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Catholicism In '60, Islam In '10 21st Century Bigotry

By Harry T. Cook

It will do no good, of course, but the White House has been sparing no effort to explain that President Obama is a true Christian [not a Muslim].

It is said that he prays several times a day, often over the phone with identifiable Christian clergy and laypersons. None of this will do any good, I say, because most of those for whose benefit that message has been crafted are convinced by no known facts that he is a Muslim and, moreover, was not born in the United States.

This is a man for whose election in 2008 I would earnestly have prayed, had I thought a deity, any deity, was on the job available to hear and act on my petition – a proposition that is, of course, ludicrous on the face of it.

If I could [and I cannot] entertain seriously the idea that any communication between me and any deity could be channeled to Mr. Obama, my message would be, "Stop already with the religious posturing. We didn't elect you to cozy up to anybody's imagined god. We elected you to a) make no more the study of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, b) put down rapacious corporate America from its seat and c) exalt the humble and meek."

While I was at it, I would continue thus:

"We who worked for you, donated to your campaign, displayed your campaign signs on our front lawns and back bumpers, cheered until we were hoarse the night you were elected and wept openly the day of your inauguration are waiting, waiting for the one who taught us to say 'Yes, we can' to get on with it.

"In an attempt to dream the impossible dream of bipartisanship, you al-



lowed the health care legislation to be turned into a mess of pottage by your sworn enemies. You are about to sell a portion of your Democratic soul to a deficit reduction commission whose members by all accounts intend to bargain away some of the future of Social Security for a minuscule tax increase on the fabulously wealthy. There's a 'yes we have no bananas' proposition for you.

"You must know by now that the likes of Jon Kyl, Judd Gregg, Mitch McConnell and that crowd will never be satisfied until you are politically destroyed. Their implacable hatred of what we thought you stood for re-

minds me of the singular mission of Hamas and Hezbollah to reduce Israel to ashes.

"Your election spoiled plans for a Republican coup. Its leaders wanted to replace their puppet from Texas with the maverick from Arizona and bring their anti-democratic millennium to glorious fruition.

"So, Mr. President, most of us could care less about any theology you may or may not ponder in the darkness of a White House night. We don't care if you are, as they say, 'a Christian' – and some of us would just as soon you weren't. Depending on the branch of Christianity to which a person gives fealty, he might be required to believe stuff that ain't necessarily so and, moreover, to think more highly of himself than he ought to think.

"There are Christians who oppose a woman's reproductive rights, who are against both abortion and providing public funds to feed and care for poor children. Go figure.

"The dogma of certain brands of Christianity hold as absolute truth that saving the environment is point-

See OBAMA Page 18

FIFTY YEARS LATER, JFK'S WORDS STILL RESOUND

Editor's Note: It's history repeating itself – demonizing Muslims just as they demonized Catholics when Jack Kennedy made the race for president. Kennedy took the fire right to the Houston Ministerial Alliance meeting and his words are as true today as they were then. It happened on Sept. 12, 50 years ago.

Reverend Meza, Reverend Rack, I'm grateful for your generous invitation to state my views.

While the so-called religious issue is necessarily and properly the chief topic here tonight, I want to emphasize from the outset that I believe that we have far more critical issues in the 1960 campaign; the spread of Communist influence, until it now festers only 90 miles from the coast of Florida – the humiliating treatment of our President and Vice President by those who no longer respect our power – the hungry children I saw in West Virginia, the old people who cannot pay their doctors bills, the families forced to give up their farms – an America with too many slums, with too few schools, and too late to the moon and outer space.

These are the real issues which should decide this campaign. And they are not religious issues – for war and hunger and ignorance and despair know no religious barrier. But because I am a Catholic, and no Catholic has ever been elected President, the real issues in this campaign have been obscured – perhaps deliberately, in some quarters less responsible than this.

So it is apparently necessary for me to state once again – not what kind of church I believe in, for that

See KENNEDY Page 19

Observations

Funding The GOP

We hope those mindless Democratic lawmakers who vote annually to enrich the richest oil companies in Oklahoma – Devon and Chesapeake – realize they are funding the Republican Party.

Devon alone gave \$350,000 to the Republican State Leadership Committee. They donated \$300,000 to the Republican Governors Association and \$250,000 to Newt Gingrich's American Solutions for Winning The Future.

Don't forget it has been a Democratic governor, Brad Henry, who signed all the largesse for the richest Oklahomans. That's the same governor who brought vouchers to public education in Oklahoma.

This and other donations – such as Target's \$150,000 to the GOP – is the result of a corrupt U.S. Supreme Court majority, which has held that corporations are "persons" and can give unlimited amounts.

All you folks who voted for MAPS III, a gift of millions to Devon, go stand in the corner.

If Republican Mary Fallin is elected governor, expect more of the same. She's been in the hip pocket of business from the get-go, voting for Bush's bailout of Wall Street.

Mouth Of South

The Oklahoma show-off, Republican U.S. Sen. Tom Coburn, is miffed at the National Education Association and the Oklahoma Education Association.

"Nowhere does the U.S. Constitution give Congress the authority to be responsible for teacher pay in Oklahoma. Teacher pay is a state and local function that should be performed at the state and local level," Coburn said.

He was talking about the Obama \$26 billion package that saved more than 300,000 teaching jobs and 150,000 police jobs. All but U.S. Rep Dan Boren voted "no" – including Mary Fallin who would be a disaster as governor.

What really ticks Coburn off is that

he was criticized by name by an NEA official, accusing Coburn of lying about the bill – which was fully funded, not adding a dime to the deficit.

"The union's critique is especially troubling given the fiscal damage the union is actively working to inflict on the State of Oklahoma," Coburn said.

The NEA plans to spend up to \$3 million on an Oklahoma school funding initiative slated to be on the ballot this November [State Question 744] which would require the Legislature to raise school per-pupil spending to the regional average.

Where was he when Republicans pledged to not only pass the education bill first in the Legislature but also to reach the regional average?

Instead Coburn said not a word when legislative Republicans cut taxes \$771 million.

The OEA picked up 252,000 signatures to put the Republican pledge on the ballot – and that was before the economy collapsed.

We've said it before but it bears repeating: a teacher who votes Republican is an oxymoron.

Jeb Bush's Lies

The news wasn't all bad but it wasn't all good, either. The ACT tests are in and Oklahoma is static in some areas, advancing in others.

One message is loud and clear – we kicked Florida's butt.

So somebody who can talk slow enough call Jeb Bush and tell him the last model we want for our children is his low performing state.

Bush was brought here by the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs and other rightwingers – enemies of public education to the last zealot. All they talk about is vouchers.

State Superintendent Sandy Garrett said the ACT was taken by 28,343 students, which is 1,289 or 4.8% more than the year before.

In fact, in 2010, more Oklahoma students reached ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks for all four content



areas than in 2009. The state's average ACT composite score for 2010 remains stable at 20.7, while the nation's average has fallen 0.1 to 21.0.

Oklahoma's score and percent of graduating seniors taking the ACT remain among the highest in the South.

While comparable percentages of graduating seniors take the ACT in many southern states, students in Oklahoma's Class of 2010 outscored those in Florida, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Kentucky and Tennessee.

Fine New Law

A tip of the hat to state Rep. Phil Richardson, R-Minco, for a new law ensuring better ambulance coverage in rural Oklahoma.

HB 1888 requires each county with a population of 500,000 people or less to present an emergency medical services plan to the Oklahoma Department of Health by April 1, 2011.

The legislation also creates a petition process to allow registered voters to create an ambulance service district in their counties.

The legislation will ensure counties have a plan of action for unincorporated areas within the county limits.

The petition process allows registered voters to push their county to create an ambulance service district if they feel they're not getting good ambulance coverage. This makes sure that districts are created where they are needed, but not frivolously.

The legislation also requires licensed ambulance services in the licensed area to respond to all emergency calls regardless of the patient's ability to pay.

This will ensure that individuals who may not be able to pay for the service are helped in an emergency.

As Richardson so aptly put it, "It's a lot like the law that says emergency medical services must be given to a person whose life is in danger."

Uncle Sam

We don't know how far \$1 million will go in cracking down on crooked insurance scams but it's a million more than we are spending now.

The money came from the big, bad federal government and was announced by HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

Oklahoma will use this Affordable Care Act funding to help improve the oversight of proposed health insur-

ance premium increases, take action against insurers seeking unreasonable rate hikes, and ensure Oklahomans receive value for their premium dollars.

Remember, this is a state with 635,000 uninsured [50% are kids] so the federal Affordable Care Act puts in place critical market reforms to improve quality and reduce the cost of health care for employers and individuals now covered.

Increased competition, lower insurance overhead, and better risk pooling in health insurance Exchanges in 2014 are expected to reduce premiums in the individual market by anywhere from 14% to 20%, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Just as Republicans and assorted conservatives fought Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, any attempt by the feds to improve the lot of ordinary Americans is met with horror stories such as Sarah Palin's made-up "death panels."

Good News!

Dr. Laura is going off the air, a victim of her own racism. In her early days The Oklahoma Observer fought her verbal crud. She ended up bringing herself down by the constant use of the "N" word.

Her defense when all hell broke loose: Blacks use it about each other. Well, very few that we know do and those that do ought to be ashamed.

Her parting shot: "I've made the decision not to do radio anymore. The reason is, I want to regain my First Amendment rights. I want to be able to say what's on my mind and in my heart, and what I think is helpful and useful, without somebody getting angry, some special interest group deciding this is the time to silence a voice of dissent and attack affiliates and attack sponsors."

It's a bizarre yet common belief held by many conservatives that critics aren't exercising their own right to speak freely but are curtailing their own. They've come to believe that "free speech" means the right to speak without being called out for what one says.

The wingnuts are up in arms over Dr. Laura's defeat at the hands of political correctness run amok, but they should be thrilled by this development. It is the free market at work. Her sponsors are rational economic actors making decisions based on a careful analysis of the costs and benefits of continuing to support her show, and the market has spoken.

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

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

- Adapted from Thomas Wolfe

Observerscope

Editor's Note: Frosty Troy has a new email address, frosty.troy@gmail.com. He also will be receiving mail at the old address, ftroy@fullnet.net, but not for long.

Dart: To the Oklahoma Baptist Messenger for printing a diatribe against public education. The slightest research would have revealed that Reagan's so-called Nation At Risk was proven to be bogus, written in the White House basement.

First, greed shattered the public's faith in Feed the Children. Now it's the same affliction at OKC's Jesus House. There's always Neighbor for Neighbor where we're sending our charity dollars today.

Laurel: To State Sen. Judy Eason-McIntyre, D-Tulsa, winner of the American Red Cross Heart and Hero Award for 31 years of advocating for children. She's also a breast cancer survivor.

Good news! Kalyn Free is seeking the No. 2 slot at the Oklahoma Democratic Party. Given her experience in recruiting and training candidates via INDN's List, she would be a natural.

Dart: To the Oklahoma Observer for generalizing that the 27% polled who blame the Obama Administration for our economic difficulties are racist. A lot of good folk differ with the President. We apologize.

MSNBC's superb commentator Rachel Maddow is receiving this year's Walter Cronkite Faith And Freedom Award for her vigorous defense of religious freedom. Our founding editor, Frosty Troy, is the only Oklahoman to receive the award.

Laurel: To the Upward Bound kids who are leading the charge against school bullying and cyber bullying. Bullying led to the suicide of 11-year-old Ty Field who couldn't take it any longer.

The first testicular guard was the "cup," first used in 1874. The helmet was first used in 1974. That means it only took 100 years for men to realize that their brains are also important.

Dart: To Gov. Brad Henry, saddling the state with its first voucher plan, with 15 church-related schools due to draw public school money. This is the "education" governor?

If you believe Time Magazine, the No. 1 quality of life in the world today is in Germany. America still leads in economic dynamism.

Laurel: To the American Council of Trustees and Alumni [ACTA] for a survey proving that OU and OSU offer a wider range of core subjects than does Harvard [\$38,500 per year tuition].

Let the fight begin! The Oklahoma Education Association thumped GOP gubernatorial hopeful Mary Fallin head on, saying Fallin opposes funding for Oklahoma schools. [OEA press release]

Dart: To those literally robbing the cradle - scouts spotting elementary school kids as potential big time players. We know first hand of parents of a Tulsa eight-year-old who were warned by a scout not to sign anything yet.

Why is he still here? Rush Limbaugh said if ObamaCare became law he would move to Costa Rica. We will gladly help him pack.

Laurel: To the Broken Arrow Police Department, honored by the International Association of Police Chiefs for its work with OU in creating an employee empowerment program.

Pardon our clunker when we wrote that 5.3 million felons are being held today. That's 5.3 million felons unable to vote today. The national prison population is well over two million.

Dart: To bloggers working overtime spreading the "fact" that illegal aliens cost every American household \$2,400 per year. Wrong! Check the facts at Snopes or www.tulsaworld.com/immigrantcost.

The Sooner Poll has President Obama's approvability on the economy at a record low 28%. Gov. Brad Henry comes in at 63%. Nationally, President Obama has a 41% overall rating.



Laurel: To Harvard Medical School, finally cracking down on faculty who cozy up to the drug companies and medical-device firms - consulting fees, meals, trips. Check your TV - it's a drugged America.

Don't kid yourself. That \$13,000 Ten Commandments monument to be put on the north lawn of the Capitol will be financed by the Cecil B. DeMille Foundation, which is trying to locate one on every state's Capitol grounds.

Dart: To our junior U.S. senator, Tom Coburn, claiming in a public forum that \$600 billion could be cut from the federal budget without anyone noticing it. Come on, Doc, spell it out so we can check it out.

What school district is dumb enough to hire ex-GOP Sen. Don Nickles to drum up grant money? He's so hard up he's started a company, EdOklahoma, and is looking for suckers.

Laurel: To Sgt. Larry Isbell of Oklahoma City, named National Guard Soldier of the Year and Best Warrior. He's a member of the 45th Infantry Brigade.

Thanks to ObamaCare, Medicare is in good shape for the next 12 years and beyond. Social Security is solid into 2040. [AP]

Dart: To Okies who would like to have the Arizona law in Oklahoma. What they probably don't know is that so far 40 conventions slated for Phoenix have been canceled.

A 750-pound bronze sculpture of historian and author Angie Debo is slated for the Stillwater Public Library. She was a charter subscriber to The Observer, taking us to the woodshed on more than one occasion.

Laurel: The Soaring Eagle Award has gone to the Oklahoma Department of Human Services for the fourth consecutive year for outstanding performance in the food stamp program.

More than four million children in the U.S. were born to illegal immigrants - that's one in 12 children born in the U.S. [Pew Hispanic Center.]

Dart: To Fox News' owner Rupert Murdoch, donating \$1 million to the Republican Governors Association. So much for "fair and balanced" news on Fox.

Tulsa is ranked 21st in a national survey of the most literate cities in America. Minneapolis, Washington DC, and St. Paul, MN lead the pack.

Laurel: To the American people for finally waking up. Only 38% support the Afghan war, the rest want us out, pronto. [AP Poll]

Tulsa's Veterans Treatment Court was named one of four national mentor programs by the National Drug Court Institute. The goal is to get help for veterans, not lock them up.

Dart: To OKC Catholic Archbishop Eusebius Beltran for refusing to return press calls concerning a Dallas priest previously stationed in two Oklahoma parishes. Rev. Thomas Behnke died in 2008. More than \$4.65 million was paid to settle claims of six boys abused by the priest.

Terry Nichols, doing time for his part in the Murrah Building bombing, sued the feds for a better diet. A federal judge kicked his suit out of court. Poor baby.

Laurel: To a State Supreme Court majority for nixing that Republican \$76 million "fee" on health insurance premiums passed in the last five days of this year's session. Adding insult to injury, the court declined to write an opinion.

Women are waking up. A record 129 GOP women sought U.S. House seats and 17 sought Senate seats. Democratic women were candidates for 134 House and 19 Senate seats. The results, so far: Republican women won 38 House and three Senate primaries, Democratic women 64 House and seven Senate primaries.

Dart: To those wailing about the death of racist columnist James J. Kilpatrick. He was fighting for segregation long after the court ruled and was particularly incensed over school integration.

The Centers for Disease Control has announced that 27% of Americans are obese [25 pounds or more overweight]. Oklahoma is one of nine states that top 30%.

Laurel: To American Airlines retired employees C.W. Denton and Leonard Hoosier, awarded the Charles E. Taylor Award, both for 50 years as accredited aviation mechanics.

THE OKLAHOMA Observer

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Letters

Editor, The Observer:

Re: Pink Slip, Frosty Troy's Notebook, 8.25.10:

We are out here, Frosty. Thank you for speaking up for us, all my Mid-western German Catholic-educated family who no longer go to church. We attended those wonderful Catholic schools taught by highly educated nuns, and most of us left when they did..

We are out here, Frosty, a few here and there across the Tulsa parishes still stand up and speak – perhaps until they throw us out. My biggest concern is what they are teaching now in the Catholic schools.

Keep up the good work and don't forget – we are out here reading you and agreeing with you.

Joyce Grane
Tulsa

Editor, The Observer:

The Vatican has threatened to excommunicate well-known Catholic priest and longtime peace advocate Father Roy Bourgeois unless he recants his support for the ordination of women into the priesthood. Bourgeois responds, "Over the years I have met a number of women in our Church who, like me, feel called by God to the priesthood ... Who are we, as men, to say to women, 'Our call is valid, but yours is not.' Who are we to tamper with God's call? Sexism, like racism, is a sin.

"Working and struggling for peace and justice are an integral part of our faith. For this reason, I speak out against the war in Iraq. And for the last 18 years, I have been speaking out against the atrocities and suffering caused by the School of the Americas ... I could not address the injustice of the SOA and remain silent about injustice in my Church."

Bourgeois has not recanted.

Frank P. Belcastro
Dubuque, IA

Editor, The Observer:

I've subscribed for many years and often purchased a subscription for a different government worker where I volunteer my time to serve on various state boards. Although I don't often share the same views of The Observer I think it is crucial for me to examine my positions in light of contradictory information. It is like taking a crowbar and prying open room in my mind for a new idea and integrating the information to formulate a more accurate position for myself.

Reading the following excerpt last night after dinner pushed me out-

side the boundaries that I can operate within in regard to The Observer.

"Laurel: To Time Magazine for putting a poll question as bluntly as possible. Who do you blame for today's horrendous economic problems? Sixty-one percent said G.W. Bush, 27% said Barack Obama. [That's probably the 27% racist population]."

This is offensive on so many levels. First of all it is intellectually immature to assume that if you disagree with Obama's economic policies it is because he is black. It is also a shameless pandering to who you assume your audience to be. Finally I was personally hurt to be accused of being a racist when I spent the last 40 years dedicating myself to improving the condition of poor children. [Thirty-five years ago I was a VISTA in Wewoka, OK living in the black community in a house that rented for \$30 a month].

The poll you are referring to is interesting because I, too, believe that policies of the Bush Administration led us to our current economic woes.

I also feel that Obama has exacerbated the problems and the economy will be much worse in the future because of it. A discussion of those complexities would be valuable.

Jay Scott Brown
Shawnee

Editor, The Observer:

Poor Barry Switzer.

When it comes to football, our old OU coach follows the rule of our cocklebur governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray who said, "Never say anything good about the state of Texas."

But when it comes to politics, Switzer is a lost soul. He doesn't know his friends from his enemies.

The bootlegger's boy from rural Arkansas remembered what it was like to be poor and registered Democrat, the party that looks out for the little guys and gals. He endorsed two Democrats for governor, Gov. Brad Henry and Lt. Gov. Jari Askins.

Then, he shows up at a Republican rally led by Fox News radio-TV star Sean Hannity and ex-Republican Congressman J.C. Watts Jr. from Eufaula.

At the Tulsa rally, Switzer led cheers for his political enemies who represent the wealthy and try with all their might to destroy all Democrats. When he switched parties, Watt's father told his son, "For a black man to vote with the Republicans makes about as much sense as a chicken voting for Col. Sanders."

Until further notice, this "yellow dog" Democrat will consider an en-



dorsement by Switzer as good as being bitten by a snake in the grass.

Virginia Blue Jeans Jenner
Wagoner

Editor, The Observer:

If reincarnation were actually possible – and I seriously doubt that it is – one particular combination of personalities seems to fit that possibility: namely, P.J. Goebbels, of Nazi fame being reincarnated as Rupert Murdoch of Fox/NewsCorp fame.

Dr. Goebbels knew that with repeated repetition of a lie, a large percent of the public would eventually believe it. The German people, during the rise of Nazism, were some of the most astute, most highly educated people on the face of the earth. Yet, with the help of Goebbels, Hitler was easily able to take control of the whole country.

The current poll numbers concerning our president's religious affiliation seem to indicate that Dr. Goebel's old strategy is being used on a massive scale. To think that 25% of America's population believe that our president is, in fact, a Muslim is beyond my comprehension.

Fox News and its lying propaganda machine must be stopped in its tracks. Since it cannot be done legally, I firmly believe that a 100% boycott of all Fox sponsors – even non-news shows – by right thinking Americans will easily accomplish the desired effect. Will you join me in this effort?

J.A. Gowman
Oklahoma City

Editor, The Observer:

If you have not read it, you had better read it now. James Lankford [the GOP's 5th Congressional District nominee] definitely believes in less regulation on corporations, banks and business and more regulation on your personal life.

I do not live in the 5th District, but every vote he casts will apply to you and me.

He may say he will be speaking for "US," but it isn't the "US" that includes me. A fertilized egg has more rights than you, especially if you are a female or gay.

[Kevin Calvey had a record to fight. This guy thinks he personally made all decisions at Falls Creek, which is a lie, and he thinks he personally did all the training at Falls Creek, which is also a lie. Falls Creek isn't even running most of the year. What did he do the rest of the time?

Karen Webb
Moore

Editor, The Observer:

I just got to thinking ... do you reckon Kevin Calvey is so conserva-

tive that he conserves his toilet paper, using it over and over again?

If he figured telling as much would have won him a few votes, he'd have put it in that ridiculous commercial of his that played double-time every TV break.

I can't stand watching local OK TV nowadays. The Repug "hate ads" are nauseating. Looks as if the legal corporate campaign money is being funneled into those sloping skulls.

Ronnie King
Norman

Editor, The Observer:

There is an old saying that "one should be careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water." I have to wonder if that is not what some of our lawmakers are doing.

According to an article in the Tulsa World about a year ago the health industry had spent over \$66 million bribing/lobbying our lawmakers in Washington during the first quarter of last year but that would be only pennies on the dollar of the reduction of the excess profits and exorbitant bonuses and salaries to which they are accustomed. Canadians spend 10% of their GDP on health care but we spend 16%. Six percent of our GDP amounts to over \$800 billion a year!

The health industry has spent millions trying to convince the public that a health care system such as Canada's is inferior to what we have in the United States but let's look at some numbers. People in Canada have 20% fewer infant deaths than we do and their citizens live on the average almost three years longer than we do. Does this sound like an inferior health system?

In 1985, 8% of all bankruptcies in the United States were attributed to medical expenses. According to a joint study by Harvard Medical and Law Schools that number had increased to 62% by 2007. Over 78% of those originally had health insurance. That means that there are over a million bankruptcies a year in the United States that are due to health costs.

I assume that most of those who filed for bankruptcy would qualify for Medicaid. I don't mind helping those who thought their medical insurance company protected them but I resent very much having to pick up the tab for those who could afford to purchase medical insurance but chose not to.

Of course if you like to purchase your pharmaceuticals from Canada, as many of our citizens are presently doing, then you might think that our present health care system is the best in the world.

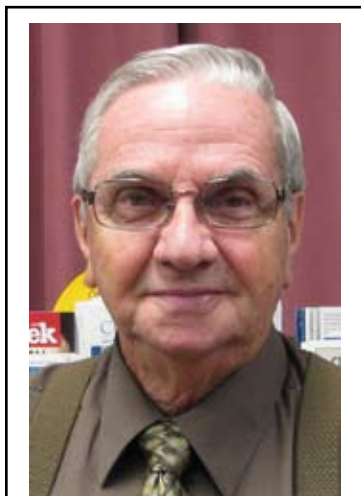
Chris Bolton
Eucha

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.

Alien Camps



FROSTY TROY
Founding Editor

I read about the Florida and Georgia candidates who recently called for “alien camps” for people in the country illegally – to keep them from instantly hopping back across the border.

Their comments brought back a vivid memory for me. McAlester, my hometown, was selected as a site for one of the “alien camps” for German prisoners of war.

Dad would drive us by in the evening to view progress on construction of the camp. We were not alone – curiosity drove hundreds by the camp’s location.

The German prisoners [POWs] began arriving by railroad, then were transported to the camp on the north side of McAlester.

It was called the “alien camp road” long after the war was over and the prisoners were repatriated.

Once they had arrived, Dad commented on

how young most of them were – really just kids. Nazi kids. Hitler’s kids.

The camp consisted of U.S. Army soldiers guarding the barracks and other buildings located behind a high barbed wire fence.

One of the most intriguing things that happened became a local landmark. The POWs built a miniature castle just inside the camp perimeter, in full view of anyone passing by. It was remarkable in its detail.

After a while – don’t ask me how long – the POWs were allowed outside the camp to do work around McAlester, of course under guard. In fact, they built the Second Ward canal.

It had always been a mudhole. I lived nearby and I loved that mudhole because it housed literally hundreds of crawdads – including the older ones with orange-colored pinchers.

Since they were doing a lot of work around McAlester and causing no trouble, Father Higgins of St. John’s Church asked if they could fix and caulk the school windows.

No matter what their name, the guards called them “Hans” – and I had the delight of sitting on a window ledge at St. John’s as “Hans” dug out the rotted caulk and inserted the new.

Wow! Did I have a story to tell at supper. After we ate and the dishes were stacked, washed and dried, Dad always encouraged us to speak about our day.

It was usually boring unless someone had been in a fight – which was way too often except for me – I was the runt of the litter. [My Dad managed the local Golden Gloves.]

When it came my turn – you can imagine my excitement having to wait to be the sixth to speak. I told them that after I served Mass Father Higgins told me the German POWs were coming to fix up the school building.

I didn’t tell them the part about Father Higgins showing up and ordering me out of the window.

“He won’t hurt me Father,” I protested.

“Yes, but I would have to explain to your father if you fall. Get down!”

I guess the point is that, as Dad put it, “They’re just kids.” Those are “just kids” fighting two American wars today. The enemy has “just kids” volunteering to be fitted with bombs designed to kill others.

I know about the “just war theory” but Afghanistan doesn’t qualify. It stands with the Vietnam tragedy as a horrible political blunder that cost 57,000 Ameri-



can lives and countless lives of the Vietnamese. The buzzword today is “collateral damage.”

I now realize that the German POWs were “just kids” doing their duty for the Fatherland. Our armed forces are equally dedicated – some of our young men and women have rotated three or four times.

In fact, if today the President called me – a Korean veteran – I would serve my country in whatever capacity I could. But I am equally committed to the belief that America has to quit pledging the flag too cheaply.

We are the world’s warrior state in military might, military bases and combat. President Barack Obama is catching heat for getting us out of Iraq but he sent 30,000 more to the Afghan effort.

Today America has 1.4 million Americans on active duty, another 833,000 in the reserves. Major defense contractors spend huge sums lobbying to keep it that way. Ike was right when he warned us about the military/industrial complex.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates, a conservative Republican, is catching hell from some in Congress and the Pentagon for his drive to downsize the bloated national security budget – expected to hit \$950 billion next year.

President Obama this year asked for a hike in total military spending of 2.2%, to \$708 billion. That’s 6.1% higher than peak defense spending under President G.W. Bush.

It’s time to quit the blame game and start thinking with our hearts as well as our heads. The Germans learned that lesson the hard way.

Elections are just around the corner. I don’t tell anyone how to vote. Inform yourself. Don’t be misled by the militaristic huff and puff emanating from some of the candidates.

I hope my fellow ledge-dweller Hans learned that lesson when he saw what America is really all about.

Body, Mind And Spirit

This anonymous item is well worth printing. It was thrust into my hands by a teacher after I had spoken to an education convocation. Teachers have power to give students more than academic or technical skills.

There is a sentence from an unnamed source that says, “We have been so anxious to give our children what we didn’t have that we have neglected to give them what we did have.”

This brings many questions to mind: What is it that children, young people, really need? What do they really want?

Among them are love, confidence, encouragement – someone to talk to, someone to listen. Standards, guidelines and laws to live by.

They don’t want to be left footloose in life. They need upright examples, leaders, the faith and assurance of responsible people.

They need to know that body and the mind are sacred gifts – the most marvelous instruments on earth and that it is utter, stupid foolishness to do anything or use anything that would impair the clear, clean functioning of the body and mind and spirit.

Young people need to be accountable to responsible parents, to responsible people, who expect much of them and let them know that for every infraction, they [as all of us] will be called to account, that there is no way to bypass the laws of life.

They need leaders they can safely follow, leaders with moral standards and conviction, who don’t fumble along with a looseness and permissiveness that can lead only to the tragedies of life.

Parents who wisely love their children will help them early to learn these lessons of life. Oh, let us give our children what we do have; let us give them ourselves, a righteous example, work to do, a sense of responsibility, a reason for facing facts, a witness of the everlasting things of life – so that it cannot be said:

We have been so anxious to give our children what we didn’t have that we have neglected to give them what we did have.

ASKING FOR TROUBLE

When our lawnmower broke and wouldn’t run, my wife kept hinting that I should get it fixed. But, somehow, I always had something else to take care of first – the shed, the boat, making beer – something more important to me.

Finally, my wife thought of a clever way to make her point. When I arrived home one day, I found her seated in the tall grass, busily snipping away with a tiny pair of sewing scissors. I watched silently for a short time, then went into the house. I was gone only a minute, but when I returned I handed her a toothbrush, saying, “When you finish cutting the grass, you might as well sweep the driveway.”

The doctors say I will walk again, but I will always have a limp.

Oklahoma's Parallel Political Universe



ARNOLD HAMILTON
Editor

In 2004, as a reporter for The Dallas Morning News, I parachuted into Nancy Pelosi's congressional district to research and write a story that would be paired with a piece from a colleague dispatched to Tom DeLay's district.

The question we were exploring: How could voters in different parts of the same country view the world so differently?

I graduated from the University of San Francisco, so I'm quite familiar with the Bay Area's political quirks. But I'll never forget asking a business owner in the Castro what he thought of George W. Bush.

"He should be tried for war crimes," the man replied, dead serious.

I suppressed a laugh – not because I found the idea preposterous [I didn't] but because I knew I'd never hear such an idea voiced publicly in DeLay's Houston area district.

I relived that assignment when I took a recent

road trip to Skiatook to attend Republican U.S. Sen. Tom Coburn's Town Hall.

As I soaked in The Gospel According to Coburn, delivered [appropriately] in the First Baptist Church's west campus auditorium, I was reminded of an early 21st Century political reality: There truly is a parallel universe in American politics – and it's disheartening how many of our neighbors reside there.

Some of the questions posed to the senator during the hour-long gathering were clearly born of Faux News overload or those contrived, anti-Obama chain e-mails that Uncle Jim and Aunt Sally pass along.

One man wanted to know if it were true that the President is using taxpayer dollars to relocate thousands of Palestinians to Michigan or Minnesota – he wasn't sure where – and provide them housing.

"I can't answer that," Coburn replied.

Another wanted to know if Obama really could bypass the Senate and grant amnesty to illegal immigrants.

"It depends on the degree and the definition – I read some very disturbing things inside Homeland Security last week in terms of not enforcing when they have an opportunity to enforce it," Coburn said, without elaborating.

"But I don't know if those are rumor or fact and my staff is working to find out if that's a fact."

Coburn could have elevated the national dialogue – rationally responding to the fear whipped up by faux grass roots groups financed by some of the nation's deepest pockets such as the Koch Brothers and helping create a climate for a serious, sober national debate of critical issues – but he didn't.

A Patient's Account Of Hospital 'Losing' Him

Editor's Note: Ray Payn went to the OU Medical Center in Oklahoma City where he underwent successful prostate surgery. He picks up the story from there:

Alone in a hospital bed, I suddenly knew "No one knows I am here." Pain racked and twisted my body. The hard hurt was from the inside out. There was no sedative drip. I was bleeding internally.

There was no connection to any life support monitoring or patient services. I was gasping for air as my lungs were compressed with bandages. The oxygen feed was not on my nose.

My throat was painfully raw and my lips were cracking. Without the saline drip, I was dehydrating. No phone or panic button was within reach. Fear grabbed my heart and froze my mind.

"No one knows I am here."

BODY AND RECORDS DISAPPEARS

As a patient, my records and my body disappeared. Coming out of a serious four-hour operation, I had waited eight hours to be moved to my room. A shift change was in process. No orderlies were available to move me.

My nurse became concerned and had a handyman move me ... what a good Samaritan mistake. I was moved to a ward that had no nurse on duty to receive me. On the move of hope, I sent my family and friends – the "bodyguards" – home. What a mistake.

Isolated from everything all I had was deadly silence.

Shouting "help... help," I started banging the empty water jug on the tray. The patient next door was leaning on my door. He opened the door and got help.

NIGHTMARE OF INDIFFERENCE

Through the night, the nightmare went on with neglect and indifference to my patient needs. I was told that I couldn't get any pain medication until they contacted the doctor. I knew then the trouble wasn't going to end.

I moaned, "Get my hospital records – the prescriptions are there." The next three shots were in the same spot on my arm. The arm became paralyzed.

See LOST Page 7

He blamed Medicare for the nation's skyrocketing health care costs. He alleged the new national health care plan is aimed at rationing care for seniors. He contended that Roe v. Wade is responsible for a financially shaky Social Security system – claiming it would be rock-solid solvent had not all those abortions occurred.

And, of course, he denied the existence of global warming, hailed the arrival of 22 nuclear power plants [claiming there is no problem with disposing of waste] and warned ominously that organized labor is preparing to spend \$200 million to \$300 million to pursue policies that are not in the nation's best interest.

In fairness, Coburn had pointed criticism for the GOP – especially GW Bush – and its spending priorities when it controlled the Congress and White House. He said if Republicans are empowered again and fail again, they're finished – credibility gone.

Coburn portrays himself as an open-minded thinker – a daily reader of both the conservative Wall Street Journal and liberal New York Times editorial pages. He opines that neither side has a lock on wisdom or truth.

But he also speaks with a certitude that plays well with a large segment of Oklahoma's electorate [even though he often fails to deliver facts to back up his assertions]. Sadly, Coburn is the state's most popular political figure, according to recent polls – even ahead of popular outgoing Gov. Brad Henry.

Of course, Coburn all-too-often asserts as fact that which is demonstrably false. Remember his claims about rampant lesbianism in southeastern Oklahoma? He also claims he could easily cut more than \$600 billion from the federal budget – a play to widespread cynicism that government is bloated and corrupt – but where are the specifics?

Other than one man who asked why Republicans deserved another chance at power – after racking up massive federal debt when they controlled Congress and Bush was president – it was common wisdom among the 100 or so assembled faithful that "they" are leading our nation to destruction and "we" must do whatever it takes to get our country back.



Coburn can talk all he wants about his devotion to the Constitution and the ideals of the "Christian" Founding Fathers, but I think his political message is built on a different cornerstone: Fear.

If you look up demagogue in the dictionary, you'll find Tom Coburn's portrait.

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Oklahoma On U.S. Toxic Waste List

Oklahoma is one of 79 sites nationally where coal-ash has contaminated water.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] is hosting a series of regional hearings across the United States on whether and how to regulate toxic leads tailing and coal ash waste from coal-fired power plants.

A major new study identifies 39 additional dump sites in 21 states that are contaminating drinking water or surface water with arsenic and other heavy metals.

The report by the Environmental Integrity Project [EIP], Earthjustice and the Sierra Club documents the fact that state governments are not adequately monitoring the coal combustion waste [CCW] disposal sites and that the EPA needs to enact strong new regulations to protect the public.

SPOILING LOCAL WATER

The new EIP/Earthjustice/Sierra Club report shows that, at every one of the coal ash dump sites equipped with groundwater monitoring wells, concentrations of heavy metals such as arsenic or lead exceed federal health-based standards for drinking water, with concentrations at Hatfield's Ferry site in Pennsylvania reaching as high as 341 times the federal standard for arsenic.

The new report is available online at <http://www.environmentalintegrity.org>.

A February 2010 EIP/Earthjustice report documented 31 coal ash dump sites in 14 states. The 39 additional sites in the latest report along with the 67 already identified by the EPA bring the total number of known toxic contamination sites from coal ash pollution to 137 in 34 states.

Together, the independent reports and EPA's own findings make clear the growing number of waters known to be poisoned by poor management of the toxic ash left over after coal is burned for electricity.

OKLAHOMA HAS WORST SITE

The 21 states containing the 39 damage sites identified in the new report includes Oklahoma with one site in northeastern Oklahoma. That would be the Picher-Cardin site – declared the No. 1 toxic toxic waste site in America. The town has been bought out, but cleanup has not been completed.

The town would have been closed years earlier but U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-OK, opposed spending the money necessary to fund the EPA project. He finally relented after visiting the site for the first time.

In this region Arkansas has two sites.

The first public hearings on the pending EPA coal ash rule were held Aug. 30 in Arlington, VA, and Sept. 8 in Dallas. Additional public hearings will be held in Charlotte, NC, Sept. 14; Chicago, Sept. 16; Pittsburgh, Sept. 21; and Louisville, KY, Sept. 28.

Jeff Stant, director, Coal Combustion Waste Initiative, Environmental Integrity Project, said: "The contamination of water supplies, threats to people, and



damage to the environment documented in this report illustrate very real and dangerous harms that are prohibited by federal law but are going on in a largely unchecked fashion at today's coal ash dump sites.

A PERVASIVE REALITY

"Contamination of the environment and water supplies with toxic levels of arsenic, lead and other chemicals is a pervasive reality at America's coal ash disposal sites because states are not preventing it.

"The case for a national regulation setting common sense safeguards for states to meet, such as liners, monitoring and cleanup standards, could not be more persuasive. The need for more direct EPA involvement is clear; leaving enforcement to the same states that have refused to do their jobs for the last 40 years is simply not a responsible course of action."

Lisa Evans, senior administrative counsel, Earthjustice, said: "There is no greater reason for coal ash regulation than preventing the poisoning of our water. We now have 39 more good reasons for a national coal ash rule. The mounting number of contaminated sites demonstrates that the states are unable or unwilling to solve this problem."

Illegal open dumping in violation of federal law may be occurring. As many as 27 of the 35 sites where groundwater is contaminated may be illegal open dumps according to federal law, based on the high levels of metals found in the groundwater.

Judge Dumps Lawsuit Over Geronimo's Skull

By Grant Lawrence

Imagine if some club had George Washington's skull and used it as a source for amusement and weird rituals.

Americans would be outraged and demand justice for the disrespect paid to the father of their country.

It has been reported that George W. Bush's Yale Skull and Bones Society uses the skull of Geronimo for their college rituals. Skull and Bones, out of respect, should apologize and turn the skull over to the descendants of Geronimo.

Instead they refuse to do what is right by hiding behind the law.

Recently a judge threw out the lawsuit by the descendants of Geronimo, a great Apache Indian leader, asking for his remains to be returned and buried in New Mexico.

WHAT LAWSUIT SOUGHT

The lawsuit was filed last year in Washington by 20 descendants who want to rebury the Apache warrior near his New Mexico birthplace.

It claimed that during the First World War, Skull and Bones members, including Prescott Bush, the grandfather of former President George W. Bush, took the remains from a burial plot at Fort Sill, where Geronimo died in 1909.

The judge threw out the lawsuit because the law protecting Native remains in

America only pertained to those taken after 1990. Also the judge said that the suit failed to establish that the government waived its right not to be sued without its consent.

In other words, here is another example where the law is doing what it is meant to do. The law is meant to protect the rich and powerful at the expense of those that have neither wealth nor power. The justice system is generally a sham and a scam set up to appear as if there is justice.

PLAYTHINGS FOR WEALTHY

It is an outrage that the sacred remains of a great leader will continue to be used as a plaything for parties and rituals of the super rich.

I live and work among the Navajo, cousins of the Apaches. I can tell you how much they respect the remains of the deceased and will not even disturb ancient Pueblo and Anasazi ruins. They understand that it is right to show respect to ancestors, even if it is not your own.

Unlike the Navajo, the law in this country only respects the wealth of the powerful.

- The author works as a school counselor and mental health counselor in Gallup, NM

LOST

From Page 6

I could not get out of bed. I stopped the fourth shot and had the nurse use a different muscle. My oxygen tube was not put on right ... it kept falling off my nose as I slept.

Most often the nurse or nurse's aides didn't really check my comfort level and became frustrated with my panic button use. They gathered around my bed and wrote their cell phone numbers on the black board.

"Now use these numbers to reach us." I couldn't read the numbers and had difficulty using my finger on the phone.

Eventually things improved, doctors and new nurses took over. I couldn't wait to leave. Going home became a different story ... the going home instructions were incomplete. For example, no one told me that pain medicines caused con-

stipation.

Editor's Note: When Mr. Payn filed a formal complaint, the head of the hospital sent him a letter of apology.

More than 100,000 patients were killed by hospital mistakes last year – 18,000 because medical personnel didn't wash their hands. If you go to a hospital for any reason, have an advocate 24 hours a day. Question every procedure.

We have other first person accounts. We know the medical staff is undermanned and overworked but this case is absurd.

Oklahoma is 3,000 RNs short, not to mention a dire lack of doctors in rural areas. America has good medical care, we just have to make sure it gets to ALL the patients ALL the time.

What's Happening To Public Ed Is Outrageous

GOP Tax Policy Rewards Rich Over School Children

By Mike Brown

It's back to school time for students across the state. Many students are excited to see old friends and return to familiar school grounds, but once that excitement wanes, I wonder how our students will grapple with the ever-changing environment of our under-funded public schools.

Shortly, our students will be toting around old textbooks, dealing with larger class sizes, losing their library media and possibly their bus routes to school. More students may be learning from teachers who have a background in a subject other than the one they are teaching.

We already lag 46th nationally in per-pupil expenditures, and 48th in average teacher salary.

With our budget shortfall, the majority leadership focused on ways to scale back the already scarce resources in our schools, and made it easier to bring in for a three-month stint lower-paid substitute teachers without bachelors degrees or teaching certificates.

EXORBITANT FAVORS

They paved the way to dismiss teachers or not give them benefits for up to four semesters. And all the while majority leadership was bemoaning the drastic cuts on top of cuts to our schools, they were also calculating exorbitant tax breaks to those industries that least need them.

This past session bills were pushed through to provide ongoing favors to the oil and gas industry as well as other large corporations at the expense of vital public services. While I was working to suspend or repeal some of the hundreds of tax breaks given to big business, the majority party was working on giving lobbyists and special interests a sweetheart tax break by reducing their ad valorem rate.

If enacted this would have greatly hurt our public schools and counties, who receive and rely on money from ad valorem taxes. If not for Democratic Gov. Brad Henry's veto of this bill, there would have been even more dire consequences for our teachers and students.

9% PENALTY INTEREST RATE

Nearly \$5.4 billion dollars of revenue is lost each year by tax breaks, deductions and exemptions. Billions of dollars, a colossal sum of money, is granted for a myriad of industries and endeavors, and although this session we glanced at a few, we still left billions on the table while our local schools bear the brunt of almost 10% in cuts over the last two years.

Take the oil and gas industry, for example. HB 2432 was crafted to provide a moratorium on gross production tax rebates for horizontal and deep well drilling. It was part of the budget agreement between Republican legislative leadership and the governor, but after pressure from the oil and gas industry this bill went from being a moratorium on tax incentives to a deferral, and came with the added penalty of permanent concessions to the industry.

Following the two-year deferral on these rebates, the state must repay these tax breaks over a 36-month period. If our revenue shortfalls prevent a timely payment, we will allow the oil and gas industry to charge the state daily a 9% penalty interest rate. In these trying economic times, this industry could actually make an additional profit off of a tax break the state grants.

WHAT A DEAL!

With this bill's passage the state also promised that in return for this one-time deferral of their tax rebates, there can be no future attempts to defer their tax breaks. Also, drilling incentives for horizontally drilled and deep wells will be paid out as front-end credits, rather than as rebates that are applied for and refunded after the end of the year. Cost for this switch is a mere \$65 million. Plus, the bill abolished the current cap that limited at \$25 million the total incentives that could be claimed for deep well drilling. Not too shabby of a deal for the oil and gas industry for enduring the hardship of having their tax breaks deferred

Scheming To Undermine Confidence In Schools

By Ed Cannaday

There has been a flurry of reporting on the recent decision by an Oklahoma County district judge to require that the Oklahoma Education Department certify and fund a "virtual charter school."

This ruling was made with the knowledge that this "school" referred to as Epic 1 on 1 lacked a formal institutional sponsor whose board had given their documented approval. According to the Oklahoma Charter School Laws a charter school must have a sponsor that is either a school district, an institution of higher education, a career technology center, or an American Indian nation.

Therefore, this virtual entity cannot be classified as a school without this sponsorship and subsequently would be ineligible for state tax dollars.

Superintendent Garrett captured the need for this requirement when she stated, "We don't have a school district that has no representation through their community through a democratic election."

Without this time-honored tradition, these virtual entities can provide "education" in manners that are counter-productive to the interest of the taxpayers who are footing the bill to fund their operations.

Some of the advocates for this unregulated form of education will say that they should not be regulated and held accountable. Well, if that is the case then they should not be asking for working Oklahomans to fund their activities.

If this process is allowed to survive and expand, the funding for schools that are held accountable will shrink at an alarming rate. This is especially disconcerting when we realize the funding available per child in our public schools is becoming smaller each year relative to the rest of the

nation.

Another troubling aspect of this issue is created when the attorney for Epic 1 on 1 stated that he would file for court action to override the statutes governing open versus emergency transfers.

These laws are designed to protect public schools from capricious movements of students from their district after April 1, since this is when the school budget for the following year is determined.

Prior to the April 1 deadline it is considered an open transfer and not subject to both receiving and sending school approval. After this date it requires both parties to agree to the transfer.

Epic's attorney states that they will appeal this law under the claim that it will create "an undue burden on charter schools." This is to be based on the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause. Historically this clause has been used to protect "individuals" from unfair discrimination.

If this occurs I must refer to the old saying that describes the "nose of the camel being inside the proverbial tent." Translated, I witnessed this past legislative session slowly but steadily allow the erosion of the public schools' integrity while trying to convince the people that public schools have outlived their usefulness.

There is no clearer evidence than that we now look to virtual schools manned by virtual teachers educating virtual students, but with "real" taxpayer dollars.

- The author, a Porum Democrat, is a former public school teacher and administrator who represents District 15 in the state House of Representatives

for two years.

Our actions at the Capitol reflect our values and priorities. I have serious concerns as to what the impact will be to our future generation given our present reluctance to prioritize their education over providing tax breaks to a favored few.

- The author, a Tahlequah Democrat, represents District 4 in the state House of Representatives

An Election Year Primer On Personal Freedom

By Sharon Martin

Do you believe a woman has the right to choose what to do with her own body? If so, steer clear of the personal freedoms crowd. They would prefer that your legislators decide for you.

Do you believe in the right to choose your own religion or to choose to practice no religion? If so, be careful for whom you vote. There are those who think your religious choices should be mandated by the government.

Do you believe that you have the right to choose your own spouse? There is a vocal crowd who would like to narrow your choices for you.

Do you want Social Security protected? Social Security is insurance. You pay into it; you draw from it when you reach a certain age. The keep-government-small crowd would like to renege on your insurance contract. They think you have the personal freedom to starve in your old age, and they have the freedom to default on the program into which you paid all your working life.

Personal freedom is the freedom to choose what you do with your own body. If you want to drink or smoke, that should be your choice so long as you pay the taxes due to the government for the regulation of said alcohol, tobacco, or

other combustible. If you choose to abuse your body, however, it's not the government's role to feed and house you.

We certainly don't have the right to harm others in pursuit of our freedoms - no second-hand smoke, no driving under the influence, no using dirty equipment for tattooing. We can row ourselves right down the river, but we can't send our children, neighbors, or strangers over the falls.

Personal freedom is not freedom from taxes. If we want roads and schools and the National Guard, each citizen must pay his or her share of the bill. But we all should be free to make our own way the best way we know how without some 50-cent politician telling us he knows better than we do what we should do with our bodies, our lives, or our futures.

The next time you hear a politician spouting about personal freedoms, you'd better find out exactly what he or she means by that before you vote. You might not like their definition of freedom if it means they are the ones free to make your choices for you.

- The author lives in Oilton

Watts' Infomercial Key To McCain's Win?



When flip-flopping U.S. Sen. John McCain reclaims his seat in Congress he will have ex-U.S. Rep. J.C. Watts, R-OK, to thank for his victory – even more than the \$21 million he spent.

J.D. Hayworth is the former GOP representative from Arizona who challenged McCain for the Arizona Republican Senate nomination. He blew an incredibly large lead, then blamed Watts for his failed campaign.

Hayworth had tried to position himself as a far-right alternative to McCain, courting Tea Party support and sending the incumbent McCain on a sometimes puzzling rightward drift.

Things got more difficult for Hayworth, though, when pundits discovered an infomercial where Hayworth and Watts endorsed a program called

the National Grants Conferences.

What is the National Grants Conferences? Eric Kleefeld of Talking Points Memo explained that it's a program set up by a company called Proven Methods Seminars, which advertises itself as running seminars in which people can find out how to get grant money from the federal government – which the infomercial's on-screen text pitched as being "FREE MONEY" in quotes.

That "free money" government grants infomercial in which Hayworth appeared in 2007 was all Watts' idea, according to Hayworth. At least that is what the Hayworth campaign declared after a crushing loss to McCain.

WHAT ROLE DID WATTS PLAY?

While it remains unclear exactly what role Watts may have played in recruiting Hayworth to the infomercial cause, Watts has had quite a post-Congressional career as both a pitchman and a lobbyist.

Watts' lobbying clients have included AT&T, the National Installment Lenders Association – a payday loan trade organization – the United Keetoowah Band/Cherokee Indians, and others.

In addition, he has done pitch work as well. The National Grants Conferences – the program promoted by Hayworth – had previously used Watts' name to promote its services.

The Virginia Pilot reported in 2005 that a National Grants Conference instructor showed an audience in Hampton, VA, a photo of Watts and said, "You don't get Congressman J.C. Watts to endorse your service unless you do things right."

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

And in an investigative story in 2006, the Sacramento Bee reported: "In a late-night television infomercial played frequently in areas where a free introductory NGC session is scheduled, former Rep. J.C. Watts, urges viewers to attend.

"Two of the company's principals, Irene Milin and her husband, Mike, sit across a table from Watts and tell viewers that hundreds of billions of federal dollars are available for purposes such as starting a business or investing in real estate."

The infomercial is from 2007, the year Hayworth left the House of Representatives and began hosting a talk show on Phoenix radio. Bloggers have been quick to point out that the National Grants Conferences doesn't seem like the kind of thing Tea Party libertarians would approve of.

HAYWORTH BLAMES WATTS

Mark Sanders, spokesman for the Hayworth campaign, reached out to Eric Kleefeld of TPM after the story broke.

"Here's what happened," Sanders told Talking Points Memo. "J.C. Watts is a former Congressman. He and Hayworth knew each other when they were in Congress. Watts had done an infomercial for this company, and he recommended to Hayworth that he do them, as well.

"So Hayworth just took it on his friend's advice that it would be a good thing to do, and he did it. And that was the extent of the knowledge that he had regarding the company."

COMPANY IS TOTAL SCAM

"It should be noted that the company's conferences and business practices have received an F rating from the Better Business Bureau, and in 2007 it was the target of a letter to the Federal Trade Commission, signed by 32 state attorneys general," writes Kleefeld in a separate Talking Points Memo story.

The Weekly Standard's John McCormack asked two pressing questions. "How long until the McCain campaign photoshops Hayworth's head on Matthew Lesko's body? More importantly, how does Hayworth survive this?"

True/Slant's E. D. Kain: "Tea Partiers may be against government spending in the abstract, but in a lot of ways that just makes this whole affair more damaging to Hayworth.

"He's just telling us that we can get a bunch of free money from the government, bootstraps and rugged individualism be damned. There's no policy here to defend. He's basically advocating pork barrel welfare, and this video drives home everything his critics have said about him."

TRASHY IDIOTIC CROOK?

Gawker's Jim Newell takes the opportunity to throw a few shots at Hayworth, whom he calls a "trashy, idiotic crook." Sneers Newell: "Some of us use this exact same logic to argue for extending unemployment benefits or improving roads, school systems, and health care affordability, but those things – public

goods – are Communist.

"Endless government grants for everyone would be conservative and responsible – kind of like actual 'tax cuts,' but for individual people, for whatever. One lady fixed up her bathroom, with a government grant!"

Hot Air's Allahpundit goes for the counter-narrative, pointing out that McCain has long tried to paint Hayworth as a kook: "Crankishness was priced into the value of his political stock long ago."

What's more, says Allahpundit, "according to that NYT poll of tea partiers back in April, 62% think the benefits of Social Security and Medicare outweigh the costs ... When it comes to the working Joe getting a little out of the system he's been paying into his whole life, they seem reasonably serene." Ultimately, he says, "reports of [Hayworth's] political death are, I suspect, greatly exaggerated."

BILLIONS ASKING FOR THE TAKING?

"What teabagger would doubt the main premise of the infomercial – that government programs have billions of dollars lying around just waiting to be snatched up by the first person, deserving or otherwise, who figures out the paperwork?" wonders Steve M. in an acidic post at No More Mister Nice Blog.

"Isn't that what teabaggers think all government programs are? Don't they think all tax money is essentially poured down a rat hole, while elves and fairies maintain the Interstate highways and conduct FBI investigations and run the Pentagon and the national parks and the Centers for Disease Control for free?"

"Clearly [Hayworth is] the victim here – an honest guy who just wanted to help return more of taxpayers' own cash to the taxpayers themselves, but was thwarted by the evil government mafia."

HAYWORTH PUBLICLY APOLOGIZES

Hayworth publicly apologized for his appearance in the 2007 infomercial for the company's questionable seminars promoting "free money" in government grants.

The McCain campaign responded to Hayworth's backtracking in their own statement: "This is a far cry from just four days ago, when Congressman Hayworth blamed the victims of this scam, coldly stating, 'buyer beware.' We couldn't agree more. When it comes to J.D. Hayworth, voters beware."

DISRESPECTFUL DIAGNOSIS

After retiring, I went to the Social Security office to apply for my benefits. The woman behind the counter asked to see my driver's license to verify my age. I looked in my pockets and realized I had left my wallet at home. I told the woman I was very sorry, but I would have to go home and come back later.

"Unbutton your shirt," the woman said. So I opened my shirt revealing my curly silver hair. "That silver hair on your chest is proof enough for me," she said, and she processed my Social Security application.

When I got home, I excitedly told my wife about my experience.

"You should have dropped your pants," my wife said. "You might have gotten disability, too!"

And then the fight started ...

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Phillips Theological Seminary, Tulsa, Oklahoma
and

Dr. Joanna Dewey
Harvey H. Guthrie, Jr. Professor Emeritus
Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts

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BOOKS

Red State Families Behind Blue States

By Jonathan Rauch

RED FAMILIES V. BLUE FAMILIES

Legal Polarization And The Creation Of Culture

By Naomi Cahn and June Carbone

Oxford University Press

304 pages, \$29.95

Can it be? One of the oddest paradoxes of modern cultural politics may at last be resolved. The paradox is this: Cultural conservatives revel in condemning the loose moral values and lifestyles of "San Francisco liberals."

But if you want to find two-parent families with stable marriages and coddled kids, your best bet is to bypass Sarah Palin country and go to Nancy Pelosi territory: the liberal, bicoastal, predominantly Democratic places that cultural conservatives love to hate.

In 2007, for example, the states with the lowest median age at marriage were all red [Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Utah]. The states with the highest first-marriage age were all blue [Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island].

The same pattern holds for age at first childbirth. Massachusetts is highest [about 28 years old], Mississippi lowest [about 23 years old].

WHERE DIVORCE RATE IS LOWEST

The country's lowest divorce rate belongs to none other than Massachusetts, the original home of same-sex marriage. Palinites might wish that Massachusetts's enviable marital stability were an anomaly, but it is not. The pattern is robust.

States that voted for the Democratic presidential candidate in both 2004 and 2008 boast lower average rates of divorce and teenage childbirth than do states that voted for the Republican in both elections. [That is using family data for 2006 and 2007, the latest available.]

Six of the seven states with the lowest divorce rates in 2007, and all seven with the lowest teen birthrates in 2006, voted blue in both elections. Six of the seven states with the highest divorce rates in 2007, and five of the seven with the highest teen birthrates, voted red.

It's as if family strictures undermine family structures.

Naomi Cahn and June Carbone – family law professors at George Washington University and the University of Missouri-Kansas City, respectively – suggest that the apparent paradox is no paradox at all.

CULTURAL DIVIDE

Rather, it is the natural consequence of a cultural divide that has opened wide over the past few decades and shows no sign of closing. To define the divide in a sentence: In red America, families form adults; in blue America, adults form families.

Cahn and Carbone's important new book is too rich with nuance to be encompassed in a short space. But here is the gist.

For generations, American family life was premised on two facts. First, sex makes babies. Second, low-skilled men, if they apply themselves, can expect to get a job, make a living, and support a family.

Fact 1 gave rise to a strong linkage between sexual activity, marriage, and procreation. It was [and still is] difficult for teenagers and young adults to abstain from sex, so one important norm was not to have sex before marriage. If you did have premarital sex and conceived a child, you had to marry.

Under those rules, families formed early, whether by choice or at the point of a shotgun. That was all right, however, because [Fact 2] the man could get a job and support the family, so the woman could probably stay home and raise the kids. Neither member of the couple had to have an extended education in order to succeed as spouse or parent.

YOUNG MAKE POOR CHOICES

True, young people often make poor marital choices. But that, too, was usually all right, at least from society's point of view, because divorce was stigmatized and fairly hard to get. Even a flawed marriage was likely to be a stable one. Over time, the spouses would grow into their responsibilities.

That is what "families form adults" means. Many teenagers and young adults formed families before they reached maturity and then came to maturity precisely by shouldering family responsibilities. Immature choices and what were once euphemistically called "accidents" were a fact of life, but the unity of sex, marriage, and procreation, combined with the pressure not to divorce, turned childish errors into adult vocations.

But then along come two game-changers: the global information economy and the birth-control revolution. The postindustrial economy puts a premium on skill and cognitive ability. A high school education or less no longer offers very good prospects. Blue-collar wages fall, so a factory job no longer cuts it – if, that is, you can even find a factory job.

SHOTGUN WEDDING IS GONE

Meanwhile, birth control separates decisions about sex from decisions about parenthood, and the advent of effective female contraception lets men shift the moral responsibility for pregnancy to women, eroding the shotgun marriage.

Divorce becomes easy to obtain and sheds its stigma. Women stream into the workforce and become more economically independent – a good thing, but with the side effect of contributing to a much higher divorce rate.

In this very different world, early family formation is often a calamity. It short-

circuits skill acquisition by knocking one or both parents out of school. It carries a high penalty for immature marital judgment in the form of likely divorce. It leaves many young mothers, now bearing both the children and the cultural responsibility for pregnancy, without the option of ever marrying at all.

New norms arise for this environment, norms geared to prevent premature family formation. The new paradigm prizes responsible childbearing and child-rearing far above the traditional linkage of sex, marriage, and procreation. Instead of emphasizing abstinence until marriage, it enjoins.

Don't form a family until after you have finished your education and are equipped for responsibility. In other words, adults form families. Family life marks the end of the transition to adulthood, not the beginning.

THEY AGREED TO MARRY

Red America still prefers the traditional model. In 2008, when news emerged that the 17-year-old daughter of the Republican vice presidential nominee was pregnant, traditionalists were reassured rather than outraged, because Bristol Palin followed the time-honored rules by announcing she would marry the father.

They were kids, to be sure, but they would form a family and grow up together, as so many before them had done. Blue America, by contrast, was censorious.

See **DIVIDE** Page 17

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Tax Dollars Wasted As Mentally Ill Suffer

By Wallace Collins

We are gathered to talk about the devastating cuts to mental health facilities in Oklahoma. First, I want to put some personal connections to those cuts.

The Enhanced Recovery Center [ERC] was closed at Griffin Memorial Hospital in Norman – in House District 45 – back in July of '09. That was a transitional facility teaching mentally ill people how to live and be able to assimilate back into society.

It was closed in the first round of cuts, putting 30 mentally ill people out on the streets, and losing several state jobs. These mental health consumers were out on their own.

One of them came from an abusive home. After wandering Norman, staying at the Salvation Army for a few days, then to OKC and the Jesus House, this person wound up back in the abusive home and committed suicide!

As I told the governor, this was the first casualty of the budget cuts.

MORE SUICIDES

Later, I replied to a letter from a constituent, telling me of her and her boyfriend's dreams. He designed houses, including his own, and they had big plans for the future. However, with the downturn in the economy, he suffered from a loss of job and depression.

Facing the loss of his own house, which he had designed and built, he, too, committed suicide!

A third tragedy was related to me as I knocked doors during my election campaign. The conversation turned toward mental health, and I told the story of the two earlier suicides, and the constituent said, "Well, here is a third, as a friend of mine gave up, because everything seemed so hopeless!"

Why doesn't the State of Oklahoma have services available to serve and save people like my constituents?

MOMENTUM LOST

Two years ago, Oklahoma was the only state in the nation to raise their score on mental health issues from a "D" to a "B" – and no state received an "A." Those improvements came after years of careful work to improve our mental health system.

Now, that gain is lost, and all the improvement is lost. How many more lives will be lost unnecessarily, because of these drastic cuts to mental health?

Mental health is always the last to be funded and the first to be cut. Evidence of that was in the budget a couple of years ago, when it was supposed to be a "standstill budget," meaning everyone received the same funding as the previous year, but Mental Health was cut 3%.

Department of Health Commissioner Terry Cline recently stated that Oklahoma now ranks 49th in overall health, and we are in danger of slipping behind Mississippi, if more cuts are made. He went on to say that we have never been rated that low before.

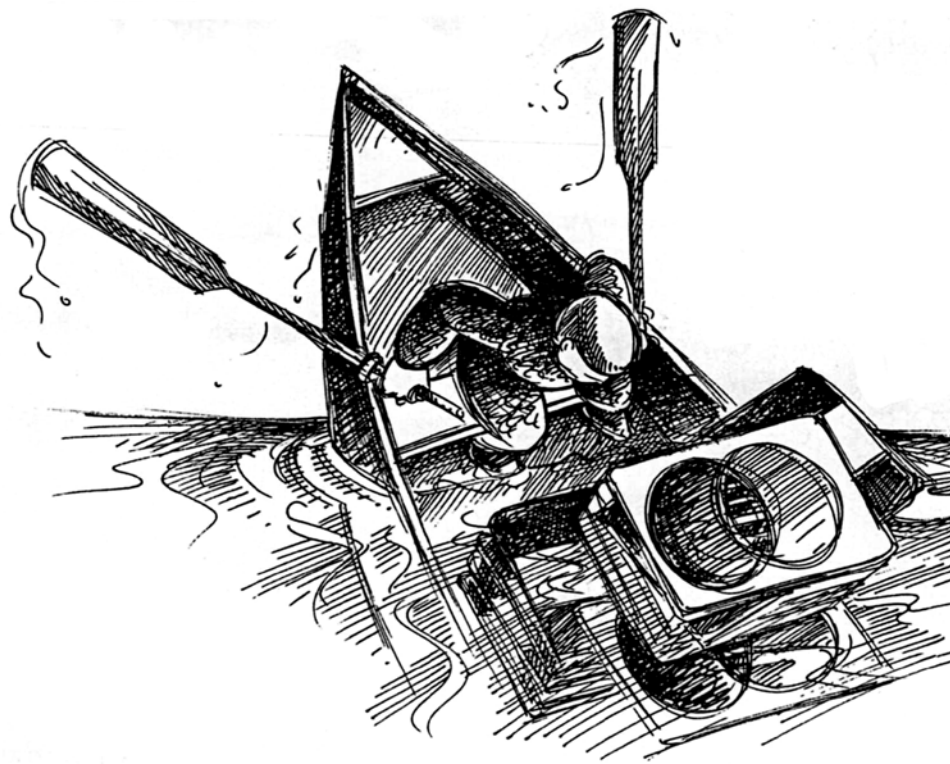
The intake capacity at Griffin, the last mental health hospital in the state, has been lowered to only 120 consumers. Two years ago, there could have been anywhere from 250-300 patients there.

With the merging of the Norman Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center [ADTC] and the CRC, 60 adult beds were lost, as well as over 100 jobs. The NADTC graduated about 750 people a year from its program, with a very high success rate, and low recidivism.

WAITING LIST FOR HELP

State Mental Health Commissioner Terri White recently told one of the committees I serve on that on any given day around 1,000 people are waiting to get in for services. It will get even worse with additional cuts.

Our jails are full, the prison system is full, and yet, that is where these needy people are headed if we do not offer the adequate services for mental health and drug addiction. We have never really offered adequate services and have always had a waiting list, but never so long as we have now. And the gains we have made in the past are now a thing of the past, as the already inadequate budgets are cut



once again.

These are just a few reasons why legislative leadership should move immediately to cut or end some of the tax credits that are now costing our state. If improvements were made in the tax credit area, it could save lives of Oklahomans, not only now, but in the future.

In 2010, Oklahoma gave away \$5.6 billion in tax credits. This is nearly a year's budget for the state. This is money that could have gone to save seniors' hot meals program, saved the NADTC, CRC, ERC, and many state jobs, improved things for our veterans, shored up public education, or many other needy programs.

MONEY SQUANDERED

Now comes the other side of the coin in the battle for funding. In the 2010 session, HB 1032 was passed that was supposed to save the state millions through volume purchasing. The idea was to mandate purchasing through Central Purchasing, and to buy only from vendors on a given list.

This was supposed to raise the volume of business with these specified vendors, which would then raise the amount of the discount the state would receive for the increase in volume of purchases.

While we have laid off employees, eliminated vital services, and bought out early retirements to save the state money, we now find out that those "saved dollars" are being wasted through sorry purchasing practices.

I am told that often times items that used to be purchased locally are now bought through the vendor on the list at inflated prices of three to five times as much as the local price. On top of that, the money is going to out-of-state vendors, so it is not even helping our Oklahoma economy.

INFLATED PRICES

A few examples: alarm wire that locally cost about \$71 per spool cost about \$275 for the same spool of wire. Other examples are water pumps that have increased in price 300-400% because of the mandate to buy from the "list." Compressors that are used frequently at a local state facility have also increased by the same percentage.

Another specific example of the savings of "local price shopping" found this – a 12 volt, 8 amp hour battery from a local OKC merchant \$13.99 or two for \$27.98. The same pair of batteries from a vendor on the approved list is \$126.41. Almost exactly \$100 more! How can this be saving any money?

I find it incredible to think that we have laid off personnel and curtailed important services, and then waste the money in this fashion. I have alerted Central Purchasing to this problem, and hopefully, it will be corrected soon. If it is not, I plan to introduce legislation to make a correction in the purchasing practice.

But in the meantime, people are suffering, dying, and other lives are ruined, while money is going down the drain.

– The author, a Norman Democrat, represents District 45 in the state House of Representatives

CareerTech Director Honored By The FFA

The National FFA Organization has selected Phil Berkenbile, state director of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, to receive a special VIP Citation for making significant contributions to agricultural education.

The VIP Citation is one of the most prestigious awards for supporting FFA and its programs. Berkenbile will be honored during the 83rd National FFA Convention, Oct. 20-23, in Indianapolis.

Berkenbile's focus has always been on people: family, friends, students and colleagues.

"So many people helped me get where I am today," Berkenbile said. "Agriculture was a big part of my life."

The VIP Citation recognizes the dedicated individuals who contribute to the FFA mission of student success through their hard work and cooperation.

As a high school freshman, Berkenbile developed a desire to become an agricultural education teacher. He earned three degrees from Oklahoma State University and went on to teach agricultural education for 16 years.

In 1988 Berkenbile joined the agricultural education division of the ODCTE as

central district supervisor. In 1995 he became the Morrison Public Schools superintendent. He returned to the ODCTE as associate state director in 1999 and was named state director in 2004.

As state director he oversees the largest CareerTech system in the nation. His leadership has provided a solid foundation for agricultural education and FFA in Oklahoma.

The National FFA Organization, formerly known as Future Farmers of America, is a national youth organization of 520,284 student members, all preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture – as part of 7,429 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The National FFA Organization changed to its present name in 1988 in recognition of the growth and diversity of agriculture and agricultural education.

The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

Campaign Contributions: Justice For Sale

An impartial judge is often taken for granted, but big money talks, even in the American judiciary. A new report reveals that private industry and special interest groups spent the past decade pouring record amounts of money – often through “secret channels” and front groups – into judicial campaigns to sway top state courts.

Oklahoma is no exception. Unfortunately, when Democrats controlled the Legislature, they limited professional selection of judges to the appellate judges. District judges compete in a corrupt, messy marketplace.

Now an equally malicious Republican Legislature has submitted State Question 752 that corrupts the Judicial Nominating Commission that has operated without a hint of politics or scandal since its adoption.

SUPREME COURT CORRUPTION

Until judicial reform came to Oklahoma, justice was for sale on the State Supreme Court. A probe resulted in the impeachment of a justice and federal prison for a justice.

National fundraising for state judicial campaigns has more than doubled from \$83 million in 1990-99 to \$206.9 million in 2000-09, according to the new report, which calls the increase in spending “pronounced and systemic.”

In the past decade, 20 of the 22 states that hold Supreme Court elections had their most extravagant judicial campaign seasons to date.

Authors of the report, titled “The New Politics of Judicial Elections 2000-2009: Decade of Change,” explained their findings in a news conference.

“We really saw a tidal wave of cash into court elections,” said Charles Hall, communication director for the Justice at Stake Campaign and editor of the report.

The report identifies a list of judicial campaign “super-spenders,” whose ranks include the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and infamous coal baron Don Blankenship.

PUSHING AN AGENDA

“The greatest concern is that anyone who wants to run for Supreme Court really depends on super spenders ... who want to put people on courts to push their agendas,” Hall said.

The authors compared the upswing of spending on vicious TV attack ads during the past decade to an escalating “arms race” that demands the funds that only special interests can afford. Ad campaign spending totaled \$93.6 million from 2000-09, topping



out at \$26.6 million during the 2007-08 cycle.

By 2009, more than half of TV ads about judicial candidates were paid for by third parties and special interest groups, according to co-author Adam Skaggs of the Brennan Center for Justice. Skaggs said that these third parties “played attack dog” and were responsible for about 90% of ads attacking judicial candidates.

Big business and special interest groups often funnel money into ad campaigns or candidates coffers through front or “shell” groups, Skaggs said.

Hall said the upcoming 2010 elections could see unprecedented third party spending on judicial retention elections, especially in Iowa, where social conservatives are attempting to oust three state Supreme Court justices that voted to legalize gay marriage in the state.

“This crisis of confidence in the judiciary is real and growing,” warns former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor in a forward to the report. “Left unaddressed, the perception that justice is for sale will under-

mine the rule of law that the courts are supposed to uphold.”

The report states that American voters share O’Connor’s concerns about the money spent on judicial campaigns and are losing confidence in the courts. Three out of four voters believe campaign spending affects courtroom decisions, and 46% of judges agree, according to the report.

Top spenders come from the left and the right, as the escalated spending puts pressure on competing special interests and the judges they help elect.

The report identifies a “multi-million dollar duel” between conservative and pro-business groups on the right, labor unions and wealthy plaintiffs on the left.

Hall explained that the “arms race” of special interest spending began in the 1990s as big business targeted individual courts that struck down judgment limits on big rulings over things like asbestos and tobacco. Civil attorneys responded, mainly through the Democratic Party, and the ongoing duel created the “tidal wave” of spending.

The report shows how super-spenders use stealth Political Action Committees or individual donations to defeat unfriendly judges or put a handpicked judge in place.

Consider Blankenship of Massey Energy. Blankenship is known for his tirades against global warming research and donning an American flag-print outfit in April after an explosion at a Massey mine known for safety violations left dozens of workers dead.

Blankenship is also known as the top individual super-spender for spending \$3 million on a campaign to elect West Virginia Supreme Court Justice Brent Benjamin.

Once elected, Justice Benjamin refused to recuse himself, and ruled in a lawsuit filed against Massey Energy by another company, in which Massey stood to pay \$50 million in damages. Benjamin ruled in favor of Massey Energy in the 3-2 decision.

LANDMARK RULING

The case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which made a landmark 5-4 decision in *Caperton v. Massey* [June 2009] against Massey Energy and Blankenship.

The majority opinion stated that due process and “a serious risk of actual bias” required the recusal of Justice Benjamin.

Caperton v. Massey set an important precedent, but special interests have continued to fight for – and win – the right to use financial muscle to influence judicial elections.

Private interests are using the First Amendment to justify massive spending on political campaigns.

In January, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a 5-4 ruling on *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, striking down a longstanding ban on corporate financing of campaigns for federal office after hearing arguments alleging that limits on corporate campaign funding violate free-speech rights.

SUGGESTED REFORMS

The report calls for reform of state judicial elections and broader transparency in regards to campaign contributions.

The report suggests that stronger recusal guidelines and “judicial performance evaluations” can help keep judges honest despite pressures from their campaign contributors.

Hall told reporters that some states are warming up to the idea of reform, but “deep pocketed” special interests will continue to fight reform and attempt to stack courts in their favor.

JEFF FOXWORTHY ON SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

You might be a school employee if you believe the playground should be equipped with a Ritalin salt lick.

You might be a school employee if you want to slap the next person who says, “Must be nice to work 8 to 3:30 and have summers off.”

You might be a school employee if it is difficult to name your own child because there’s no name you can come up with that doesn’t bring high blood pressure as it is uttered.

You might be a school employee if you can tell it’s a full moon or if it’s going to rain, snow, hail ... anything ... without ever looking outside.

You might be a school employee if you believe “shallow gene pool” should have its own box on a report card.

You might be a school employee if you believe that unspeakable evils will befall

you if anyone says, “Boy, the kids sure are mellow today.”

You might be a school employee if when out in public, you feel the urge to snap your fingers at children you do not know and correct their behavior.

You might be a school employee if you have no social life from August to June.

You might be a school employee if you think people should have a government permit before being allowed to reproduce.

You might be a school employee if you wonder how some parents *MANAGED* to reproduce.

You might be a school employee if you laugh uncontrollably when people refer to the staff room as the “lounge.”

You might be a school employee if you think caffeine should be available in intravenous form.

Quality Child Care Key To Solving Poverty

By Jean Hardisty

On almost daily basis, I see, read, or hear about a story about how women can improve their careers, advance in their pay levels, and avoid the stereotypes associated with women in the workforce. As a feminist, I am interested in these developments and am always rooting for women to pioneer new positions and achieve new forms of advancement.

In my heart, however, I worry about young, low-income, single mothers who are trying to support their children by holding a job – any job. The cost of high quality child care is out of reach for these women, making it almost impossible for them to balance their work life and family life.

Luckily, there is within the welfare reform program known as TANF [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families], a provision for child care benefits for low-income women who work. It was considered necessary because TANF requirements impose intense pressure on these women to find a job.

But young mothers with very little money are demonized by society – perhaps more so if they are African American. All sorts of stereotypes and slurs are aimed at them: she has no self-discipline; she has more and more children in order to increase her welfare benefits; she neglects her children; she doesn't want to work, but would rather sit around drinking beer and smoking.

'UNDESERVING POOR'

Further, part of the stereotype is that young mothers have as their main goal to defraud the welfare system. Many churches, rather than fighting this stereotype, collude with it and classify these young mothers as "the undeserving poor."

At the federal level, "welfare reform" has imposed draconian provisions, such as: the "family cap" provision that if a woman has a child while she is on welfare, there will be no increase in benefits for the new child; a five-year lifetime limit on receiving welfare benefits [even if you have been looking for a job, but have been unable to find one in this economy]; and denial of food stamps to legal, documented immigrants.

In response to the negative stereotyping of low-income mothers, state governments feel free to neglect these women and make it hard for them to receive benefits so they can work or attend school. State agencies set arbitrary rules that require inordinate effort on the part of the young mothers to hang onto their benefits.

For instance, in Mississippi a mother must appear at the welfare office twice a year to be recertified for her child care subsidy. Few states require a face-to-face visit and fewer yet twice a year. The burden this creates may not be immediately obvious, but Mississippi is a largely rural state and visiting the welfare office often requires transportation and time off work – both real barriers for low-income rural mothers. If a recipient is at all late in visiting the office with her paperwork, her child is removed from day care and placed at the end of the waiting list to



receive the child care subsidy. In 2009, the waiting list in Mississippi was over 6,000 children long.

RESISTING STEREOTYPES

Feminists have resisted the stereotyping of low-income young mothers for decades. Gwendolyn Mink, the daughter of the late Sen. Patsy Mink, D-Hawaii, has been one of the leaders in this push-back, presenting insights into the real lives of low-income single mothers. But the stereotype is firmly established in public opinion. As a result of pressure from most conservatives, libertarians, and even some liberals, the safety net on which these women depend has been steadily eroded.

Of course, it is much worse if they are immigrants. Negative rhetoric about welfare for poor women now even maintains that welfare is bad for women and children, robbing them of "character" and "self-reliance." As Gwendolyn Mink and many others have shown us, if there were scientific ways to measure strength, resourcefulness, and hard work, young mothers who make a life for their children out of almost nothing are some of the strongest, most resourceful, and hard-working women of all.

MOVING UP FROM POVERTY

Success for these young mothers and their children looks quite different from the success desired by professional women. Poor young mothers would like a decent life, with a certain amount of financial security, health care for them and especially for their children, and a safe environment. All these things are within our means as a country to provide, but their status as "undeserving" makes it difficult to muster the political will to provide the government assistance they need to make success possible.

Many researchers – both academic and activist – have studied how to lift women and children out of poverty. There is consensus that education is crucial, as

See **CHILD CARE** Page 14

Labor Day Commitment To The Common Good

By Jim Hightower

America's corporate chieftains must love poor people, for they're doing all they can to create millions more of them.

They're knocking down wages, offshoring everything from manufacturing jobs to high tech, reducing full-time work to part-time, downsizing our workplaces, busting unions, cutting health care coverage and canceling pensions – while also lobbying in Washington to privatize Social Security, eliminate job safety protections, restrict unemployment benefits, kill job-creating programs and increase corporate control of our elections.

It's said that the poor and the rich will always be among us. But nowhere is it written that the middle-class will always be there. In fact, it is a very recent creation in our society [and an unavailable dream for most people in the world]. America's great middle class literally arose with the rise of labor unions and populist political movements in the 1800s, finally culminating in democratic economic reforms implemented from the 1930s into the 1960s.

SUSTAINING THE MIDDLE CLASS

Social Security, wage AND hour laws, collective bargaining rights, unemployment compensation, the GI Bill, the interstate highway program, civil rights laws, Medicare, Head Start – and more – provided the national framework necessary to sustain a middle class for the American Majority.

This essential framework was not "given" to us by corporate executives and politicians – indeed, they sputtered, spewed and fought every piece of it tooth and nail. Rather, it came from union-led grassroots movements, organizing for structural change.

This Labor Day, we see corporate executives and their politicians relentlessly dismantling that framework, piece by piece – and we see the middle class disappearing and poverty rising with each dismantled piece. But as labor icon Joe Hill said just before he was executed by Utah authorities for his unionizing activities, "Don't mourn, organize." It's time for working families to organize again for the revitalization of the middle class.

'ADIOS, CHUMPS'

Who'll take a stand these days for restoring America's founding ethic of the common good?

You won't get this leadership from Washington – and damned sure not from those in the corporate suites who're ruthlessly pushing an ethic of uncommon greed, saying to the middle class, "Adios, chumps."

Instead, look to places like Williamson, a town in upstate New York. This is apple country, home to a sprawling Mott's apple processing plant. Generations of families have worked at this plant, and there had not been a labor dispute in over 50 years. But the Mott family is long gone – and so is the sense of shared purpose that had unified owners and workers.

In 2008, Mott's became a subsidiary of Dr. Pepper Snapple, a giant Texas conglomerate that also owns 7Up, Hawaiian Punch and dozens of other brands. DPS, as it's known, is doing very well, having banked a record profit of half-a-billion dollars last year. But its honchos apparently missed that basic kindergarten lesson about sharing. Indeed, the new owners introduced themselves to the area by eliminating the company's annual summer picnic, the children's Christmas party and other community-building touches.

LOWER LIVING STANDARD

Then, this March, DPS bosses abruptly demanded pay cuts averaging about \$3,000 per worker, while also slashing pensions and hiking employee costs for health care. Why? Because they asserted that Mott's 300 workers were paid more than others in the area and should simply lower their standard of living accordingly. This from a corporation that paid its CEO \$6.5 million last year! Adding insult to injury, the plant manager called workers "a commodity like soybeans" that can easily be replaced. Take the cuts – or else, demanded DPS.

The workers chose "else." As we celebrate Labor Day at the beach or at backyard barbeques, they are on a strike for middle-class survival that's now in its fourth month.

This is not just about them, but about what kind of country America will be. If DPS succeeds in knocking down these skilled, experienced, loyal workers, other profitable corporations will follow. The Mott workers are taking a courageous stand for the middle class and our country's commitment to economic justice. To stand with them, go to www.ufcw.org.

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America Is Addicted To Sickness Of War

War is suicide. It kills in arterial spurts and oozes death in listless unhurried drops. It festers and weeps with the puss of infectious fear and chills the bone in fevered sweat.

It explodes in vainglorious sparkle and whimpers in smoldering insanity long after the drums go silent. War is obscenity made sacred.

We cloak ourselves in the body armor of language as protection against the truth. Carefully marketed words meant to inoculate us against the viral indiscriminate violence and provide anesthesia to numb us to the slaughter of other human beings.

And so we die – one syllable at a time as Mike Altman and Johnny Mandel's theme from "M*A*S*H" plays in the background:

Through early morning fog I see visions of the things to be the pains that are withheld for me I realize and I can see.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

They say we did not learn from Vietnam. But that's not true. The Big Green taught us exactly how to get into Iraq and Afghanistan with flags waving and Congress singing on the steps of the Capitol and the media in full battle-rattle ready to take us on a ride alongside "our brave troops."

That suicide is painless. It brings on many changes. And I can take or leave it if I please.

I once wrote: "They say that the first casualty of war is truth but they are wrong. The first casualty of war is reality – the unreal becomes real and truth is a lie."

If you haven't read *War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us To Death* by Norman Solomon or watched the documentary – go get the book or movie. Perception is reality – and nothing beats a good Psy-Op on perception.

LESSONS FROM VIETNAM

Vietnam taught three very important lessons: 1] End the draft. Get a professional all-volunteer military. Turn the troops into a fetish of freedom. They alone defend and provide our freedoms. Say "thank you" and be on your way.

2] Terminology is critical. "Friendly-fire" is color-coded to "blue-on-blue." Operation Phoenix is now the cool Tom Clancy-sounding "Black Ops" elite Ram-

bo-like warriors striking fear in the hearts and minds of evil-doers. No atrocity here.

3] Corporatize the military, media and defense industry. Mergers are good. Prior to the Iraq invasion, Eason Jordan of CNN said, "... I went to the Pentagon myself several times before the war started and met with important people there and said, for instance, at CNN here are the generals we're thinking of retaining to advise us on the air and off about the war, and we got a big thumbs up on all of them. That was important."

I try to find a way to make all our little joys relate without that ever-present hate but now I know that it's too late, and ...

TORTURE IS ACCEPTABLE

Torture is "enhanced interrogation." Torture is acceptable when it is a police officer controlling an unruly citizen with a Taser.

This same police state wants to make it illegal for citizens to film them on the street, while they demand more street cameras to monitor us in the name of security.

Not to worry, crowd control is also coming our way after being battle-tested. And don't look up at the sky. Technology keeps you safe while watching over you. What's wrong with that?

A man recently told me that I was despicable for writing about atrocities and war crimes committed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

THE QUESTION

"What would you do if every day some Hajji was shooting at you and killing your buddies," he asked.

"I would go home," I said.

He called me an un-American Communist. He only believes what he wants to believe and what he is told by the media like this headline from CNN: "Battlefield justice or murder?"

Denial is so much more than a river in Egypt.

Suicide is painless. It brings on many changes. And I can take or leave it if I please.

The greatest recruiting tool for terrorism is Guantanamo, some say. But these people are guilty and dangerous, you say. Really? What about the story of Omar Khadr? How many others are there around the world?

THE COLLATERAL DAMAGE?

And what about the views we never see? The questions we never ask? The "collateral damage?" The survivors? The people on the other end of that bomb-sight?

In Badakhshan, where the Kokcha River rushes out of the great Hindu Kush, the surrounding terrain reminds me of the Grand Tetons and the Snake River. Steep mountain slopes and the grassy steppe is every bit the image of Jackson Hole and the Alpine Valley prairie – so much the same and yet worlds apart.

As I walked along the river a village Elder told me, "Afghanistan has never been

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CHILD CARE

From Page 13

is employment and safety. The key that turns the lock in the door to success in these areas is safe, affordable child care.

Both education and employment are unattainable if a young mother of little means lacks access to good child care. Lacking a family member or an equivalent caretaker who can care for her child at low or no cost – so that she can go to work or school, she has to care for her small child or children herself.

Now that we have health care reform, which serves women and men and definitely includes benefits for different economic classes, perhaps it is time to look at what else low-income women need, and that must include child care.

RIGHTWING BACKLASH

At one time, a system of universal child care, funded by the government, was on the political agenda. During the Lyndon Johnson Administration's War on Poverty in the 1960s, there was wide agreement that child care was a "safety net" issue and an important part of the fight against poverty. Further, middle class white women were entering the workforce, as the early rumblings of the women's movement began to open possibilities for them. It seemed obvious that the lack of accessible, trustworthy child care was a problem for all families.

But the Vietnam War and other economic and foreign policy crises intervened and child care was abandoned as a pressing issue. When legislative attention returned to the issue of child care in the 1970s, the political right [then beginning its ascendancy] mobilized a major campaign to defeat it.

Led by Phyllis Schlafly of Eagle Forum, a rightwing women's group, child care was represented as a government brainwashing program designed to replace the family as the primary caregiver of children with a government program that would instill socialist values in small children. Worse yet, it was characterized by the New Right during the Reagan Administration as a project of feminists. For the right, this was proof of its danger to American values, though the drive for child care was spurred simply by the needs of working women.

'JUST SAY NO'

Though 2010 may be a politically propitious time to try again to make child care universally available, the lessons of the recent battle over health care do not bode well for its success. Child care, even more than health care, is a "family values" issue and the right would like nothing better than to mount another campaign to "just say no."

But the public needs to understand that child care is not simply a service for

the mother in her attempt to handle work and child-rearing. It also benefits her child or children.

The overwhelming opinion in numerous academic studies – most notably the "High/Scope Educational Research Foundation's Perry Preschool Study" that compares the lives of two groups of at-risk children, one group who had a high-quality preschool program in the 1960s and another who had no preschool program – demonstrate the importance of quality child care to young children.

This study, one of the longest running [40-plus years] and best known studies of the effects of preschool education, shows remarkable results when the researchers look at a wide range of factors in the lives of the two groups of study participants at the age of 40.

RETURN ON PUBLIC INVESTMENT

The "preschool advantage" documented in this research includes higher lifetime earnings, greater employment stability, higher educational attainment, greater family stability, and dramatically reduced involvement with crime. Together these benefits result in a public benefit of almost \$13 for every public dollar invested in the program.

A decades-long attack on child care itself, combined with the demonization of poor, single mothers, an alarmingly high unemployment rate of 9.7% [as opposed to 5.7% in 2001], and lessening access to low-cost higher education have severely affected the prospects of welfare recipients and other low-income single mothers to succeed. Even by modest standards of success, the current economic climate conspires to deny them a chance for a good job or access to education. Since unemployment hits men even harder than women in this recession, married men now often find themselves with an employed spouse, but a reduced income that can no longer support child care. They must look for a job and provide child care simultaneously.

Surely it is time for society to broaden the definition of success to include a fair playing field for all women. Not all women will make partner at the firm or enter government service at a high level, but if our society does not provide the basic services that allow young mothers to improve their lives and the lives of their children, we'll never be able to claim that we've created a fair chance for all women to succeed.

– The author is a senior scholar at the Wellesley Centers for Women and President Emerita of Political Research Associates

Illegal Aliens Languish Millions In Profits For Detention Centers

By Yana Kunichoff

More than 385,000 immigrants languish in detention centers around the country. Why are they there – and who is profiting from their imprisonment?

To the tune of strategies such as Operation Endgame, the March 2004 Department of Homeland Security's 10-year-goal to "remove all removable aliens," the nation now has 270 immigrant detention centers in which individuals picked up for immigration offenses are held.

Pedro Guzman Perez speaks to his wife, Emily Guzman, by phone every evening. They speak around 8 p.m., a talk filled with stories about their days, shared projects and love.

Sometimes their three-year-old son, Logan, wants to get on the phone too, but usually Logan will be watching a show in another room. They have a great relationship, Emily says, and the conversations are often the highlight of her day.

LOGISTICAL DIFFICULTIES

There are, however, some logistical difficulties. Pedro, a Guatemalan native who was in the country on a work visa, can only speak on the phone for 20 minutes at a time – precious little for a couple sharing the tumult of raising a three-year-old. Each phone card costs \$5, and the already staticky connection is easily broken.

This is because Pedro is calling from the Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, GA, an immigration detention facility where he has been detained for nearly 10 months.

Many aspects of Pedro's case led him to the detention center – two 10-year-old charges of marijuana possession, one of which has since been dropped; an administrative mistake by Immigration and Customs Enforcement [ICE], to which they have admitted.

HARSH RECORD REVEALED

The harsh record of his immigration court judge is documented, including the patchy memory of an older woman whose answers in an immigration interview led the federal government to look into Pedro's status.

Pedro is one of the 383,524 individuals detained by ICE while they await court dates, deportation or bail.

Detention is a key aspect of the federal government's push to deport immigrants, both documented and undocumented, who have committed any crimes or misdemeanors.

More than 3.7 million immigrants have been deported since 1994, and in the past decade, immigration detention has tripled. In 2001, the U.S. detained about 95,000 individuals, compared to the 380,000 detained in 2009.

Detention Watch, a national coalition of organizations working to educate the public about the U.S. immigration detention system, called these measures extremely punitive for individuals going through a civil administrative process.

OBAMA DEPORTS MORE

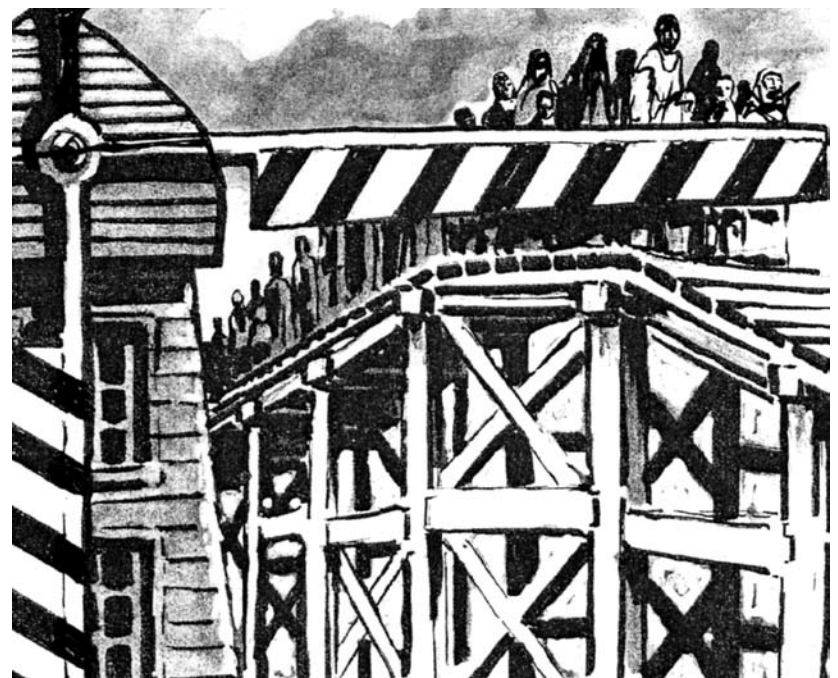
It has been an administration policy across the aisle, with more people being deported per year under President Barack Obama than under his predecessor George Bush.

The rise in immigration detention also has many critics pointing to a more sinister reason than political expedience or security fears – the profit that private prison corporations make from the detention of immigrants like Pedro.

One of the most notorious players is the Corrections Corporation of America [CCA], the largest private immigration detainer. It runs Stewart Detention Center, where Pedro now languishes, and is the sixth-largest correction system in the country, behind only the federal government and four states.

CCA was brought to Oklahoma by way of the Gov. Frank Keating administration.

At any one time, CCA houses about 75,000 offenders in more than 65 facilities



in 20 states, about half of all immigrants currently detained in private facilities. It shares its business with Geo Group, Cornell Company and Avalon Correction Services, as well as several smaller companies.

CHILDREN ARE DETAINED

In addition to detaining adults, CCA also detains children whose parents are being picked up for immigration offenses, housing them in centers such as the infamous T. Don Hutto Center in Taylor, TX.

In 2007, the American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU] filed a lawsuit against the Hutto Center on behalf of 10 juvenile plaintiffs, arguing that they were receiving substandard education, medical care and little privacy.

CCA also runs a slew of other private prisons, including Oklahoma. In fact, immigration detention makes up for only 40% of CCA's revenue, according to its quarterly report.

ICE deals with its \$140 million budget deficit by routinely farming out its immigration detention operations to private companies like CCA or state and county prisons. According to Detention Watch, only 13% of immigration facilities are ICE-owned and operated.

HOUSE IN LOCAL, COUNTY JAILS

The majority of detainees, 67%, are housed in local and county jail facilities, with another 17% in contract detention facilities and 3% in others such as the Bureau of Prisons.

For the 273 days Pedro has been detained, CCA gets paid approximately \$140 per day, according to figures from the American Civil Liberties Union. In some of their facilities, such as Hutto, ICE is contracted to pay the CCA an average rate of \$200 per detained immigrant, per day.

The ICE budget allocated \$250 million in 2008-09 to raise the total number of detention beds to 32,000, while allocating only \$10 million in funding to less expensive alternatives to detention, such as electronic monitors and regular visits with case managers.

CCA GETTING RICH

These steady successes have reaped their benefits:

CCA has managed to make a record profit every year since 2003. Their revenue in 2009 was \$1.67 billion. The company has been estimated to bill \$11 million a month. Between 2004 and 2008 the company's stock more than doubled, from \$12.15 to \$26.86 a share.

However, the profit from immigration detention does not end with CCA. Over 300 city and county governments across the country also have contracts with ICE and house the majority of detained immigrants.

Telephone access inside the prisons, as the frustrating reality of Pedro and Emily attests, has grown into a lucrative business. Companies such as EverCom run a virtual monopoly, leading to price hikes, in some areas as high as \$17.34

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WAR

From Page 14

conquered but it has been demolished many times. We live out of sight from the rest of the world until they need a place to fight each other.

"Then they come here and speak promises they will never keep. Their words are loud wind that blows out of the mountains and quickly passes after much storm. And we go on with life."

SAME TERRORIST FAMILY

The other side of this war is hardly examined in any depth or with any human face and understanding. A Hajji is a Hajji and Johnny Jihad and Tommy Taliban are brothers of the same terrorist family. End of story.

A brave man once requested me. To answer questions that are key. "Is it to be or not to be" and I replied, "Oh why ask me?"

It is ironic that the two great disasters of recent times can be spelled: A-I-G. One, a huge financial catastrophe and the other, is Afghanistan-Iraq-Guantanamo.

It is said and repeated that "they" hate us for our freedoms; freedoms we so willingly hand over to the militarized corporate plutocracy on a daily basis.

ALL IN THE NAME OF WAR

Death by Taser is the collateral damage of law and order. Drones will keep our borders safe. Warrantless wiretaps are the price for remaining free in an Internet-

connected world of terrorism. Privacy is a privilege not a right. Technology keeps our troops safer than ever on the battlefield. Invest now and get in on the ground floor of the growth industry of the future – Peace through superior firepower.

Iraq and Afghanistan and everyone else? Sorry about the collateral damage to you and your families, but some day soon you will be free enough to understand that it was for your own good. Here, have a Coca-Cola. Love you, man. Bomb ya' later.

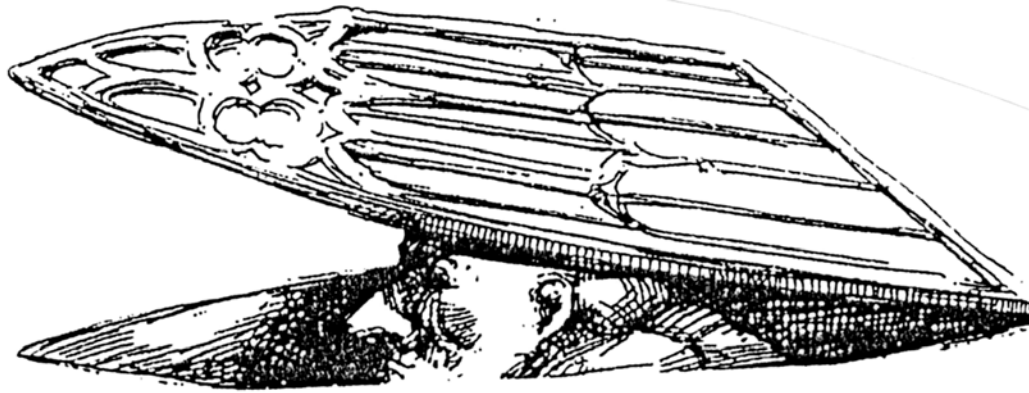
We buy the victimhood of false patriotism. We buy fear by the barrel and servitude by the gallon. We sell conformity as righteousness and plaster billboards with Utopian consumerism under the red, white and blue of "American Exceptionalism."

One war is too many and a hundred is never enough. Our addiction has turned to infection and blood poisoning. Overcome by fever and sepsis we rationalize the irrational and succumb to the hallucinations and the sweet voices in the darkest corners of our minds.

Cause suicide is painless. It brings on many changes. And I can take or leave it if I please ... and you can do the same thing if you choose.

Peace.

– Anonymous



Stealth Mission: Sneak Jesus Into Schools

By Rob Boston

United Methodist minister David Jenkins was meeting with fellow clergy last year in the small Kansas community of Sharon Springs when one of the pastors made what sounded like a routine request.

The clergyman noted that the Todd Becker Foundation was coming to town, and the evangelical Christian organization, which purports to warn youngsters about the dangers of drunk driving, wanted to line up local religious leaders to help with its presentation.

What struck Jenkins as odd was the venue: It was to take place at Wallace County High School.

Furthermore, the Becker Foundation had a very specific set of duties in mind for the ministers. They would swing into action after students had been offered a chance to become “born again.”

“Our task was to go forward when students came down to make their decision, and we would give them a Bible and some Christian material and talk with them about Christ,” Jenkins said.

He noted that one of the attendees at the meeting was the town’s former school superintendent, a man who never had much use for the separation of church and state.

“His comment was that they’d have to fly under the radar so they were not barred from giving a gospel presentation in school,” Jenkins said. “It was clear to me they were using this drunk-driving lecture as a vehicle to give an evangelizing presentation.”

Jenkins wanted no part of the scheme. In fact, he vowed to put a stop to it since he believed the Becker Foundation’s activities were legally dubious. He alerted Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

“For me, it’s not appropriate for several reasons,” Jenkins told Church & State, AU’s magazine. “This is a public school. There are students in that school who are Catholic, and that is not their form of evangelism.

“These kids are forced to attend this program because it is a school function,” continued Jenkins. “If they don’t attend, they could be disciplined. They have a forced audience of people who are under age, whose parents in many cases would not be very happy to see their kids being exposed to this type of event.”

Americans United’s Legal Department investigated and took action, sending a letter to school officials warning them that allowing Becker Foundation representatives to proselytize students would violate church-state separation.

But AU didn’t stop there. Later, AU Legal Director Ayesha N. Khan and Staff Attorney Ian Smith drafted a letter to officials at the foundation itself, warning

them that their activities were constitutionally problematic.

AU’s intervention in the issue is not new. In fact, AU attorneys have periodically done battle with groups just like the Becker Foundation – fundamentalist-oriented ministries that have proven adept at slipping into public schools under the cover of stealth, where they preach to students outright or pressure them to attend a revival later that evening.

AU’s Legal Department sent a letter to Wallace County school officials and followed up with a phone call to Superintendent Robert Young, who assured Americans United that he would tell the group not to preach to the students or attempt to lure them to an evangelistic service later in the day.

Young apparently followed through, but not all references to the evening revival were scrubbed. Jenkins noted that fliers promoting the religious service were posted all over the school.

In Sharon Springs, a rural Kansas hamlet of about 800 near the Colorado border, the Becker Foundation’s foray has had lasting effects on Jenkins. The minister had been at odds with a faction of his congregation aligned with the Religious Right prior to the foundation’s appearance in town. His refusal to support the crusade pushed things to the breaking point, and they engineered his ouster.

Jenkins, 50, is currently living in Kansas City and plans to join the United Church of Christ. He hopes to find work serving as pastor of a UCC congregation. His run-in with the Todd Becker Foundation, Jenkins said, has been a learning experience for him – and he hopes it will be for the town as well.

“If that community had a Muslim group come in and wanted to do that type of presentation, they would have been up in arms,” observed Jenkins. “As long as it’s what some hold to strongly, they think it’s OK in the schools.

“If they’re really going to focus on evangelism, why not do it in a church?” he asks. “In a church there would be no problem. The fact that they do it in a school shows they are trying to reach a captive audience of kids who are compelled to attend.”

AU Legal Director Khan called on public school officials to exercise diligence when private organizations offer to put on assemblies. The Web sites of many of these groups, she said, make it clear that they are interested chiefly in evangelism. A little research, she said, can stave off possible legal action.

“When a group that openly proclaims to be a Christian ministry approaches a public school and offers to put on a program,” Khan said, “a little warning bell should go off in a principal’s head. It’s likely this group has ulterior motives.”

© Church & State

Parties Mean Little In Governor’s Races

By Froma Harrop

Professional partisans see every race as a mark on their team’s scoreboard. But these activists err in treating the win of a state governorship and U.S. Senate seat as similar victories. Voters might care which party runs Congress, but why would they fret over whether their state’s chief executive is a Republican, Democrat or something else? Truth is, most don’t.

Yet GOP cheerleaders saw the 2009 elections of Republican governors in “blue” New Jersey and “purple” Virginia as some extraordinary coup full of meaning for national politics. It’s like they never noticed that bluer California has a Republican governor – as does even bluer Vermont and the bluest-of-all Rhode Island.

None of these states had turned into Republican bastions in any way. It happened that Republicans ran strong candidates amenable to the local culture, and the electorate thought they’d be better managers of local affairs.

Pollsters asked voters in Virginia and New Jersey whether President Obama was a factor in their choice for governor. In both states, most said no.

Governors and U.S. senators might as well be different species. A Republican goes into the Senate and bucks the national leadership at his or her own peril. That applies to Democrats, as well, though to a far lesser extent.

Governors have to be adults. As their title implies, they actually govern. They must balance budgets. They have to deliver services to real people. And they need to work with members of the opposing party.

Republican Bob McDonnell won the governorship of Virginia promising better public transportation, not the usual GOP election platform. Republican Chris Christie won in a New Jersey that was swooning under a budget crisis set against very high property taxes.

Smart Republicans are now making Christie their hero, as well they should. He’s taken on the special interests – above all, public employee unions – that have been breaking the taxpayers in many a state. In a place where these unions

are powerful, Christie went directly to the people, even [successfully] urging voters to turn down local school budgets.

In a forum where a teacher yelled at him for trying to contain her compensation, he famously responded that if she didn’t like the pay, why didn’t she take another job? The audience applauded him.

New Jersey has not become a conservative bastion. In 2008, it gave Obama a 15 percentage-point win over Republican John McCain.

And one doesn’t have to be a conservative or Republican to fight the extraordinary deals handed some government-employee unions in recent decades. As mayor of liberal Philadelphia, Pennsylvania’s Democratic Gov. Ed Rendell went to the mat with city workers and was hailed for it.

The sad part is that the best governors often have the hardest time winning their party’s presidential nomination. Unlike Washington politicians, they can’t just borrow. Spending reductions are excruciating, and there are human needs to be met, so taxes can’t be cut lightly.

Christie had to suspend New Jersey’s popular property-tax relief checks for 2010. And his current budget underfunds public employee pensions. This means the \$3 billion not put into the fund this year will have to be found in the future.

Fiscal discipline is supposed to be a conservative virtue, but during the 2008 Republican primary debates, candidates who were senators bashed two former governors, Mitt Romney of Massachusetts and Mike Huckabee of Arkansas, for raising taxes. Again, the governors didn’t have the U.S. senators’ luxury of borrowing the money. What were they to do? Cut out kindergarten through third grade?

Playing partisan team politics is a loser on the local level. Two bad Washington continues to wallow in that unfortunate game.

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5 Million Iraqis Dead, Tortured, Displaced

By Fred Branfman

The immensity of Iraqi civilian suffering is incomprehensible. How can war's cheerleaders claim to fight on behalf of the people whose lives they helped destroy?

In 1970 a Lao villager who had survived five years of U.S. bombing wrote: "In reality, whatever happens, it is only the innocent who suffer. And as for the others, do they know all the unimaginable things happening in this war? Do they?"

Do we? And if we did know about the innocent men, women and children our leaders kill, would it matter?

Does it matter that those who justified the Iraqi invasion in the name of the people of Iraq have largely ignored their unimaginable suffering under U.S. occupation, as more than five million civilians have been murdered, maimed, made homeless, unjustly imprisoned and tortured – and millions more impoverished?

JUST PICK OUT TEN

Would war supporters serve themselves and their nation if they wrote about both the humanity and suffering of, say, just 10 Iraqi victims – and sought to convey how each represents at least 500,000 more?

Is the suffering our leaders inflict on innocent civilians relevant to deciding whether to support our present war-making in Afghanistan and Pakistan?

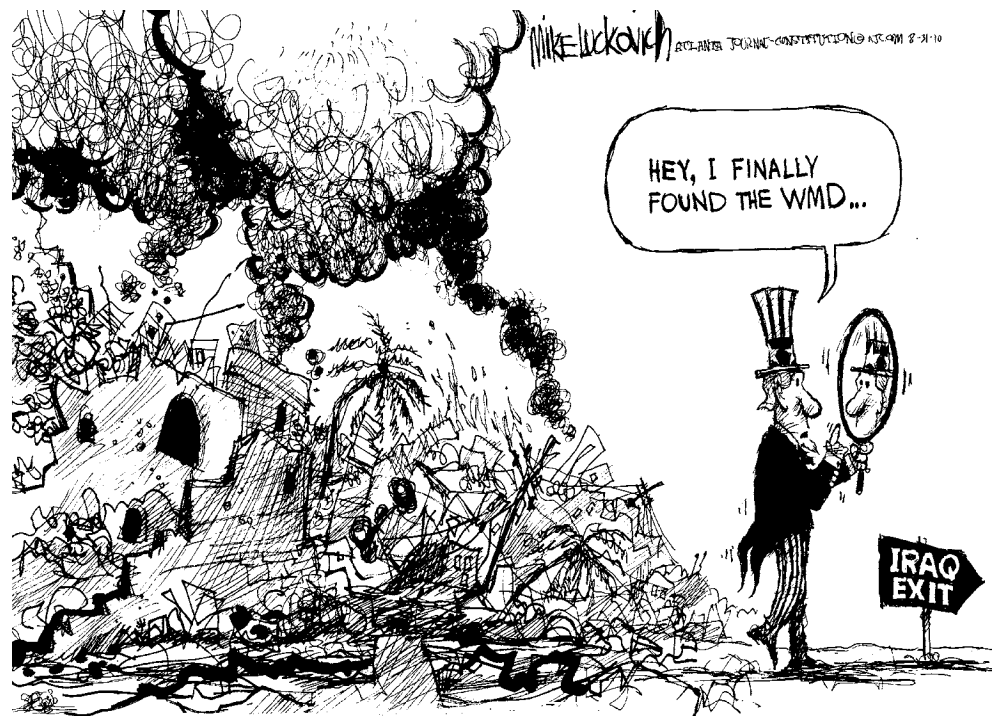
Would it matter if the New York Times had run daily profiles and photos of Iraqi civilian victims since 2003, as it did of U.S. victims after 9/11?

Such questions are raised by Christopher Hitchens' recently published best-selling memoir, *Hitch-22*, in which he proudly claims to have helped cause the invasion of Iraq as the most prominent of a group of war hawks ["by which political Washington was eventually persuaded that Iraq should be helped into a post-Saddam era, if necessary by force"], but entirely ignores the human cost that followed.

HIS INDIFFERENCE

No one spoke more eloquently of the Iraqi people's suffering before the invasion. Thus his indifference to it since has been striking.

The key issue is not what this reveals about Hitchens' soul but about Ameri-



ca's. His memoir epitomizes one of the most chilling phenomena of our time: a growing "nonhumanity" in which our leaders and their supporters claim to wage war on behalf of a foreign people but are largely indifferent to their suffering.

Citizens take on no more solemn role than when they convert a personal opinion into the political act of publicly promoting violence by their nation's leaders. Debating health care, gay marriage or Wall Street reform is one thing; promoting policies that wind up killing innocent human beings quite another.

Whether they acknowledge it or not, those advocating war assume a moral responsibility for its innocent victims. Or, more plainly, they have their blood upon their hands.

This blood can be easily justified in a hypothetical case of "humanitarian intervention," e.g. imagining that Bill Clinton had successfully used military force to stop the Rwandan genocide.

It is also easy to justify war when only hated political leaders or groups are discussed: "Saddam Hussein," "Ahmadinejad," "the Taliban" – and the civilian population, always the main victims in war, are treated as non-people. But an honest evaluation of war in a case like Iraq requires a far more serious moral calculus.

DIVIDE

From Page 10

Bristol had committed the unforgivable sin of starting a family too young. If red and blue America seemed to be talking past one another about family values, it's because they were.

When you understand all of that, you also understand why you can do a good job of predicting how a state will vote in national elections by looking at its population's average age at first marriage and childbirth.

A further twist makes the story more interesting, and more sobering: Cahn and Carbone find an asymmetry. Blue norms are well adapted to the Information Age.

WHY BLUE STATES ARE BEST

They encourage late family formation and advanced education. They produce prosperous parents with graduate degrees, low divorce rates, and one or two over-protected children. Red norms, on the other hand, create a quandary. They shun abortion [which is blue America's ultimate weapon against premature parenthood] and emphasize abstinence over contraception.

But deferring sex in today's cultural environment, with its wide acceptance of premarital sex, is hard. Deferring sex and marriage until you get a college or graduate degree – until age 23 or 25 or beyond – is harder still. "Even the most devout overwhelmingly do not abstain until marriage," Cahn and Carbone write.

In any case, for a lot of people, a graduate education or even a bachelor's degree is unrealistic. The injunction to delay family formation until you are 24 and fin-

ish your master's offers these people only cold comfort.

SELF-DEFEATING BACKLASH

The result of this red quandary, Cahn and Carbone argue, is a self-defeating backlash. Moral traditionalism fails to prevent premarital sex and early childbirth. Births precipitate more early marriages and unwed parenthood. That, in turn, increases family breakdown while reducing education and earnings.

"The consequential sense of failure increases the demands to constrain the popular culture – and blue family practices such as contraception and abortion – that undermines parental efforts to instill the right moral values in children," Cahn and Carbone say. "More sex prompts more sermons and more emphasis on abstinence."

The cycle repeats. Culturally, economically, and politically, blue and red families drift further apart as their fortunes diverge.

Whether Cahn and Carbone are right will take time and subsequent scholarship to learn; but their story is both plausible and sobering. Plausible, because it brings so many aspects of the culture wars into sharper focus. Sobering, because the economic and cultural forces battering traditional family norms show no signs of abating – but the new, education-centered pathway to adulthood is often least accessible to those who need it most.

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DETENTION

From Page 15

for a 15-minute phone call.

Since 2003, there have been 111 reported deaths in immigration detention. According to Detention Watch, the majority of these deaths were caused by a lack of timely and thorough medical care.

Detainees must request medical services through CCA staff, and as Business of Detention notes, detainees have said that staff members often deny medical care to both reduce costs and push detainees into voluntary deportation.

Three-strikes and truth-in-sentencing laws also contribute to a more punitive system. These pieces of legislation and their desired policy outcomes began their life at ALEC, or the American Legislative Exchange Council.

ALEC is the nation's largest public-private legislative partnership, which counts among its members more than 2,000 state lawmakers, about one-third of the nation's legislators and more than 200 corporations and special interest groups. Included in this list is the Corrections Corporation of America.

Central components of ALEC include 10 task forces that work to develop model legislation in different areas, one of which is the Civil Justice task force.

"I am aware personally that CCA executives have been on the board of ALEC," said Alex Friedmann, associate editor of Prison Legal News. "The argument there is that CCA is being actively involved in an organization that pushes policy and legislation and therefore benefits the private prison industry."

Though federal law forbids corporations from helping form legislation, any ALEC bill must be approved by both its public and private sector members. Of the group's \$6.9 million in annual revenue, about \$5.6 million come from its corporate members.

According to an article by Beau Hodai of *In These Times*, Arizona's recent anti-immigrant bill, SB 1070, is very similar to model legislation crafted by ALEC.

The ACLU notes the paradox in which immigration law and the detention industry have placed people. Forcing them to choose between waiting out their cases in jail indefinitely and giving up their immigration claims means that only the individuals with the strongest cases are most likely to continue to fight – and therefore face lengthy detention.

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Feuding Over The Manhattan Mosque

It May Be Perfectly Legal, But Location Is Bad Idea

By Edwin E. Vineyard

Pointing to the First Amendment provision on prohibition of government interference with the free exercise of religion, most of those who consider themselves to be bona fide respecters of the Constitution are saying that it would be wrong to prohibit the building of a Muslim shrine near the site of the 9/11 tragedy. But even these will privately admit to having misgivings about being trapped within the purity of their commitment to strict constitutionality in government.

Despite the fact that he has always been a strong respecter of constitutional principles of law, this writer will admit to being one of those who is bothered by these plans to build a 10-story mosque, museum, and cultural center for Muslims at this particular place. He must be counted among the conservatives who think that this is a bad idea.

However, one would like to think that his motivation is different than most of those who are loudly protesting this shrine. Certainly this writer does not agree with the defamatory language of their protestations, nor with the hostile, bigoted slogans on their signs. In fact, one tends to feel very uncomfortable being on the same side with such zealots or with the usual members of a Tea Party-type crowd.

It is quite embarrassing to find oneself amidst a group of haters of any sort, whether it be Muslim-haters or Obama-haters.

'IN YOUR FACE' GESTURE

But the premise taken here is quite different, even if it be just by nuance. We are saying that building such a Muslim shrine at that location is a bad idea – it is unwise. It is provocative of the very reactions which it is receiving. It is evocative of emotions and high negative tensions toward all Muslims. It has all the appearance of an “in your face” gesture on the part of its Muslim organizers, and that tends to be generalized by the public toward all Muslims. People have good reason to wonder from whence and why will come the millions to finance this construction.

Indeed, it is a bad idea. However, it is legal. It could be argued that it would indeed NOT have been a constitutional error to have had restrictions on new buildings within a certain zone – such as a five block circle of 9/11 ground zero. Building codes exist everywhere. But that particular board in New York City, being politically correct and overly sensitive to racial and religious issues, wrongly approved the structure. Again, that may prove to have been a very unwise action.

So, the Muslim shrine there is legal. But it is still a bad idea for Muslims to push. One would think that any Muslim leaders involved would be sensitive to the mood and feelings of the people of New York City, the relatives of the victims of 9/11, and the mood of the nation in general. One would think that if these leaders are insensitive to feelings, then other Muslim leaders should have counseled them.

NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS

This writer has had association and relationships with Muslims in various ways. He has found most of these contacts quite congenial, with a few exceptions as could be said for all groupings. Most Muslim students attending the college where he presided tended to be polite and cooperative. Their squabbles were mostly with one another.

We had the honor of a campus visit at our small college, arranged through our State Department, from two Egyptian cabinet secretaries. One spent time in this writer's home visiting, even interacting with his Baptist adult class. A half-dozen educational dignitaries from Jordan spent three weeks each as campus guests learning our ways. When they brought the need to our attention, we arranged a private room at our gym so they could say their prayers as the proper hour came while attending a basketball game. We tried to be sensitive to their needs, and they were highly appreciative and very friendly.

For almost 10 years we lived as neighbors with a Muslim family. Nowhere would one find nicer people. The children were mannerly, and the adults were always friendly. Interestingly enough, at Christmas time the lady of the house always brought her neighbors a lovely tray of traditional Egyptian goodies. These were among the most sensitive, polite, pleasant people on earth.

INSENSITIVITY AND CALLOUSNESS

We just cannot see our friendly Muslim neighbors being party to any action or project as insensitive as putting that Muslim cultural center near the site of a tragedy killing thousands of people perpetrated by misguided criminal fanatics from the Muslim world. This would simply not be the nature of our former neighbors at all.

The conclusion of this writer is that no sensitive Muslim would be supportive of building the New York shrine. Therefore, those who are promoting this indecency are expressing an unwelcome callousness toward Americans' feelings about the incident of a decade ago. At its best, this is an unfriendly, insensitive act of rudeness and irresponsibility.

This movement should be corrected from within the Muslim community itself.

– The author, The Militant Moderate, lives in Enid

What's A Wingnut To Think? Saudi Bankrolls Fox, Center

By Kenny Belford

For those of us living in just about the reddest of the red states, take heed. There is a danger looming that you need to be aware of, and perhaps consider taking precautionary measures.

We all know that this new Republican Party and its kissing cousins in the Tea Party are defined by what and who they hate.

They hate Mexicans, even though they hire them to do jobs they don't want to do themselves. They hate Democrats, even though it's the libs that keep cleaning up their messes. They hate blacks, especially the really smart ones like Barack Obama. They hate the “liberal media,” which is any news entity other than Fox News. They hate Arabs, but they love to do business with them. They hate Muslims, because they aren't Southern Baptists. They hate anyone that challenges their hate.

Which brings us to the topic: Republicans are all in a big snit because Muslims want to build a cultural center and mosque several blocks away from the former location of the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Multiple times each hour Fox News, their lone source of “news,” has another Republican being interviewed informing them just how awful that is. After all, Republicans hate Arabs, and Republicans hate Muslims.

The Fox News talking heads rail away about how despicable that is. After all, Fox News also hates Arabs, and Fox News also hates Muslims. They're proud to help carry the banner. But there is a hidden danger lurking that's certain to create a problem for the rest of us that are surrounded by the hate crowd dominating our state.

It turns out that one of the biggest shareholders of News Corp., which owns Fox News, has been a major financial contributor to the fund to build the Muslim Cultural Center and Mosque in New York City. The rank-and-file haters won't like that at all.

It's so confusing when their only news source is railing away against the cultural center, while a major co-owner of Fox News, actually owning 7%, is kicking in moolah to help build it. But it gets worse. The name of the Fox News co-owner is Al-Waleed bin Talal, a Saudi Prince. At this point, the wingnuts eyes are beginning to twitch, and they're developing a nervous head-bobbing tic. An Arab is a co-owner of Fox News! A Muslim Arab is a co-owner of Fox News! A Muslim Arab is a co-owner of Fox News and is a financial backer of building a Muslim Cultural Center and Mosque at ground zero!

The wingnuts are now finding their hearts racing as they struggle to comprehend this development. This new effort to actually comprehend something not spoon fed to them is testing their under-utilized thought processes and is beginning to cause a cerebral overload.

There is a danger to the rest of us that have to be surrounded by them. When their underdeveloped brains reach critical mass, we may well experience spontaneous head explosions on a massive scale. The contaminants from these eruptions should be considered hazardous to the rest of us.

– The author lives in Tulsa

OBAMA

From Page One

less – and maybe even against the will of their screwball god – because Jesus is about to come again in a thing called ‘the rapture.’ I wish I could say I am making this up. I am not.

“You, sir, are thought of by many as the smartest man in any room. Smart people know when others are out to get them, so you must know who's out to get you. Don't let it happen. This religion hoo-hah is a classic diversion from the main issues before this country. Your earnest advisors have taken the bait. They should spit it out.

“The United States of America is a secular republic. Thinking people expect of their elected leaders such an attitude toward religion as was set forth by the late John F. Kennedy in a speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in Texas 50 years ago.

“Kennedy addressed ‘the so-called religious issue’ that had arisen over his being a Roman Catholic. He began by saying, ‘We have far more critical

issues to face in the ... election: the hungry children I saw in West Virginia, the old people who cannot pay their doctor bills, the families forced to give up their farms ...’

“That speech could be given today.

“Kennedy's message was that religion is a matter of personal preference and cannot be allowed to interfere with governance. ‘I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute ... where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials ... where religious intolerance will someday end ... Neither do I look with favor upon those who would work to subvert Article VI of the Constitution by requiring a religious test – even by indirection – for it.’

“Thus, Mr. President, I am on my knees begging you to get off yours. Don't pray for me, B. Obama.”

– The author is an Episcopal priest, journalist and author living in Michigan

KENNEDY

From Page One

should be important only to me – but what kind of America I believe in.

I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute; where no Catholic prelate would tell the President – should he be Catholic – how to act, and no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote; where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference, and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the President who might appoint him, or the people who might elect him.

I believe in an America that is officially neither Catholic, Protestant nor Jewish; where no public official either requests or accepts instructions on public policy from the Pope, the National Council of Churches or any other ecclesiastical source; where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials, and where religious liberty is so indivisible that an act against one church is treated as an act against all.

For while this year it may be a Catholic against whom the finger of suspicion is pointed, in other years it has been – and may someday be again – a Jew, or a Quaker, or a Unitarian, or a Baptist. It was Virginia's harassment of Baptist preachers, for example, that led to Jefferson's statute of religious freedom.

Today, I may be the victim, but tomorrow it may be you – until the whole fabric of our harmonious society is ripped apart at a time of great national peril.

Finally, I believe in an America where religious intolerance will someday end, where all men and all churches are treated as equals, where every man has the same right to attend or not to attend the church of his choice, where there is no Catholic vote, no anti-Catholic vote, no bloc voting of any kind, and where Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, at both the lay and the pastoral levels, will refrain from those attitudes of disdain and division which have so often marred their works in the past, and promote instead the American ideal of brotherhood.

That is the kind of America in which I believe. And it represents the kind of Presidency in which I believe, a great office that must be neither humbled by making it the instrument of any religious group nor tarnished by arbitrarily withholding its occupancy from the members of any one

religious group.

I believe in a President whose views on religion are his own private affair, neither imposed upon him by the nation, nor imposed by the nation upon him as a condition to holding that office.

I would not look with favor upon a President working to subvert the First Amendment's guarantees of religious liberty; nor would our system of checks and balances permit him to do so.

And neither do I look with favor upon those who would work to subvert Article VI of the Constitution by requiring a religious test, even by indirection. For if they disagree with that safeguard, they should be openly working to repeal it.

I want a Chief Executive whose public acts are responsible to all and obligated to none, who can attend any ceremony, service, or dinner his office may appropriately require of him to fulfill; and whose fulfillment of his Presidential office is not limited or conditioned by any religious oath, ritual, or obligation.

This is the kind of America I believe in – and this is the kind of America I fought for in the South Pacific, and the kind my brother died for in Europe. No one suggested then that we might have a divided loyalty, that we did not believe in liberty, or that we belonged to a disloyal group that threatened – I quote – “the freedoms for which our forefathers died.”

And in fact this is the kind of America for which our forefathers did die when they fled here to escape religious test oaths that denied office to members of less favored churches – when they fought for the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom – and when they fought at the shrine I visited today, the Alamo.

For side by side with Bowie and Crockett died Fuentes, and McCafferty, and Bailey, and Badillo, and Carey – but no one knows whether they were Catholics or not. For there was no religious test there.

I ask you tonight to follow in that tradition – to judge me on the basis of 14 years in the Congress, on my declared stands against an Ambassador to the Vatican, against unconstitutional aid to parochial schools, and against any boycott of the public schools – which I attended myself. And instead of doing this, do not judge me on the basis of these pamphlets and publications we all have seen that carefully select quotations out of context from the statements of

Catholic church leaders, usually in other countries, frequently in other centuries, and rarely relevant to any situation here.

And always omitting, of course, the statement of the American Bishops in 1948 which strongly endorsed Church-State separation, and which more nearly reflects the views of almost every American Catholic.

I do not consider these other quotations binding upon my public acts. Why should you?

But let me say, with respect to other countries, that I am wholly opposed to the State being used by any religious group, Catholic or Protestant, to compel, prohibit, or prosecute the free exercise of any other religion. And that goes for any persecution, at any time, by anyone, in any country.

I hope that you and I condemn with equal fervor those nations which deny their Presidency to Protestants, and those which deny it to Catholics. And rather than cite the misdeeds of those who differ, I would also cite the record of the Catholic Church in such nations as France and Ireland, and the independence of such statesmen as De Gaulle and Adenauer.

But let me stress again that these are my views.

For contrary to common newspaper usage, I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President who happens also to be a Catholic.

I do not speak for my church on public matters; and the church does not speak for me. Whatever issue may come before me as President, if I should be elected, on birth control, divorce, censorship, gambling or any other subject, I will make my decision in accordance with these views – in accordance with what my conscience tells me to be in the national interest, and without regard to outside religious pressure or dictates. And no power or threat of punishment could cause me to decide otherwise.

But if the time should ever come – and I do not concede any conflict to be remotely possible – when my office would require me to either violate my conscience or violate the



national interest, then I would resign the office; and I hope any conscientious public servant would do likewise.

But I do not intend to apologize for these views to my critics of either Catholic or Protestant faith; nor do I intend to disavow either my views or my church in order to win this election.

If I should lose on the real issues, I shall return to my seat in the Senate, satisfied that I'd tried my best and was fairly judged.

But if this election is decided on the basis that 40 million Americans lost their chance of being President on the day they were baptized, then it is the whole nation that will be the loser, in the eyes of Catholics and non-Catholics around the world, in the eyes of history, and in the eyes of our own people.

If, on the other hand, I should win this election, then I shall devote every effort of mind and spirit to fulfilling the oath of the Presidency – practically identical, I might add, with the oath I have taken for 14 years in the Congress.

For without reservation, I can, “solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution – so help me God.”

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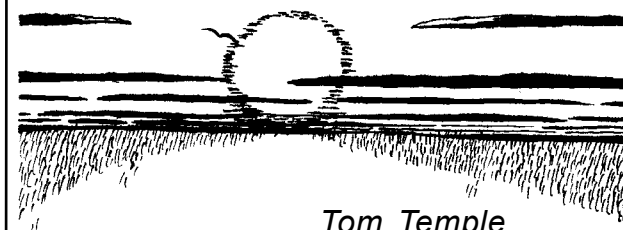
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