inmates, with a total capacity of 5,997 through February. Seven facilities provide medium security.

Violent crimes account for 47.3% of the population or 12,111 inmates. Non-violent crimes are 52.7%, or 13,499 inmates.

Minimum security accounts for 8,055 in 16 institutions. Total capacity: 8,041.

Due to the large numbers sent to prison in Oklahoma – thanks to a Legislature that sends anybody they're mad at – Oklahoma has 486 in county jails, 1,264 in halfway houses and 4,714 in private contract prisons. In all, the state has 6,464 in contract facilities.

Corrections operates 16 work centers with a total count of 1,338 – well over the total capacity of 1,173.

There are 3,672 inmates on parole – 3,062 males and 610 females.

If the prisons take another budget hit – an almost certainty – the head of the guards predicts there will be riots and deaths of both inmates and guards. About 15% of the workforce would be laid off.

The number of prisoners is expected to hit 26,700 this month, with 53% committing non-violent crimes.

The Legislature keeps adding to the number, creating 24 new felonies this session, adding 19 more to serving a minimum of 85% of their sentence.

This insanity is termed by legislators as “tough on crime” but in fact, they're socking it to taxpayers.

Climate Is A Hot Topic

The last thing I want to do is get involved in an argument with someone who doesn't believe in global warming.

In fact, the first of several British investigations into the e-mails leaked from one of the world's leading climate research centers has largely vindicated the scientists involved.

The House of Commons' Science and Technology Committee said that they'd seen no evidence to support charges that the University of East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit or its director, Phil Jones, had tampered with data or perverted the peer review process to exaggerate the threat of global warming – two of the most serious criticisms levied against the climatologist and his colleagues.

In their report, the committee said that, as far as it was able to ascertain, “the scientific reputation of Professor Jones and CRU remains intact,” adding that nothing in the more than 1,000 stolen e-mails, or the controversy kicked up by their publication, challenged scientific consensus that “global warming is happening and that it is induced by human activity.”

The 14-member committee's investigation is one of three launched after the dissemination of e-mails and data stolen from the research unit.

I admit that the e-mails appeared to show scientists berating skeptics in sometimes intensely personal attacks, discussing ways to shield their data from public records laws, and discussing ways to keep skeptics' research out of peer-reviewed journals.

One that attracted particular Oklahoma climate-deniers was Jones' reference to a “trick” that could be used to “hide the decline” of temperatures.

The e-mails' publication ahead of the Copenhagen climate change summit

sparked an online furor, with skeptics of man-made climate change calling the e-mails' publication “Climategate” and claiming them as proof that the science behind global warming had been exaggerated or even made up altogether.

This is America and everyone is entitled to an opinion – even if it's wrong.

THE BEAR REMOVER

A man wakes up one morning in Alaska to find a bear on his roof. He looks in the phone book and, sure enough, there's an ad for “Bear Removers.”

He calls the number, and the bear remover says he'll be over in 20 minutes. The bear remover arrives and gets out of his van. He's got a ladder, a baseball bat, a shotgun and a mean old pit bull.

“What are you going to do?” the homeowner asks.

“I'm going to put this ladder up against the roof, then I'm going to go up there and knock the bear off the roof with this baseball bat. When the bear falls off, the pit bull is trained to grab his privates and not let go. The bear will then be subdued long enough for me to put him in the cage in the back of the van.”

He hands the shotgun to the homeowner. “What's the shotgun for?” asks the homeowner.

“If the bear knocks me off the roof, shoot the dog.”

Examining Our Collective Checkbook



ARNOLD HAMILTON
Editor

It's a rite of spring, graduation announcements in the mailbox from friends whose children are wrapping up their high school or college careers, poised to enter the next phase of life.

As I've visited with new college grads recently, I heard an anxiety in many of their voices, replacing the optimism of years past.

Though the economy is said to be improving, new hiring always lags behind. Some are applying nationally, but getting few nibbles. Others are headed to graduate school, hoping in part that the job market will have improved by the time they're finished.

Among the most heartbreaking: Those who long dreamed of educating children, frantically applying for the few vacancies posted – but knowing as many as 5,000 teaching jobs statewide are still vulnerable to budget cuts.

It's not all blue skies in the publishing business, either, but this is one time I can say I don't

envy those embarking on their careers. In fact, I have more than a little trepidation for both the short-term [our youngest son graduates from college next year] and the long-term [our first grandchild is just 15 months old]. What kind of Oklahoma, what kind of America, are we leaving the next generations?

As far as Oklahoma is concerned, we'll have a better idea when the 2010-11 state budget is finally written. It will reveal much about our immediate future: What our public schools will look like. How safe our highways and bridges will be. How well we care for our elderly, our mentally ill, our neglected or abused children, our working poor.

Moreover, it will say a lot about us as a people – and about our priorities.

When I was a youngster, I often heard ministers say that you can tell everything you need to know about a person by studying their checkbook. It was often mentioned in an effort to juice up the collection plate, but that doesn't mean it's not true.

In this case, think of the state budget as our collective checkbook.

Class Experience Key For Next Ed Chief

By Sharon Martin

Education reform is a common mantra. Change can be good, but before we do any more reforming, will someone please talk to the teachers?

Most change comes from the Legislature. We have to believe that most legislators have the good of children at heart. But have they studied developmental psychology? Have they studied best practices in the classroom? Have they spent any time in a situation where they have had to motivate, work crowd control, and teach?

Here are a few things I've learned from years in the classroom. Each student has a learning style. Students may not be able to learn things the way I learned them. Each child comes with a set of skills, a past, and a story.

NO ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL

Scientists and teachers know that every brain is different. What we call learning disabilities often are just differences in wiring. Each brain is wired in its way, and each student must be taught in his or her own way.

There are no wholesale prescriptions or generic brands in education. The kid whose father reads to her, whose mother has long discussions with her, whose grandmother plays dominoes with her, whose family travels with her will start school with a vocabulary and an understanding of the world that the kid sitting beside her may not have. Another child may have a deep knowledge of the community and its resources. Still another may be neglected and hungry. It isn't logical to expect teachers to get the same results with the same methods from each of these students.

ELECTING A NEW SUEPRINTEUDENT

This year, Oklahomans will get a chance to vote for a new state superintendent of schools. The first thing to ask any potential candidate is this: Have you ever spent time as a classroom teacher?

Candidates will tell you their educational philosophy. Unless that philosophy is grounded in real experience, it is useless or worse, dangerous. How children learn and how to teach them requires knowledge and training. Too many people who have never studied education think they have the answers for fixing education.

Teachers want reform, but it must be realistic and it must be based on research and science. Legislators, talk to teachers before you act. Voters, make sure our new superintendent is an experienced teacher.

Education reform might mean change, but unless teachers are involved, it might not be change for the better.

- The author is a retired educator living in Oilton

As our cover story makes clear, Oklahoma's spending priorities are seriously out of whack. Republican legislative leaders have engineered what is arguably the greatest transfer of public wealth to private interests, both individual and corporate, in Oklahoma history.

They've taken control of both houses of the Legislature – and have their sights on the governorship this year – a trifecta that would give them almost unchecked power to reward their corporate partners and further marginalize those in society's shadows.

Like it or not, rank-and-file Oklahomans must accept their share of the blame for this mess. Most are woefully ignorant of what is occurring at the state Capitol.

Far too many call tell you about Rush Limbaugh's ranting or Glenn Beck's weeping. And they know all about country couple Blake Shelton and Miranda Lambert's pending nuptials, 12-year-old YouTube sensation Greyson Michael Chance of Edmond and who's expected to start at quarterback next year for OU and OSU.

But they make no connection between taxes and services. Roads and bridges don't just appear magically, after all.

Furthermore, the GOP in Oklahoma has deftly harnessed anti-government Tea Party resentments, cleverly steering the focus to a Democratic president and his policies, especially health care.

What Oklahoma's teabaggers haven't yet figured out is they've been had.

Much of their furor reflects traditional populist resentment against the rich and powerful, but they're oblivious to the Republican end game, obsessing instead over conspiracy theories targeting Barack Obama's birth certificate and religion.

How bad must it get before Oklahomans begin to pay attention – and hold these legislators accountable?

THE OKLAHOMA Observer

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

... NOW DELIVERED THE WAY YOU WANT

	<p>IN PRINT - OR - ON-LINE</p>
	<p>SUBSCRIBING TO THE OBSERVER IS AS EASY AS 1-2-3</p>
<p>1. TOTAL ACCESS <i>Only \$60 for a full year</i></p> <p>Unlimited access to <i>The Oklahoma Observer</i> on-line and in print.</p> <p>One-year subscription includes 22 issues of our award-winning print edition sent to your mailbox, on-line access to each issue as it becomes available and on-line access to our national columnists and special features.</p>	<p>2. DIGITAL <i>Only \$40 for a full year</i></p> <p>One-year subscription includes on-line access to 22 issues of The Observer as it becomes available and on-line access to our national columnists and special features.</p>
<p>3. PRINT <i>Only \$40 for a full year</i></p> <p>22 issues of our award-winning print edition sent to your mailbox.</p>	<p>TO SUBSCRIBE, VISIT WWW.OKOBSERVER.NET</p>

Fallin's Campaign Feasts At Taxpayer Trough

By Wanda Jo Stapleton

Congresswoman Mary Fallin has periodically mailed huge postcards to constituents in her Congressional District 5. These magnificent mailers on page-size cardstock glisten with multi-colored photos and images on both front and back. This thinly veiled campaign material reeks of Fallin's ambition to be Oklahoma's next governor.

Oklahoma's taxpayers have unknowingly helped fund this Fallin enterprise; a sentence, in print too tiny for me to read without bifocals or a magnifying glass, says "This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense."

That's the sentence which prompted Keith Olbermann, commentator on MSNBC's "Countdown," to name Fallin the "Worst Person in the World" on his May 10 show.

Olbermann wasn't being literal. He simply exposes a "Worst Person" on each show to highlight behavior worthy of a boooo from the audience.

According to Olbermann, Fallin "like most Republicans claims to be upset about wasteful government spending. So upset that she sent out a flyer, beautifully made, to everybody in her district, in which she notes she voted against the stimulus bill, against health care reform, against the entire 2010 budget, and, quote, 'potential job-killing cap and trade legislation.' This so she can, quote, 'reduce the tax burden on all Americans.'

"Except, what is that bit of fine print on the front of that thing? This mailing was prepared, published and mailed at taxpayer expense. So you're going to reduce the tax burden on Americans by charging us for the spiffy, ego-trip postcards telling us how you're going to do it."

In contrast to Fallin's supposed frugality now, on Jan. 5, 2007, she voted against a measure called PAY-GO. This pay-as-you-go rule required that Congress find the funds for any new spending without increasing the national debt for our children to pay.

In addition to this latest postcard



In small print on the postcards was the following message: **This mailing was prepared, published and mailed at taxpayer expense.**

which blasts government spending, Fallin used taxpayer dollars for an earlier postcard to tell us how to prepare for tornado season, complete with slick images of a tornado,

wall cloud, and lightning. Of course, Fallin's photo was included plus her name in five places.

Name identification gives voters a sense of familiarity with a candidate

even though they pay little attention to what's otherwise going on. For example, voters might be too busy to question why a congresswoman going out of office would send this expensive mailer at taxpayer expense, even though local weather forecasters keep us thoroughly informed.

Then there was the fancy postcard indicating how much Fallin cares about the elderly.

What she didn't tell us is that in 2007, she voted against H.R.4 which would have empowered Medicare to bargain with drug manufacturers for lower prescription drug prices.

In conclusion, when words and actions don't match, isn't that hypocrisy? It's time for Fallin to whoop it up on her own dime and stop using ours to pay for hypocrisy as she campaigns for governor.

— The author, a former Democratic state representative, lives in Oklahoma City

Republican Lite Won't Cut It Anymore

By Kalyn Free

Editor's Note: Kalyn Free, founder of INDN's List, wrote the following letter to state Sen. Kenneth Corn of Howe, a Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor.

I noticed that your stationary [envelope and thank you card], which I just received, do not have a union bug on them. They don't appear to be printed in house, but hopefully I am mistaken and they were. Were these printed at a non-union shop? I certainly hope not – as you know better than anyone, organized labor is solidly behind your campaign.

I vividly recall in 2004 being at a meeting with you in Talihina in a crowd of less than 50 people, most of whom were my relatives, friends and supporters. You were not on the ballot and I was. You spoke before Dan Boren and me. Two of the statements you made that night were: "I am proud to be a pro-life Democrat" and "I am proud to have authored the constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage." Those statements have stuck in my craw for six years and every time your name has come up they have been replayed in my mind.

WHY DIVIDE DEMOCRATS?

At the time, I was outraged. Not because I was being attacked by Dan Boren for being pro-choice and many in the audience viewed your remarks as a slap against me. Not because you purportedly hold these personal positions, which I can only believe that you are true to your convictions, unlike so many other

legislators who are "privately pro-choice but can't vote that way." But, more importantly that you raised these two issues and chose to talk about them instead of the issues that unite Democrats and that rural Oklahomans need to hear.

We always say that "Democrats let Republicans define them." Well, that isn't the case when we have someone as eloquent and passionate as you, one of the brighter stars in our party, bringing these issues to the forefront for no reason. And, equally as important is because I will go to my grave believing that it was this amendment that cost us the House.

As soon as I got back in cell phone service area, I called Shannon and said, "I have made my last donation to Kenneth." Well, I didn't keep that promise and I did donate \$500 to your campaign recently. And I had every intention of maxing out to you and trying to help you raise more money after the primary.

'PART OF THE SOLUTION, NOT THE PROBLEM'

But I just can't do that now. I want to be part of the solution, not the problem. Which is why I am going to Arkansas tomorrow to volunteer on the Halter campaign [Lt. Gov. Bill Halter's Democratic primary challenge against U.S. Sen. Blanche Lincoln]. I firmly believe that until our party stops supporting Democrat sellouts, like Senator Lincoln for killing the public option and not supporting EFCA [Employee Free Choice Act], that we are doomed to Republican control.

See SELLOUTS Page 8

The Oklahoma Law And My Ultrasound

By Martha Kempner

Recently, while the Oklahoma Legislature was voting to override a gubernatorial veto and reinstate a law requiring women to have ultrasounds before allowing them to have an abortion, I was, well, having an ultrasound.

This is not the first state law that requires this procedure prior to abortion but this one takes it one step further and mandates that the doctor or technician set up a monitor so the woman can see it and that he or she describe the heart, limbs, and organs of the fetus. The law does not make an exception for pregnancies caused by rape or incest.

Perhaps it was because I'd just gone through the procedure or perhaps it's just the pregnancy hormones raging through my system but the thought of a woman being forced to go through this when all she wanted was to exercise her legal and moral right to terminate the pregnancy made me cry. That kind of manipulation is cruel.

WILL MINDS BE CHANGED?

My husband tried to console me by saying that I shouldn't worry, at those very early ultrasounds the images are so murky and the fetus has so little resemblance to a human baby that it will not successfully convince any woman to change her mind. He may be right – at my first scan, the fetus was more alien than baby.

Then again, I could see and hear a heartbeat, and despite the fact that the fetus was smaller than a grape, the magnified images let me see a tiny developing spine.

We've all watched those stereotypical scenes in movies and sitcoms where a couple goes to the OB and are chatting, fighting, texting, or otherwise not paying attention until the sound of the heartbeat stops them cold and brings tears to their eyes.

Clearly, changing the mind of women who are seeking abortions is exactly what the lawmakers are hoping to do but I'm not sure that whether they succeed matters. Just trying is degrading and damaging to women.

SOCIETY'S ROMANTIC FANTASY

I wanted to be pregnant, so for me the goal of the eight-week scan was to hear a heartbeat and confirm that this was a viable pregnancy. After all, at that stage of pregnancy one doesn't look pregnant or necessarily feel any different. It was heartening to learn that the home pregnancy test was right.

I wouldn't exactly say that it was an emotional experience for me but the thought "OK, there really is something in there" kept going through my head.

In my opinion, this isn't a thought that women seeking an abortion in early pregnancy should be forced to have.

Our society seems to have a romantic fantasy about the unplanned pregnancy that changes a woman's life for the better. Think about the Judd Apatow movie, *Knocked Up*, or the new Jenna Elfman sitcom, *Accidentally On Purpose*. We seem to enjoy the idea that an unexpected pregnancy can join two unlikely people together and create an instant loving family.

MOST DECISIONS WELL-REASONED, INTELLIGENT

One of the lawmakers who voted for this veto has clearly bought into such a vision saying that, "Maybe someday these babies will grow up to be police officers and arrest bad people, or will find a cure for cancer." In real life, though, it rarely works that way.

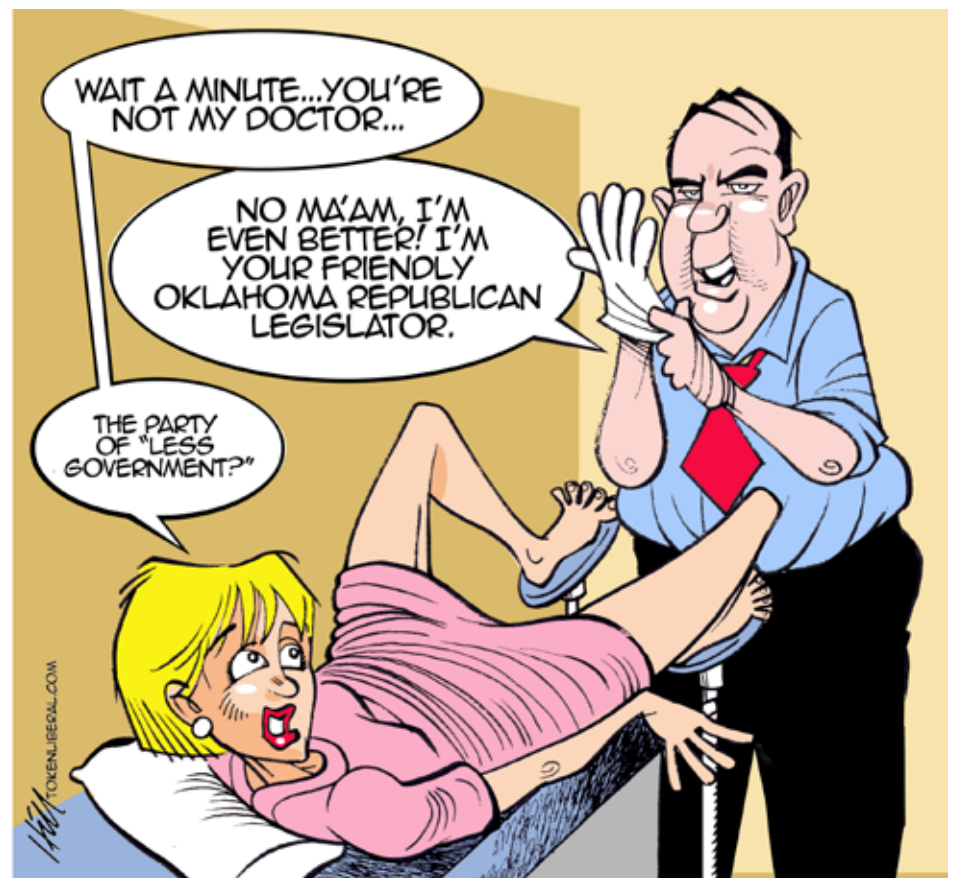
Most women who seek abortions know what they want; they have made a well-reasoned, intelligent decision that for whatever reason – be it relationship, money, job situation, or long-term goals – carrying this pregnancy to term would not be good for them, for their families, or for the resulting child.

These women do not need somebody to say: "Really, are you sure? Before you say anything let me just show you a heartbeat, your baby's heartbeat."

Such questions are manipulative, patronizing, and unfair.

Similarly, women who go to a clinic and are unsure of the option that is best for them should also not be exposed to such manipulations. These women need to sit down with an informed and impartial counselor who has no agenda of her own and is not required to promote the agenda of conservative lawmakers.

Unfortunately, the Oklahoma law has a second provision that is even more



– Steve Hill

insidious. This provision prevents women who have had a disabled baby from suing a doctor for withholding information about birth defects while the child was in the womb.

PROTECTING UNSCRUPULOUS DOCTORS

According to the New York Times, "... The bill's sponsors maintain that it merely prevents lawsuits by people who wish, in hindsight, that a doctor had counseled them to abort a disabled child."

That explanation seems suspect to me, and I agree with choice advocates who see this as designed to protect doctors who purposely mislead women to keep them from having abortions.

The ultrasound I had is referred to as an anatomy scan and typically takes place in the 20th week of pregnancy, the halfway point. The 45-minute procedure goes over every centimeter of the developing fetus and carefully measures the arms, legs, brain, and kidneys. It takes a detailed look at all four chambers of the heart, and checks blood flow through the umbilical cord. And, for expectant parents who want to know, it can determine the biological sex by carefully examining the genitals.

There was, in fact, a monitor set up directly in front of me. Half the time, my husband and I had no idea what we were looking at but certain things were obvious. The head looked like a head, possibly one of skeleton, but a head nonetheless. Each vertebrae of the spine was visible, and the hands and feet were unmistakable. Such tests answer the question "does it have 10 fingers and 10 toes?" long before birth. Of course, we all know that that age-old question is a bit of a stand-in for: "Is everything normal?" or "Is there anything wrong?"

'SHIVERS DOWN MY SPINE'

If the technician had found that there was no blood flow to one of the fetus's kidney, that the heart was growing outside its chest, or any other number of anomalies that can now be determined pre-birth, my husband and I would have had to make a decision about whether to continue the pregnancy.

In this case, we would have turned to the doctors not to "counsel us to abort a disabled child," but to give us the information we needed to make that decision for ourselves. To tell us based on the extent of the anomaly and the most up-to-date research what we could anticipate for this child.

The thought that the sonographer or the physician on call could withhold information from us in order to influence our decision sends shivers down my spine.

In this pregnancy alone, I have had six sonograms, all performed by different technicians and physicians, none of whom I have met more than once. I have no idea what their personal views are on abortion and I shouldn't have to care. But

See **ULTRASOUND** Page 10

SELLOUTS

From Page 7

Acting like Republicans, whether it be tax cuts to oil and gas companies or terrorizing women, hasn't worked so well for our party in our state.

I am deeply disappointed in you, and the other Democratic senators who voted to override the governor's veto on the two "abortion bills."

ABORTION BILLS 'UNCONSCIONABLE'

You and I clearly disagree on a woman or girl's right to control her own reproductive health. I have known that for a long time but have always still supported you, and other legislators in our state, whose views on choice differ from mine.

However, these last two bills are unconscionable – allowing a physician to withhold information and lie to a woman or man for any reason is criminal, unethical and unconstitutional. And forcing a girl or woman who has been raped to undergo invasive procedures and view images is abhorrent and cruel.

And giving doctors a license to lie to their patients and closing the courthouse doors for the victims is beyond unfathomable.

THE OKLAHOMA OBSERVER, MAY 25, 2010, PAGE 8

Someday you may be Oklahoma's governor. I hope your party at the State House supports you if you ever take courageous action.

I sent you and the other members of the Senate an e-mail a few days before the vote. I trust you read it. In case you did not, I am attaching it to this e-mail.

NO MORE DEFENDING VOTES

I will vote for you in November and I do hope you win. But I cannot host a fundraiser in our home. Although I don't have constituents, I do have a community of friends and supporters who support INDN's List and candidates when I ask. I am simply incapable of defending your votes and unwilling to engage in a futile effort, wasting your time and mine.

I wish you the best of luck. You have my number if you wish to talk.

Kalyn

– The author lives in Tulsa. Her earlier letter to Oklahoma senators was posted at www.okobserver.net on 4.26.10.

Terrill Again Plays Politics On Immigration

By Edwin E. Vineyard

How many of us one-time history scholars recall the term “mugwump?” While once so rich in meaning that it was found as an item on our American History examinations, it is now so lightly regarded that the MS Word dictionary spell-check highlights it in red, indicating that it is not in its vocabulary.

For the unenlightened, or those with shorter memories, a “mugwump” was a fence sitter, unwilling to take a stand or a side on an issue. Thus, sitting on the fence, his “mug” was on one side and his “wump” was on the other.

[Actually, Muggeowump was an Algonquin Indian word meaning “important person,” which became political in the election of 1884 when important Republicans bolted their party to support a Democrat for president.]

This writer has been something of a “mugwump” on Arizona, not ready and willing to come down hard on one side or the other.

In his pen role as the Militant Moderate, this writer has normally been unabashed in taking firm positions on the issues of the week and against extremist elements within our political spectrum. But thus far this writer has not felt really comfortable in weighing in on the loud, clanging, noisy issue of immigration law in Arizona.

No similar reluctance would be felt if the usual and customary extremists in the Oklahoma Legislature were to come up with a companion bill as Rep. Randy Terrill, R-Moore, is talking of doing.

Of course, all of us remember Terrill as the author of most or all of our protective legislation against Oklahoma’s vast, locust-like horde of illegal aliens who threaten to drown our schools, overwhelm our hospitals, and run amok amidst our law enforcement with their hosts of criminals.

Sometimes it worries us that Terrill seems to take such wide-eyed pleasure in persecuting those folk. He becomes so excited that he can scarcely talk, but nevertheless frequently finds a TV camera and does so.

Sometimes it may be necessary to enact laws and rules which are hurtful to certain segments of our society, but such should always be made with restraint and compassion. There is something basically wrong in taking pleasure from hurtful rule-making or law-making. Such people are troubling.

So, it is very troubling to see and hear the legislative sponsors of the Arizona bill as they vigorously defend what is obviously a harsh and hurtful bill. This bill appears to be not only harsh and hurtful, it appears to be mean-spirited. It is the latter that is more troubling. Mean-spirited people tend to offend and drive moderates away.

Unlike Oklahoma, Arizona is indeed a state with its government and its social services, as well as law enforcement, severely taxed by inbound undocumented immigrants and by the drug wars on the border, sometimes connected but not necessarily.

For this factual condition, many of us want to give the citizens there and their leaders some slack. If they push the envelope or redefine the line some, we are

What Makes Immigrants Willing To Risk All? – Page 10
Five Million Kids Have Alien Parents – Page 11

prone not to rush to judgment.

On the other hand, Oklahoma really has no valid excuse for harshness.

There are some very bothersome features of the Arizona enactments. First, listening to the conflicting views, there seems to be mean-spiritedness among those sponsoring and supporting the bill. These people seem angry, full of hate, and vindictive in their motives. They act callously and talk mean. Usually that is enough to put a moderate on the opposite side.

Secondly, there appears to be a lack of candidness and honesty on the part of those, like the governor, who approved the bill. It is difficult to understand how any logical person can look at the legislation and not see that racial profiling is required. One may sincerely disagree with lawmakers and the courts, and one may believe that there is nothing inherently wrong with racial profiling on the basis of empirical statistical data. However, one loses credibility when one tries to deny the obvious.

Like some it is difficult for this writer to believe that we must tolerate a sieve-like border. It is difficult to think that we cannot put armed personnel there to do what is necessary to prevent an unfettered flow of people, drugs, guns, and cash across that line.

Once that is said and done, it seems also that we should surely be able to devise humanitarian means of dealing with the undocumented alien workers already here. Obviously, this calls for some intense study, maybe some toughness, and a cooperative, bipartisan policy approach to the situation. Negativism of one party makes that seem beyond us on any big issue.

For an immediate reduction of tensions in Arizona, would these Tea Party conservatives there consider broadening the manner of the new law’s application to include themselves? The demand for “papers please” could be made universally – of ALL people, not just those who might look like illegal immigrants. That approach may meet constitutional muster, as with other laws. No selective enforcement. Apply the law to everyone.

We wonder what would then become the position of the radical Tea Party folk. One might expect a hue and cry about infringement of freedom, and all kinds of new conspiracy theories, if their law were applied to them. That could be a good lesson for all.

We might then conclude that if the law is not suitable for all of us to follow, then it is probably neither humanitarian nor constitutional to apply only to Hispanics.

– The author, AKA The Militant Moderate, lives in Enid. More of his essays can be found at www.okobserver.net.

Discrimination Against Autistic Children Ends

The Legislature has taken a small but important step for children with autism – insurance companies can no longer refuse other medical services for autistic children.

This was reported by one TV station as autism coverage – which it isn’t.

Sen. Jay Paul Gumm proposed the language as an amendment to SB 2045, which senators overwhelmingly approved. The amended bill passed both the Senate and House of Representatives and was signed into law by Gov. Brad Henry.

“During my work with families who have children with autism, this was one of their highest priorities,” said Gumm, a Durant Democrat. “We have families who have children with autism who pay their premiums and expect to be treated fairly. This amended bill will ensure that very thing.”

The senator said dozens of families told him some insurance companies routinely deny claims filed on behalf of children with autism for illnesses and mala-

dies unrelated to the diagnosis of autism.

Such claims were denied because, thanks to the Republican legislative leadership, Oklahoma does not require health insurance policies to cover diagnosis and treatment of autism and most insurers specifically exclude autism.

“For me,” Gumm said, “this issue speaks to the fundamental moral question of ‘fairness.’ Regardless of anyone’s stand on whether insurers should be required to cover diagnosis and treatment of autism, one fundamental fact remains: If a child with autism breaks an arm on the playground or gets sick, they should be covered the same as any other child.

“It shows that we can set aside partisan differences and find that common ground on which we can build a better Oklahoma for all our citizens, and this was a critical step toward fairness for our children and families who are struggling with autism.”

STDs Epidemic Impacts Oklahoma’s Young

Approximately 19 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year in the United States. About one in two sexually active young people will get an STD by age 25 – and most won’t know they have it.

In Oklahoma, STDs mirror the national epidemic, with those in the 15 to 24 age group having the highest rates of infection.

In 2008, there were 14,757 reported cases of chlamydia in Oklahoma with the majority of those cases in females [75%]. Oklahoma ranked 20th out of 50 states for reported chlamydial infection in 2008, a rate of 405 per 100,000 population.

“Up to 70% of females who have chlamydia have no symptoms,” said Debbie Purton, RN, MPH, acting chief of the HIV/STD Service at the Oklahoma State Department of Health [OSDH]. “That’s why we recommend that all sexually active women 24 years of age and younger be screened for chlamydia.”

Since 1998, gonorrhea rates in Oklahoma have been relatively stable with a 7% increase from 2007 to 2008. In 2008, there were 5,207 reported cases of gonorrhea in Oklahoma with the majority being female [57%]. Oklahoma ranked 11th out of 50 states for reported gonorrhea infection in 2008 with a rate of 143 per 100,000 population.

“Both rates and consequences of chlamydia and gonorrhea are far more severe among women than men,” added Purton, “and as a result of these infections,

women can suffer long-lasting effects from the damage to their bodies, and that damage can ultimately prevent them from being able to have children.”

In 2009, the OSDH identified an outbreak of syphilis occurring among teenagers younger than age 18 in central Oklahoma. This was alarming because syphilis is an STD most often seen in older age groups and it can have significant health outcomes if undiagnosed and untreated.

In addition to affecting Oklahoma’s youth, racial and ethnic disparities exist in African Americans who have the highest rates by population of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis.

Consistent condom use is one effective way to prevent becoming infected with STDs. Once infected, STD screening and early diagnosis is vital to prevent serious health consequences and increased transmission. Screening is particularly important since many STDs often have no signs or symptoms.

County health departments have STD clinics that test for gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis. They also offer HIV testing since infection with other STDs increases the risk for acquiring HIV. For more information, contact your local clinic.

A list of county health departments can be found on the OSDH website: <http://www.health.ok.gov/>.

BOOKS

What Makes Immigrants Willing To Risk All?

By Mike Nobles

CROSSING WITH THE VIRGIN

Stories from the Migrant Trail

By Kathryn Ferguson, Nonna A. Price, and Ted Parks

The University of Arizona Press

224 pages, \$17.95

"When a whole nation is roaring patriotism at the top of its voice, I am fain to explore the cleanness of its hands and purity of its heart." – Ralph Waldo Emerson

This is a timely book.

The news is full of accounts of efforts to pass legislation, both on the state and federal level, dealing with illegal immigration. Undocumented workers and illegal aliens are considered by many to be both an economic and security threat to the United States. Indeed, Arizona has just passed legislation, signed by the governor, that makes it a crime under state law to be in the country illegally and requires local law enforcement officials to demand proof of citizenship from people they suspect are illegal immigrants.

Most if not all of the stories dealing with this problem are written in the context of political, economic, or security issues and both sides of this very contentious issue have valid points, though they seem to be overshadowed by political posturing that lends little to solving the problem.

While these issues are undeniably important there has been precious little written about the individuals coming north across the U.S.-Mexico border; the reasons for their willingness to risk their very lives to cross the line; the oft tragic results of such efforts; and the U.S. citizen volunteers that work to provide them with water, food, and medical attention as they pursue the American dream.

HUNTED ON AMERICAN SOIL

This book corrects that oversight and provides stories told by the migrants themselves about their experiences crossing a desert that has claimed more than 4,000 lives in the past 10 years.

Perhaps Charles Bowden said it best: This is the story "... of our fellow human beings as they are hunted on American ground."

The stories in this book are true stories of immigrants crossing from Mexico into the United States in what the Homeland Security Department calls the Tucson Sector. It is 262 miles of borderland from the New Mexico and Arizona state line to Yuma County in western Arizona. It is perhaps the most inhospitable terrain in the U.S., this Sonoran desert. The temperatures in the summer typically reach 115 degrees and fall below freezing in the winter. There is virtually no water. It is so dangerous that for many years it was thought to be a natural barrier to illegal immigration. It has been described as a killing field and for good reason.

The estimated 4,000 deaths over 10 years are just that, an estimate. Authorities have found that many bodies. There are others that have disappeared in this desert and never been found. No one has even guessed at that number.

It is a dangerous, deadly place that is unforgiving. Make a mistake here and one seldom gets a second chance. I have personally traveled this desert in a Jeep and can attest to the brutality of the environment. I did it once. I doubt I will try it again.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

And yet thousands of illegal immigrants continue to attempt to cross this desert into the U.S. every year. Who are these people? Why do they risk their lives and the lives of their children on such a trip? What happens to them if they are caught?

ULTRASOUND

From Page 8

this law, in essence, allows their opinions on abortion to be more important than my own.

LEGISLATION NO JOKING MATTER

In truth, I was a little disappointed with the latest technician to whom I was assigned. While the other ones had smiled and said things like "oh that looks good" throughout the procedure, this one had a serious look on her face that bordered on a scowl and stayed quiet unless prompted. Not the reassurance I needed.

At one point, confirming the amniocentesis's finding that the fetus is a girl, she said, "Yes, I don't see a pee-pee." I later joked to friends that the sex educator in me felt compelled to reply, "OK, but do you see labia?"

For women in Oklahoma, the technician who they pick out of the phone book or to whom they are referred is no joking matter – it can now mean a lifetime of raising a disabled child because somebody else thought they should. Moreover, while I was able to trust my technician's professional opinion despite our personality differences, until this law is struck down by a court, and I have to believe it will be, women in Oklahoma can no longer have such feelings of trust.

And that, even without a system full of pregnancy hormones, is enough to make me want to cry.

– Martha Kempner is a writer, consultant, and sexual health expert who has authored numerous publications for young people, parents, educators, and policymakers. This essay first appeared at www.rhrealitycheck.org.

The authors are members of a humanitarian group known as the Samaritans that travel the desert trails offering food, water, and medical care to immigrants in an effort to reduce the number of unnecessary deaths occurring almost daily in this Arizona desert. They tell the stories told to them by the immigrants of the experiences encountered along the trail.

These are on the ground, up close and personal accounts of children dying of thirst, of bandits that rob and rape the migrants, of the actions of Border Patrol agents that are demeaning and many times inhumane, and of the mostly church-sponsored humanitarian efforts to provide some aid, comfort, and basic humanity to those surely less fortunate.

In all there are 39 stories that put a human face on this so-called immigration issue.

TREATED LIKE DOGS

The reader will learn of immigrants in detention when requesting water being subjected to a bucket placed in the middle of the cell and Border Patrol agents whistling for them to come and get a drink, much as some would a dog.

The story of immigrants coming to the U.S. to be with their family and find work is not new but maybe the story of a 40-year-old man named Carlos who lost a foot hopping a train and his subsequent search for work will raise your aware-

See IMMIGRANTS Page 12

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

FIND TODAY'S HOTTEST CURRENT AFFAIRS TITLES AT

Full Circle

1900 NW EXPRESSWAY
OKC OK 73118
405/842.2900

THE OKLAHOMA Observer

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

WHY WAIT?

Now you can subscribe to *The Oklahoma Observer* at the Full Circle Books checkout counter and receive your free book certificate on the spot!

IMPORTANT RESTRICTIONS

To take advantage of this offer, visit Full Circle Books, where you can subscribe to *The Oklahoma Observer* at the checkout counter and receive your free book certificate immediately. You also may subscribe to *The Observer* using the coupon on page 3 of this issue or by visiting our web site www.okobserver.net. You then will receive via U.S. Mail a certificate from Full Circle Books for a free book (\$20 limit). The certificate is not transferable and must be presented in person at Full Circle Books in order to receive your free book. No facsimiles, printouts or photocopies will be accepted as a substitute for the original Full Circle certificate. This book offer is for new subscribers only. Not valid with any other offer.

Five Million Kids Have Alien Parents

By Michelle Chen

Children are the hidden casualties of America's war on immigrants, and the passage of Arizona's new racial profiling legislation could open up countless opportunities for local law enforcement to break up families by putting undocumented parents on the fast-track to deportation.

A report from the DC-based advocacy group First Focus outlines the possible consequences for children who wind up alone after their immigrant parents are apprehended.

According to the organization's estimates, "over five million children in the United States with at least one undocumented parent are at risk of unnecessarily entering the child welfare system when a parent is detained or deported." [Of all the children with at least one undocumented parent, a large majority are citizens by birth.]

MASSIVE BUREAUCRACY

Once inside the system, children often fall into a massive bureaucracy that can traumatize youth and parents, and when language barriers and poverty enter the mix, separated family members might have only a dim awareness of their children's fate or the legal process for keeping custody within the family.

The result is that on top of the nightmare of permanent separation across national borders, these parents face especially high risk of losing parental rights under domestic law.

When a child enters the child welfare system, immigrant parents face huge obstacles in reuniting with the child.

For example, if a parent is detained or deported, they cannot take part in child welfare proceedings like family court or case plan requirements, which creates the risk of permanent, unnecessary separation of the child from their parents.

It's not just the undocumented who are at risk. First Focus notes that ICE enforcement actions "have resulted in the apprehension of thousands of immigrants for minor non-criminal offenses as well as the deportation of thousands of lawful permanent residents."

DEPORTED PARENTS

According to one government study, over a 10-year period, an estimated 108,000 parents with U.S. citizen children were deported.

One of the most disturbing possibilities is a convergence of three huge institu-



tions – immigration, criminal justice and child welfare – where family members are roped into a Kafka-esque bureaucratic limbo where advocating for their families could be punished by deportation.

Just as SB 1070 could deepen tension between communities of color and police, the collateral consequences in the child welfare system could leave all immigrant families alienated from the social service system.

A rational solution to that dilemma is to pass legislation, such as a humane proposal offered by Rep. Jose Serrano, D-NY, that would compel the government to respect the need to keep families intact during deportation proceedings.

Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-CA, has another solution: deport children of the undocumented, too, even if they are citizens.

Pointing to the "cost" of unauthorized immigration, Hunter recently argued, "we're not being mean. We're just saying it takes more than walking across the border to become an American citizen. It's what's in our souls, not just walking across the border."

© The Huffington Post

American Brotherhood? It's Still Them Vs. Us

By Harry T. Cook

Them ... to borrow the third-person plural pronoun in the objective case, or the title of Joyce Carol Oates' 1969 novel about lower-class tragedy, or that of the 1954 black-and-white film about irradiated ants running amok. And let's not forget the mid-1960s Northern Ireland rock band of the same name.

For purposes of this essay, though, "them" is the "not us." In alphabetical order, here's who they are or used to be. For some sets of "thems" you'll notice there is more than one slur available. Evidently it was thought necessary at one time to have a variety of pointed insults to hurl.

Ay-rabs, beaners, camel jockeys, chinks, commies, dagos, dykes, faggots, frogs, garlic eaters, hunkies, jungle bunnies, kikes, krauts, limeys, micks, niggers, nips, ruskies, slant-eyes, spics, wetbacks, wops and yids, to name a few.

Personally, I fit into about three – maybe even five – of the groups thus referenced, although I don't remember ever being called any of those names. I suppose, however, that should there be a sudden uptick in the immigration of poor Italians or Germans [are there any of the latter?], someone could research my genealogy and rat me out. Those two nationalities above cover three of the epithets by which I might be described.

I recall being asked at age eight or so by my Methodist Sunday school teacher how it felt to be part of the only Jewish family in town – a very

small, rural hamlet in northern lower Michigan to which we had recently moved. I had no idea what she was talking about, although by then I knew Jesus had been a Jew. So I guessed I would be in pretty good company.

At the dinner table that day I inquired of my mother if we were Jewish, hardly understanding what I was asking. She, a first-generation Scottish immigrant, paused a second or two, fork between plate and lips, and said, "Ask your father." He merely nodded in the affirmative and kept on eating.

Ever helpful, I couldn't wait to get back to Sunday school the next week to confirm my teacher's suspicion and to say that it felt fine to be a Jew like Jesus, whatever else a Jew might be.

Dad told me later that my Sunday school teacher had been very much out of line, and that, except to the people involved, it didn't matter in America whether anybody was Jewish or not Jewish. That man should rest in peace, having passed on something invaluable to his children.

In fact, we do not know whether or not we may have Jewish forebears in our family tree. Speaking for myself, I would rejoice if we did – and, by the way, I'll bet we do.

For some reason, our family was presumed to be Jewish. After all, we had moved to that insular village from Detroit, which in those days had a telephone directory full of last names that ended with vowels gener-

ally denoting immigrants. However, we must have been thought to be harmless Jews, if Jews we were, because nothing much seemed to come of the matter.

Other "thems" have not had it so easy. Because of a national paranoia juiced up by 9/11 and the Bush II Administration's quick pre-emption of the craze in a politically calculated appeal to fear, our airline security system has been forced to stereotype ay-rabs and camel jockeys.

With recent legislation right out of Berchtesgaden via the Reichstag, the State of Arizona is trying to turn its beaners and wetbacks into the European Jews of the 1930s and '40s. "Your papers!" As if police do not already have authority to demand identification of those whom they have detained for cause.

The dykes and faggots are right up there on the Public Enemies list along with the aforementioned ay-rabs and camel jockeys, beaners and wetbacks. Demonized off and on by politicians trying to find a toehold for electoral advantage, our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters simply want to enjoy life, maybe even marriage, in peace and quiet. Bizarrely, that brings out the worst in some people who, with all the blind instinct of a hive full of bees, buzz around seeking a "them," any "them," to taunt and persecute.

I cannot bring myself to type in full for a second time in this essay the infamous "n" word, but you know the one I mean. Despite studied denials

to the contrary, this is the place on the spectrum of "thems" where at present the friction is.

From Nov. 8, 2008, to Jan. 20, 2009, most of the nation seemed to have been buoyed by unalloyed joy and just plain relief. We had elected the candidate who was by any measure superior to his opponent. The victor has clearly Negroid features, an Arabic middle name and was born of a mixed race marriage in a place that on the date of his birth had been a state for all of 348 days.

For all too many, Barack Obama has become the target of unfocused and often unwarranted anger over real and imagined ills. In effect, he has been called a "ruskie" and a "commie." He has been compared unfavorably to Hitler. [And may I ask what comparison to Hitler would be favorable, save to a neo-Nazi?] And, yes, I have heard people speak of Obama using the "n" word and have had to catch my breath and then restrain myself from undertaking a physical response.

Obama is the big "them" right now. Just listen, if you can, to Sarah Palin, Rush Limbaugh and the other talk-radio maniacs – an army of snipers whose sole aim seems to be disruption for the sake of disruption.

I'm pretty sure Katherine Lee Bates was not thinking of "thems" when she wrote these concluding words to her "America the Beautiful": "And crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea."

– The author lives in Michigan

Coburn At It Again

Obama Denied Choices For His Administration

A group of Democratic senators offered up scores of requests to approve 108 stalled Obama Administration nominees – and Republican Sen. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma objected to every one on behalf of his GOP colleagues.

Sen. Claire McCaskill led the charge on the stalled appointments, calling the secret Republican holds “sneaky.”

The Democrat from Missouri continued by comparing Senate Republicans to petulant children trying to hide wrongdoing.

“I’ve got to tell you, if they were my kids, I’d assume they were doing something they weren’t proud of. I would assume that, if they were doing something sneaky. And that’s what this is, it’s sneaky because they’re not stepping up,” McCaskill said.

Coburn is the only GOP senator who has complied with Senate rules and published his name and reasons for holds in the Congressional Record.

CHALLENGE ISSUED

“Step up. Own it,” McCaskill said, challenging the anonymous senators who have placed holds blocking Obama nominees.

Coburn contested the notion that Republicans are blocking nominees to prevent President Obama’s Administration from functioning at full force.

“I agree we out to be forthright with the reasons we hold individuals,” Coburn said. “I think I can defend my principles to the hilt. And I think in front of 100 commonsense folks in this country, I can get 85 of them to side with me.

“So I’m not afraid to do that and I’m willing to be honest and transparent and straightforward. But the impugning of motives really worries me on this, because it has nothing to do with not wanting President Obama to have his people.”

Oh really? This is the same Dr. Coburn who, upon delivering a baby for an



unmarried Muskogee girl, tied her tubes without permission. He was sued but it was no contest with a Muskogee jury.

Coburn went on to question the existing Senate rules on so-called secret holds, which state that senators must publish their identities and justifications for holds within six legislative days.

“At some point in time, I think it would be wise ... that we get a parliamentary ruling on what the rule really means, because I think there is some discussion,” Coburn said.

“I don’t doubt that the intent of what was passed was exactly what we intended to put out there. But I think the interpretation or how it may be read is subject to some debate, and it would be great to have a parliamentary rule on that.”

Sens. Ron Wyden, D-OR, and Chuck Grassley, R-IA, are working on new legislative language, which Democrats hope would put an end to the debate over holds. McCaskill has a letter signed by almost the entire Democratic caucus, as well as Republican Susan Collins of Maine, promising to not engage further in the practice of secret holds.

10,000 Union Members Hit Wall Street Greed

Taking to the streets of downtown Manhattan, 10,000 AFL-CIO union members shouted and jeered at the offices surrounding them, demanding three major changes to Wall Street culture.

The first is to call off the lobbyists fighting regulatory reform. The second is to stop the incessant focus on market speculation over business lending. The third is to chip in money for job creation initiatives.

“Our history and our heritage teach us that America is about more than making easy money and looking out for No. 1. Our lives and our livelihoods are all bound together. And we are all paying the price for those who knew no limits on their greed,” AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said.

“Eight and a half million lost jobs – that’s the price of greed – that’s the real

cost of bankers’ bonuses and private jets and cute tricks like the one that got Goldman Sachs in trouble.”

The remarks were far more condemning in tone than those offered by President Obama during a speech at Cooper Union in which he urged financial industry titans to join him in passing reform. But the underlying message was largely the same: the mess made by Wall Street still needs cleaning.

The rally, one of the largest in recent memory to take place at the epicenter of the financial world, was timed for the same hour when the trading bells closed.

Dozens of individual unions were in attendance, with a slow march down a six-block route followed by Trumka’s speech at the iconic bull at the corner of Wall Street and Broad.

Times Are A-Changin’ – Just Not Much

By Norm Rourke

In the movie *Driving Miss Daisy*, Miss Daisy’s [Jessica Tandy] driver Hoke [Morgan Freeman] takes her to a dinner where Dr. Martin Luther King is speaking. Miss Daisy in a moment of exuberance proclaims: “I think it’s wonderful the way things are changing,” referring to the [slow] improvement of racial attitudes.

Hoke, muttering to himself, says: “Things changin’, but they ain’t changed all dat much ...”

That could be said of the obscene pay and benefit package corporate CEOs continue to receive while the companies they supposedly lead lose billions. No matter how much political posturing, chest thumping and side show Senate hearings like to make us think things are changing – they aren’t.

Every day we read of another CEO raking in millions with stock options [which translate into big bucks no matter what the company’s PR people say] that continue to make American CEOs the most overpaid in the world.

REWARDED FOR LOSING BILLIONS?

How is it they can oversee a company losing billions and still get fat cat pay packages? I’d like someone to explain that to me.

I’d bet my last Confederate dollar if their secretary did as lousy a job as they do, he/she wouldn’t be getting a raise and most likely wouldn’t have a job.

At the very least, if the company was doing poorly financially, the secretary along with many other ordinary employees wouldn’t get a dime in raises or benefits.

But not Mr. Fat Cat CEO. No matter how badly the company does, they continue to get millions in salary and equal millions in “stock options” and other accounting buzz-word benefits.

Most recently we’ve heard about the CEO of American Airlines continuing to get a hefty salary and all the other financial perks while pilots and some ground crew people took pay cuts to keep the company solvent.

Then we have Oklahoma’s own Chesapeake Energy that reportedly lost millions. But its CEO still receives his multi-million-dollar salary and, yes, all the usual \$\$\$ perks that go with it.

STOCKHOLDERS WILLING TO SIGN OFF

However to be fair, we must remember that stockholders – the investors – approve these ridiculous pay packages. And since stockholders expect a return on

their investment [an understandable expectation] why do they reward a CEO so lavishly of a company that’s losing money?

Why do they continue to keep him/her around if the company is on the wrong side of the ledger sheet?

Mr./Ms. ordinary employee of the same company would be canned in short order if they failed to do their job or perform up to expectation. They certainly wouldn’t be rewarded for being a sorry supervisor, manager or someone responsible for performance.

Meanwhile the game goes on: Much pontificating by politicians, many lines of type in print media and sound bites on TV about excessive CEO salaries and bonuses of companies that are losing money.

Yep, ol’ Hoke had it right: Things might be changing [but not when it comes to obscene CEO salaries for poor performance], but they aren’t changing all that much.

– The author lives in Beggs

IMMIGRANTS

From Page 10

ness of the tragedy unfolding daily in this county.

The story of “Juan Alberto Martinez Ramos” and his effort to retain some dignity during legal proceedings that had all the earmarks of a sham will bring tears to your eyes if you are not careful.

This is a must read book for anyone remotely interested in the human side of the migrant problem. Yes, there is a migrant problem but it should be remembered it is a problem of human beings as well. The migrant problem is not an abstract question. These are real people that are suffering and dying on our watch.

The University of Arizona Press is to be praised for publishing such a book. They are located in the middle of a firestorm over immigration and to have the courage to offer this book at this time is truly commendable.

– The author, co-founder of *A Gathering of Writers*, lives in Tulsa

Palin Makes Millions Saying Dumb Things

By Daniela Perdomo

You've got to hand it to Sarah Palin. She is nothing if not devoted to spouting her tired, nutty talking points. Indeed, it doesn't matter what's happening in the world, Palin will deliver what the rightwing masses want to hear, especially if they're paying big bucks for it – which they usually are.

In her latest gig, the Tea Party darling has truly outdone herself. In a speech to a Republican crowd gathered in Kansas City, Palin declared that off-shore drilling will be the linchpin in the United States' efforts to achieve energy security and overall prosperity.

Talk about bad timing. Since April 20, British Petroleum's Deepwater Horizon oil rig has been spilling oil into the Gulf Coast at a rate of at least 5,000 barrels a day. Already, the spill is about the size of Puerto Rico.

WORSE THAN EXXON VALDEZ

This environmental disaster is expected to ultimately be much worse than the last big oil spill, caused by Exxon Valdez in 1989 off the coast of Alaska, Palin's very own home state.

You almost want to hope against hope that Palin hadn't heard of Deepwater Horizon yet before she started harping about off-shore drilling as the solution to our nation's problems, but she actually referred to it – calling it “very tragic” before adding: “I want our country to be able to trust the oil industry.”

Fantastic. Ladies and gentlemen, is Sarah Palin a performance artist, an incredibly shrewd businesswoman or just very dense and lucky? Signs point to all of the above.

Her commitment to saying exactly what rightwingers want to hear – reality is always extraneous – has made her a very wealthy woman.

SHE'S A BRAND NAME

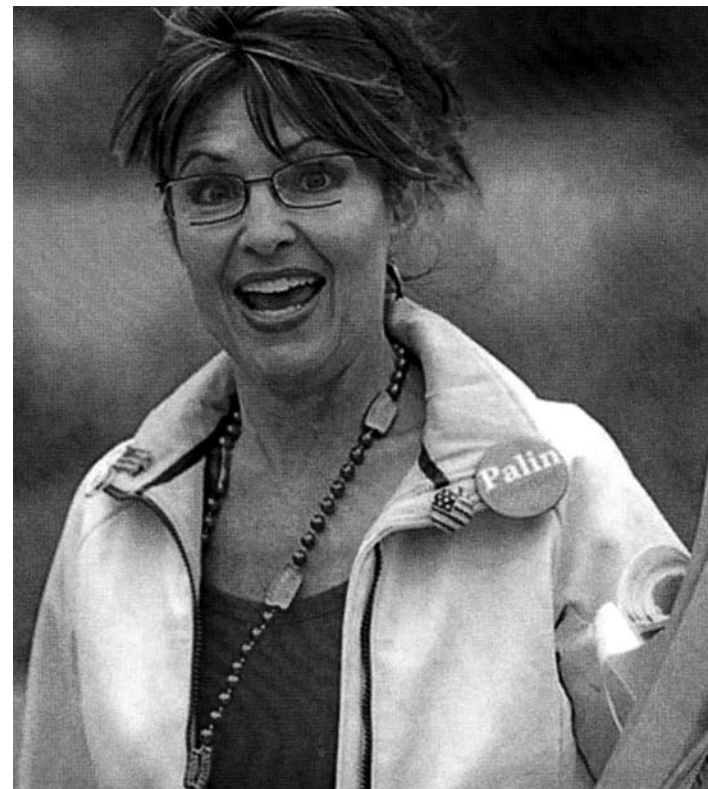
Palin has become a business and brand unto herself, even as what she says almost always defies logic or is merely a less-elegant regurgitation of the talking points available nightly on Fox News or on the crazy end of the AM radio dial.

Ever since she appeared on the national stage as John McCain's disastrous but highly-entertaining running mate, Palin's special ilk of folksiness and unlearnedness has resonated deeply with many Americans.

When she saw the White House slip away, going back to her lame job as governor of Alaska didn't seem good enough.

Moreover, when she got back to Wasilla, she faced \$500,000 in bills from the “Troopergate” scandal, something her \$125,000 job wasn't going to cover. According to Palin observers, since quitting her job in Juneau she has gone on to amass a \$12 million fortune.

Then you have to add in the stupefying success of her autobiographical book,



which sold 2.2 million copies and has earned her a second book deal with HarperCollins.

FOX, TLC AND LECTURES

Palin also made \$1 million when she signed a three-year contributor deal with Fox News this January, and she'll be making another \$250,000 for each of the eight episodes of her TLC show, which to environmentalists' chagrin will focus on Alaska's unrivaled wilderness.

Although her first foray into television, *Real American Stories* on Fox News, was universally panned and didn't attract all that many viewers, Palin hasn't painted herself into the television corner.

In fact, she's one of the highest-paid speakers on the lecture circuit. Earlier this year, she made headlines when it was revealed that the Tea Party had paid her \$100,000 to speak at their first convention in Nashville.

NEARLY EQUALS BUSH

That's only \$50,000 less than George W. Bush commands for “motivational” seminars these days – and he actually got to the White House.

While Palin has not outright declared an intent to run for president in 2012, she has flirted with the idea, joking with Sean Hannity that a Sarah Palin-Michelle Bachmann ticket “sounds kind of cool.”

Palin is going after stardom, having learned that politics – particularly right-wing politics – can be monetized. After all, being president of the United States can be kind of lame, what with all that work. Plus, it pays only \$400,000 a year.

– The author is a staff writer and editor at AlterNet

'Hokey, Changey Thing' Workin' Out Great

Sarah Palin recently had this to say ...

“That bumper sticker that maybe you'll see on the next Subaru driving by – an Obama bumper sticker – you should stop the driver and say, ‘So how's that hokey, changey thing workin' out for ya?’”

This is my answer...

Pretty damn well, actually. In just one year President Obama ...

- Passed Healthcare Reform [ending preexisting conditions, giving small business subsidies for providing insurance, Creating 3.2 million healthcare-related jobs over the next 10 years, closing the Medicare donut hole in drug coverage, ensuring coverage for all kids up till the age of 26, covering 32 million Americans, expanding Medicaid to cover the rest, all while cutting the national debt by \$100 billion] – Check.

- Signed into law tax cuts for all middle income families, and 95% of all Americans – Check.

- Signed an arms control agreement with Russia to dismantle nuclear weapons – Check.

- Reauthorized SCHIP to cover all children – Check.

- Saved the entire stock market from collapsing [from a low point of a Dow of 6,000 within a month of Obama taking office to close to 11,000 just a year later, basically preventing millions of retirement accounts from getting wiped out] – Check.

- Ended the ban on travel for people with HIV – Check.

- Stopped the dismissals of homosexual individuals serving in the military by the Pentagon [it's the first step to dismantling don't ask, don't tell completely] – Check.

- Ended the federal crackdown on medicinal marijuana centers in California – Check.

- Passed into law mortgage fraud protections – Check.

- Ended the ban on stem cell research – Check.

- Passed student loan reform, and used the savings to significantly increase financial aid loans and grants – Check.

- Engaged in diplomatic dialogue with Middle Eastern countries, instead of using language like “Axis of Evil” that achieves nothing other than to piss them off some more. – Check.

- Passed credit card reform [minimizing predatory lending, making the terms of credit cards clear, eliminating arbitrary rate increases] – Check.

- Since the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 have had the new job loss numbers from their peak right as Obama took office, go down steadily month after month, every single month like clockwork to the point that finally, this month is going to have job growth in the six figures [a trend expected to accelerate this whole year] – Check.

- Reversed the ban on sending foreign aid to countries with legal abortions [The Mexico City Policy] – Check.

- Signed the expanded hate crimes bill – Check.

- Helped stem down employment discrimination by passing the Lilly Ledbetter Act – Check.

- Extended unemployment benefits, helping millions of Americans stave off bankruptcy until the economy recovers – Check.

- Drew down troops in Iraq for a 2011 withdrawal date – Check.

- Drew down Gitmo detainees and making preparations to close it by 2011 – Check.

- Increased the forces in Afghanistan and brought to justice 500-plus major al Qaeda senior leaders in the past year [more than the Bush Administration brought in all eight years combined] – Check.

- Saved the entire U.S. auto industry [GM and Chrysler] from going bankrupt thus preventing dozens of major factories and hundreds of dealerships from closing their doors – Check.

- Saved banks from going bankrupt to the point that they're profitable again and have now paid back all of government loans and bailout funds in full and with interest – Check.

- Signed into law, new mileage and emissions standard for cars and SUVs – Check.

- Working on education reform and financial regulatory reform so banks can't pull this crap again – the very next thing on his list.

It's been a hell of a productive first year for him. He made good on more than 90% of what he promised while running for election. I can't think of many presidents who accomplish that much in eight years [especially on issues as big as healthcare reform]. And that's just what I can remember. Do you guys have anything to add?

If you don't think that list is impressive, visit www.politifact.com for few dozen more accomplishments in his first year that I haven't even had the chance to

See HOPEY, CHANGEY Page 15

Obama's Feminist Roots Yield Kagan

By Joe Conason

Someday, when Americans have learned to live the true meaning of our creed, a Supreme Court nomination of a woman, a Latino, an African-American or any other variety of human being – including a gay man or woman – will provoke no comment or concern. Until then, we should applaud every step toward that future. The latest is President Barack Obama's choice of Elena Kagan to become the third female justice among the nine justices on the nation's highest court.

Beyond the inevitable and proper inquiries about the character and views of his latest nominee, Obama's decision tells us something important about him, too. Surely he appreciates her reputation as a conciliator who listens to all sides. He is probably reassured by the fact that the Senate easily confirmed her last year as solicitor general.

But what this nomination reminds us is that he is not only the first African-American in the Oval Office, but the first president raised on feminist principles, as well.

INVOKING KAGAN'S MOTHER

As he stood next to Kagan in announcing her selection, Obama referred to her late mother, a public elementary school teacher who showed a special interest in bright little girls.

"I think she would relish, as do I," said the president, "the prospect of three women taking their seat on the nation's highest court for the first time in history – a court that would be more inclusive, more representative, more reflective of us as a people than ever before."

Certain exceptions on the far right aside, the potential elevation of Kagan has been met with admirable restraint so far.

Critics have noted that her written record is thin compared with previous nominees, especially for a former Harvard Law Review editor and Harvard Law School dean. At 50, she is relatively young, lacks extensive experience in a courtroom and has none as a judge [thanks to the Republican senators who refused to permit a hearing when President Clinton nominated her to the federal bench].

THRIVED ON MERIT

The daughter of immigrant parents, a lawyer and a teacher, she was a highly talented girl who won admission to the finest colleges and universities, strictly on merit.

We may have reached a milestone when nobody complains that she was chosen as an affirmative action candidate. Perhaps any Democratic president would have nominated two women in succession to the court. Perhaps a Republican president will eventually do likewise.

But it is nevertheless worth noting that this president did so now – and that he grew up in a family of independent-minded feminist women who were unfazed by

Lack Of Judicial Experience Hardly Unusual

By Danny M. Adkison

President Ford, although he was only president during the second half of President Nixon's term [with the dubious distinction of never having been elected to either the presidency or the vice presidency], got one. President Carter, who defeated Ford and went on to serve a full term, got none. President Obama will soon get his second one.

President Obama is in the process of replacing the one appointment President Ford made to the U.S. Supreme Court. Justice Stevens, who recently turned 90, will retire at the end of the court's term in June. If a majority of the U.S. Senate consents, Elena Kagan will be the second person President Obama has placed on the court.

What do we know about the membership of the Supreme Court?

First, the Constitution states that Supreme Court justices [in fact, all federal judges] will be nominated by the president and then appointed on the "advice and consent" of the Senate. The term of all constitutional federal judges is "good behavior" which is interpreted as life tenure.

LESS THAN 20 YEARS SERVICE

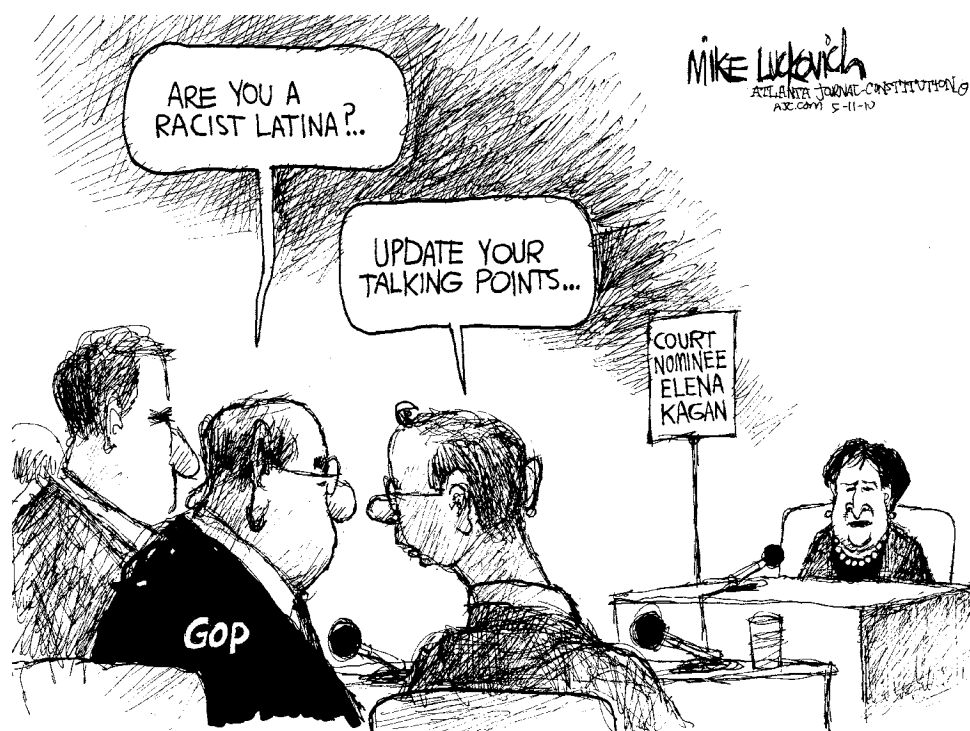
In spite of this, two-thirds of all Supreme Court justices have served less than 20 years. The average length of time for serving on the court for all justices is about 16 ½ years.

The average number of years served for chief justices is slightly less, 15 years. While some Associate Justices get promoted to chief [President Nixon appointed William Rehnquist as associate and then President Reagan promoted him to chief justice], this is not the norm. Of the 17 individuals who have served as chief justice, only five of those started as an associate justice.

Justice Douglas, who was appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt, holds the record for the longest tenure at almost 37 years. Justice Thomas Johnson, appointed by President Washington, served one year and two months.

President Washington got the most appointments with eleven. That was mainly due to the fact that he had to fill the entire court at the beginning of the republic, and, in addition, because the court was not a prestigious office in the early years. The primary explanation for this was circuit riding. Even though the first Congress created an intermediate level of courts there were no permanent judges to preside over them; thus, Supreme Court justices were required to travel throughout a "circuit" to provide this level of judicial appeal.

THE OKLAHOMA OBSERVER, MAY 25, 2010, PAGE 14



What would the rightwingers have done if President Obama nominated Jesus to the Supreme Court? – Page 15

a culture of male domination.

OBAMA'S UPBRINGING

Remember that his mother, Ann, though unlucky in marriage, was deeply persistent, adventurous and professional in her career as an anthropologist. This "girl from Kansas" brought her children with her to distant lands, and even left teenage Barry with his grandparents for a time while she worked abroad.

Recall also that his beloved grandmother Madelyn Dunham, whom he knew as "Toot," was a working woman who rose daily before dawn to arrive at the bank where she toiled for more than 20 years until, at long last, she won promotion to vice president. Owing to her gender, her advancement came far more slowly than she deserved – and the fact that she earned more than her husband was often a source of friction at home.

Today, there is nothing unusual about a bank vice president – or a peripatetic academic – who happens to be female. Back when Obama was growing up, however, those two brave women shaped his outlook profoundly.

We cannot yet know how three female justices will change the culture of the court and the jurisprudence of the nation. But the dream that Elena Kagan cherished and pursued just became a little easier for other girls to imagine.

© Creators Syndicate

Military Tribunals Vs. Civil Courts

In Terror Cases, A Role Model For Others

By Walter Jenny

Shortly after noon, a vehicle with 100 pounds of dynamite and 500 pounds of cast iron shrapnel explodes at the corner of Wall and Broad Street in downtown Manhattan. Thirty-nine people are killed, hundreds more injured, and the stock market closes in a panic.

A prediction of things to come? No, for this act of terrorism took place almost 90 years ago, on Sept. 16, 1920.

Nobody was ever arrested or convicted for the 1920 Wall Street bombing. A note in a mailbox a block away implicated anarchists. Comprised mostly of Italian immigrants, they were protesting poor labor conditions, capitalism, inflation and oppression by the federal government.

Their eloquent firebrand was one Luigi Galleani, who was deported to Italy in June 1919 out of fear that he was part of a conspiracy to assassinate President Wilson. An anarchist, after all, had assassinated President William McKinley in 1901.

ANTI-AMERICAN PROTESTS

Galleani's disciples included Nicola Sacco and Bartolemeo Vanzetti, who were indicted five days before the Wall Street bombing, on Sept. 11, on shaky charges of armed robbery and murder. Their subsequent convictions and executions in 1928 sparked anti-American protests around the world.

In 1917 Congress adopted the Espionage Act, which made it a crime to speak or write against our involvement in World War I. After anarchist bombings escalated, Congress adopted amendments prohibiting "any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States."

That was followed by the Anarchist Act in 1918, which made it legal to evict any non-citizen for mere membership in an anarchist organization or possession of anarchist literature for the purpose of dissemination. Immigration policies also shifted preferences away from southern Europe in favor of northern Europeans.

Anarchists reacted in 1919 by sending at least 38 package bombs to prominent judges and public officials who had supported or enforced the deportation laws. One target of two bombings was Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, who responded by rounding up over 10,000 immigrants in what became known as the Palmer Raids. Nearly 500 immigrants were eventually deported, and terrorism in the name of anarchy has gradually abated.

VIOLATIONS OF FREE SPEECH

Today we would recoil at the manifest violations of free speech and due process. But all this took place in an era before Miranda warnings, court-appointed legal counsel, international human rights treaties and civil rights reforms.

The American Civil Liberties Union, in fact, was founded during this time in an

effort to protect the rights of those threatened with deportation.

There were undoubtedly abuses when viewed through the tinted glasses of history; as at today's Guantanamo prison, some might have simply been in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong ancestry.

But it's notable that the American judicial system was able to deal with the crisis without resorting to military tribunals. Although judges and prosecutors and juries faced intimidation and reprisal from foreign nationals, there was a consensus that civilian courts were the proper forum for criminal acts.

ANARCHISTS THEN, TERRORISTS NOW

While the United States had effectively "declared war" on anarchists, no state of war had been declared between the United States and Italy. There was also no indication the weak Italian government was encouraging the terrorist acts – in fact, Benito Mussolini's rise to power in the 1920s was in part an effort to stifle anarchists in Italy.

Military tribunals are intended to try members of enemy forces during wartime. Even during the Civil War, in most cases military tribunals were not used where civilian courts were still functioning.

Simply declaring war on terrorism, as we have declared war on drugs and war on poverty, isn't enough to invoke their use in lieu of civilian courts on simple criminals, regardless of the gravity of their crimes.

Finally, military tribunals aren't a guarantee of maximum punishment. Of the 177 Nazi officials tried by American military judges, only 12 death sentences were issued.

IMPORTANCE OF CIVILIAN COURTS

Sacco and Vanzetti, fairly tried or not, were tried and convicted in a Massachusetts state court. The foreign nationals who bombed the World Trade Center in 1993 were tried and convicted in federal court.

The underwear bomber, who tried to blow up an airliner on Christmas Day, has been arraigned in federal court. Faisal Shahzad tried to set off a truck bomb in Times Square this month, and the courts there are fully competent to try him for doing so.

To imply that these constitutional courts are somehow incompetent or insufficient to try these individuals is an insult to one of the three pillars of our federal government – the very role model we urge other nations to embrace.

To do anything less means the bad guys win – that our system of government isn't worthy of respect.

Let's not lower our standards to their level.

– *The author lives in Edmond*

This Court Choice Would Have Been Heavenly

Editor's Note: Before President Obama nominated Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court, one report had him poised to tab someone the rightwing noise machine wouldn't have dared oppose. Or would they?

President Barack Obama is expected to nominate Jesus Christ, an immigrant originally born to a virgin mother in Bethlehem, to fill the new vacancy on the Supreme Court. Although Mr. Christ is over 2,000 years old, He is immortal, so Democrats and Republicans expect that He will serve on the high court forever or until He decides to start the End Times. Republicans are expected to fight the nomination on the grounds that Mr. Christ would radically move the court to the left. The GOP is also concerned that, despite decades of controversy and speculation, Mr. Christ has never revealed his position on abortion. Mr. Christ, according to many authorities, is expected to oppose the death penalty in all forms. Michael Steele, the head of the GOP national committee, issued a statement: "Christ is a complete mystery to us. He won't reveal His physical appearance and many of His positions are unknown or the subject of speculation. He is a stealth candidate. Why won't He reveal himself? Who does He think He is?"

Republicans are reportedly outraged that Mr. Obama even considered Mr. Christ, who has been widely quoted for his sentiments supporting the poor over the wealthy. In a Facebook post, former half-term Alaskan Gov. Sarah Palin called for an investigation into the Bethlehem chapter of ACORN because of what she termed the "highly suspicious" coincidence that both President Obama and Mr. Christ had each spent three years as community organizers. In her post, Palin also wrote that "more and more of good God-fearing smalltime Americans from hardworking smalltime towns from great parts of this real America, West, South, East, North, are seeing more and more every day that Christ is a community organizer. We don't need another community organizer in the White House!"

Rep. Michelle Bachmann, R-MN, asked, "We're not even sure where He was born. Why is He afraid to show us his birth certificate?" Bachmann also announced that she would vote "no" when the Christ nomination came before the House of Representatives. Later, her congressional staff released a statement saying that the congresswoman had forgotten that the House does not vote on judicial nominations.

According to Rush Limbaugh, "Christ doesn't know anything about free enterprise. This is part of the Obama conspiracy to drag us to socialism. If this guy is approved, I'm moving to Costa Rica." Sobbing, Glenn Beck attacked Christ's support for the separation of church and state, telling his audience "You know who else wanted a separation of church and state? Hitler."

Several Catholic priests were contacted for comment but refused to discuss

the issue, and, even though they weren't asked, all empathetically denied that they had personally molested any children.

Democrats are optimistic about their chances of shoving Mr. Christ down the throats of Americans using normal constitutional and parliamentary procedures. Many Democrats are hopeful that Mr. Christ's past associations with prostitutes will earn him at least one Republican vote, that of Sen. David Vitter, R-LA.

If confirmed, Christ will be the first Supreme Court Justice who has at least one American city named after him: Corpus Christi, Texas.

– *Author unknown*

HOPEY, CHANGEY

From Page 13

read all the way through.

I would love to see someone in the media compile a more comprehensive version of this list to at least cover all that this administration has accomplished in the past year and two months.

P.S: When exactly did posters of America's first black president painted in white face become socially acceptable?

P.P.S: Why do Democrats do such a piss poor job of standing by and talking up their own accomplishments. The Republicans have no problem sticking to even ridiculous talking points like death panels and accusations of fascism.

But the Democrats can't even show a chart of the actual national debt for and spending by President Bush vs. President Obama, a chart of the stock market, or a chart of monthly job losses since the recession started, in 2007. Every month, the number of jobs losses had been going up, higher and higher, month after month until a few months into Obama's term when the taxcuts and the stimulus were implemented into law. Since then, the job loss numbers have been steadily going down, month after month, at nearly the exact same rate they went up. Right till this month when job losses stopped completely, and the economy has finally started to add new jobs again.

The Dow Jones was at 6,000 a year ago. Now, a year after the bailouts that successfully saved key industries, including the entire U.S. auto industry, on the verge of failure, the Dow is back up to 11,000. And companies have started reporting profits and have started hiring again.

The stimulus paved the way for the recovery.

– *Blog posted by wikoogoo at the Daily Kos*

Nuclear War Few Willing To Acknowledge

By Bob Nichols

Politicians and talkers of all sorts drone on endlessly about Global Thermonuclear Weapons and suck all the oxygen out of a room when you're talking about any other subject.

Reliable sources say nuclear war targeting requires about 300 actual nukes.

The thousands of nuke weapons in the inventory in addition to the required 300 are pointless overkill for politicians to prance around about. They go on and on about reducing the gross number of nukes that are ready to go. It is all an absurd and ridiculous theater for ignorant civilians who are fooled into thinking politician X or Y has done the world a favor.

It is great for fast talking politicians. Nuke weapons talk builds fear. It is great in the run-up to elections. Fear makes people vote stupid. It is the same everywhere.

American liberals and conservatives can't handle the truth about nuclear war. Nothing wrong with that. Most people can't. People will talk in circles forever to avoid the truth or just plain go and hide.

The Pentagon, the American civilian political leadership and the CIA led anti-nuke front groups encourage the confused, misled and be-guiled American people to talk about global thermonuclear weapons all they want. Ever helpful officials will even happily send all kinds of slick PR to "facilitate" energetic, endless, pointless discussions about thermonuclear weapons. Weapons that will never be used.

Why do they do that?

Well, actually it is because the big thermonuclear weapons from the ever useful B-61 Dial-A-Yield right down to the 155mm atomic cannons that would kill or maim almost everybody on Earth are a convenient diversion from the real nuclear war American military forces are tasked to fight in the Middle East, Central Asia and Asia right now – every day.

The Department of Defense and the American political and economic leadership have no intention of using the thermonuclear bombs – Hydrogen Bombs, though. They are cover for the actual, ongoing, 20-year-old, covert nuclear war being fought with hundreds of thousands of tons of nuclear munitions like the weaponized uranium 30mm shell and plain old dumb bomb. Not to mention the very high tech, patented and JDAMed GBU 39; but then, it is just a skinny version of a dumb bomb that can fly.

In overall terms of radiation, though, the nuclear war on the Middle East, Central Asia and Asia is the



equivalent of hundreds of thousands of Hiroshima- or Nagasaki-sized nuclear bombs. Even those weapons, way back in 1945, were just a big depleted uranium poison gas bomb with a very small built in nuclear device for dispersion.

If you are or were in the last 20 years of American wars, and in the theater on the ground, you probably got zapped with radiation. The worst part is, it never goes away. You will carry the radiation legacy with you till you die.

That is just the way it is. It's like Agent Orange and it's radioactive. The worst of both worlds.

There is no easy way to tell definitely, though. It requires a laboratory with a Mass Spectrometer and a Geology attachment; there are only about 50 of those in the world.

Of course, the civilian populations are the targets. They number in the billions and war fighters are drawn from their ranks. The weaponized uranium gas does its deadly job as a force multiplier on them, too. Fertility, health and intelligence are negatively affected by the poison gas.

From Kabul to Baghdad to Mecca to Jerusalem there is nothing like weaponized uranium gas and aerosols to put a crimp in people's style

and zero out men and women's fertility. The annual monsoons send the lethal radioactive poison to India and China, the future enemies of the U.S. military.

About three million faithful Muslims a year make the journey to Mecca on their personal Hajj and sample the radioactive dust from the war zones and Kuwait.

The winds take the deadly gas molecules everywhere; weaponized uranium has even been found in the Antarctic. President George W Bush's attack with weaponized uranium gas took nine days to ride the winds to England. The U.S. forces' poison gas is worldwide in a year. The stuff just gets more deadly the more finely divided it is – not safer. You can't dilute this poison enough.

Knowledgeable sources put the radiation burden at many millions of Becquerels per square mile in the target areas. Monsieur Becquerel was one of the early French pioneers in radiation physics. Today it is just bad, real bad. There is no way you can be in theater and not get that poison on you and in you. Worse, of course, if a person happens to live there. There is no escaping it.

The U.S. military's nuclear munitions were developed by the recon-

stituted and renamed Poison Gas Committee from World War I. They were approved for use by the World War II Manhattan Project. Individual assassination with nuclear methods was approved in the 1950's. Nuclear munitions were field tested in the 1973 Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur War. The heavy-duty industrial base to manufacture, transport, "test" fire, store and ship nuclear munitions was put in place in the United States over the decades since 1945.

Unfortunately, the radiation poisoning is worldwide. But, how do we know the purpose of the long nuclear war of choice? The U.S. Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab and the U.S. Army know exactly where the radioactive aerosols go on the wind. The U.S. military and political leadership know the purpose.

One thing is unmistakably clear: The weapon of choice, Uranium Oxide, is a war crime and is genocidal.

Livermore Nuke Lab and Picatinny Arsenal work for the DOD and the commander in chief. The crashing sperm concentration of men in New Zealand, Switzerland and Israel and many other countries from the U.S. military firing weaponized uranium is just collateral damage; too bad, just the way it is.

The most incredible thing is that Iran, the former Yugoslavia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the 'Stans, Saudia Arabia, Kuwait, Israel, India, China and other nations are in a nuclear war and the people there don't even know it.

Do the leaders of all these countries know they are in a nuclear war?

That is a good question and everybody is entitled to their own opinion. What everybody is not entitled to is their own facts. They do have one thing in common: Their countries are being genocided by the U.S. military.

Uranium oxide as a weapon stands by itself as whole countries crumble before it and the U.S. onslaught. Acknowledged or denied, it makes no difference to the Uranium; it makes you sterile, it cripples you, then it drops you like a stone. Depending on how much you get, it takes anywhere from months to years.

The fact that it will kill the U.S., too, is irrelevant and beside the point.

As the old saying goes, "He who dies with the most toys wins."

– The author is a Project Censored Award winning writer and a San Francisco Bay View correspondent. A former bomb maker in a U.S. government factory in rural Oklahoma, he reports on the two nuclear weapons labs in the Bay Area. He can be reached at duweapons@gmail.com

What's Up @ The State Capitol?

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

twitter

<http://twitter.com/okobs>

WHEN LOVE FADES ...

Last night I was sitting on the sofa watching TV when I heard my wife's voice from the kitchen: "What would you like for dinner, my love? Chicken, beef or lamb?"

I said, "Thank you, I'll have chicken."

She replied, "You're having soup, a--hole. I was talking to the cat!"

Hey, Union-Busters: Your NMB Days Done

By Leo Gerard

Corporate CEOs, union-busting lawyers, and conservative politicians who pander to the rich have condemned a National Mediation Board [NMB] ruling.

They complained that the NMB gave railway and airline workers the ability to obtain collective bargaining rights through majority-rule elections.

That's the type of balloting that occurs under universal democratic rules. Everyone qualified to vote is invited to participate, and the outcome is determined by the majority of those who cast ballots.

The anti-worker-rights groups wanted the NMB to retain a different kind of election – one that requires the winner to receive votes from the majority of all of those qualified to participate – essentially, a supermajority.

EXCITING DEVELOPMENT

This is an exciting new development. Up until now CEOs, union-busters, and particularly conservative Republicans, have actively opposed the Employee Free Choice Act, mainly because of a provision they call “card check.” But card check provides exactly what they now say that they want – a determination made by the majority of all of those qualified to participate.

So, clearly, since they're so upset by the end of supermajority rule for airline and railroad workers, they'd be happy if Congress intervened and instituted it for all workers by passing the Employee Free Choice Act.

For a little over 70 years, the NMB, which governs collective bargaining by airline and railroad workers, mandated supermajorities.

When a group of workers, let's say Delta Airline Flight Attendants, sought the right to collectively bargain for better wages and working conditions, the NMB conducted an election in which it counted those who voted yes as supporting the proposal; those who voted no as opposing, and all those who didn't vote as opposing.

THEY RIGGED THE ELECTION

The NMB arbitrarily placed the non-voters in the “no” ballot box. To win an election, the NMB required collective bargaining supporters to receive votes from a majority of all those eligible – those who voted combined with those whose ballots the NMB inexplicably stuffed in the “no” box after they did not vote.

Compounding that supermajority obstacle was the NMB practice of permitting employers to determine who was eligible to vote, then excusing them from providing that list to workers seeking collective bargaining.

This created an incentive for employers to “accidentally” include the names of workers who'd quit or retired – ineligible voters whose inability to cast ballots created automatic “no” votes. Writing about losing an election in 2008, Delta flight attendant Linda Sorenson said airline officials released its list after the balloting. Among other problems, it included the name of a deceased worker. Sorenson wrote:

“The company acknowledged her death, but the NMB – whose chair had been a Northwest [airline] lobbyist – refused to remove her. She became a vote against

Unions May Have To Abandon Barack Obama

As president of the AFL-CIO, Richard Trumka is emerging as the voice of an increasingly irrelevant labor movement. As unionized work sinks to only 7% of the private sector, the labor movement is losing its influence within the Democratic Party.

To revitalize labor, Trumka must not only challenge Democratic leaders, but wage political battles outside the bounds of party politics by bringing labor back to its working-class activist roots.

The failure of President Barack Obama to make a major push on the Employee Free Choice Act – let alone give even a single speech dedicated to the topic – is a telling sign of organized labor's declining momentum inside the Beltway.

As Washington Post columnist Harold Meyerson noted in February, “For American labor, year one of Barack Obama's presidency has been close to an unmitigated disaster.” Labor ranks so low on the president's list of priorities that a new generation of Obama activists is now planning for a political environment altogether devoid of the labor movement.

CLEAR LACK OF CONCERN

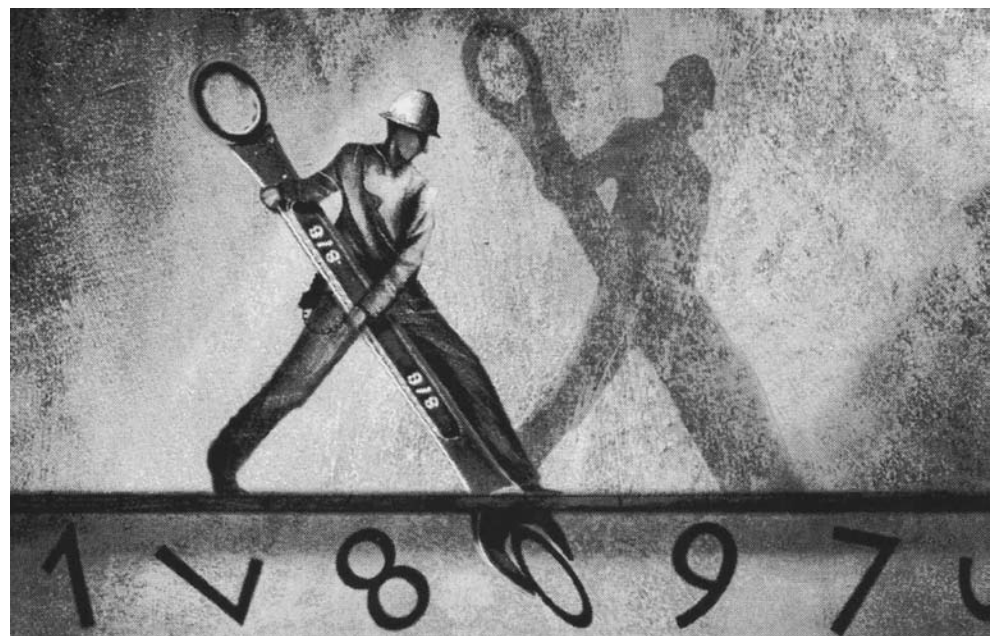
The Obama Administration demonstrated a clear lack of concern for labor when it allowed nominations to the National Labor Relations Board [NLRB] to be ignored in Congress for a full 14 months.

The vacant seats on NLRB prevented the panel from issuing any decisions over this 14-month period, meaning there was no functioning court to protect unions from the illegal practices of big corporations. Needless to say, this was a big problem for both labor and the country at large – imagine the president allowing a federal circuit court to sit inactive for more than a year.

TIMID NEGOTIATIONS

Most of the direct blame for the delay rests on the shoulders of Republican senators. But Obama's timid negotiations with conservatives allowed the problem to fester. In March 2009, Obama appointed former union lawyer Craig Becker to the NLRB, but the nomination didn't clear a Senate Committee until October of that year. Republicans then filibustered Becker's nomination, ultimately killing it in the Senate by Christmas.

Organized labor responded by pushing for Obama to give Becker a recess ap-



representation.”

CONFOUNDING RULE

Airline and railroad workers found the supermajority rule confounding in what is supposed to be a democratic system.

Writing the NMB to request the rule change, Jamin B. Raskin, a law professor at American University's Washington College of Law, noted that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1937 that a supermajority is not required, partly because established democratic practice is: “Those who do not participate are presumed to assent to the expressed will of the majority of those voting.”

The NMB ignored the Supreme Court and continued requiring a supermajority – until now. Then it joined the National Labor Relations Board, which complied with the Supreme Court decision and allowed majority-rule elections for the vast majority of U.S. workers whose collective bargaining rights it governs.

UNDER THE NEW ACT

Under the Employee Free Choice Act, workers seeking collective bargaining rights would collect signatures among their co-workers. If more than half of all eligible workers signed cards in support, the NLRB or NMB would recognize the workers as having the right to collectively bargain with the employer for the benefit of all of the workers.

This process would guarantee that a majority of all eligible workers supported collective bargaining before it could occur. It is a process that was routinely used to secure collective bargaining rights in the early days of union organizing in this country. It gives anti-worker-rights groups such as Winston & Strawn exactly what they're demanding – a supermajority.

The process is not an election. But with secret balloting, requiring a supermajority is undemocratic. No one can be compelled to vote in a democratic system. And counting those who don't vote as supporters of collective bargaining is just as logical as tallying them as unanimously opposed.

The solution provided in the Employee Free Choice Act is elegant and historically valid. It's great that Georgia Sen. Jimmy Isakson and his fellow conservative Republicans in the U.S. Senate now back the supermajority concept that the Employee Free Choice Act achieves through “card check.”

© Alternet

pointment in February, which would have filled the NLRB seat without subjecting it to filibuster in the Senate. Obama's initial response was a refusal: he wanted instead to cut a backroom deal with Senate Republicans in an effort to attain some variety of Obama's ever-elusive Holy Grail of public policy goals, bipartisanship.

After Obama's rejection, labor had two options. It could play nice with the administration and hope to be rewarded for their loyalty, or it could take a stand and criticize the White House for cutting this backroom deal. Trumka chose the latter.

He blasted the secret deal with the Senate GOP as one that “left working people out in the cold.” He urged union members to bombard the White House with phone calls in protest – the first time the AFL-CIO had asked workers to do this during the Obama presidency.

MISDIAGNOSIS

Bubba walked into a doctor's office and the receptionist asked him what he had. “Shingles,” Bubba said. So she wrote down his name, address, medical insurance number and told him to have a seat.

Fifteen minutes later, a nurse's aide came out and asked Bubba what he had. “Shingles,” he said. So she wrote down his height, weight, a complete medical history and told Bubba to wait in the examining room.

A half hour later, a nurse came in and asked Bubba what he had. “Shingles,” Bubba said. So the nurse gave Bubba a blood test, a blood pressure test, an electrocardiogram, and told Bubba to take off all his clothes and wait for the doctor.

An hour later, the doctor came in and found Bubba sitting patiently in the nude and asked Bubba what he had. “Shingles,” Bubba said. The doctor asked, “Where?”

Bubba said, “Outside on the truck. Where do you want me to unload ‘em?”

What a Holy Mess Our Oil Addiction Is Causing

By Jim Hightower

Luckily, as our country tries to cope with another oozing oil disaster, we have political leaders with the insight, expertise and cool heads to analyze the problem precisely and guide us to rational long-term solutions. For example, Gov. Rick Perry of Texas.

Known as the Sage of Paint Creek, TX, this towering intellect was among the right-wing politicians who were noisily demanding deregulation of all offshore drilling only two years ago, chanting "Drill, baby, drill!"

Now, even though BP's offshore rig, Deepwater Horizon, has created an ecological catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico, Perry is still defending the industry's always-messy practice of extracting ever-more crude from the Earth's depths.

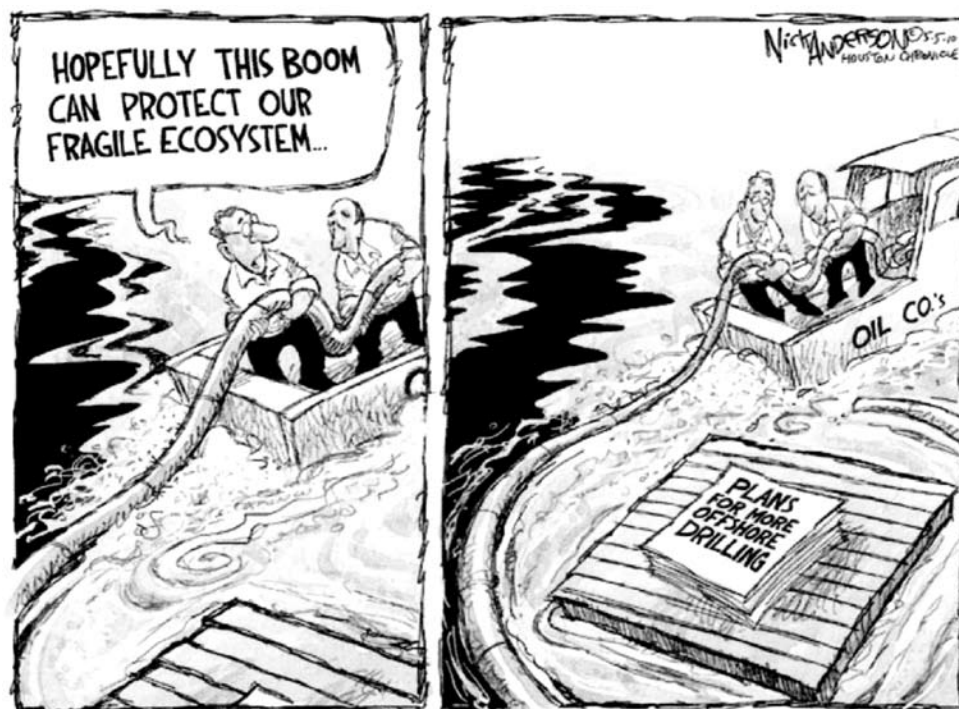
The culprit in this disaster, explained the gov, is not BP but the Almighty. "From time to time," he informs us, "there's going to be things that occur that are acts of God that cannot be prevented."

Hmmm. So, God is the one who exploded BP's rig, killed 11 workers, shut down the livelihoods of countless Gulf fishing families and spread a deadly, still-gushing slick of oil across four states.

Wow, that's one mean God!

But wait – it wasn't God whose insatiable thirst for profit put a risky oil-pumping contraption afloat on mile-deep water and sank a pipe four miles into the Gulf floor. BP executives did that.

And they also were the ones who decreed from on high that there was only a one-in-a-million chance of anything going wrong. Scoffing at all who objected, they pointed out



that Deepwater Horizon was a state-of-the-art rig. Perfectly safe, they crowed. Trust us.

Unfortunately, Washington did. This massive spill is neither an accident nor an aberration. For the past 30 years, leaders of both parties [generously lubricated by industry campaign cash] have enthusiastically embraced laissez-faire ideology, imposing the oxymoron of "voluntary regulation" on our country and spreading the industry myth that offshore drilling is practically pristine.

Even Barack Obama recently declared that "oil rigs today don't generally cause spills."

You wish! He should check the files of the speak-no-evil federal

agency that supposedly regulates oil corporations. There, he could see records of 1,443 serious drilling accidents in offshore operations just from 2001 to 2007. These failures caused 356 spills, 302 injuries and 41 deaths.

Among the oil giants, the worst performer on health, safety and environmental issues is none other than BP. It has been cited repeatedly for "willful" safety violations that have led to spills, explosions, contaminations, injuries and deaths. The reason for this is a culture of carelessness from the top that keeps demanding cost-cutting and shortcuts to increase corporate growth and profits.

Indeed, BP [which soaked up \$5.6 billion in profit in just the first three months of this year] decided against installing a remote-control shutoff switch on the Deepwater Horizon well in order to save \$500,000. By the way, if you're an aficionado of irony, here's one for you: When this rig blew up on April 20, seven BP executives were on board it for a ceremony hailing the project's safety record! All seven were injured, but survived.

Following a 2005 explosion that killed 15 workers at another BP facility, the corporation's own hand-picked review panel concluded that executives "skipped on [safety] spending" and "had not learned from a long string of past accidents."

Far from learning, BP has been a leader in creating today's indulgent federal regulatory climate of allowing the industry to police itself. As recently as last September, BP officially [and successfully] opposed additional safety requirements on these inherently explosive offshore rigs, arguing instead for "voluntary programs."

Volunteerism is a mandate for "Spill, baby, spill." What BP's latest disaster teaches us is not only that these profiteering giants must be strictly regulated, but also that America must aggressively – urgently – expand our nation's transition to renewable energy. Our addiction to oil is killing us.

As an old Texas saying puts it, "When you've dug yourself into a hole, the first thing to do is quit digging."

To help get our country out of its oil hole, connect with: greenforall.org
© Creators Syndicate

Nun Saves Mom's Life, Then Is Booted

A nun at a Catholic hospital in Phoenix, AZ was automatically excommunicated after approving an abortion be performed on a patient in order to save the woman's life, The Arizona Republic reports.

Sister Margaret McBride, who was also a long-time administrator at St Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, has also been reassigned to other duties, Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted, head of the Phoenix Diocese said.

The incident occurred late last year when McBride was consulted – along with doctors – in the case of a young woman who was 11 weeks pregnant.

The woman was suffering a life-threatening condition which was likely to have caused her death had she not had an abortion.

"In this tragic case, the treatment necessary to save the mother's life required the termination of an 11-week pregnancy," hospital vice president Susan Pfister told the newspaper.

Pfister issued the statement on behalf of the hospital, its parent company Catholic Healthcare West, and the Sisters of Mercy, McBride's religious order.

Olmsted confirmed McBride was "automatically excommunicated" because of her involvement in the abortion.

"I am gravely concerned by the fact that an abortion was performed several months ago in a Catholic hospital in this diocese," Olmsted said.

TOM GUILD

Democrat For Congress

www.guildforcongress.com

Paid for by Guild For Congress

"I am further concerned by the hospital's statement that the termination of a human life was necessary to treat the mother's underlying medical condition."

Excommunication forbids the person from participating in church life, including receiving communion. It can only be remedied by an appeal to the Vatican.

© NewsCore

DEFINING POLITICAL PARTIES

A woman in a hot air balloon realized she was lost. She lowered her altitude and spotted a man in a boat below. She shouted to him:

"Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The man consulted his portable GPS and replied, "You're in a hot air balloon, approximately 30 feet above ground, elevation of 2,346 feet above sea level. You are at 31 degrees, 14.97 minutes north latitude and 100 degrees, 49.09 minutes west longitude."

She rolled her eyes and said, "You must be an Obama Democrat."

"I am," replied the man. "How did you know?"

"Well," answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically correct. But I have no idea what to do with your information, and I'm still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help to me."

The man smiled and responded, "You must be a Republican."

"I am," replied the balloonist. "How did you know?"

"Well," said the man, "you don't know where you are or where you are going. You've risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise you have no idea how to keep, and you expect me to solve your problem. You're in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but somehow, now it's my fault."

– Thanks to Darla Reynolds-Sparks for this jewel

REPUBLICANS

From Page One

let extremist Republicans make their draconian cuts so that voters feel the pain of their electoral choices?

Early polling suggest November's mid-term elections might not be kind to Democrats nationally – even less so in Oklahoma, a state so rightwing that President Obama failed to carry any of the state's 77 counties two years ago.

Democrats privately fret they could do the right thing politically – fighting successfully to help those who would be hurt most by deeper budget cuts – but end up being clubbed at the polls as Republicans exploit a growing anti-government wave.

An example from the regular session's next-to-last week: House Minority Leader Danny Morgan, D-Prague, voted to sustain the governor's veto of HJR 1054 that authorizes the Legislature to file suit challenging federal health care reform.

Morgan said he expects opponents to attack his vote this fall, but he cast it anyway, agreeing with Henry the court challenge wasn't likely to succeed. Further, with more than a dozen other states preparing challenges, Morgan reasoned it was fiscally prudent for Oklahoma to let others shoulder the cost of a court fight.

Evidently, the self-proclaimed fiscal conservatives in the House never met a taxpayer dollar they wouldn't spend

tilting at windmills they thought could give them political advantage.

In fact, this episode serves as a microcosm for the entire legislative session. The Republican majorities rolled out one hot-button piece of unnecessary legislation after another – from tightening abortion restrictions to expanding gun rights to asserting Oklahoma's dominion under the Tenth Amendment – rather than tackling the serious fiscal problems facing the state.

GOP leadership didn't even heed calls from its own members in the last two years – most prominently, Sen. Mike Mazzei of Tulsa and Reps. David Dank and Mike Reynolds of OKC – to seriously review the 450-plus tax breaks that siphon \$5.6 billion from the state treasury, about the same amount of money the Legislature is authorized to spend in FY 2011.

When the 2010 session opened, legislative leaders dismissed by fiat any possibility of rolling back tax breaks. As the magnitude of the \$1.2 billion budget crisis became clear, legislative leaders agreed to study the matter during out-of-session months.

By session's end, the Legislature's top budget writers, Sen. Mike Johnson, R-Kingfisher, and Rep. Ken Miller, R-Edmond, said *all* tax exemptions were on the negotiating table.

All, that is, except for one: GOP leaders didn't seem too interested in reviewing the \$150 million in drilling rebates that energy producers will reap during the next fiscal year.

Asked why lawmakers won't touch the \$150 million in energy industry tax incentives, one Republican leaned over, out of earshot of other legislators, and matter-of-factly opined the state Legislature is "a wholly-owned subsidiary of the oil and gas industry. How's that for an honest answer?"

Let's call it what it is: The Not-So-Free Enterprise System. Lawmakers are using taxpayer money to lavish gifts on an industry that doesn't need them. Just ask legendary Tulsa oilman and banker George Kaiser, who bravely advised lawmakers last year that taxpayers deserved the breaks more than the oil and gas industry.

It is fair to point out that corporate welfare has been a favorite tool of both political parties in Oklahoma. It was a problem when Democrats controlled both houses of the Legislature. And it's been an even worse problem since Republicans took over.

Consider this: In 2006, corporate tax credits for venture capital projects cost Oklahoma nearly \$1.7 million in lost revenue. Two years later, the amount skyrocketed to nearly \$27 million.

In the same period, tax breaks for rural venture capital companies jumped from \$2.8 million to a whopping \$45 million-plus and tax credits for investment purposes tripled from about \$40 million to \$120 million.

"Many of these credits claim to create jobs and spur the economy," noted Rep. Scott Inman, D-Del City. "But after serious investigation, it is clear that while some provide the benefits for which they were established, many of these tax credits have become nothing more than a shell game – being sold to out of state companies that never create one job or invest in one building in our state.

"When our state is facing a \$1.2 billion budget shortfall, we believe it's immoral for the legislative leaders to dole out tax credits to wealthy corporations that total more than our entire state budget."

It's also important to remember that Oklahomans tend to be a suspicious lot when it comes to their government.

There's a long history of populist distrust that the powers-that-be are able to cut sweetheart deals at taxpayers' expense – a sentiment that no doubt helps fuel much of the current Tea Party anger.

Oklahoma's Republican leaders ignore that history at their peril.

LETTERS

From Page 4

an editor like Arnold Hamilton that publishes the views and articles that the dailies won't!

Darla Reynolds-Sparks
Yukon

Editor, The Observer:

While driving up York Street in Muskogee, I met a funeral procession on the way to the cemetery. Most motorists pulled over to the side and stopped. I thought, "How nice." The respect shown for the deceased and family by these motorists is wonderful. With so much greed prevalent in the nation now, I wondered if we would ever see a Brinks Armored Money truck following the funeral hearse.

Greed, Greed, Greed! That would be a good topic for preachers to base their sermons on next Sunday. But, on reflection, I don't recommend it. You probably would have a parishioner in your congregation who would get you fired.

The greed in opposition to the health insurance bill passed by Congress says a lot about the values of

this nation. The bill is an assault on poor health, not on our liberty. Dr. Don Betz, president of Northeastern State University, cited a Gallup World Healthways Poll in the Muskogee Phoenix which ranked the 2nd Congressional District of Oklahoma near the bottom of all congressional districts in the United States. This poll was based on job quality, access to basic health care, healthy habits, and physical and emotional health. Of Oklahoma's five congressional districts, the 2nd District ranked at the bottom except for work quality where the district ranked fourth.

Oklahoma's Congressional and Senate delegations, both of them, said "No" when they voted on the health care bill for their constituents. They said "No" to children for protection from discrimination, "No" to small business tax cuts, "No" to seniors for rebates to drug costs, "No" to people with pre-existing conditions, "No" to young people staying on their parents insurance until age 26, and there is much more. Now our state legislative leadership has joined them in saying

"No." The Roman poet, Virgil, said, "The greatest wealth is health." Oklahoma is now on the threshold of getting wealthier.

I write these lines because of what Edmund Burke once wrote: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." It is good that a few voices are emerging from out in the wilderness. Names like Jenner, Lewis, McMahon, Parsons, Troy, Vineyard and others are greatly respected.

Legislators should use up their political bankroll and do what is best for the state and country, not what is best for their re-election.

Raymond D. Sewell
Muskogee

Editor, The Observer:

President Obama did not win a majority vote in any of Oklahoma's 77 counties. Today, the President's popularity appears to be below 50%. It is hard for me to understand when I read a report that shows beyond a shadow of a doubt that his stimulus program that has been severely criticized by

our Legislature and voted against by every member of our Congressional delegation provided \$316.8 million dollars for education in this year's budget.

Without that revenue the schools in Pottawatomie County and the state of Oklahoma could have been set back approximately 20 years.

- Transportation received \$532.9 million, including \$8 million to improve rail service between OKC and Shawnee and the industrial tracks in Shawnee.

- Public safety received \$31.5 million.

- Budget Stabilization received \$578 million.

- Health and Human Services received \$905 million.

Thank you, President Obama. Your stimulus program will likely carry Oklahoma through this next fiscal year without dramatic increases in fees that would wreak havoc on the poor and the working poor in Oklahoma.

James B. Townsend
Shawnee

WIDEAWAKE  ORG

GIVE WISELY. Caring, safe, responsible donor directed giving to fully vetted grassroots charities in developing countries. www.wideawake.org

**WHAT KIND OF FREEDOM
PUNISHES AMERICANS OVER
WHAT THEY DO TO THEMSELVES?**

**REGULATE THE DRUGS
WWW.DPFOK.ORG**



Shelly Venters-Jacobs, M.D.
Wellness Physician

Weight Loss,
Bioidentical Hormone Replacement

Sherry's Drug
Wellness Center
P.O. Box 1160
220 S. Littler Rd.
Edmond, OK 73083

Phone: (405) 341-1683
Fax: (405) 359-1936
Web: www.sherrysdrug.com
Email: sheily@sherrysdrug.com

REX FRIEND
Attorney at Law

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

(405) 557-1277
Reasonable Fees — Terms Available

THANK YOU
SUSAN B. ANTHONY & FRIENDS
FOR 90 YEARS OF
THE RIGHT TO VOTE
FROM
THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF OKLAHOMA COUNTY



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

OEA

Oklahoma Education Association
www.okea.org

BEN F. SANDERS
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

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

Income Tax Preparation * Accounting * Consulting

Oklahoma Retired Educators' Association



The only organization
that works for
Retired Educators

405.525.2230
800.310.2230
www.orea.org

International Brotherhood of
Electrical Workers Local Union 1141
405/670-4777



WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

Auto Service Technology



Metro Technology Centers
Preparing for Life



(405) 424-TECH
www.metrotech.org

WORSHIP AT MAYFLOWER CHURCH

For religion that is biblically responsible,
intellectually honest, emotionally satisfying,
and socially significant. Services at 9 and 11 a.m.
Full church school.
Broadcast 9:30 a.m. on KOKC AM 1520
Located on NW 63rd Street,
one block west of Portland, 405/842-8897.

Dr. Robin Meyers, Minister
Rev. Chris Moore, Associate Pastor
Mayflower Congregational Church
3901 NW 63 Street, Okla. City, OK 73116

Additions, Renovations & Repairs

**Gresham
Construction**

BOB GRESHAM
405.659.6812

3309 N. OLIE
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73112

**Video
Producers**

Marketing Presentations
For Corporations

Since 1980

Bill Hellams 405 843-1400



Jeans
PLUMBING
HEAT & AIR

RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL
FOR ALL YOUR PLUMBING, GAS & AIR WORK

WE WORK BY THE JOB... NOT BY THE HOUR

BEST FLAT RATE PRICE

www.jeans-plumbing.com
OKC & Surrounding Areas **844-1951**



Mark Mills
Acupuncture
Chinese Herbal Medicine

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

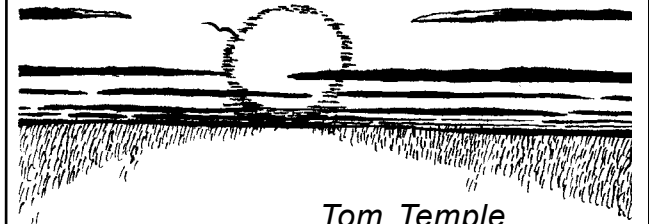
National Board
Certified (NCCAOM)



Transforming
People Who
Transform
the World

First Unitarian Church
of Oklahoma City

13th and Dewey ♦ www.uuokc.org



Tom Temple
Sustainable Design

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

Better Information, Better Policy

Oklahoma Policy Institute provides timely and credible
information, analysis and commentary on state policy issues.

See our latest issue briefs, fact sheets and blog posts at:

OKPOLICY.ORG

David Blatt, Director ■ 918.794.3944 ■ dblatt@okpolicy.org

Friends Meeting (Quakers)

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

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

DentalConfessions.com

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

Gingival Sulcus | Fluoride Fraud | Mercury Deception

Jim Maxey D.D.S.