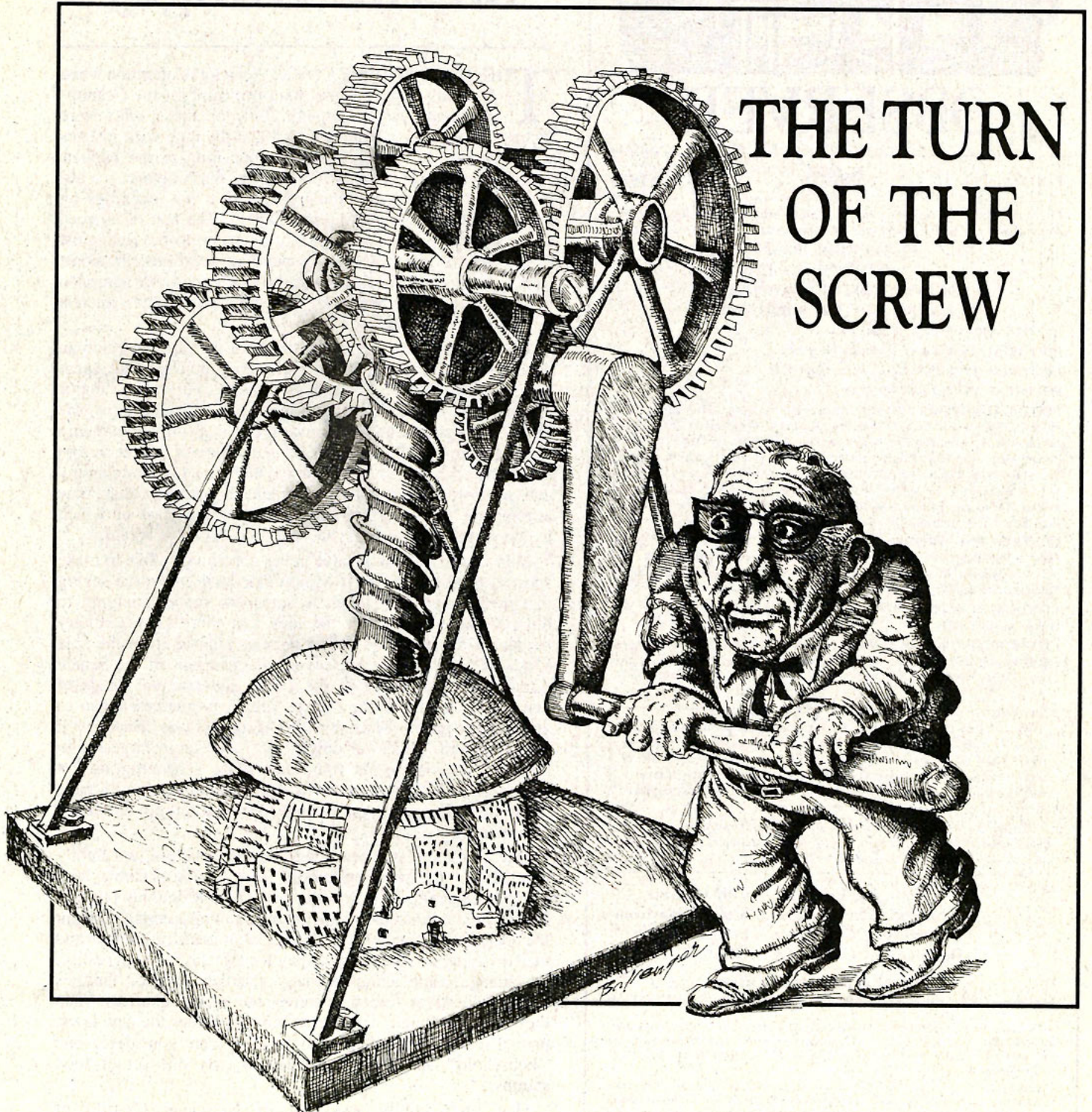


THE TEXAS OBSERVER

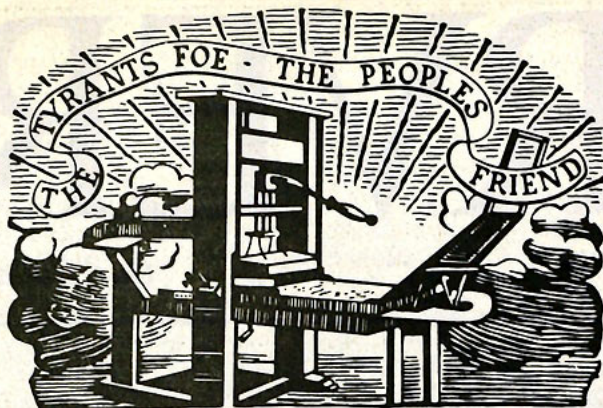
A Journal of Free Voices

July 31, 1986

One Dollar



The San Antonio Spending-Cap Battle



THE OBSERVER

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A journal of free voices

We will serve no group or party but will hew hard to the truth as we find it and the right as we see it. We are dedicated to the whole truth, to human values above all interests, to the rights of humankind as the foundation of democracy; we will take orders from none but our own conscience, and never will we overlook or misrepresent the truth to serve the interests of the powerful or cater to the ignoble in the human spirit.

Writers are responsible for their own work, but not for anything they have not themselves written, and in publishing them we do not necessarily imply that we agree with them because this is a journal of free voices.

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• EDITORIAL •

Cracking Down on the Hungry

THE U.S. SUPREME COURT got a lot of attention when it struck down an important provision of the Gramm-Rudman law last month, but for those who were inclined to take the ruling as a sign that the nine wise justices were standing up in high-minded opposition to the budget-cutting fervor that is so fashionable in Washington . . . ah, for those simple-minded souls there are a few openings on the Optimists' Farm waiting to be filled. The rest of us need not look far to find the true spirit of the (soon-to-be) Rehnquist Court when it comes to social spending questions; the court hasn't the slightest qualm about the slash-and-burn approach to the budget, nor, as we all know by now, the slightest interest in "judicial activism."

The evidence was not to be found in the Gramm-Rudman decision but in a ruling on food stamp policies that came eleven days before. Perhaps because very few major metropolitan newspaper editors make use of food stamps, the decision got almost no news coverage. Yet it will undoubtedly make a difference in the lives of many hungry people across the country who are trying to cope with both a hostile economy and a hostile array of government regulations that now accompany most welfare programs, not the least of which is one of the most successful, the food stamp program.

Many Americans who have never gone hungry like to make sport of food stamps, as if Milton Friedman's favorite saying that there is no free lunch is somehow more satisfying to the national psyche than the idea that there be no hungry people. When the food stamp policies slipped from the able hands of Sen. George McGovern as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee in the 1970s and into the hands of Sen. Jesse Helms in the 1980s, simple prejudices began to guide the program. Thus, by 1981 Congress was already well on its way to "cracking down" on food stamp largesse, in the guise of rooting out fraud and abuse. The program got loaded up with new regulations that ensured that you'd have to be pretty hungry to put yourself through the government's means testing.

One of Congress's new ideas was to disallow two family members of the same household from having separate food stamp allotments. This was done to prevent devious families from trying to boost their benefits by claiming a certain amount for one family member and another allotment for another and then divvying up the stamps to pay for a grand feast. In reality, the change came along as many relatives in poor families found themselves forced to move into shared quarters when they could no longer afford rent money. Under the new laws, passed in 1981 and 1982, two families were considered one "household" and thereby entitled to only one set of food stamps.

One such family was that of Natividad Castillo of Brownsville. With his wife and children, Castillo left a farm labor job in Michigan and arrived in Brownsville in September of 1981. Finding no employment there, they moved into the home of his stepdaughter. The daughter and her family were

receiving food stamps, and when Castillo applied at the Brownsville office of the Department of Human Resources he was told his family was ineligible because the household already had a food stamp allotment. Castillo maintained that the families ate as separate units and did not share food. On behalf of Castillo and six other families, Texas Rural Legal Aid filed suit, saying that the restrictions discriminated against poor families who happened to be sharing a house. Non-related people sharing a house were allowed by the law to declare themselves separate households and receive separate food stamp benefits.

In April of last year, U.S. District Judge Filemon Vela in Brownsville ruled in favor of TRLA, maintaining that the law violated constitutional guarantees of due process and equal protection. But on June 28 the Supreme Court overturned the ruling by a 6-3 vote.

Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for the majority, said that Congress had a "rational basis" for determining that "relatives sharing a home — almost by definition — tend to purchase and prepare meals together." Since the justices presumed this to be the usual case, they found that the law did not discriminate against families who moved in together. But underlying the Court's ruling is the nagging suspicion that somewhere out in America there might be families, through "mistaken or misstated claims of separate dining," who would manipulate the food stamp program to get more than their share to eat.

Justices Byron White, William Brennan, and Thurgood Marshall dissented. Marshall questioned the government's assumption that the restrictions were necessary to prevent widespread fraud — "the Government has provided no justification for the conclusion that related individuals living together are more likely to lie about their living arrangements than are unrelated individuals," he wrote. Marshall further noted that Congress did not allow families that did not conform to the assumptions of Congress to make an individual case that they bought and ate food as separate families. Instead the Court swallowed Congress's assumptions that the government can simply not afford the expenses that supposedly would result from a relaxed law on entitlements. According to William Choyke, writing in the *Dallas Morning News* last April, the difference could typically come down to about 50 bucks for a household. Choyke calculated that a related household of eight people could receive \$483 a month in food stamps. If they were divided into two units of four people, their total take would amount to \$536 a month.

THE COURT'S RULING on food stamps involves only the narrowest questions of procedural justice — and that is how we are most accustomed to thinking about poverty in the declining years of the welfare state. As the Reagan administration, Congress, and state governments pursue policies of social retrogression, we become embroiled in battles on many small fronts. But one ought not to miss the panorama. As the government proceeds with suspicion that too many people are trying to get a free lunch, more and more people are going hungry.

In Texas, because of historically inadequate delivery of social services, the problem is especially vexing. In the beginning of the year, when the Harvard Physicians Task Force on Hunger made such a stir by ranking Texas first in the nation in number of "hunger counties," there was a chorus of doubt and dismay. In February the Task Force toured hunger counties in Texas, in an effort to understand why the system was not serving the poor. In May the group released a report that was highly critical of the Reagan administration's changes in food stamp law that made it harder to get benefits. This

was at about the same time the President himself was attributing the hunger problem to poor people's ignorance about government programs. "One of the consistent themes in our research and field investigations is that federal impediments have been placed in the way of those who need help most," the Task Force report said.

The physicians were referring to the bright ideas of 1981 and 1982. Congress established stricter requirements for monthly reporting of income by food stamp recipients. Certain deductions used to calculate level of income were disallowed or reduced. And new rules were created that averaged the level of earnings over previous months, so that on paper a family could have a liveable income but in the present be unemployed and without food stamp eligibility. Whereas the food stamp program was originally established to keep people from slipping into abject poverty, says Norma Almanza Plascencia of the Anti-Hunger Coalition of Texas, "it is now a very restrictive program that very few people have access to, and when they do have access they have a mountain of paperwork." In addition, says Plascencia, the state Department of Human Services is now more likely than ever to keep people off the programs through technicalities, having been cited by the federal government for too high an "error" rate in allowing people on food stamps. But state officials admit that less than half of the 2.9 million Texans living below the poverty line are getting food stamps. The average monthly level of recipients in Texas is 1.3 million; in April of this year it hit a record high, according to the Department of Human Services.

So, even as difficult as the bureaucratic tangle has become, the economic conditions of the state have become worse, and the number of food stamp recipients, as well as hungry people

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Cover Art by Tom Ballenger

served by private food pantries, is rising. While members of Congress and the Supreme Court sit in Washington and fret that someone "out there" is getting too much food, they

fail to address real questions of economic justice. There is a reason people might go to great lengths to get food stamps: people are hungry. D.D.

• DIALOGUE •

Insurance Half-Truths

It's surprising to see in a publication, which is dedicated to the whole truth, an article so full of half-truths as "The Insurance 'Crisis,'" By Rebecca Lightsey (TO, 5/2/86).

In fact, it has so many half-truths, that it's hard to pick one to rebut.

For one, Ms. Lightsey calls for the regulation of the property/casualty insurance industry.

Actually, the industry is already closely regulated by designated authorities, usually called "Commissioners of Insurance," in every state. Also, certain insurer activities are subject to regulation by federal agencies.

But let's focus on what led Ms. Lightsey to write the article: the insurance industry's advocacy of tort reform.

Ms. Lightsey ignores facts that prove there is a crisis in the civil justice system. For example:

In 1984, there were 401 awards of a million dollars or more in the U.S., up from 372 in 1983 and only one in 1962.

In federal courts, product liability suits jumped 600 percent in 10 years, from 1,579 in 1974 to 10,745 in 1984.

From 1965 to 1985, losses (dollars to be paid out in claims) in commercial liability insurance increased 2,046 percent, while inflation was up only 242 percent.

In 1984 alone, losses in commercial liability insurance increased 25 percent. In 1985, they were up 43 percent.

According to a Rand Corporation study, claimants in asbestos cases receive only 37 cents of every dollar. The other 63 cents pay for litigation costs.

Critics of the civil justice system include Chief Justice Warren Burger, President Derek Bok of Harvard University as well as former Attorneys General William Smith and Griffin Bell.

Perhaps, what is most important, the public, in replies to surveys conducted by the Gallup Organization and Cambridge Reports, Inc., shows that it is fed up with the system.

—The public favors limits on pain and suffering awards as well as on contingency fees.

—The public favors reforms, including greater use of alternatives to going to court, such as arbitration.

—The public complains about the excessive delays and outrageous costs of the civil justice system.

Virtually, every segment of American life is affected by the unbridled civil justice system.

The threat of lawsuits is forcing manufacturers to pull vaccines off the market. It's making doctors order \$17.5 billion a year of unproductive tests just to avoid being sued or to have documentation in case they are taken to court. It's making obstetricians give up delivering babies.

Because of the rise in lawsuits, directors of publicly-held companies are resigning. Sports programs are being canceled. Municipalities are cutting back on services like sanitation, fire and police.

No insurance company — let alone the entire insurance industry — wants to take away the legal access of citizens. The industry believes that injured persons have a right to sue and to receive restitution for their injuries. However, the industry doesn't believe that one person's injury should mean a windfall for the person who represents him.

It's essential that the debate about improving the civil justice system continue, but it's also essential that people who participate in the debate know the facts.

Mechlin D. Moore
Insurance Information Institute
New York, New York

Rebecca Lightsey replies:

Mr. Moore's figures themselves are "half-truths." His figure on 401 million dollar or more awards, compared to only one in 1962, omits the facts that:

1. over half of those awards were never paid (they were reduced, remitted, or turned over on appeal), and

2. today's dollar is worth only 28 cents of a 1962 dollar; a million dollar judgment today is equal to a \$280,000 judgment in 1962.

A large part of the jump to 10,745 products liability suits in 1984, a 600 percent jump, can be attributed to asbestos defendants and their insurers'

refusal to compensate asbestos victims. Virtually every one of the estimated 4,000 to 6,000 federal asbestos cases filed that year (60 percent of the court's products caseload) were unnecessary. If the defendants and their insurance companies had compensated the victims according to already-established proof, the cases would not have been filed, insurance lawyers would not have earned part of the judgment dollar, and the victim would have had full, immediate compensation. Instead they were forced to sue.

Mr. Moore's numbers on insurance losses also tell only part of the story. While companies calculate losses using a variety of unsubstantiated figures, such as "incurred but not reported" losses, industry assets are more straightforward. Between 1975 and 1985, property and casualty assets tripled. A.M. Best reports they are now at \$313 billion — three times larger than the national debt of Mexico.

Tooth and Toenail

I read with a great deal of interest your articles on the insurance crisis, especially in the May 2, 1986, *Texas Observer*, and then in subsequent issues. I want you to know that it does not seem to me that you can dismiss the matter by merely saying it is a rip-off by the insurance industry, conclude that no one should deny plaintiffs the right to sue everyone in the world, and then say someone should do something about the insurance companies. There are many states which have enacted legislation which will go a long way toward correcting the problem without denying plaintiffs their rights but, nevertheless, will eliminate the uncertainty of the matter which to a large degree is why insurance companies jack up the rates.

As an example for your information, Galveston County is without any insurance whatsoever for anything, except for extended coverage on buildings; that is, fire and windstorm. We cannot even afford to carry liability insurance on our sheriff's cars or road department trucks, and we have no liability insurance for any elected officials or agents of the county. Of course, we are not in as bad a shape as many companies because we do have a maximum that can be

recovered unless gross negligence is shown. However, we chose to go without insurance, and those who choose to sue the county will just have to get in line, and we will fight them tooth and toenail to eliminate any pay out from the taxpayers of our county or to try to settle for the minimum absolutely necessary to pay off a legitimate claim.

If you really want to do justice to the liability insurance situation, you should explore what other states have done and see if there is some compromise that the plaintiff's attorneys will live with and which will force the insurance companies to cover companies and governmental agencies at a minimum cost and yet make a profit. If it continues the way it is now, the insurance companies will get rich, customers will pay more and more and more for services and products, many plaintiffs will go without anything because of no defendant's liability insurance, and everyone involved in the situation will stay mad at everyone else. I encourage you to help solve the crisis instead of just adding to the problem.

Ray Holbrook
County Judge
Galveston

Feeding and Breeding

In a flippant Political Intelligence item (TO, 5/30/86) an anonymous person interprets Texas Committee on Natural Resources' position for strict immigration control as a failure to consider that human beings are "part of the ecology."

Actually, a large majority of our board sees human beings as key elements of the ecology, and important beneficiaries of holding the line on immigration.

When human beings overpopulate the globe, as they are now doing, they eliminate entire ecosystems. They replace natural biotic communities in forests, prairies, and marshes with more and bigger cities, pastures, and monocultures of corn, wheat, cotton, and other crops. We need to retain examples of natural communities for the gene-pools that sustain our foods, fibers, medicines, other commodities.

Overpopulation is a form of manslaughter in that it leads to massive deaths through starvation, disease, and war.

The benefits of immigration control to human beings include (1) reduction of overpopulation within the nations exercising control (the United States has some of the weakest controls in the

world), (2) discouragement of overpopulation in other nations by not providing a new feeding and breeding place for every over-sized family to spread into, and (3) protection of the standard of living in the controlling nation by preventing the uncontrolled entry of lower-waged workers.

TCONR loves people of all views and nationalities, and welcomes them to join, but not to overpopulate.

Edward C. Fritz
Chairman
Texas Committee on Natural Resources
Dallas

On Mayer

Thank you, Dave Denison, for your fine tribute to Milton Mayer (TO, 5/30/86).

Mayer's tormented soul is finally at rest. But do not count him short. He disturbed the consciences of many of us, but we are not yet safe. Through his legacy of poignant prose he may still reach up, clutch us by the shoulders and shake us to our moral roots.

Why did we love so much this writer who troubled our minds so often? Mayer wrote with a killer instinct, always going for the moral jugular, but he also warmly expressed love and gave generous praise. He wrote with dazzling wit and outrageous humor, but also with disarming humility and self-deprecation. He was such fun to read, but his messages so often brought sadness instead of joy.

Milton Mayer's spoken words, what few I heard, were even more impressive than his written ones. I heard him speak once, to a tiny audience of pacifists, people who needed no persuasion from him, but whom he goaded to deeper ethical analysis and greater activism. I also "heard" his silence at a Quaker meeting, where his presence helped create an atmosphere of warm acceptance and support. Generally, our mass media took no note of Mayer's passing. His early brilliance in intellectual circles faded to relative obscurity at the end. I am pleased that Milton Mayer received eloquent recognition in *The Texas Observer*.

Harry R. VanDyck
Denton

Wanted: Mutual Respect

We appreciated Lori Montgomery's report (TO, 5/30/86) about the dialogue in Wisconsin between pro-choice and "right-to-life" groups. Although the two

camp here in Texas were able to agree last session on a bill to regulate abortion clinics to assure health and safety compliance, there was no direct negotiation involved in that compromise, and there's been virtually no dialogue on anything else. Let us suggest why.

Although there is a good deal of resentment and anger in the pro-choice movement here in Texas about the tactics of Bill Price and many of those in the right-to-life movement, we don't know anyone who questions the deeply-held religious and moral beliefs of those who believe that abortion is wrong. That same respect and courtesy is almost never accorded by the right-to-lifers to us.

The other important distinction between the two camps is in the breadth of their concerns. No one we know in the pro-choice movement is "for abortion" as such. It is always a difficult choice to make, and those of us who support a woman's right to make that choice work very hard for sex education, increased access to contraception, and government funding of social programs to create a society in which the need for abortion is kept to a minimum. The right-to-lifers, as Bill Price concedes, care only about stopping abortion, not about the larger human context in which the abortion debate takes place.

It is true that there is a fundamental core issue in each camp on which there can be no compromise: the basic issue of whether a woman has a right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. But there could be a dialogue, and one which could result in enormous benefits to our society, if there was a mutual respect for integrity and a common resolve to work together on measures which would reduce the incidence of abortion. When the right-to-lifers show some evidence of that respect and that resolve, they will find us more than ready to talk with them.

Pam Fridrich
Texas Abortion Rights Action League
Peggy Romberg
Texas Family Planning Advocates
Gara LaMarche
Texas Civil Liberties Union
Evelyn Bonavita
League of Women Voters of Texas

Sex Manual

Lori Montgomery appears to be the ideal individual to submit a sex manual suitable for Texas schools.

Elza Gardner Tax
College Station

The Governor's Race and Other Texana

By Ronnie Dugger

New York City

As we saunter toward the run-up to the fall campaign for governor of Texas, the political situation is poisonous.

Bill Clements, running against Governor Mark White, says: "His record is crystal clear. Mark White is like the captain of the Titanic. He has shipwrecked the Texas economy. He heads a ship of state that has brought the Texas economy to its knees." Since it's \$10 oil that has brought the economy down, Clements is dishonestly blaming White for the fall in oil prices.

White has called a special session without waiting for legislators to produce a plan for dealing with the predicted shortage of \$2.3 to \$3 billion in the current two-year budget as he'd earlier announced. But of course the legislators would prefer to hide until next year. After talking to some of them, Peter Applebome reported in the *New York Times*: "A tax increase in an election year is extremely unlikely despite the fact that Texas ranks 48th nationally in per capita taxation and near the bottom in most spending categories, legislators say."

State Treasurer Ann Richards warns that the state may literally run out of cash by the end of the year, but to the legislators that looks like the pot of votes at the end of the rainbow because they can wait until after the November election to act. But what will they do even then?

White is not to be expected to forget the electoral outcome of Walter Mondale's advocacy of higher taxes to pay for nothing inspiring. At least White is working with legislative leaders to come up with a plan of spending cuts that will protect education and social welfare programs. Unfortunately he also intends to protect expensive highway boondoggles.

The state should be coming up with a public works program to employ some of the 846,000 Texans who are out of a job. Surely progressive members of the legislature should come forward with their own package, new taxes rooted in

a corporate income tax, combined with a total moratorium on the highway program, to protect social spending. With the federal revision of the income tax pending, a visionary leader might even propose that we join the new federal system with a state income tax, but that's even less likely than parimutuel betting.

And this is the point! Necessity can be delayed. As Jim Rudd, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, told Applebome, "I just want the least possible to happen. The less you do, the less problems you have. The more you do, the more people you alienate. At this time, I'm going to do the minimum it takes to get to the problem." But come November or next spring we are going to have to have a taxbath, a bloodbath for the poor, or a churchbath as we adopt horserace gambling. With \$10 oil, there just won't be enough money to pay the state's bills.

I think, myself, that the schoolteachers of the state had better get over their anger with White as soon as they can and go to work for his reelection. I can see why some of them are mad at him about the competency test, but he was thinking of the students, and teachers ought to be high-minded enough about education to take that into account. I am still mad at him myself for that dumb crack he made about testing teachers for drugs. But he ran the honorable risk on taxes to get the teachers better pay, and he took on the jocks to restore academic standards to their rightful primacy in the public schools.

Let Clements in there again, and it's bye-bye social welfare spending, bye-bye teachers' pay, bye-bye good education, and — in 1988 — another eight years of Reaganism. Think it through, teach. You're the one who's supposed to be able to think it through.

Binational Law

The afternoon of July 9th, officials unlocked the door of a boxcar in Cotulla

and found 26 undocumented workers who had been locked in there by the coyotes, whom the aliens had paid to get them into the United States. One of the workers was dead, another one was dying, and a 16-year-old girl was suffering from shock and dehydration.

In 1954, when I was in the Valley during one of the high crests of immigration from Mexico, bodies of drowned Mexican citizens washed up on the shores of the Rio Grande two or three times a week. Again this summer, as the *New York Times* reported June 26, "law-enforcement officers say that almost every day they find the bodies of shooting victims in the bushes or floating in the Rio Grande, some of them immigrants robbed while trying to cross the border, some of them victims of smuggling deals that went wrong."

Isn't it time that neighbor-nations start enacting laws together to deal with situations like this that inextricably concern both nations? American politicians junket to the meetings of the Interparliamentary Union, but how about some interparliamentary legislation? One can visualize joint hearings conducted by legislators from both the U.S. and Mexico alternately in Mexico City and Washington, followed by the invention of new techniques and technologies for binational legislation. There would be hitches and snags — but we might at least try to take one real step toward the establishment of new *ad hoc* international systems of governance.

A Nuclear-Free Texas?

According to *The New Abolitionist*, which identifies itself as "the newsletter of nuclear-free America" and takes a specialist interest in nuclear-free zones, 14,388,371 Americans live in 115 nuclear-free zones as of May this year. Not one of these zones is in Texas.

The nuclear-free-zone movement has spread all over the world. There are 18 nuclear-free-zone countries (including, now, New Zealand) and, in addition to those in the U.S., there are 3,078 nuclear-free-zone communities. Yet in Texas *The New Abolitionist* lists only Galveston as a place where a nuclear-free-zone campaign is now under way.

If New York City can do it, why not Houston? If Chicago can do it, why not San Antonio? If Wallowa County, Oregon, why not Bell County? If Boulder, Colorado, why not Austin?

Anyone interested in this movement

can subscribe to *The New Abolitionist* for \$10 a year, sent to Nuclear-Free America, 325 East 25th St., Baltimore, Md. 21218, or telephone these good people at (301) 235-3575.

Mickey Leland's Work

Mickey Leland, the congressman from Houston, has become the specialist in Congress on hunger in the U.S. and the world. The "Hunger Report" of the House Select Committee on Hunger, of which Leland is chairman, discusses, in a single mimeographed issue, a newly-proposed hunger relief act, deforestation in the Third World as a precursor to famine, a locust infestation that now threatens agriculture in the sub-Sahara, and the global effort to immunize children.

But Mickey Leland's reports do not ignore Texas. In the issue for June 26, for example, it is reported that the Texas Department of Human Services has turned to the private sector to provide part of the Texas money necessary to match federal funds for food distribution to the poor. And here is another Texas item from this report of the same date:

"The House Select Committee on Housing learned first hand about the growth of hunger in Houston during a hearing concluded June 6, followed by visits to a family shelter and a food stamp office.

"Rev. David Knotts, executive director of Houston Metropolitan Ministries (HMM), told the committee that his agency served 10,000 people in emergency feeding programs in 1981. Last year HMM aided 200,000 people in 102 sites.

"In Houston 30,000 people have fallen into poverty in the last three years, bringing the total to 306,157. The 'new poor' are people suddenly out of work due to declines in the oil industry and other changes affecting the Houston economy.

"Senator Hugh Parmer, a hunger

alleviation program advocate in the state legislature, called the committee's attention to the elderly and the 'traditional' poor. Among the almost one million elderly poor persons in Texas are many home-bound persons who go hungry due to the lack of delivered meals, he said.

"Food stamp participation lags far behind the increasing number of people in poverty in Houston. Present participation is 183,992 persons, less than two-thirds of the 306,157 persons statistically now in poverty."

Amarillo's T. Boone

T. Boone Pickens, the Amarillo raider, quit preachin' and went to meddlin' in the corporate board rooms a good while ago, but now his meddlin' may lead to a broader social good than richer stockholders and a richer T. Boone Pickens. He is launching a national shareholder-rights lobbying organization which will seek secret balloting on corporate affairs. Under his plan, shareholders would send their votes to an independent auditing firm which would count the votes and tell the corporation the outcome.

What Pickens has in mind is freeing institutional investors (banks, insurance companies, pension funds) from fear of

retaliation if they oppose corporate management on (let's just say) a raid by T. Boone Pickens. But secret balloting might also free certain pension funds from similar fears on votes about such matters as investment in South Africa or the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

No doubt the Council of Institutional Investors has a better idea — make the votes, not secret, but public, so institutions can be held accountable for how they vote. But, in any case, Pickens is once again shaking up the birds'-nests-in-the-skyscrapers. It's enough to make a perfect stranger think of him as "good old T. Boone."

The Corporate Bureaucrats

Liberals and government bureaucrats are the big spenders who don't know how to meet a payroll and run an efficient business, right? How come, then, Brown & Root has agreed to pay \$750,000,000 to the four owners of the South Texas Nuclear Project to settle a \$6.3 billion lawsuit they had filed against the construction company? And how come an audit ordered by the Texas Public Utility Commission has found that between \$1.1 billion and \$1.3 billion of the construction costs at the \$5.5 billion plant were caused by "mismanagement imprudence"? □

"If one advances confidently in the direction of his own dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours."

Henry David Thoreau

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Farm Aid for the Betrayed

By Greg Moses

Austin

SEVENTY-FIVE TEXAS FARMERS went out of business during the July 4th weekend. At the rate of 173 farms per week, the farm crisis is destroying this state's most experienced producers, causing economic blight and emotional bitterness which may never be repaired. If Farm Aid II came up short on expected donations, it did offer a symbol of hope to rally around, a living monument for those 32,000 Texas farmers who said in February that they did not expect to be farming in 1987. While the nation's slickest promoters staged a mega-buck extravaganza allegedly in honor of Lady Liberty, farmers could turn to an alternative production and a message more truthful about their shipwrecked status on these amber waves of grain.

"But *dah-ling*," yawn the trendies, "hasn't this whole Live-Aid-Farm-Aid-Hands-Across-America-Band-Aid thing gotten so-oo wearisome?" Yes, and that's much of the point. It takes sustained effort to solve problems like hunger, poverty, and injustice. It always has. Farm Aid II was no simple case of whooping it up. No one of the 40,000 spectators who trucked their coolers to Manor Downs would tell you it wasn't a wearisome day. Willie Nelson himself was weary during his generous closing set, long after midnight. For one day, 40,000 people were challenged to get up with the sun, stay up with the sun, and go to bed in the wee hours, mulling over expenses and revenues, wondering if it was all worthwhile. For one day we could stand in the shoes of our farmers and feel sore as hell.

NANCILLE GALLIMORE was run off her family's farm in 1984, and she's still bitter about it. But she needs the bitterness, she explains, "because the day I completely forgive my government for what it did to my family is the day I will stop helping the small farmer hold on to what he has." As administrator of the six-month-old Texas Farm Crisis Hotline, an offspring of Farm Aid,

Gallimore feels God has put her where she can do the most good for others. "I'm a Christian person," Gallimore says quietly. "I guess God felt I was capable of helping so many other farmers. He knows I realize how these people feel."

Good farmers, like her husband Craig, are being forced to take their families into cities and shift for work at the nearest job site. Both Craig and Nancille and their two sons, ages 11 and 16, are earning money in a city where layoff announcements regularly remind one of the brute economic forces at work. They bring to the city extra mouths to feed, extra employment needs, fear, and a sense of betrayal.

In 1974 the Gallimores scraped together \$200 to start a small cattle operation on their existing Panhandle farm. Located near feedlots, they began their herd with feedlot calves. Calves born on feedlots are allowed one nursing, then they are slaughtered to prevent any weight drain on the mother. So Craig and Nancille diligently watched the feedlots, plucked up new-

born calves at bargain prices, and started a herd. In 1984 the government had the Gallimore herd sold to slaughter. Thirteen feedlot calves had been nurtured into a herd of 87 head, and the government had them taken away. That's what hurt Nancille the most.

"Other families have other things that are especially important to them," says Gallimore. "For some it's the brand new tractor. For others it's the land that has been in the family for two or three generations." For Gallimore's oldest son, it was a herd of goats. He came home one day from school and they were gone. Recently, the youngest son was taken by his grandmother to visit the old farm house. "Mama," he told Nancille, "I just cried and cried and cried, and I don't know why."

Statistics help to quantify the bitterness of this harvest. In six months the hotline received 2,500 calls from Texas farmers. The median caller is 47 years old with 22 years of farming experience. Ninety percent take names of attorneys. Fifty percent take information on indigent legal aid services. Thirty-five percent accept job training information. And 32 percent accept referral to the state's mental health facilities.

"The most significant trend of the past six months," states a hotline analysis, "has been the steady rise in the number of callers willing to accept referrals to state-run and private psychological counseling." Our most experienced farmers are at wit's end. Much like the Gallimores, they feel impotent and betrayed before a system which treats them as if they were a national nuisance. To Nancille Gallimore, government policy is saying, "get big or get out." And there is no reason why things have to work this way.

More often than not the system comes to the farm in the form of the Farmer's Home Administration, or FmHA. As "lender of last resort" the FmHA was created to help farmers. But recent history suggests that the FmHA has become the final wringer in a system designed to squeeze family farmers dry. When farmers call the hotline they usually need help with the intimidating machinery of the FmHA. That's why 90 percent of them take names of lawyers.

On Friday the 13th this June, a class action suit on behalf of FmHA clients was heard in a Lubbock federal court. Without Farm Aid and the Texas Farm Crisis Hotline, the suit might not have been possible. The lawsuit simply seeks to get the FmHA to recognize the right of its clients to due process. Farmers do have rights in their dealings with the

The Congress

FARM AID funds are supporting a United Farmer and Rancher Congress to be held in St. Louis, Sept. 11-13. Three area coordinators will be organizing caucuses in Texas to select delegates and draft farm policy resolutions for consideration at the congress. Each caucus will select one delegate for every ten people in attendance. In addition, each caucus will be able to select a "rural concerns" delegate to address the impact of the farm crisis on the rural economy. A total of 45 caucuses are planned throughout Texas. Contact the following coordinators for further information: West Texas and the Panhandle, V.B. Morris, Rt. 3, Box 31, Gruver, TX 79040, (806) 733-2203; South Texas, Alberto Luera, 406 Scott St., Laredo, TX 78040, (512) 724-2555; and East Texas, Terry Hyman, 812 Blackjack, Stillwater, OK 74074, (405) 372-8562. **G.M.**

Longtime Observer contributor Greg Moses now lives and writes in Austin.

FmHA, but the agency is not known for its ability to inform farmers of those rights or grant them before they are demanded. Too often the hotline is not called until the last minute, but Gallimore will use expensive overnight mail whenever it is needed: "I ask myself, is it worth \$10 to keep this farmer on his land? You bet it is."

Once the call is made, Gallimore collects all the information she can get, a task which is sometimes difficult. "To these farmers, going broke means doing something wrong," says Gallimore. "It's difficult for them to say how broke they are to some woman on the other end of the line, you know." But, when more than 6,000 Texas farmers are listed as "delinquent" by the FmHA, and when those who call the hotline are middle-aged and experienced farmers, there are good reasons to suspect we are not witnessing the weeding of bad farmers. We're seeing the outright damage of bad agricultural policies.

FORTUNATELY, THE FmHA is only the government, and after a good dose of July 4th rhetoric

we can still believe that the government is us. As soon as we decide we want fair government on the farm, the FmHA will stop wringing out the little guy. That's why Farm Aid is important. It reminds us that we still enjoy a government of the people whenever the people are not too cynical or too timid to want it.

Our reasons for wanting a fair government can vary. Justice itself is a compelling notion. Or perhaps those of us living in the oil bust don't want a farm bust as well. Or perhaps we sense the danger in this harvest of bitterness and confusion, where adults and children alike are ready to give up on the promise of America. And maybe it's finally time that we looked beyond the Hollywood dazzle of the Reagan administration, beyond its deficits of compassion, and began caring again for the real folks who buy the tickets. Whatever our reasons for making America a land of fairness, we should know that Farm Aid has already made the commitment and that real work lies ahead.

The hotline is a good example to

demonstrate how Farm Aid is working. Once the \$25,000 in seed money was provided, a group of active and competent service organizations teamed up in cooperative effort. The Texas Conference of Churches assumed sponsorship. Support sponsors now include Texas Rural Legal Aid, Gulf Coast Legal Services, and the Texas Department of Agriculture. Austin attorney Mitchell Green provided office space until the TDA offered a small warehouse in May. And Milburn Travel of Austin now donates a portion of its income to the hotline.

Farm Aid is making it possible for farmers to hope and to work for reform and survival. That's why Gallimore was able to report calls in early July from farmers who said, "If you see Willie, tell him we said thanks." Today Gallimore continues to take calls in a small steel warehouse on the outskirts of Austin. Of course the calls of encouragement are too few and too far between, but because of Farm Aid, for embattled Texas farmers, at least, there is still such a thing as a free phone call. □

• POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE •

✓ A conservative Texan, Cong. Marvin Leath, seeks to capitalize on liberal displeasure with the chairman of the House Armed Services committee and hopes to replace him. Les Aspin of Wisconsin, the chairman, broke his word when he voted for aid to the contras, according to Speaker Tip O'Neill. Rep. Charles Bennett of Florida has announced his aim of replacing Aspin as chairman. Leath, 14th-ranking Democrat on the committee (compared to Bennett's rank of third) told the *Washington Post* he considers himself a conservative who agrees with liberals in believing the Pentagon must be reformed and the Reagan military-spending program was too much, too soon.

✓ Congressman Mac Sweeney, freshman Republican from Wharton, appears to be in serious trouble. The *Houston Chronicle* has quoted three employees of his House staff that they were required to work on his re-election campaign in order to retain their jobs. At federal law, such a requirement is a crime punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$10,000 fine. Apart from the testimony of the three, there is a memo that was written by a member of Sweeney's staff informing his workers in his Texas congressional office that they would be "required to help and

attend" political parties, dinners, vote-getting walks, and yard-sign distributions. Sweeney disavows the memo as an underling's mistake, and a staffer implicated by one of the resigned employee's charges denies wrongdoing.

✓ Houston leads the nation in the number of toxic chemical mishaps reported annually. "This is the petrochemical capital of the world, and if you're moving more chemicals than anybody else, there's a good chance you're going to have more problems than anybody else," said a supervisor of the city's hazardous materials unit. The unit has faced as many as eight chemical accidents in a day and as many as three at one time; 576 such incidents were reported in 1985.

Romeo: What Shall I Swear By?
Juliet: Swear Not At All.

✓ In Huntsville, the eight-member group, People vs. Pornography, is trying to bring criminal charges or a boycott against stores selling sexually-oriented magazines. The group's members, which include police officers and members of the Second Baptist Church, claim that magazines such as *Penthouse* and

Playboy are immoral and can lead some people to commit sex crimes. The Second Baptist Church pastor said that "after exposure to pornography, some 35-year-old men have trouble walking down the beach filled with healthy young girls."

Anti-pornography efforts in other parts of the country have targeted literary books such as J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*. Last year, high school textbook publishers deleted 400 lines from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* because of complaints of sexual suggestions and swearing in the play.

✓ And who else but Mel Gabler, the self-appointed Minister of School Textbook Ideology from Longview, might we expect to show up at the "Scopes II" trial in progress in Greeneville, Tennessee? Gabler told a U.S. District Court that schoolbooks are "indoctrinating" children with the philosophy of secular humanism, according to the *Washington Post* of July 19. The trial pits People for the American Way against Concerned Women for America in a suit over whether fundamentalist parents can demand that schools provide alternative readings that don't offend their religious beliefs. According to the *Post*, one of the books the plaintiffs object to is *Riders on the Earth*, which talks of

humans as "riders on the Earth together, brothers on that bright loveliness in the eternal cold — brothers who know that they are truly brothers." The fundamentalists object that the book advocates sun worship, internationalism, and one-world government. The trial is being compared to the celebrated 1925 case in which high school biology teacher John Thomas Scopes was found guilty of teaching evolution.

From Hunger

✓ Part of the \$100 million contra-aid bill recently passed in the U.S. House includes authority for Reagan to transfer \$300 million from existing African famine relief programs and use it for economic assistance to Central American countries. Administration officials said famine conditions in Ethiopia and other African nations have improved, and if the bill passes the Senate, they plan to take \$225 million from a fund set up to provide aid to Ethiopia and \$75 million from the Food for Peace program. Sens. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, and John Melcher, D-Mont., protested the transfer of African aid money to the contra aid package. In a letter to Reagan, Harkin said, "It would be unconscionable to divert funds from a program to combat world hunger and starvation to a policy which will produce further bloodshed and hardship for the people of Central America."

✓ Now that Jesse Helms, R-N. Carolina, has effectively soured relations between the U.S. and Mexico, he blares his dangerous nonsense from points farther south. This time it's Chile. Helms has criticized the State Department for placing pressure on Chile to restore democracy and calling for investigation into the recent death of a young Chilean-born resident of Washington, D.C. Helms, chairman of the Foreign Relations subcommittee on Latin America, said, "Chile is a stable country which has no corruption, and I admire Chileans because they believe in free enterprise."

✓ After building more than \$200 million worth of office buildings, shopping centers, houses, and apartments in Texas and New Mexico, the kingdom of Texans Ben F. Barnes and John Connally appears to be crumbling, according to the *Dallas Morning News*. Poor John, three-time governor of the state and former U.S. Treasury secretary, says, "I don't like the fact that we're having to work 12 to 14 hours a day to get ourselves out of this quagmire." The partnership has since January defaulted on more than \$35 million in loans, and one owner foreclosed on an acre of real estate in downtown Austin. Connally and Barnes owe \$170 million in debts. Says Connally: "We're scratching to keep from being dumbbells."

Institutional Bias

✓ A recent survey conducted in Houston found that citizens there would rather accept spending cuts for universities and colleges than for prisons and jails. Richard Murray, the University of Houston political scientist directing the survey, said the general public believes the higher education system is adequate but fears having inmates turned loose on the streets for lack of prison funding. He said that, with so many people in Houston concerned with the basic problems of economic survival, there is a willingness to accept cuts in higher education spending.

Under-taxed

✓ Noting Texas' need to diversify its funding base since the collapse of oil prices, Austin's Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corporation president Bobby Inman said recently that Texas residents pay an average of \$615 per person in state taxes, most of which result from the state sales tax. The national average, Inman said, is \$835 per person, and only residents of New

Hampshire and South Dakota pay less per person in average annual state taxes.

Gene Alteration

✓ Developments in biotechnology are not highly publicized, so it's not unusual that no ceremony was called and no statement issued when the President recently signed a major set of rules, guidelines, and definitions to regulate the industry. The rules, which take effect immediately, assign oversight responsibilities to the Food and Drug Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Agriculture, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, and the National Institute of Health. Several prominent biologists say the new guidelines are not adequate and that the alteration of some genes would not be subject to strict review.

More than 200 biotechnology companies are ready to license new genetic creations in the form of plants, pesticides, drugs, vaccines, and other products, and major chemical corporations such as Monsanto, Dow, and DuPont are heavily invested in the industry (see *TO*, 6/13/86). □

Correction

In a discussion of John Connally, Billy Clayton, and other party switchers ("Tower: The Life of the Party," *TO*, 7/11/86), we suffered a glitch in our usually crackerjack system of copy editing, proofreading, and production, leading to the following: "Connally and Clements were both indicted, although acquitted. . . ." The sentence should have read, "Connally and Clayton were both indicted, although acquitted." We apologize to our readers and to loyalist Republican Clements, who has enough bones to bury. — The editors.



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Austin's Waste Incineration Hazards

By David Gunter

IN 1984, CONFRONTED with dwindling landfill site reserves, Austin voters endorsed a plan to build a municipal waste incinerator. They had initially rejected the measure when the Austin Clean Air Committee, buoyed by commercial landfill member John Mobley's ten-day \$150,000 dollar advertising blitz, aroused enough voter support in August 1983 to defeat the proposal by 27 votes. Following that bond's narrow defeat, councilman Roger Duncan suggested the city scale down the proposed 1,200-ton-per-day unit to a 600-ton unit, effectively mollifying Mobley and the private-landfill lobby. The new proposal gained support from neighborhood and environmental groups with the city's assurance that it was "cheaper and safer to burn it than bury it." The proposal passed in a September 1984 election.

On June 26, 1986, the Austin City Council passed a resolution to issue bonds for a "waste-to-energy" plant, despite a concert of appeals to delay the project until specific uncertainties relating to the financing, health risks posed, and design of the plant could be resolved. The council, with \$1.5 billion worth of voter-approved bonds to issue, nevertheless voted 6-1 in favor of the proposal, calling it the best solution for the city's solid-waste disposal.

Is it really cheaper to burn waste than to bury it? The council majority believes it is, based on the current rising costs of landfill in comparison to the decreasing costs of waste-to-energy plants. The project's opponents point out, however, that the last thing the city needs is an additional revenue-draining project to burden its budget.

Currently, Austin's annual garbage disposal cost is \$830,000. Oscar Baucus, the project manager, anticipates \$5 million in annual maintenance and operating costs for a waste-to-energy plant but expects the plant to pay for itself in twelve years. George Humphrey, the lone council member to vote against the project, predicts the plant will be \$18 million dollars in the red three years after construction. He further calculates the facility will spend

\$3,300 per kilowatt generated, making it 50 percent more expensive than the South Texas Nuclear Project (STNP), from which the city is still trying to extricate itself. Jackie Jacobson of the Sierra Club believes it will cost the city \$200 million to pay off the \$80 million bond at current interest rates and will effectively guarantee that the city's garbage bills will not decrease until 2006. Operating costs could further escalate if the city declares the ash from the plant toxic, as has happened in some communities. In that case, the hazardous product would have to be sent to the nearest toxic waste dump for at least \$110 a ton.

The council majority is convinced there will be no significant environmental risks associated with the facility. They insist dioxins and carbofurans, some of the most toxic chemicals known, and various heavy metals can be effectively minimized with efficient combustion and "best available" air pollution controls. Opponents of the plant note, however, that the facility will not circumvent the necessity of landfill as the incinerator will only reduce the original mass 70 to 80 percent. This ash residue, with concentrated toxics produced by these "state of the art" controls, will still be placed in the landfill.

The resolution passed by the council states that the city will ensure that the plant will produce air quality equivalent to California ambient air standards, or Swedish air standards, whichever proves to be more stringent. The bid accepted by the city council from Babcock and Wilcox (B&W) guarantees it will meet the California standards. But the bid, as specified by the council's resolution, does not guarantee they will meet the Swedish air standards. Says Connie Moore, president of the Zilker Park Posse, "B&W, not the city, should guarantee they will meet these emission standards." Pam Mavrolas, who monitored the emission debate for the Texas Center for Rural Studies, explains, "It is vital for the city to get an emission level guarantee from the manufacturer so it can be reimbursed in the event the incinerator is unable to meet the Swedish criteria, or the contract won't be worth the paper it's printed on." Project

manager Baucus, when asked about this stipulation, said he did not know of a single boiler manufacturer in the country who would give such a guarantee. Peck Young, former chairman of the city's Electric Utility Commission, says he is not concerned about the Austin plant's meeting the Swedish standards, declaring the Swedish study to be nothing but a bunch of "happy hooey." Said Young, "A Canadian plant built by B&W already beats the Swedish values, and the Austin facility, with greater technological advances than any other in the world, will certainly meet or beat the Swedish range of values." According to Baucus, "We'll eventually get the guarantee, but it will probably cost the city additional dollars if the plant has to be redesigned."

Austin currently handles 600 tons of garbage a day. A good deal of the toxic material can be kept from entering the plant if the city expands its recycling coverage to most of its municipal routes as planned. Also the resolution will require private haulers to offer recycling service. The burning or landfilling of any material that can be recycled will be prohibited, and a facility for the composting of food waste will be provided. Plastic, leather, and rubber will be buried. Bill Carter of Ecology Action says he is "skeptical about the feasibility of such a plan effectively keeping hazardous material from going into the plant." Cathryn Kennedy of the city's environmental board is confident, however, "that the rejuvenated recycling program will provide Austin's plant with one of the best hazardous waste profiles in the country."

Will the recycling program, if successful, leave Austin with an oversized plant? For maximum efficiency the plant will need to run at full capacity, 24 hours a day. Jacobson contends that without an audit of the waste stream, an education program, and implementation of maximum recycling it is impossible to gauge what size incinerator Austin needs.

While Baucus is certain the proposed incinerator will be a boon for Austin's waste and energy needs, others are less convinced. Opponents of the plant believe the possible benefits pale in comparison with the possible liabilities the plant could bring with it. Even if one could ignore the questions of size and safety, the unpredictable economics of the plant seem reason enough to delay the project. In light of the various financial problems associated with STNP, perhaps the council's near-unanimous approval of the plant can be described as hasty at best. □

David Gunter is an Observer intern.

The Turn of the Screw

The San Antonio Spending-Cap Battle

By Geoffrey Rips

San Antonio

1. After the Flood

ON JUNE 2, as the rains fell on their home on the near north-west side of San Antonio, Raul and Dora Flores began to worry about Martinez Creek. The creekbed, usually empty save for the random mattress or sprung easy chair deposited there as part of the centuries-old process of shedding that marks civilization, bisects the Flores's block, just east of IH 10. It had flooded several times during the 16 years the Flores family had lived there. The night of June 2 it flooded again.

By the evening of July 1, any damage suffered by the impeccable lawn and house of Raul and Dora Flores was not immediately evident. But across the street, two houses down, rotting furniture was piled on a lawn and a mud line was visible at window level some three to four feet off the ground. Across the creekbed, at the other end of the Flores's block and on several others along Martinez Creek, people had been stranded, could not be reached by firefighters, sat on roofs, lost their dogs, cars, furniture. The flood gauge showed seven and one-half feet of water had come roaring down Martinez Creek.

That July evening some 20 neighbors gathered in the Flores's living room to talk about the flood damage and the proposed cap on city government spending scheduled for a city-wide referendum on August 9. Many had lived in the area for 30 years or more. J.G. Vasquez, who'd lived on Pasadena Street for 30 years, testified that he'd had water in his house five times. "The improvements that are needed for our area we will not get if they pass the spending cap," Raul Flores told the gathering.

Raul Flores is a neighborhood leader of the Metropolitan Congregational Alliance (MCA), an Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) community organization based in north and northwest San Antonio. Along with its sister IAF organizations, Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) and the East Side Alliance (ESA), MCA has devoted a large part of its energies in recent

months to defeating the spending cap proposed by another San Antonio north-side organization, the Homeowner-Taxpayer Association (HTA) of Bexar County and its leader, C.A. Stubbs. Flores is a longtime postal worker and said he'd worked with MCA for several years, laid off for a year to have more time for himself and his family, and now has returned to working with the group. The issue of flood control in his neighborhood has been one of his chief concerns for a number of years. Back in the mid-1960s, Flores explained to the gathering, "funds that we once had for the creek were diverted to Hemisfair. We know that. That was before single-member districts. We don't mind paying our way. But we want our money to pay for our projects. All of this [the proposed spending cap]," he continued, "deals with the creek indirectly. Your property value will stay the way it is [if the cap referendum passes]." Flores told his neighbors that, following pressure applied on the city council by MCA, the city had scheduled the North Fresno flood control project to alleviate flood conditions in the neighborhood. They would no longer, he said, be "staying awake at night to put your belongings on tables." The cap, however, would kill the North Fresno project and any hope for flood control.

Flores then gave a brief explanation about how city revenues and spending work, talking about the city's capital fund and general operating fund. He reported the fact that the city manager of Galveston had been on the news that evening, saying how that city's expenses had skyrocketed because the cap on city spending prevented road repairs, which had resulted in lawsuits. But most of the concern in the paneled room centered around the flood. When Flores finished his talk on revenues, he asked his neighbors for their reactions. A woman in her mid-thirties talked about losing her dogs in the flood. A woman who said she didn't "have so many years left" and so didn't worry as much about the future as about the present, said she had filed a claim with the city for damages to her home of 30-plus years. In answer, the city's insurers had told her the flood was an act of God and they would not pay up. The woman said

that she thought it was more a case of the city's negligence — they'd had the money for drainage in the area and did not use it. A middle-aged man urged an older neighbor to tell the group how C.A. Stubbs's organization had gotten him to sign the petition putting the spending cap resolution on the ballot by telling him, "otherwise they will raise your property taxes." The older man nodded that it was true.

"I joined HTA," a Mr. Longoria volunteered, "because there's nobody to represent the people against our elected officials. It don't matter if you vote for it [the spending cap] or don't vote for it because they'll always use the money some place else." Longoria not only lives in the neighborhood but also owns a small business in the area. When his neighbors complained that it takes police an hour to respond to a call, he said he has personal relationships with police officials and never has a problem getting police help. The problem, he added, is with the permissive legal system. Later in the discussion, he argued that some people bring the flooding upon themselves, by clogging the creekbed with discarded furniture. "We had two neighbors who got flooded," he said, "so you know what they did? They put their [ruined] furniture out by the creek."

According to Raul Flores, he and Longoria had worked together for several years trying to get the city to do something about the creek. But while Flores recognized in MCA a force that might be able to effectuate some change, Longoria continued to wage his personal crusades.

At the same time, it is in Longoria that you find the appeal that the populist-sounding rhetoric of C.A. Stubbs has for people who have felt relatively powerless in confrontations with their government. Talking about this attraction, Longoria explained, "The main factor that got them interested [in Stubbs's proposition] was that there was somebody who would check these people [elected city officials] out." Stubbs, he explained, was looking out for the "little guy."

And so, in Raul and Dora Flores's living room on the near northside of San Antonio, among the framed photographs of children, parents, relatives graduating and in wedding dress, the spending cap debate was joined. How is the little guy to hold government accountable? Longoria echoed the Stubbs contention that less government spending is better government. In response, Flores presented his case to Longoria and the assembled neighbors. "The city budget is open to the public," he said. Later,

Flores admitted that several years before he would never have believed that he would be spending time going over the city's budget, as he has been doing recently for MCA. "We [in MCA] are 18 churches throughout the city," he told his neighbors. "We need the public sector spending, and we need to share the load. We've been suffering silently. We're suffering now, too, but we're a little more vocal about it." Flores pointed out that with the leverage gained through the combined strength of MCA, the people of his neighborhood had finally been able to get city council members to inspect and address the flood problems of the area.

"I think Father Benavides started this," said a woman sitting on a couch, referring to the late priest who had been an active presence in COPS. "He said stick together and fight."

Raul Flores then said that a spending cap, by limiting the rate of growth of the city's budget, prevented the political process from working. MCA co-chair Genevieve Flores, who had sat quietly listening through most of the two-hour meeting, followed him, saying that government accountability "does not mean that we have to tie their [elected officials'] hands. It means they're responsible to us for what we want. Basically," she said, "it [the spending cap] puts a cap on the future of our children." "Yes," clapped Mrs. Longoria.

On the way out, Mrs. Longoria shook Genevieve Flores's hand, saying, "He's [nodding toward her husband] with Stubbs, but he doesn't know what we're discussing. The whole city of San Antonio needs to be organized to work towards the things we need." She volunteered to call friends to urge their vote against the spending cap.

2. "Stupid, Unworkable and Insensitive"

IT ONLY MAKES sense that as the state unemployment figure hits 11.1 percent, as the oil economy flounders, as municipalities and taxing districts scramble and squeeze in an effort to balance their own budgets and offset the funding cuts made by larger governing bodies, it only makes sense that in the depths of the statewide recession the movement to reduce public spending would rear its grizzled head. It makes sense that the full impact of the so-called Reagan revolution would move into Texas in full force only when local residents began to fear a tax squeeze on a local level to make up for the chaos wrought by a national eco-

nomie policy that was necessitating increased state expenditures at a time that state revenues were being decimated. It makes sense that Reaganomics produces and nurtures spores and that such a spore has taken root in San Antonio in the home-grown person of C.A. Stubbs and his Homeowner-Taxpayer Association of Bexar County.

It is significant that a great deal of the momentum that vaulted Ronald Reagan into the presidency was created by the California Proposition 13 mentality of the late 1970s, when the national recession of that period, to which most of Texas was immune, ran headlong into the high inflation of the preceding decade. In 1978, California voters approved Proposition 13, created by Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann, which drastically rolled back California property taxes, limited their increase, and banned any new property taxes. This was followed the next year by Gann's Proposition 4, which passed overwhelmingly and prohibits California state and municipal governments and school districts from increasing their spending beyond increases in the inflation rate and population growth. It is a model for C.A. Stubbs's spending cap proposition.

According to AFSCME, the San Antonio spending cap proposal is the toughest in the country.

The California movement triggered a nationwide strategy for reducing public services and reducing individual and corporate taxes. It helped catapult Ronald Reagan into the White House and resulted in the Hance-Conable tax bill of 1981, which provided large corporate tax breaks and paved the way for the spiraling federal deficit. It is echoed in the Gramm-Latta Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 and the Gramm-Rudman budget balancing act of 1985, both of which reduced the services government provides (except to military contractors) and changed the method of distribution of those services, initiating a squeeze on state and local entities to shoulder greater social and fiscal burdens. The result is a reduced public service role for government and an increased local tax burden as municipalities are made to collect the wages of federal sins. The municipalities then become the spawning grounds of the second generation Jarvis tax rebels, including C.A. Stubbs.

What Mr. Stubbs proposes is a cap on the budget of the City of San

Antonio, including all appropriations for the city's operating budget and for its capital budget. The spending limit can only be increased by the combined percentage of increase in population growth and the consumer price index. Any increase beyond that percentage must be approved in a city-wide vote before its implementation. A spring petition drive netted some 25,000 certified signatures of San Antonio voters, placing the referendum in a special August 9 election.

According to Wendy Patton, an economic policy analyst with the department of public policy of AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) in Washington, the San Antonio proposal "appears to be the toughest in the country. All others allow broad exemptions." There are statewide mandates limiting spending in all cities in California, New Jersey, and Arizona. But in New Jersey capital improvements and interest, libraries, and insurance are exempt. In Arizona, citizens can vote on areas of exemption. Phoenix, for example, exempted funds for airport facilities, wastewater and water treatment, a civic plaza, and sanitation. In Mesa, citizens have voted to exempt practically everything. Tucson finds itself in big trouble because it has no exemptions in its operating budget. The city, therefore, has been unable to increase its police force or to staff computers acquired to increase emergency response time. Tucson officials and citizens are, meanwhile, lamenting an increase in violent crimes. In California, ten cities are now running up against the limits imposed by Proposition 4. California governments do have more leeway than San Antonio would under the Stubbs proposal because federal grants and private donations are not governed by the Gann amendment. In the Stubbs proposal, every bit of money spent by the city, whether received from taxpayers, the federal or state government, or private donations, must come under the spending limit.

In a series in the *San Antonio Light*, Kathryn Kase reported that the California state government is running up against the Gann amendment next year and will be forced to make \$918 million in cuts. Not only will this mean cuts in education, health care, social services, and prisons, but it also threatens the highway budget. Kase wrote that Proposition 4 supporters, including Gann, are scrambling to pass an amendment to exempt highway funding from the limit. Lenny Goldberg of the California Tax Reform Association told Kase that the spending limit is "stupid,

unworkable and insensitive" because it "does not reflect growth apart from that of population and inflation." There is, for example, no room for increases in state Medicare funding, despite the large increase in California's elderly population. There is also no room for the state to accommodate economic growth. According to Goldberg, "public finance will become a patchwork of gimmicks to avoid an arbitrary limit, at great cost to government efficiency and effectiveness."

Peter Schrag, associate editor of the *Sacramento Bee*, wrote in *The New Republic* that, as a result of the Jarvis-Gann amendments, "California, which was once regarded as a leader among states in progressive government, public education, and social service, is now not much better than average . . . its public schools are overcrowded, underfunded, and in most measures of performance, just barely average. California now has one of the highest high-school dropout rates, which climbed sharply when Proposition 13 forced the cancellation of nearly all summer school programs."

But the problems communities are facing in other states are not as severe as those San Antonio would face. According to Wendy Patton, in the wake of the passage of spending caps, the states affected expanded their aid to local governments. California removed user fees from coverage in the spending limits. There was immediately a proliferation of local user fees. New Jersey more than quadrupled its aid to urban police and fire departments. With the State of Texas facing a budget crisis, said Patton, "there's no chance that will happen in Texas."

BUT ALL THAT dirty water rolls right off the back of Claus A. Stubbs. Instead, he paints himself in populist tones as a down-to-earth taxpayer fighting the people's battles. The Homeowner-Taxpayer Association of Bexar County is housed in a nondescript office in a complex of small nondescript office buildings in northwest

San Antonio. There is a receptionist, a man working at a computer, a woman filing cards, and C.A. Stubbs, sitting at a long table, his white Stetson Dakota beside him. "I spent 31 years associated with the Air Force," Stubbs explained. "I was an executive in the civil service — logistics command at Kelly and in the management/computer science field. . . . I'm always keenly aware of who's been paying my salary — the taxpayers. And I can't think of a better way of paying these honorable men and women back for the life they gave me for 31 years than by doing what I'm doing right now."

Stubbs said a large number of the 3200 members of HTA are retired military personnel or retired civil servants associated with the military — people, in other words, who live directly off government spending. "But I daresay," he added, "that now probably maybe a quarter of our membership [is] the young people . . . younger people trying to keep body and soul together trying to make a living." Seventy-five percent of his membership, Stubbs said, lives in the two north quadrants of San Antonio, which are predominantly Anglo and relatively more affluent. But, he was quick to add, in his organization "there are no northsiders, no southsiders, no Catholics, no Protestants, and there are certainly no Democrats and no Republicans and no ethnic groups. They're just homeowner-taxpayers because any of these other things divide us. The politicians hate my guts because we won't get in bed with either party." That does not mean the group does not get involved in electoral politics. In the city's last election, HTA endorsed conservative businessman Phil Pyndus against Mayor Henry Cisneros. Pyndus was soundly defeated.

Stubbs and HTA have opposed Cisneros on several occasions. In April 1985, the group opposed Cisneros's successful campaign to pass a \$100.3 million bond issue. (They also fought unsuccessfully a San Antonio School District air conditioning bond vote.) In November, however, Stubbs was successful in his fight to defeat a fluoridation plan for the city's water supply, a plan supported by Cisneros.

The fluoride issue presented Stubbs with an opportunity to test his strength for the real battles on taxes and

spending. A similar fluoride effort in the 1960s was defeated by a coalition organized around members of the John Birch Society. On the fluoride issue, Stubbs filled the personality void in media coverage of the battle. While MCA worked to pass fluoridation, it was not a major item on the agenda of COPS. Cisneros voiced his support for the measure, but only devoted much energy to its passage in the final days of the campaign. Stubbs waltzed in and provided good copy for the newspapers. He played on the fear of big government and the unknown, talking, for instance, about a letter he'd received from "a lady from Kansas City. She raises alligators. When they put fluoride in there, it killed three of her alligators and the others got sick." Stubbs hailed the defeat of fluoridation as a great victory, while Cisneros-watchers saw in it the first sign of the mayor's vulnerability. The *San Antonio Light* dubbed Stubbs its "Politician of the Year," calling him the "champion of the San Antonio silent majority."

DESPITE THIS MEDIA attention, Stubbs insists on the role of outsider. "All three TV stations are against us," he said, "and both newspapers. They even started cutting out the letters to the editor." The underdog role suits the populist rhetoric Stubbs attaches to his efforts to cut government spending.

To argue his case, Stubbs stands before an easel, holding a pointer, and runs through various charts and graphs printed on posterboard. "This is a lecture series I give all over the state of Texas," he explained. "I'm also vice president of a coalition of 60 organizations from all over the state of Texas [the Texas Association of Concerned Taxpayers — TACT]. About 85 percent of the entire [tax] burden is single-family residential homeowners," he continued, pointing to a chart. "They carry the whole load. Big money or welfare, the lower groups, they don't carry it. Neither one of those groups carry it. But both of those groups spend their time and money imposing greater burdens on this group in the middle. The developers always take out more than they put in." Stubbs said a group similar to HTA was formed five or six years before but folded because its organizers were told they'd lose their jobs or businesses. "That's what happens when you tackle the elites; that's what happens when you tackle the power structure."

Stubbs's career as an organizer began in 1983, when he received his new house appraisal under the Peveto bill. "I

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couldn't find even one person in ten that understood taxation, budgeting, spending — how they worked," he said. "The deeper I dug into it, the madder I got. I started traveling around the city to see what other people were doing about the system. I ran a kind of public opinion petition that addressed the proposition in this simplistic way: 'If we citizens have to live within our budgets and means, why is it we can't expect taxing authorities and governments to do the same thing? People liked the idea. Seven thousand of them signed the petition.' From this list, he organized the non-profit Homeowner-Taxpayers Association, and "we started looking over the shoulder of ever taxing authority in the city.

"The 360,000 properties we have in Bexar County," he said, pointing to a chart, "had a value of \$8.5 billion in 1980. Those same properties had a value of \$27.4 billion in 1984. There's a little bit of annexation and there's a little bit of new building, but the majority of it is a multiple of this basic figure. Projected, it will be \$50 billion by 1989 or 1990. That's the opportunity for increased taxes and spending. While property taxes amount to only one-third of the total tax burden, they, nonetheless, set the stage for other things.

"The city budget's growth was from \$272 million to \$823 million in that five-year period. Between 1980 and 1985, the population grew 9.5 percent while inflation was 46.3 percent. So the ability to pay grew 55.8 percent. City spending increased 202.6 percent. We want the city to grow, but we don't want to bankrupt it.

"We want the city charter modified so that in the future the spending for the City of San Antonio will grow in step with population growth and inflation. In other words, we want the city to grow, but we don't want to bankrupt everybody here so that a few developers and few big money interests can get rich."

But what about the problems governments are experiencing that are ruled by less stringent spending caps? "I guess we're all going to have withdrawal pains together," Stubbs answered. "Now, I don't know what it's like to be a doper, but I'm told that when you get used to a fix of a certain level, you can't stay with that fix for too long. You've got to have more. Well, that's the same thing it's been with dollars for the last 20 years. Those dollars are the fixes for the big habit. Now there's going to be the cutbacks in revenues, and there's going to be the dangdest screaming you ever heard when everybody goes into withdrawal pains. But withdrawal pains

we must have. We're all going to have to sacrifice together. . . . Gore somebody's ox but don't gore mine. Their [COPS] attitude is that I'm mean-spirited and I'm trying to cut back on spending that they deserve. . . . It seems that there are special interest groups all over. And I'm sure that MCA and COPS are two of them that want spending to continue at the same level, be damned who it hurts, and it hurts many of their own people as badly as it hurts anybody else."

Why should city spending that is not financed by taxpayers but by private donations, federal grants, or user fees fall under the spending cap? The expansion of the airport, for instance, a major ingredient of the city's 1985 budget, was paid for by airport users through parking and other fees. In answer, Stubbs said, "Guess what the city's been doing with those dollars they've been getting? That extra \$22 million [from a federal grant]. They've been using it for things they've never

Stubbs claims the city used federal funds "for things they've never been intended to be used for — like arts and theaters."

been intended to be used for in the first place — like arts and theaters. Back in the beginning, all of these government development grants, block grants, they were supposed to be used for only one purpose and that is such things as developing something that is good for everybody, such as roads, drainage, streets, and all that kind of stuff. Instead, they got away from that, and they got in the habit of using part of that money to fund other things that were not essential. Now they're caught with their hand in the cookie jar, too." Stubbs also mentioned that he does not think the city should spend money to market low-cost housing "built over there [the West Side] by a minority group."

What about accountability? Doesn't tying the hands of elected officials with a spending cap make them less responsible for their actions and less accountable to their constituents? "Accountability," Stubbs answered, "is like beauty, and it's in the eyes of the beholder."

THERE ARE OTHER problems Stubbs does not address, several pointed out in recent weeks by San Antonio newspaper columnists. Writing in the *Express-News*, Kemper

Diehl examined disinformation being purveyed by Stubbs and other referendum supporters. "Dozens of voters," he wrote, "labor under the delusion that the plan promoted by C.A. Stubbs and his Homeowner-Taxpayer Association would put a firm freeze on any increase in property taxes. . . . Here is the bottom-line truth: Even if the Stubbs plan were already in effect, the council this year would still be able to double the current 41-cent tax rate and remain within the cap. The Stubbs plan governs total spending from all sources, not taxes. The plain truth is that state law already provides a much more effective safeguard against needless tax increases . . . the truth is that, when adjusted for inflation, the city's per capita tax bite this year is approximately one percent lower than ten years ago."

Then there is Stubbs's contention that the city has been engaged in a reckless spending binge and that Stubbs is responsible for recent drastic cuts in the city's budget. The 1986 reductions, Diehl wrote, are the result of the energy industry collapse, the downturn in sales tax revenue, reductions in federal grants and in income from city utilities. The spending spree pointed to by Stubbs in his assessment of the budget increase from 1980 to 1985 was financed in large part "by capital spending from bond issues approved by the voters and from revenue bonds financed by user fees." Increases in the general operating fund "have been gradual enough to have fit the guidelines of the celebrated cap." A sewer project, mandated by the state and federal governments, was paid for by sewer fees.

Stubbs has also said that 60,000 San Antonians will lose their homes in the near future. While he has not produced a single potential victim, Stubbs has also not addressed the fact that 41,000 senior-citizen households are exempt from \$60,000 of their property valuations. "As a result," Diehl wrote, "33,000 of them next year will pay no city property taxes at all." This leaves 60,000 potential evictees out of a remaining 180,000 city single-family homesteads. Does anyone really believe, asked Diehl, that so many homesteads are going down the tubes?

According to *Light* columnist Mike Tolson, San Antonio "has a property tax rate commensurate with its level of public spending, which is lower than that in any other major [Texas] city. . . . Both in real dollars and as a percent of personal income, the tax paid by San Antonians is far less than what they'd pay in Dallas, Houston or Fort Worth." As a result, San Antonio, for example,

has the fewest police officers per 1,000 residents of any major city in Texas. "A spending cap," wrote Tolson, "assumes current needs are being met. That is a stupid assumption to make in San Antonio."

After a brief tenure as a media star in San Antonio newspapers, Stubbs may now be receiving a closer examination. He remains, however, the darling of another medium. "What we have here," Stubbs explained, "is what not many other communities have, and that is the ability to voice your opinion on radio talk shows. Those people provide a sounding board for the community and for practically half of Texas. I can't name the number of times I've been on there. Therefore, we have quite a name recognition — I think I personally do — over one-third of the state. They play one whale of an important role because people have the opportunity to voice their opinion. This is quite an aid to us. This played an influential part in the fluoridation issue."

There are those in the campaign against the spending cap who claim that the radio talk shows are responsible for the rise of C.A. Stubbs, for the defeat of fluoridation, for the prominence of the spending cap. Among the talk show hosts listed by Stubbs as crucial to his progress are Ricci Ware of KTSA, Jud Ashmore of KBUC, Allen Dale and Tony Dale of KRNN, and Carl Wigglesworth of WOAI. Allen Dale, the dean of the San Antonio talk show hosts, for a long time held court on WOAI before moving to his new station and, in that role, has served as a champion of conservative causes. The general manager of KBUC said Ashmore's show was not classified a "talk show." "We've had Stubbs, Cisneros, and [developer and Chamber of Commerce president] Cliff Morton on fluoride," he said. "We give both sides of a question. We satisfy our commitments to fairness." Opponents of the spending cap say, however, it is not who they have on, but how those subjects are treated.

"I think we have some effect," said Carl Wigglesworth, but he is not certain how crucial that effect has been. "The mayor's group has made it [the spending cap] the big issue it is. They're scared to death of it. It would have died [without them]. C.A. Stubbs told me he only had \$5,000 to run with it. The mayor's team made it a major issue by attacking C.A. Stubbs." It is Stubbs's contention that he could never have gotten the word out on the spending cap without the radio shows. "Probably so," said Wigglesworth. "You could have gotten a few letters to the editor in the papers. I think getting it out at all the

radios had a part in it. Making it a big issue was the mayor's doing."

3. "A Legacy of Neglect"

"LET US ASSUME there is a big flood in 1986 and it costs the city \$2 million," IAF organizer Ernesto Cortes, Jr., told 100 leaders of San Antonio COPS during a strategy session held in the cafeteria of St. John Berchmans Church on June 21. "Let us suppose there is a big railroad wreck and there is a big spill. [San Antonio experienced both disasters in late spring.] The railroad company gives the city \$2 million to pay for damages, but the city can't spend it without reducing spending somewhere else because the cap on spending doesn't say anything about revenues or taxes. It's not just a cap on the operating budgets. The spending cap will gut any effort to build the economy. It doesn't lower anybody's taxes. What the spending cap does is put a stranglehold on any kind of planning the City of San Antonio does and on any kind of need."

The COPS strategy session had been called in order to organize house meetings around the city. Many of those assembled are veterans of COPS battles for flood control, safe neighborhoods, single-member city council representation, decent housing, and education funding reforms. They are gathered now, a stone's throw from Kelly Air Force Base, to develop a grassroots strategy for defeating the spending cap resolution.

"Politics is public discourse," preaches Cortes (TO, 7/11/86). The house meetings are designed to engage voters in discussion on the spending cap. Together, COPS, MCA, and ESA have pledged to conduct 1,000 house meetings, hoping to reach 18,000 to 20,000 voters through these neighbor exchanges. Out of these house meetings, they hope to recruit 1,000 people to canvas their neighborhoods door-to-door on three consecutive Saturdays, the last being the day of the vote on the referendum.

The house meetings, Cortes told the leaders, "are not about information. They're about agitation, about stirring people. This is a battle we are in . . . a major confrontation. . . . I don't like the way everything is done in San Antonio. There are a lot of ugly things, wasteful things, unnecessary things. There probably are too many supervisors. Some are important; others are not. In spite of that, I do know what kind

of impact this spending cap will have on the city of San Antonio. If the spending cap goes through, *olvidate* [forget it]. The drainage project for St. John Berchmans, St. Stephen's, St. Timothy's needs a bond issue. There are drainage projects, street projects, fire stations and libraries that are not finished." Cortes rattled off a list of past, current, and future capital improvement projects pushed by COPS for COPS neighborhoods. "All those projects could not have been done, would not have been done, and won't be done if the spending cap goes on line."

The house meeting, said Cortes, is "a grassroots, agitational session, education session, and training session. It's about building relationships with people." The house meeting, COPS organizer Sister Maribeth Larkin explained the following week on the way to a house meeting in southwest San Antonio, is one of the chief sources of the COPS organization's strength.

In the house meetings of the IAF organizations, both the means and the ends of organizing are simultaneously realized. Here is the bedrock of grassroots organizing: neighbor talking to neighbor, discussing matters of great import in the context of their immediate and local impact. As they organize themselves to address an issue, they are also creating, or re-creating, the organization that brought them together. While one COPS leader jokingly referred to it as the "tupperware" system of organizing, the fact is that the house meetings are not so much forums for buying and selling as they are mechanisms for manufacturing political power in which the whole created far exceeds the sum of its parts.

ON JULY 1, Angelina Garza, first vice president of COPS, led a house meeting in the Mancilla home, several blocks from the sprawling San Fernando cemetery No. 2, south of Castroville Road and east of Gen. McMullen Boulevard. To the west is St. Timothy's Church and the park recently dedicated to the memory of Father Albert Benavides. The area is called Los Charcos, meaning "puddles." Until COPS began agitating for improvements over a decade earlier, Castroville Road was a lake in any kind of rainstorm. Its surface was three parts dirt, gravel, and potholes to one part pavement. There were no curbs or sidewalks. Many of the feeder streets had never been paved. Now there is good drainage on Castroville Road, one of the area's two

main arteries. There are curbs and sidewalks and a light on Gen. McMullen for children crossing to Las Palmas School. Drainage for the blocks immediately surrounding the Mancilla house is included in the Driftwood project, scheduled for an April 1987 bond election.

Angelina Garza conducted the house meeting in Spanish. In conversation with those attending, she seems to operate as a local ward healer, working through COPS to get a bar moved and a block cleaned up. She speaks with a woman who lived near the bar, reminds her of that victory, and encourages her to inform the parents of children attending her children's parochial school about the spending cap. Some 26 people sit in the living room and dining room as a Mr. Rangel, who says he'd worked with COPS since 1974, recounted a few of the improvements precipitated by COPS action. This included improvements in housing and services in the local neighborhoods, such as Colonia Santa Cruz, Colonia Amistad, Colonia Romero, Colonia San Alfonso, and in Government Hill. It included \$800 million in drainage projects and four libraries. Mr. Vallejo, an older man saying he'd worked with COPS for 13 years, reminded his neighbors of the new curbs and sidewalks. Then he denounced the spending cap. "It is a negative mentality," he said, "against working people, poor people, Mexican people, people of color." "This spending cap is a complete disaster," chimed in Mr. Mancilla, adding, "If we have spending caps, we will have handicaps."

Angelina Garza then produced homemade posters outlining the reasons COPS opposes the spending cap. The spending cap, she said, destroys the common good, the future of San Antonio as a totality. It divides the city into rich and poor, haves and have nots. It destroys communication between politicians and their constituents. The spending cap becomes the reason for all council action or inaction, thus ending council member accountability. It means a reduction in city services, such as those provided by police, fire and emergency departments, and an end to special city projects, including sewer, home improvement, and road projects. Public services, such as clinics, daycare, elderly nutrition, will be cut. Residents with money can form their own districts to provide their own services, while those who cannot afford to do so will go without. Finally, Garza explained, the spending cap will, in effect, negate the single-member districting of the city council because the cap will restrict any neighborhood, constituent, or council

district initiative. Any special measures to exceed the cap, such as for capital improvements, must be voted on twice by the entire city, thereby re-instituting at-large control.

"It's very important that you work together," Garza said. "Unless you do, you will live like we used to live. Four streets [in the neighborhood] are in the works now, but if there is no bond . . . it will be just as sad as it was before."

Garza then asked if city services were adequate as they exist today. Several people mentioned recent killings at the church and at Las Palmas shopping center, saying more police protection was needed. A woman said she reported a burglary twice, but the police never came. She had to go look for a police car driving down Gen. McMullen.

Another woman worried that, if elderly nutrition programs were cut, they would have to find a way to subsidize these meals by paying through the church. "If it [the spending cap]

***"The cap does not
discriminate good
projects from bad, good
administrators from bad."***

passes," she said, "it's a disgrace for us all." The Mancilla son, in his twenties, came into the room, saying it was his first experience with a COPS meeting. He said he doesn't like the way the city spends money but he is against the cap "as it is." He said he receives most of his information on the spending cap from the Allen Dale radio show. "People who work in my department," he said, "drive around all day and listen to talk shows."

A Mrs. Martinez, who lived on the block from which the bar had been moved, told the group, "I was for the spending cap because we pay too much taxes, but it [the house meeting] has definitely turned my way of thinking. I'm willing to help you telephone and walk. We need to let more people know." Most of those gathered in the Mancilla house agreed to walk door-to-door, to host other house meetings or to call their friends. Mr. Vallejo said, "I won't be walking for my health but for the benefit of the whole community."

COPS VICE PRESIDENT Evelyn Garcia conducted a meeting that same evening for 20 people in a classroom at St. John Berchmans Church. She presented transparencies

outlining the reasons COPS opposes the spending cap. They were colored by her daughter. She told the gathering that Stubbs was reported that day to have said that his goal is to eliminate city council districts altogether. She enumerated the various capital improvement projects in the area that would not be possible without a spending cap, including the new Kennedy Park. With the spending cap, she told the group, "we're going to return to 10 or 15 years ago . . . to a legacy of neglect." After the meeting, Garcia told Sister Maribeth Larkin that she thinks they are making progress in educating people about the proposed cap. "It [the cap] looks good superficially," she said, "but when you start gnawing away at it. . . ."

4. We're Presenting Values

IN THE SPARE OFFICES of Communities Organized for Public Service on the second floor of an annex of the Immaculate Heart of Mary by IH-35 in downtown San Antonio, Father Rosendo Urrabazo, C.M.F., discussed the ironies of the spending cap proposal. "It increases spending," he said, "instead of capping it. The higher the consumer price index, the more the city can spend. So it behooves the city to raise the price of services and thereby raise the consumer price index. The cap does not discriminate good projects from bad, good administrators from bad."

Father Urrabazo believes the impetus for the referendum was generated in part by anger over county taxes and the lack of county services, issues the Stubbs referendum leaves untouched. The referendum is attractive to "anybody with a gripe against City Hall or against Cisneros." The referendum has "nothing to do with City Manager Lou Fox" or his four well-paid assistants. It has nothing to do with property taxes, but, Father Urrabazo believes, these

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issues are, nevertheless, wedded in the minds of supporters of the spending cap and exploited in the rhetoric of spending cap proponents.

The mayor, he continued, "is looking at the cap in terms of the city's economics. We're looking at it in terms of the common good. There are certain things a city should do for its people, even if it means raising taxes. What we're presenting here are values. He [Cisneros] goes after the head; we go after the heart."

5. Falling Off the Cliff

"I REMEMBER about ten years ago we met at St. Jude's Church to do something very unlikely," Henry Cisneros told the annual festival of COPS, held on July 6 at Rosedale Park. "We're standing on a piece of land which your meeting at St. Jude's started . . . Rosedale Park." With the spending cap, such neighborhood improvements would not be possible, the mayor told the crowd. "This cap is a bad idea: it would restrict the ability of the city to invest. . . . Why do these people want to take us back?" he asked. "I don't know. Do you want to live in the San Antonio of old? Or do you want to have more jobs and income? . . . Who is Mr. Stubbs to put himself apart from the rest of the people? Who elected him? Nobody. . . . For the first time we are here without having to argue whether there is democracy [referring to single-member council districts]. All the old questions are finished. Now we are moving ahead." Cisneros shared the platform that day with a broad array of San Antonio elected officials, including Democratic state Representative Orlando Garcia and Republican state Sen. Cyndi Taylor Krier, assorted school board members, a county commissioner, and several city council members, including northside representative Weir Labatt. Andres Sarabia, the first president of COPS, had introduced Cisneros as someone who was a much the beneficiary of council districting and COPS actions as COPS itself.

But Cisneros has not just been spending his time speaking to the converted. He has, by his count, been devoting 80 percent of his time "to keep

us from falling off the cliff," talking to any group that would listen. Beyond questions of right and wrong, Cisneros's political past and future may be at stake. In the person of Henry Cisneros, many political and business leaders have found the symbol they want to project for the city of San Antonio — a young, bright Mexican American devoted to economic development. In the person of C.A. Stubbs they see the symbol of Texas' past — a cowboy hat, a western string tie, a distinctive twang, the old Anglo oligarchy that believed the less government bothered people, the better off everybody was.

While the Homeowner-Taxpayer Association has only managed to enlist the support of a business group formed by former mayoral candidate Pyndus and of Bernardo Eureste, a city council loose cannon deposed in the last election by a Cisneros-backed candidate, the forces against the cap represent a broad political spectrum. They include the four area chambers of commerce, all city council members, the Target 90 business and economic development group, the San Antonio Builders Association, the San Antonio Apartment Association, COPS, MCA, ESA, the San Antonio AFL-CIO, the League of Women Voters, the Southwest Texas Chapter of the Texas Association of Business, and the San Antonio Democratic League. They have formed several confederations to defeat the cap, with funding that seems to far outstrip that reported by Stubbs. It would seem that such a constellation of power — with community organizations and businesses, each for their own reasons, concerned about city services, capital improvements, the city's infrastructure, and bond ratings — could not lose such an election. But Stubbs adroitly exploits the image created by this power elite to the hilt, pointing out the fat cats among them, touching all the vulnerable populist chords. Eureste, meanwhile, has gone after COPS.

This has led Cisneros to address not just the head, but also the heart. While he talks about the dangers the cap poses for the city's bond rating and about the fact that it will mean that "equations take over for human judgment," the mayor also talks about the effect of Stubbs's actions on those on the bottom rung. "He [Stubbs] envisions a city in which wages remain low and municipal services remain limited," Cisneros told reporters in May. "In his view, as far as we have come is as far as we go. Anybody who hasn't got there yet — sorry. The door is going to be shut at this point, and those of you who are poor and want to make a better income, those struggling in low-income jobs —

sorry, folks. The Stubbs philosophy will say maybe you better go to another city. We are going to shut the door."

6. A Way of Thinking

"THE ONLY REASON we have government is because we know government can do some things the private sector can't do," Ernesto Cortes, Jr., told the COPS strategy session. One of the things government can do, he said, was ensure a certain amount of fairness to all that would not otherwise exist.

This is not the message of C.A. Stubbs. He would have you believe that he is engaged in a populist-style battle with the power elite — Cisneros, the city council, banks, developers, what he calls special-interest groups. The rhetoric is populist but the substance of his battle is not. While populism looks to government to serve as a regulator and equalizer of economic and political power, Stubbs is fighting for the preservation of the inequalities of the past.

"This is really a way to create an at-large election in city council," COPS President Helen Ayala told the strategy session. She was speaking about the effect of the spending cap. Less than one month later, Stubbs said that his next battle would be to return city council elections to an at-large system. "Rank-and-file council members," Stubbs told *Express-News* columnist Paul Thompson, "should run in their own districts first time out, then be required to face the full city electorate in order to win a second term."

In addition, Stubbs has other items on his agenda. "After we get through with this project," he said in his office, "we've done something else that nobody in the state of Texas has done. School taxes account for 50 percent of all the taxes or close to it. And that whole thing has been a sacred cow. . . . If we're going to have a revolt in one tax area, it will be in all. It won't be selective." Stubbs plans to investigate the taxing and spending of school districts. He also plans to lobby the state legislature on home appraisal methods and set a limit on the amount of taxes that can be collected from a homeowner, regardless of a property's assessment. Through the Texas Association of Concerned Taxpayers, Stubbs also plans to lead the spending cap fight in Corpus Christi and Houston, then take it to Dallas, Fort Worth, and Austin. This is, of course, all predicated on a victory in San Antonio.

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But beyond Stubbs's particular agenda, the victory of the spending cap referendum has far-reaching implications. "We're concerned," said AFSCME's Wendy Patton, "that this is part of a national trend toward cutting public services . . . a general erosion of sound economic principles which will bring about a general weakening of our government and our economy." One immediate impact of a spending cap would be, of course, the privatization of services that were once performed by the government. That will mean, warned Cortes, that the rich will create their own municipal utility districts. "Those with the money to pay for it," he said, "will get the police protection. Those who can't will do without." Nutritional programs, warned Father Balthasar Janacek, will become the responsibility of the churches.

"This spending cap," Cortes told the COPS leaders, "is also a referendum on COPS. Prior to 1976, the city was run by an at-large system. The people in power tended to live in the northeast quadrant of the city. Maybe the underlying reason [for the spending cap] is that this is really a way to control the council they've lost control of. . . . This will take us back to the days before COPS. . . . If this passes, Cisneros will be hurt. And on August 10, the whole front page of the San Antonio *Express* will be an obituary for COPS, written by Paul Thompson."

Even though they are campaigning against the spending cap, Cortes added,

developer "Cliff Morton or Sam Barshop is going to have what he needs if Stubbs wins or loses. But you won't have what you need."

LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) district director Cruz Chavira has attacked the spending cap as an effort to cut funding to programs that serve Hispanics. "Stubbs should hang a sign on his campaign that says, 'Stop spending money on the Mexicans of San Antonio,'" he said. "The proposed cap," wrote *Express-News* columnist Mike Greenberg, "isn't about high taxes. . . . It's about the distrust the uninformed have for professionals, people Stubbs calls 'the incrowd.'" It's about a clash of cultures, the insular suburban culture of the cap proponents vs. the more expansive urban culture of the opponents, including Cisneros and COPS. It's about private backyards and television sets vs. public parks and theaters." The *Light's* Mike Tolson wrote that the success of the spending-cap promotion "has to do with the age of the electorate, which is gradually getting older. By the time a guy is 50 he usually knows what he's going to achieve, and he becomes that much more protective about what he has."

In his *New Republic* article, Peter Schrag blames the Jarvis-Gann effort for helping to create "gerontocratic politics." He gives as an example an instance in Sacramento in which a suburban school district needed to float bonds to build new schools. Reports

Schrag: "When some elderly people came in to protest that they wouldn't get anything out of new schools, the school board voted to exempt property owners over 65 from two-thirds of their share of the cost of amortizing the bonds. Nevertheless, when the matter went on the ballot in April, the elderly voted heavily against it, and it narrowly missed getting the necessary two-thirds vote." It is no coincidence that out of the gerontocratic politics of California we got an aged President, with his programs to protect the power and money of those with power and money at the expense of those without. According to Willie Velasquez, of the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project, those over 45 years old vote more often than those under 45. Age, he says, is the biggest determinant of voting.

No doubt all of this is true. But the real danger the spending cap referendum poses is that its passage would signal a victory for a way of thinking, a signal not unlike those being received from Washington and now from Austin all too regularly. It is a way of thinking that Cortes described as "anti-Mexican, anti-poor people, anti-black, and anti-working people." It would mean that a decision had been made by the electorate that the processes of government should not be used for the promotion of justice and equality. It would mean the failure of our society as judged — according to the American bishops' pastoral letter on the economy — by how it treats the powerless and the poor. □

• BOOKS AND THE CULTURE •

Ending the War Inside

By Gary Pomerantz

ONE DAY IN 1969, U. S. Marine Lieutenant William Broyles crawled into a tunnel in Vietnam and sensed that he was not alone beneath the earth's surface. He felt another presence in the tunnel — an enemy presence. "I could feel his heart beating," Broyles writes, "his lungs working, his eyelashes blinking. I could feel the curve of the trigger on his finger

— or was it the heft of a grenade in his hand?" He could also feel fear. Broyles set a charge of explosives and

BROTHERS IN ARMS: A Journey From War to Peace By William Broyles, Jr.

New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986
284 pages, \$17.95

backed slowly out of the tunnel. But the charge was a dud, so he crawled back

underground with a new bundle of plastic explosives. "I lay there quietly, hoping to feel nothing," he reports. "The presence was still there. Why hadn't he left? 'Didi!' I whispered. 'Didi mau!' Go away! Go away fast! I should not have warned him. He was my enemy. I was supposed to kill him. But it was not so easy. I felt a powerful connection to him. I also knew what I had to do." Humanitarian generosity aside, Broyles left the explosives in the tunnel and crawled back out. "I had barely got past the entrance and into the clean air when the charges went off with a muffled thud."

Lieutenant Broyles probably succeeded that day in killing a complete stranger beneath the sometimes placid surface of Vietnam in turmoil. And, like all good soldiers everywhere, he quickly buried the deed and any question of it beneath the deceptively placid surface

Gary Pomerantz is a regular contributor to the Observer.

the war, as a civilian, Broyles got on with his life. He became the founding editor of *Texas Monthly*, moved on to Los Angeles to edit *California* magazine, and then went to New York to be the editor-in-chief of *Newsweek*, until he left that job to take up his present career as a full-time writer. Then, in 1982, on the occasion of the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, the deed in the tunnel and its attendant questions surfaced in the ex-soldier's mind. He stared at the names of the fallen on the Memorial wall and wondered, "Why them?" Then he saw his own reflection on the wall — saw that he was alive — and asked himself, "Why me?" Both questions come naturally to a survivor. But the next question he asked himself was unexpected and troubling. What about the others — the enemy? "They died by the hundreds of thousands," Broyles writes, "but they remain abstractions. Who knows their names? . . . I still knew no more about the men we fought, that other 'them,' than I knew about that presence I had encountered in a tunnel. Another human being had come to be there, through some sequence of events, just as I had. . . . I had to reach out in that tunnel and try to touch that other man. . . . I had to go back."

In 1984, after much effort and application, Broyles was notified that his visa was approved for a one-month stay in Vietnam. His plan was ". . . to do what no American veteran had ever done: return to Vietnam and write about the people we had fought against." *Brothers in Arms: A Journey from War to Peace* is the result, and it is a triumphant piece of reporting. But, more than that, it is a wonderfully sensitive record of one man's *personal* "journey from war to peace." "This book is a personal narrative, not a work of

scholarship," Broyles writes in his "Essay on Sources" at the back of the book, although he cites enough sources to testify to exhaustive research. Broyles, like many others who fought in Vietnam, brought the war home with him. His book is an attempt to heal his own war wounds, but, because of his insight and intelligence, because of the news he brings of the enemy, and because of his humor and humanity, *Brothers in Arms* may help heal the wounds of a nation. Broyles has written a candid and honest book that is a unique and valuable source of information. He tells his story with humility — his respect for his old enemies shines through a window of transparent and well-crafted prose.

BROYLES WENT to the war out of a sense of shame and of duty; unlike Norman Mailer, he did not go to write a book. Broyles describes himself as a "reluctant warrior" and mentions that he had protested American involvement in Vietnam (presumably during his student years at Rice University). But later, when he was studying at Oxford, he reports that he ". . . watched the BBC as young Americans died in the streets of Hue during the Tet Offensive" and began to feel shame for the privilege that allowed him to be cozy in England while his less fortunate countrymen were at war. "I thought my country was wrong in Vietnam," he writes, "but I began to suspect that I was using that conviction to excuse my selfishness and my fears." Broyles took his pre-induction physical in Newark — he was one of four whites and 146 blacks. "When I left Newark that day," he writes, "I realized I could no longer act as if my education and social class had given me special privileges." What followed, of course, was a year in hell — combat was unlike anything that came before or after in the young soldier's life.

The war year for Broyles was a year of intensity — intense fear, bravery, and comradeship. Years later, returning to Vietnam to interview Vietnamese survivors, he found that they, too, had felt intense comradeship among themselves. Then, over drinks, it was only natural for the ex-Viet Cong and the ex-Marine to swap war stories until they began to feel an unexpected comradeship for each other. Broyles traveled widely in Vietnam and talked to a diverse group of Vietnamese — retired generals, wounded ex-Viet Cong, a My Lai survivor, government officials, religious leaders, and street hustlers. Everywhere he went he was greeted as a friend. And everywhere he went he saw the determi-

nation of the Vietnamese to rise above — to forget, even — the war years. In 1970 Noam Chomsky visited North Vietnam for one week and reported: "The people I met exhibited no bravado, only quiet confidence in the justice of their cause and the eventual achievement of independence and the defeat of foreign aggression." Broyles, in 1970, was already trying to put the war behind him, but he found, in 1984, much the same "quiet confidence" that Chomsky remarked on 15 years before.

The Vietnamese are fond of quoting Ho Chi Minh, or "Uncle Ho," as he is often called. One of Uncle Ho's most famous statements — "Nothing is more important than independence and freedom" — was repeated over and over to Broyles. Accordingly, the prevailing sentiment he found among the Vietnamese he talked with was that the war had been necessary for them to rid themselves of a foreign presence. Any price — in bodies and in time — was worth it, if only they could succeed in recapturing their sovereignty and national destiny. Those who fought with the Viet Cong are considered national heroes and are memorialized across the land — they had fought bravely for a just cause. The Americans, however, had fought an absurdly protracted war in Vietnam for a very suspect cause. Small wonder then that the war is "over" in Vietnam but is still being fought in the hearts of American Vietnam veterans. Broyles went back to Vietnam to meet his enemy, but he also returned to end the war — his war.

TOWARD THE END of his stay in Vietnam, Broyles found himself standing in the countryside, looking down at a tunnel entrance, not unlike the one he had crawled into in 1969. The tunnel was harmless now — there was even a guide present to take Broyles, the tourist-reporter, into it. "He [the guide] had fought in the tunnels during the war," Broyles writes, "and now led regular tours through them." Broyles looked down at the tunnel and thought, "I didn't want to go down there — it brought back too many memories, too many fears." But down he went anyway, following the guide, about whom Broyles thought, "I had encountered someone like him in a tunnel fifteen years ago." Outside the tunnel again, Broyles jumped at the chance to try to unravel a mystery. With the help of his translator, Minh, he questioned the guide:

"What was it like to be down here, under the earth, for so long?"

"It was difficult," he said.

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"But what was it like when B-52s bombed you? How did you sleep? How did you breathe? How did you cook?"

"All that was very difficult."

"But what was it like when an American came down in the tunnel, trying to find you? What was it like to meet another man, your enemy, down there?"

"It was quite difficult."

I had wanted so much, but I was getting nothing. Or perhaps I was getting everything. I wasn't sure. I tried one more time.

"How do you feel now?" I asked him. "Do you think about all those years in the tunnels?"

He thought for a minute, then replied, "No."

I asked Minh to try again, to find out if the man understood my question. . . . Minh asked him again.

"He says, yes, he understood your question," Minh said to me. "And no, he doesn't think about it anymore. He says the war is over."

"Life goes on?" I asked Minh.

"Life goes on."

And indeed it does, but often as nightmare. As a North Vietnamese general told Broyles, "It is easier to start a war than to end one."

The Vietnam War still rages in the hearts of those who fought in it and fought against it. *Brothers in Arms* is a significant attempt to end that war, quiet the heart, and get on with the future. □

• SOCIAL CAUSE CALENDAR •

ROBERT CAPA EXHIBIT

The "Robert Capa: A Retrospective, 1932-1954" photography exhibit will continue at the LBJ Library and Museum, Austin, through **August 10**. The exhibit features the full range of Capa's work — images of both war and peace, filled with humor and glamour as well as bravery and compassion. Call (512) 482-5137 for more information. Don't miss this one; it's terrific.

CONTEMPORARY TEXAS

"Contemporary Texas: A Photographic Portrait" exhibit continues at the Amon Carter Museum until **August 24**. The photographs were commissioned by the Texas Historical Foundation as part of the 1986 Texas sesquicentennial celebration and present a powerful presence of place, whether defined by land, work, culture, or imagination. Call (817) 738-1933 for details.

HOUSTON PEACE NEWS

Learn about and participate in the Peace Project, a non-political grassroots organization dedicated to creating world peace by the year 2000, **August 3**, East-West Center, 3815 Garrott, Houston, (713) 868-5218, 7 p.m. View the "Women for America, For the World" film and participate in a discussion session afterwards with Brenda Hardt **Austin 5**, Collier Branch Library, Pinemont near Antoine, Houston, (713) 688-3803, 7:30 p.m., sponsored by Peace Links Houston.

TEXAS CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES WORKSHOPS

The Extension Service, Farm Crisis Hotline, Texas Baptist Convention, Department of Human Services, Texas Department of Agriculture, Regional Food Banks, and many local denominational and ecumenical groups will sponsor a series of one-day workshops for rural clergy and key lay leaders from 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. in the following cities: **August 5** Amarillo, **August 6** Plainview, **August 7** Sweetwater, **August 12** Victoria. The workshops will provide a setting for discussing what is happening locally, nationally, and internationally; a variety of resource persons will be available to discuss local initiatives, as well. Call the Texas Conference of Churches at (512) 478-7491 for more information.

REAGAN COUNTRY

"Reagan Country" is a new radio program that will air every other Sunday, 2:30 p.m., KNON Community Radio, Dallas, featuring interviews with activists working for peace, equality, justice, and freedom for all people. Issues discussed will range from housing for poor people to nuclear war. Call Joshua Hirsch, (214) 826-0694 or 821-0001, for details.

OBSERVANCES

August 6, 1945 — United States dropped the first A-bomb on Hiroshima, Japan.


August 7, 1964 — Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, giving President Johnson the power to conduct war in Vietnam.

August 9, 1974 — President Nixon resigned.

August 19, 1870 — Annie Webb Blanton, educator elected 1st woman State Superintendent of Public Schools in 1919 as a Texas State Woman's Suffrage Association candidate, was born.

PANTEX PILGRIMAGE

Hundreds of people from many states make a yearly pilgrimage to Pantex, the plant near Amarillo, Texas, which makes all the nuclear warheads in the U.S. arsenal, to commemorate the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to prevent nuclear war. This year's vigil will be **August 6-9** with speakers such as Lloyd Dumas, an economic conversion expert, John Stockwell, the ex-CIA officer turned peace activist, and Jean Hutchinson, the fiery British mother who helped organize the Peace Camp outside the gates of the Greenham Common Air Base. Folks will bike, ride, walk, and hitch to Pantex. To find out how to join them,



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MONEY AVAILABLE

The Live Oak Fund for Change invites groups organizing for social change in Texas to apply for funding for the Fall 1986 funding cycle. Applications must be postmarked by **September 7, 1986**, to be considered. Call Rob Lavis or Jane Porter, (512) 476-5714, or write LOF, Box 4601, Austin 78765, for application guidelines.

EDOM ARTS FAIR

Edom, Texas, the charming East Texas town that has for years been home to a community of artists and craftspeople, will again be the site for one of the state's most respected and entertaining art fairs, the 14th Annual Edom Arts Fair, **September 13-14**, Saturday, 10-6 p.m., and Sunday, noon-6 p.m. Exhibits will include those by artists, potters, jewelers, sculptors, kite makers, dulcimer makers, weavers, glassblowers, and others. Country music, hearty food, and a rustic atmosphere set the scene. Call Sue Anders, (214) 828-4014, for details. Edom is located east of Dallas between Canton and Tyler on Highway 279 (1½ hours from Dallas).

NIGHT MOTHER

"Night Mother" by Marsha Norman will be presented at the Hyde Park Theater Thursdays-Sundays, **September 4-28**, 8 p.m. Tickets are \$2-6; call (512) 452-6688 for reservations and information.

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What Terrorism Tells America

By Benjamin R. Barber

Terrorism and the poignant dilemmas it raises for America teach an ancient lesson: the incompatibility of democracy at home and empire abroad. We have treated the confrontation with Libya as a problem of foreign policy, but the more disturbing question is domestic. Can we project our military and economic power on a global scale and continue to exist as a democratic society — open, tolerant, modest and humane?

What terrorism has done to the United States is to re-expose the tension — first revealed by Vietnam — between our democratic ideals and our power politics globalism. We need not call ourselves imperialist to recognize that our nation has assumed global responsibilities and acquired the aspirations and tastes as well as the onerous responsibilities of a superpower. Our international stature and the force by which it is sustained invite resistance from the less powerful and revenge from the victimized and dispossessed.

We are targeted not simply because we favor Israel here or oppose Syria there, because we are too slow to support national liberation movements or too quick to exploit foreign economic opportunities, but because we are a great global power with large appetites and extensive interests. "Innocent" Americans are slaughtered because the nation whose passport they carry is not innocent: The powerful never are, despite good intentions.

The ancients would not have been perplexed by our situation. They understood democracy to depend upon a high degree of economic autarky and political self-sufficiency, and connected the passing of town democracy in Attica with the rise of Athenian economic imperialism. No philosopher of republicanism, no witness to the history of Rome, would ever imagine that a gentle, self-sufficient democracy could survive its transformation into an ambitious empire with its freedom intact. Our own founders worried from the outset that we might have difficulty preserving our liberties, and we preserved our innocence into this century only by pursuing a policy of assiduous isolationism.

Our engagement in World War I was reluctant, and we fought World War II in a mood of moral outrage. But in the postwar world, we have been overtaken by the contradictions between our power and our freedom.

Terrorism presents the argument with a vengeance. It mocks our humble liberties by attacking our crusading internationalism; it argues against our modesty by demonstrating our ubiquity. It discredits our humanity by provoking our brutality. It sets our democracy at odds with our empire by revealing our incapacity to serve

either modest liberty or brute force with conviction. Thus we find ourselves pinned between our democracy and our empire, paralyzed as imperialists because, as democrats, we are devoted to justice and lack the stomach for murdering civilians on the scale demanded from empires, yet paralyzed as democrats because as imperialists we are committed to a struggle for hegemony and are unable to eschew the brutal means by which hegemony is secured.

Finally, ours is a failure of imagination, for we imagine ourselves to be a modest democracy insulated from the world by two oceans even as we pursue the policies of a superpower. The world may be forgiven for seeing the empire with which it must contend rather than the democracy about which it only hears. The terrorist strikes at the superpower, dumbfounding the modest democrat who sees his ideals rather than his power.

So, as a nation, we find our global ambitions hobbled by our democratic conscience and our democratic ideals compromised by our global ambitions: After all, the democracy depends upon an open and free society, a dispassionate and informed public opinion, significant civic participation, tolerance in the face of dissent, and above all a refusal to permit the politics of reason to be displaced by violence.

The empire on the other hand requires the projection of national power abroad, an intolerance for resistance and dissent, and a disposition for ruthlessness in the choice of means, which must include those of the terrorist and the assassin, as well as the statesman and the diplomat.

Nor is it a question of ruthless foreign policy alone. To make America terror-proof in its global incarnation is ultimately to curb its liberties at home. It is to curtail mobility, to increase surveillance, to hamper concourse, to violate rights; it is to watch, to spy on, to follow, to search, to seize and to control citizens and foreigners alike until all the world comes to resemble a well-secured airport or an invulnerable embassy.

Thus it is that terrorism wins, even where it loses. Its victory comes not when it blows an airliner out of the sky or sends an innocent tourist to a watery grave but when it eggs the democracy into actions that undo sacred liberties and corrupt the devotion to justice that is democracy's finest achievement.

Not to resist terrorism is painful to the empire, but to resist it may be fatal to the democracy. So terrorism may be history's ironic way of compelling us to confront the ancient question we have so long sought to avoid: What price empire?

Benjamin R. Barber, professor of political science at Rutgers University, is the author most recently of Strong Democracy (University of California Press). This essay, reprinted with permission, first appeared in the May 1, 1986, edition of Newsday.

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The Baptist-Baptists of Pampa

By Richard B. Hughes

WE WERE ALL BAPTISTS in Pampa, Texas, where I grew up. My brother, sister and I were sent off to Sunday School among the Methodist-Baptists, the town's second most important church. My Scout troop was sponsored by the Presbyterian-Baptists, who, with the Disciples-Baptists, were next in importance. Next came the Catholic-Baptists, who, some feared, would never see heaven. The Episcopalian-Baptists would have gone unnoticed except that some of the town's founding fathers had brought their faith from England to Pampa, giving a certain class to their scrawny congregation.

At the apex were the Baptist-Baptists, pure and undiluted, whose massive presence — First Baptist was the length of a football field from my bedroom window — was palpable on any Sunday morning at eleven in those open-windowed days before air conditioning as triumphant song and trumpeted sermon accused me of sleeping in.

Furthermore, the Baptist-Baptists sang just as triumphantly at seven o'clock Sunday evening and, not trusting human nature to stand firm from Sunday to Sunday, used some of the town's most seductive homemade pies to lure the faithful (and unfaithful) to a Wednesday evening prayer meeting.

The Baptist-Baptist formula for religious success was clearcut and ultimately as measurable as the bottom line at a hardware store: keep the message simple; stir faith in the organization; expand the plant and the program by gifts of

money and service; sell the product; count the results.

When I think of those Baptist-Baptists, often with begrudging admiration, it is verbs of action which come to mind: attend, promote, support, count, do and do

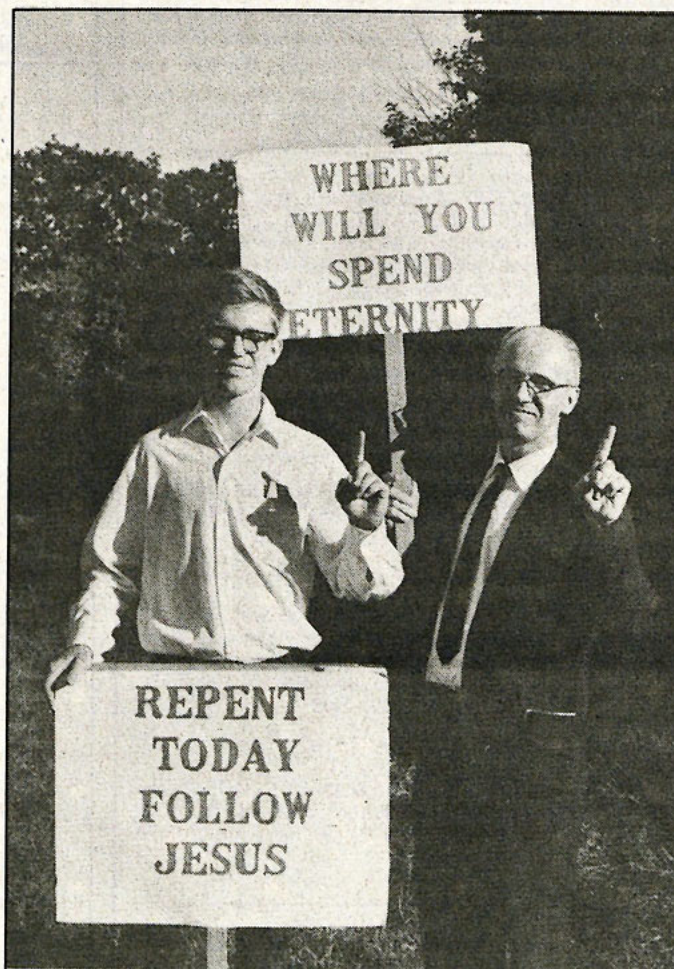


Photo by Roy Hamric

and do. To call their preacher a "go-getter" was to end all attempts at praise.

When I say we were all Baptists, I mean that the Baptists did what the other churches tried to do but did it better. It was they who defined success. It was they who set the tone for the town, and it was not uncommon to sense their spirit at a meeting of the Rotary Club, the P.T.A., or the High School assembly.

There were dissenters to this formula for religious success. One was my mother. (I can't guess the total number of dissenters in Pampa; the silent are hard to count.) Religious to her bone marrow, Mother's was a mysticism of nature and God. She longed for beautiful music, elegant architecture, thoughtful sermons quietly delivered by learned ministers, the evangelization of the mind as well as the heart. She became a regular churchgoer only when she and Dad moved to Washington, D.C., for a time in the 1950s. She worshipped at the National Presbyterian Church, whose august atmosphere, so full of God, might also on a given Sunday be full of the august likes of President Eisenhower or Secretary of State Dulles.

THE TEXAS PANHANDLE frontier, like all frontiers, mobilized the outer man. Survival, not subtlety, was the goal of pioneers. Their contributions to the churches — the camp meetings, the circuit riders, the farmer — preachers of the Methodists, the Disciples and above all, the Baptists, furnished the Daniel Boones and the Davy Crocketts of the American religious tradition. They functioned in hard times. They got it done in hard places. And their muscular fundamentalism, with its high-decibeled promises of a non-alcoholic heaven and a steam-heated hell still reigned in my boyhood years in the 1930s and 1940s. The inner man with his needs for contemplation, for beauty, for a careful theology, had to wait for a subtler civilization. Woe to tender souls born at the wrong time and place!

When after college I visited the cathedrals of Europe, I learned that the world has far more Catholics than Baptists. I learned that Lutherans far outnumber Baptists in Scandinavia and Germany and that the scrawny Episcopalians make up the official Church of England. I even learned that there are people in the world who never heard of a Baptist. I know all this, but I don't believe a word of it. □

Richard B. Hughes teaches history at St. Edward's University in Austin.

• CLASSIFIED •

BOOKS

MA BELL by Bryan Sloan is a book explaining their deceptive accounting practices and how Bell has averaged over 42% profits annually for 25 years, and has already received far more telephone rate raises than due. \$7.50 at your book store or order postpaid from Vantage Press, 516 West 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.

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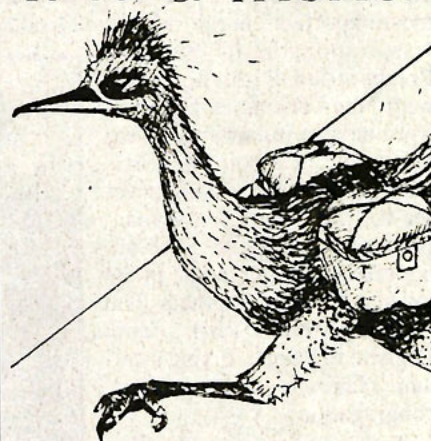
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