THE TEXAS Observer

A JOURNAL OF FREE VOICES

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ELECTION COVERAGE
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ALAN POGUE

We Give Thanks
Ann Richards Prevails, Clayton Williams Departs

Among The Interfaithful
The Texas Industrial Areas Foundation Goes Statewide

Skirttail Envy
What Ann Richards Had and Phil Gramm Coveted

Also: *Reviews of Mary Beth Rogers's* Cold Anger *and Sanford Horwitt's* Let Them Call Me Rebel

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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 human-kind 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.

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DIALOGUE

BOB ECKHARDT

As Liberal As We Wanna Be

It is intellectually repugnant that "Populism" as reflected in *The Texas Observer* fails to apply the same liberal values to analyses and critiques of economic theory and policy as are applied to political theory and policy. The 16 de Septiembre issue reached new lows in the application of this dual standard.

It is without question that under a liberal analysis, Mexico needs political diversity, democratic institutions, and the primacy of individual rights. Both the *Observer* and Sr. Cárdenas are to be commended for pursuing liberal (in the classical sense) goals in the political arena. However, the economic analyses reflected in the 16 de Septiembre issue are a certain recipe for disaster in any economic arena, and are particularly devastating for Mexico.

Politics and economics are not so different that different rules and values are to be applied to each. Both perform best when the sovereignty of the individual is guaranteed, when power is decentralized and only flows up from the individual to collective institutions when the individual elects, and when the only restraints on the individual are those best characterized as the individual's responsibilities to avoid infringing on the rights of other individuals. Yet "Populism" as defined in the *Observer* ignores the common liberal principles, the vast grey area of overlap of politics and economics, and presumes to apply libertarian values to politics and static principles to economics.

At this point in the human experience, the only mechanisms which apply the values of decentralization of power, individual sovereignty, and responsibility towards the rights of other individuals are the democratic and market processes. Not only have all other systems or processes failed to realize these values, these other systems have resulted in the most egregious abuses to human rights, degradation of human well-being, and long-term harm to the environment.

There is no good reason for the *Observer*, one of the few consistent voices for the application of classical liberal values in politics to at the same time be a voice against the application of classical liberal values in economics. Perhaps the recent experiences of China and Eastern Europe will lead to the consistent application of liberal values to all aspects of the human condition. I urge *The Texas Observer* to reexamine its editorial policies in this regard.

Andy Carson
Corpus Christi

EDITORIAL

A People's Agenda

THERE WAS NO MANDATE. Ann Richards is a minority governor-elect; she won 49.6 percent of the popular vote in a three-way race. The third candidate, a Libertarian, took 3.3 percent of the vote. But Ann Richards won. And she won in a race against an opponent who outspent her two-to-one, spending $11 per vote. Considering that one-third of the voters in the state are registered Republicans, Clayton Williams paid a dear price for each swing voter his campaign purchased.

And Ann Richards had skirttails, particularly in places like Travis County, where her presence on the ticket swept away incumbent Republican judges, House members, and even one justice of the peace. (For some of us living here it is as if Bill Clements never existed. And if we look for proof in the public policy he initiated, his existence seems even more doubtful.) Richards also seemed to have skirttails in Harris County, where incumbent Republican House members who won by narrow margins two years ago (or less, by special election) were retired by Democratic challengers. It might even by argued that Richards's presence on the ticket, along with Lieutenant Governor-elect Bob Bullock, returned Richard Smith to the real estate business — where he might ultimately face indictment for his questionable dealings in Resolution Trust Corporation Properties at a time when he had a $460,000 S&L loan in foreclosure. Smith, the dour, uncompromising Republican representative from Bryan who carried the anti-workers' compensation legislation through the last regular and special legislative sessions, had designs on the Senate seat vacated by Kent Caperton. Smith lost to Jim Turner, a former Democratic House member and mayor of Crockett, who became something of a foxhole convert to progressive issues like insurance reform.

Though there was no mandate in depth, there seems to have been one in breadth. At a morning-after press conference on November 8, Attorney General-elect Dan Morales talked about a Democratic executive team, which he predicts will end the adversarial stalemates that characterized the last two legislative sessions — when a Governor with no agenda used the power of his office to obstruct progress in a divided Legislature. Democratic candidates won the most important statewide offices, and in a redistricting year they will hold all five positions on the Legislative Redistricting Board — the body ultimately responsible for redrawing every legislative district in the state, based on shifts in population changes reflected in the census. The board, responsible for redistricting if the Legislature fails to come up with a plan, includes the lieutenant governor, speaker of the house, comptroller, attorney general, and land commissioner. On the new board, which only has any importance in those years that end with a one, the closest thing to a Republican will be House Speaker Gib Lewis.

SO WHAT WILL occur on January 15, then, is a changing of the guard. But if it is to be anything more than new faces moving into place to serve the interests of the corporate lobby, the public will somehow have to be involved. If Ann Richards's New Texas agenda, if Bob Bullock's school finance, ethics, and tax reform are to be implemented in the coming legislative sessions, somehow the public will have to enter a process which by both its own evolution and by the design of a professional lobby has become insulated from public control.

Who then will represent the people? A number of groups, such as Public Citizen, Consumers Union, the Texas Consumers Association, and the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, perform an invaluable service, writing bills, killing bills, following legislation through committees, attending hearings, pressuring legislators, and informing the public. They are the people's lobby and when they win it is because they are smarter, work harder, and organize their information better than their well-funded adversaries. But a broad-based popular movement they are not.

The only such organization in the state today is the Industrial Areas Foundation, the 10-member coalition of local church- and synagogue-based public-interest organizations directed by Ernesto Cortes Jr. They are, according to Duke University historian Larry Goodwyn, a student of popular movements, "the only group that can change politics in this country," because, again according to Goodwyn, "they are changing the structure of power and the way people relate to power."

They are also one of the most poorly understood organizations in the state. Clayton Williams obviously didn't get it. Meeting with a small group of IAF representatives in San Antonio a week before the election, he seemed to confuse them with Pat Robertson fundamentalists. "As I said during the primary, my doors will be open to all Christian groups," Williams said. The IAF is church-based, but their agenda is secular, issue-specific, and non-partisan. Williams, citing scheduling problems, declined to appear before the 10,000-member IAF convention

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FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

Fundraiser Update

Thanks to the prompt and generous response of nearly 600 readers, the *Observer's* 1990 fundraising campaign has passed the halfway mark. We've received $28,451 in money and pledges so far, plus many thoughtful suggestions and encouraging comments.

It's especially moving to receive notes and contributions from readers who themselves are struggling to pay their own bills. Thank you all, very much.

The fundraising progress is so encouraging that we decided to proceed with our 32-page issue. But we still have a long ways to go before reaching the $56,000 total it will take to get us through this tight passage. We'll need the help of *all* of the *Observer's* friends if we are going to make it.

vention in San Antonio a week before the election.

Ann Richards, however, does get it. As do Bob Bullock, John Sharp, Dan Morales, and Garry Mauro. All, through experience, are familiar with the IAF accountability ritual, in which candidates or elected officials are asked in a public forum to commit themselves to certain specific agenda items. But accountability sessions are only the superficies of this organization. What the IAF is really about is political power — a power built upon organized communities. The IAF, best known by "actions" or issue campaigns conducted by its local organizations — such as Valley Interfaith's fight for water and sewers, San Antonio COPS's crusades for pavement and neighborhood improvements, and Allied Communities of Tarrant's ongoing campaign for fair utilities rates — met last month in San Antonio to inaugurate a statewide network that will focus on a long-term legislative agenda in Austin.

Speaking in San Antonio, Ed Chambers, the national director of the Industrial Areas Foundation, warned of the dangers of directing some of the organization's energies toward statewide issues. Chambers described the Capitol as a place filled with sharks. How to compete in a world of sharks? Bring teeth. The IAF is about teeth. And knowing how to use them, that is, being able to answer the question: "Now that we have power, what do we do with it?"

The beginning of a new administration and a new legislative session seems a good time to take a careful look at an organization that has, by working at the local and regional level, altered the social landscape of the state. In an attempt to better understand what this organization is about, we have focused much of this issue of the *Observer* on the Texas IAF. Included is an excerpt from Mary Beth Rogers's book, *Cold Anger,* which is also reviewed by Ellen Hosmer; a review of *Let Them Call Me Rebel*, the biography of organizer Saul Alinsky, upon whose work the IAF is based; a Linda Rocawich interview with Ernesto Cortes Jr., the director of the Texas IAF; interviews with individual IAF leaders, and coverage of the IAF convention held last month in San Antonio.

Six months from now, it will require an archaeologist to document the accomplishments of Bill Clements. But it seems that the next administration has an opportunity to advance a genuine people's agenda — to achieve something more significant than to redefine for 10 years the political cartography of the state, and to be something far more than a footnote in the history of the politics of gender. To realize that promise, Richards and Bullock will be well advised to take into account the genuine mandate of the people, which at the moment is best defined in the legislative agenda of the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation.

— L.D.

A Democratic Conversation

BY GEOFFREY RIPS

San Antonio

TO THE UNINITIATED, the first official convention of the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation Network may have seemed like an odd animal. There, filling the Hemisfair Arena of the San Antonio convention center, were 10,000 vociferous leaders of 10 community organizations around the state, plus those from incipient organizations. They had come by the busload that Sunday, October 28, some traveling overnight from as far away as El Paso. And onstage before them, the Democratic candidates for statewide office, joined by two Republicans, waited politely to play their part. They fidgeted, stared out into the throng surrounding them, looked at notes now and again and, no doubt, thought about time on this next-to-last Sunday before the election.

For two hours, time was controlled by the Texas IAF. The convention began on time, as all IAF functions do, ran like clockwork, and ended on schedule. The roll was called, and the leaders from the organizations from across the state responded with head counts in the hundreds and thousands. The Archbishop spoke. Henry Cisneros spoke. Tom Luce spoke. Then several IAF leaders from around the state presented the network's agenda on housing, health care, jobs and job training, and education. The candidates were then asked to speak briefly in response to the network's request for those elected to meet with IAF leaders about the IAF agenda after taking office. Most did as they were asked. Ann Richards talked about the fact that her church is a member of Austin Interfaith. (Clayton Williams did not show but met with a few IAF leaders earlier in the day. That didn't count.) The two Republicans, Rob Mosbacher Jr. and Kay Bailey Hutchison, used their answers as springboards for campaign speeches and were cut off by their IAF questioners. A steering committee for the statewide network was ratified, and the meeting was over.

What had transpired? Why had all these people traveled hundreds of miles to play small parts in an orchestrated pageant? Why had the statewide candidates dedicated a crucial Sunday afternoon to appearing onstage and mute, save for three to five minutes of restricted oratory?

They came to take part in a democratic conversation. It was a conversation in which power was the unspoken point of reference. It was the inverse of most political conversations in our country, in which the candidates do most of the speaking. For two hours, at least, the elect in this relationship were the citizens and the candidates were clearly public servants. It was a meeting between the politics of everyday life practiced by IAF and the politics of 30-second television spots, pollsters and the push and pull of special interests among political elites. It was real, if symbolic, communication. The symbols: Ten thousand brown, white, African-American and Asian Texans met in common accord; coming from economic and social strata that go largely unheard, they made some of the most powerful officials in the state sit and listen to their needs; they celebrated the fact that their individual conversations, some beginning 17 years earlier, one-on-one, in house meetings and in parish and citywide meetings, have melded to create a kind of social capital with which they could now trade on their own behalf.

And they are ready to trade, not for personal favors as old-time ward heelers would, but for justice and a moral infrastructure for government. For politics to become meaningful, it must be more than elections at regular intervals. It must be a means for people to understand and control their own lives. It must be a continuing discussion between the governed and the governing; it must affect and energize everyday life; it must be about the building of relationships between neighbor and neighbor and between citizens and their elected officeholders, holding all parties accountable to that relationship.

Geoffrey Rips is a former Observer *editor.*

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Father John Korcsmar addresses the IAF Convention

The chorus heard at the Hemisfair Arena was built on a foundation of hundreds of thousands of discussions: discussions, for instance, far into the night in the home of Raul and Dora Flores of San Antonio's Metro Alliance, where neighbors gathered four years ago to debate a cap on public spending; discussions in the little cinder-block church center in the Cameron Park colonia, where Valley Interfaith leaders gathered to plan their campaign to bring public utilities to the colonias; discussions among leaders of the Allied Communities of Tarrant at Morningside Middle School in Fort Worth to improve their children's education through community involvement. Those discussions begot more discussions and they begot political understanding and political action. And the attempt to cap spending failed in San Antonio; and the state passed legislation to bring water and sewer service to the colonias; and the children in that middle school began to learn and provided a model for reforming education across the city and the state. But all this began as simple discussions, relationships among neighbors that became public discussions and public relationships.

The day after the convention, Ed Chambers, executive director of the Industrial Areas Foundation, spoke to several hundred leaders of the Texas IAF Network. "We stand for a kind of politics that is not really practiced in our country," he said. "Historically, when the scale was smaller, you could practice the kind of politics we're trying....Our culture is very simple. We start with family, a congregation. We start with the teachings of the Bible. We start with basic values that are given us. Then we try to practice a genuine democracy. Not the artificial democracy of the sound bite. In order to realize that, to stay close to the family, the gospel, and social action, we hold one another accountable....You are in the business of developing human potential. You believe that men and women are the most precious treasure this country has, and the most important thing we can do is to develop them, let them grow, let them flower, let those talents flourish."

What we have in the Texas IAF Network is a great experiment. Can a meaningful relationship be developed between a politics based upon moral understanding and moral imperatives and the big-money politics of the late 20th century? Is there still room to think and to build based upon values? Can a political system in which most people feel powerless be made a means of empowerment?

As Ed Chambers described it, the source of IAF's strength is the relationship among individuals. "All of us have pain and joy in our lives. Once you hear it from a white person or a black person or a Mexicano, a Puerto Rican or a Latino, you say, gee, that's my story. That's the same story. We've got something in common. Once that starts happening to you, then you have a bond that the received culture doesn't put any value on. That's what keeps you together—your shared stories and your shared memories. That will keep you together and carry you through."

Czech writer Milan Kundera once equated "the struggle of man against power [meaning the State]" with the "struggle of memory against forgetting." The politics of Texas IAF are the politics of the long haul. Communities are built upon collective memory, just as modern-day politics depend upon collective amnesia. The convention of the Texas IAF Network was an attempt to meld the politics of memory into a relationship with the politics of forgetfulness. It was awkward, but it worked. And to the extent that it continues to work, democracy is served. □

Gospel Values and Secular Politics

BY MARY BETH ROGERS

WHEN ERNIE CORTES came to the Industrial Areas Foundation Training Institute in 1971, Saul Alinsky was conspicuous by his absence. Edward Chambers was fully in charge, struggling to build a program to attract and train professional organizers. When Alinsky died of a heart attack in 1972, it was Chambers who had to scramble to raise money to keep the training institute alive. Alinsky's speaking fees had supplemented foundation grants to underwrite the program, and now without Alinsky, it was going to be difficult for the IAF to survive financially.

"The first five years I had to sell my soul to raise money. Foundations wouldn't fund us and I had to figure out a way to make it self-sufficient," Chambers recall.

Everything was in a state of flux within the IAF — the money, the ties with local organizations, the concept of organizing, and the development of training programs for organizers and volunteer leaders. Then Ernie Cortes came along and dropped into the brewing stew his interest in theological concerns.

At first, Chambers resisted incorporating religious and theological reflection in the IAF's training process. After all, he was a tough, street-fighting organizer with a streak of skepticism stiffening his spine. He had trained with the rough-talking Alinsky and had served under him for 15 years. Besides, Chambers had once been seared for his religious beliefs when, as a young Benedictine seminarian, he had questioned the practices of the Catholic church in the days before Vatican II. When he threw his existential beliefs at the rigidly organized precepts of church orthodoxy, he was asked to leave the seminary. He was only 23 years old at the time and went from there to Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker movement in New York. But his idealism in serving the poor eventually led to the deterioration of his health — he was too weak even to make a blood donation. He also felt useless because his sacrifices made no lasting changes in people's lives.

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Ed Chambers

"Chambers saw the danger of mixing religious teachings with organizing because they have a tendency to deteriorate into sentimentality," Cortes says. "Chambers was afraid it was too soft."

Ed Chambers was not a soft man. In his early 40s when he found himself trying to hold the IAF together, Chambers assumed an air of authority few seriously questioned. Sister Maribeth Larkin, an IAF organizer, says the first time she was around Chambers he "scared the hell out of me. In the early days when he'd shout or use profanities, he would really shock me."

Chambers delighted in shocking and in testing his organizers to the limit, and Ernie Cortes was no exception. Chambers challenged him relentlessly. How could Cortes's religious feeling possibly be integrated into the organizing process? How could he keep it from being phony, or worse, hypocritical? How could there be any toughness to this stuff? How would it correspond to people's lives here and now?

"Ed's initial reaction to things is always 'that's crazy,'" Cortes says. "But that's okay because it forces you to think through what you want to do."

Although Chambers was skeptical, the wide-ranging theological discussions continued among the staff and lead organizers. "Chambers and Harmon had a philosophy, almost a theology of organizing, although that was not what they called it," Cortes says. "What impressed me was that they had read a lot of the same books I had and they had thought about some questions I was really wrestling with. Like what is this business of organizing all about? What is its connection to public life generally? How does it relate to people's growth?"

Cortes says the atmosphere in Chicago was more helpful to him than he ever could have imagined. "I began to get some insight into myself and the whole process of organizing," he says. "What Chambers taught was a systematic way to organize — not just an emotional wave. I came to see that organizing was not just action and issues, but also values and vision."

The challenges from Chambers, the discussions with Harmon, the reading and reflection at last gave Cortes the opportunity to integrate his scholarly inclinations and interest in theology with some practical grassroots organizing. The IAF Training Institute — not merely books and talk — provided hands-on experience through the development of several community organizations in the Chicago area. Although Alinsky's works, *Reveille for Radicals* and *Rules for Radicals*, were nominal "textbooks," the real teachers were experience and reflection — learning what worked in the real world and taking the time to find out why.

A significant feature for Cortes was the development of a vision for the kind of people's organization that he and others in the IAF wanted to build. What should it *be*? Where should it *lead*? What were you organizing *for*? What did you want people to *learn*?

To come up with answers, Chambers, Harmon, Cortes, and others began a serious analysis of the successes and failures in not only the IAF's history of community organizing, but within the 1960s civil rights and anti-war movements, and within a whole range of civic and service organizations that attracted the kinds of people they wanted to organize. They discovered several striking patterns common to most volunteer citizens'

Mary Beth Rogers is a former deputy state treasurer who served as director of Ann Richards's gubernatorial campaign. This is a chapter excerpted from her recently published book, Cold Anger: A Story of Faith and Power Politics, *published by University of North Texas Press. The book is available through University Distribution, Drawer C, College Station, 77843 or by calling 800-826-9211.*

organizations — patterns that created instability, ineffectiveness, and eventual dissolution:

• Movements that depended on charismatic leaders fell apart in the absence of the leader.

• Organizations formed around a single issue died when the issue lost its potency.

• Organizations that relied on public money, private grants, or the largess of a few wealthy contributors could never become truly independent.

• Organizations that became overly procedural lost the momentum and flexibility to act.

• Organizations whose leaders acted autonomously without a system of internal accountability became corrupt when no one monitored their actions.

• Organizations that played to the public spotlight confused their desire for media attention with their strategy for change.

• Organizations that scrambled continuously to respond to a crisis got caught up in a whirlwind of activity that soon exhausted their leaders.

But the most important critique of movements and community organizations centered around the fact that once an organization folded, people were as powerless as they had always been — even after solving a specific problem or enacting a particular law. The power to regularly shape decisions that affected their lives was still not within the grasp of most middle-class and working poor people. If IAF organizations and IAF-trained organizers were to be effective, they would have to grapple with the fundamental issue of political power. That meant asking some essential questions about building a political organization: What if your organization's purposes were broader than solving single problems? What if your purpose was to amass power that would allow action on a wide range of issues? What if you sought the kind of power that lifted you to a different level of political decision-making? What if you could become a frequent player in the crafting of public policy? What if you had an organization that could survive not only its defeats on single issues, but its victories as well?

More questions and conversation: What if you began to appeal to people not on specific issues, but on something they valued? On something that was intrinsically important to them and for which they were willing to sacrifice? What if your organization could enhance what people valued? Would they then be willing to make a permanent commitment to an organization that seemed to care for them and operate with them on a deep level of fundamental concern? Would you be able to count on the longevity of the organization — no matter what happened to individual leaders or specific causes?

Within the IAF in the early 1970s, answers to these questions began to take shape, and the concept of seeking broad power and building organizations around values began to provide a central organizing strategy. This new direction meshed with the personal experiences of both Cortes and Chambers.

For Cortes, his Mexican roots helped shape his views that values mattered more than issues. For example, the people Cortes wanted to organize on the South and West Sides of San Antonio cared about "family." Family was a supreme value in their lives. And family, for most of the Hispanic working poor, was also intertwined with feelings for church. When you value something, you are willing to make a sacrifice for it; there is a

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Ernesto Cortes

cost you are willing to pay. Cortes knew that Mexican parents willingly sacrificed for their children — and often for their church. By talking about family values, could you motivate and organize people to act politically in their own genuine self interest?

Talking about the positive value of families would be a radical departure from the movement rhetoric of the 1960s and early 1970s. Yet Ed Chambers sensed that poor people might be hungry for it. "The movements [of the 1960s] never attracted the moderate and conservative sections of the country," he wrote. The majority of Americans, he felt, thought that movement people were "willing to trample on traditions for a single cause." But old movement images and language would not suffice for the strains and stresses of the 1970s and 1980s, Chambers argued. The new organizations had to reach into the heart. They had to connect with people at a core level of essential value. The idea of protecting and enhancing families might make that possible.

Cortes agreed, adding an important caveat. "You can't just be romantic about families," he says. "Unrealistic romantic notions about family can lead to fascism. Families can turn out to be oppressive. But families and traditions are useful and important, and you always have to see them in relation to other things. It is the give-and-take of family life, in the sacrifices and compromises that you make for the family that you learn to be human. It is where you learn to nurture and be nurtured."

For Chambers, the concept of family also struck a resonant — and personal — note. Giving up the life of a professional bachelor, he got married in his mid-40s and began having children at the same time as he was struggling to transform the IAF. Family mattered to him now in a way that he had never before experienced, and he began to understand the pressures working families felt to stay intact and to keep children safe from harm. Particularly in poor urban communities. Families were under siege — affected by the corrosive effects of alcohol and drug abuse, crime, and the physical deterioration of neighborhoods. But the pressures were economic, too.

"The American family has become a money machine," Chambers wrote. "Month after month it must meet the food bills, mortgage or rent, car and other transportation costs, insurance premiums, non-insured health items, clothing costs, taxes, utilities and fuel, school expenses. ... Both parents must work to fuel the family money machine, to meet the basic cost of keeping the family alive. Too often, what they work so hard for is undone by their own hard work ... they have no energy left for the love and care of their children."

If you began to talk to people about their families — and about how they might protect and help them by becoming involved in community organizations — and if you talked about their own individual growth and development in the process, then you might have a strategy that could lead to stable political organizations anchored by people whose values derived from concerns deeper than transitory issues. "In organizations based on values, social change is not some kind of abstraction that happens out there," Chambers also wrote. "It happens to people. It involves your whole life."

As the IAF began to clarify its vision of community-based power organizations centered around values, its language also began to change. "I'd had a little training in philosophy," Chambers says. "And I started forcing myself to look at what our kind of organizing meant to people. We worked with people in the churches, and their language was the language of the gospel. Their language was nothing like Alinsky's language. His language was power talk. Tough, abrasive, confrontational, full of ridicule. And those are really all non-Christian concepts. So I started looking at it. Here are the non-Christian concepts ... here are the Christian concepts. Are there any similarities? Is this just a different language for the same thing?"

Because he was now bringing lay church people from urban neighborhoods into the

training sessions as well as organizers, synthesizing power talk with church talk became very important to Chambers. And he began to see some exciting possibilities. "When people act on the gospel values and hold one another accountable, you've got a revolutionary act," he discovered.

As Chambers worked on ways to assist in the development of leaders and minimize their dependence on the IAF organizer for ideas and leadership, he realized that organizers had to become teachers. And that meant they had to become readers and thinkers, as well as doers. If organizers were going to teach leaders about power and talk with them about values, they had to have an understanding of what was happening in the world around them — from the effects of television on people's lives to the roles of mediating institutions in a democracy to the dynamics of the market system. That meant they had to know who held vast economic power — not only at the local level, but nationally and internationally as well. How were major U.S. corporations linked to law firms, the media, the politicians, even the church? What were people really up against when they challenged entrenched economic power? Or when their values conflicted with the overriding value of the modern market economy — money. More importantly, the IAF organizers and leaders had to understand the effects of public-sector decisions on private lives. They had to know the philosophy of modern corporate management, the dynamics of political decision-making, and the effects of concentrated economic power on the political process, and on and on.

So it was not just tactics — how to confront an enemy, stage a demonstration, hold a politician accountable, get out the vote, develop an issue, lobby a legislator, or get publicity — that characterized the IAF's evolving training program. Those elements were, of course, part of the training that organizers and leaders experienced. But there was more. The IAF kept breaking new ground, taking new risks, and moving into areas that most community organizers avoided.

In the years of experimentation, Chambers discovered one other crucial factor in the growth and development of the people he wanted to organize: the power of relationships. It is what he calls "mentoring and tutoring." It is a commitment on the part of an organizer or leader to work with other people — on a one-on-one basis — to help them grow beyond themselves and participate as a full citizen in the public life of their community. Chambers began focusing on developing strong personal relationships with his key organizers and leaders that extended support, encouragement, honest evaluation, and assistance in developing skills that could be used in the public arena.

This internal relationship building was slow, hard, and invisible to the politician, bureaucrat, or businessman who had to deal with the IAF organizations. But without it, the IAF would have died with Saul Alinsky, and to Chambers, it is "why we do what we do."

"If you want to really make democracy work, if you're crazy enough to believe that the democratic system is one worth proving, and if you know that electoral politics doesn't cut it, and if you know you can communicate that to people who have some central values, then it's worth doing," Chambers says. "Saul had the ideas and concepts, but he didn't believe in the mentoring and the tutoring. He'd just throw me in and say, 'don't bother me.'"

Chambers vowed he wouldn't do that to the organizers and leaders he trained. And his concept of "mentoring and tutoring" had a profound effect on Ernie Cortes. When he first went to the IAF, Cortes had the benefit of hours and hours of conversation with the more experienced Chambers. Chambers worked with him on a personal level, helping him integrate his intellectualism with his need for action in the public arena. Later, Chambers assigned another organizer the task to meet with Cortes several times each week.

"As they probed me, I started thinking about how I ought to be doing this too. I was beginning to see that electoral politics just didn't go deep enough, and I began to do some reading to find out how to reach people on a deeper level myself," Cortes says.

Cortes read psychology — Freud and Jung, of course, but also Kohlberg, Karen Horney, Henry Stack Sullivan, Gustav Napier, Murray Brown, and others. He delved into theories of family therapy. To gain insight into women, he studied Doris Lessing's novels and questioned the women he organized. How did they think about themselves? Why were they so hesitant to take on leadership roles? What did they care most about? And he began to incorporate what he was learning, plus his own instincts, into a process of working individually with people to help them discover their strengths and to learn how to use them in a public setting.

By now, Cortes had signed on with the IAF to become a full-time organizer, and he worked on projects in Chicago, Milwaukee, and Lake County, Indiana. Cortes discovered that the people he worked with were amazed to find a community organizer who thought about them in an individual or personal way, and who would actually listen to their ideas and concerns, advise them, develop their public skills, and help them synthesize their reading, reflections, and action. It amazed Cortes, too, and he realized he was involved in a new, more effective way to organize people to act in their own self-interest.

Then in 1973, Cortes decided to go home. His marriage had ended and he wanted to be with his young daughter, Ami, who was in Texas. Besides, change was in the air in San Antonio. The Good Government League was crumbling under its own weight, in the face of a challenge from a bunch of builders and developers who simply wanted to make money — big money they felt they could make if only the city fathers had guts enough to get out of the country club and annex land, build new sewer and water lines, widen streets — let the city grow! North Side Anglos were tearing each other to shreds, not like gentlemen behind closed doors, but like rowdies for all the city to see. A wealthy former GGL city council member who had been shut out because in his own words, he was "one of the most irreverent bastards you've ever known," announced as an independent candidate for mayor — and he won. He brought with him a slate of independents who looked like they might break the GGL's hold on the city once and for all.

To Cortes, it seemed like a good time to come home. Maybe the "sleeping giant" was stirring too. □

Interview

Ernesto Cortes Jr.

BY LINDA ROCAWICH

ERNESTO CORTES JR. has been called a lot of things: angry, brilliant, dangerous, energetic, possessed, unrelenting. The derogatory adjectives are not always spoken by his enemies; the admiring ones not always by his friends.

A native of San Antonio, Cortes, now in his mid-forties, has been agitating Texas since the mid-1960s, when he worked for the United Farm Workers, then engaged in a strike broken by the Texas Rangers at the behest of Governor John Connally. Later trained at Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation, Cortes is one of the group's chief organizers.

He was the first organizer for COPS — Communities Organized for Public Service — a San Antonio civic group founded in 1973 and considered one of the nation's most successful. The city was half Mexican American but the power was all in the hands of the white business establishment. That has changed, and most observers credit COPS. Cortes taught the people how to make themselves heard through confrontation.

At first the mayor refused to deal with COPS. Austin writer Kaye Northcott has described what happened next: "Cortes took aim at the establishment that supported the mayor. Five hundred folks wearing COPS buttons advanced on the Joske's department store next door to the Alamo. They tried on dresses and furs, experimented at the makeup counter, tested the beds in the furniture department.... Over at the Frost National Bank, they lined up to change dollars into nickels and nickels into pennies and then back into dollars. COPS not only got its meeting with the mayor, it extracted a $10,000 loan from the president of the bank."

Cortes moved on after a couple of years; COPS now has numerous offspring, and he heads up the Interfaith Network, an alliance of such groups in Texas.

He likes to stay in the background, but was thrust into the limelight a few years ago after receiving a grant from the MacArthur Foundation. "They call you on the phone and tell you you're the recipient of the grant," he said. "And then they tell you what it is."

I asked if he had done anything he wouldn't have been able to do without the more than $200,000 from the foundation. "Yeah," he said, "I took my family to Italy for three weeks." The more important beneficiaries of the windfall would be his children, he went on to explain. "It virtually assured a college education for my kids, if they want it," he said. "And also two god- children."

Northcott reported that when she asked what he was going to do with the money, he replied, "Buy books." Her initial reaction was: Nobody buys that many books. Later she changed her mind, and I'm inclined to agree. I haven't seen his home — "a jumble of books," she said — or his car — "a library on wheels." But I have seen his office.

Books are everywhere. On shelves, on the floor, piled precariously on his desk. Economics, political theory, the social sciences, Third World development. Also ready at hand are biographies of Mary Tudor and Charles II, treatises on Judaism, a history of Greece. And magazines, a whole room full of magazines. *The Progressive* and *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker* and *Tikkun*. No realm of knowledge too obscure, or too obvious, to go unexamined.

We discussed the art of community organizing in this bibliomanic den early on Saturday morning, the fifth of May. That evening, there was another award to accept, *The Texas Observer*'s annual Social Justice Award.

What are the most important things you're working on right now?

Right now, the most important agenda is to expand the network of organizations, IAF organizations. In Texas now we have 10, and I'm working with some sponsoring committees in Arizona — the beginnings of new organizations — in Phoenix and Tucson. And we have organizing efforts in Dallas and in Beaumont/Port Arthur.

Primarily in Mexican-American communities?

I'm glad you asked that because a lot of people have the mistaken impression that our organizations are predominantly Mexican American. That's true along the border and with COPS in San Antonio. However, the efforts in Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, Houston, Phoenix are very interracial — blacks, Hispanic Americans, poor whites. And also some middle-income professional types.

Do these organizations still, as COPS did in the beginning, spend most of their energies on local issues?

I would agree that all politics are local. But since 1982, there has been a real push on issues such as public-school finance, water and sewers for the poor border communities, health care for the uninsured, job training, fair taxes, our toxic nightmare, other issues that cut across a region and the state. The question is, How do we take the leaders of these organizations and challenge their vision on such issues?

Tell me how one of these organizations starts up. Less than 20 years ago, none of them existed.

In Texas, yes. But the Industrial Areas Foundation has been around for 50 years.

Yes. But how do you decide to go and organize, say, Fort Worth?

For Fort Worth to happen, somebody would have to talk to us about — advocate — putting an organization together. The first step is a sponsoring committee, which is essentially a group of people who are willing to raise the money for a two-year budget to begin the organizing effort. It's hard to organize and raise money at the same time, so you have to have money for the organizers to do the work.

These sponsoring committees primarily, in the beginning, are church leaders. Sometimes you get some union leaders too, and others who have a long-term vision and a commitment to the common good, maybe a few professional people who have some resources they're willing to put in. We are finding more people troubled by the quality of life and the lack of vision of people in the political establishment. But mainly it's been church people who make up the sponsoring committees. And once you have a broad enough sponsoring committee, one that's representative of the community, then it hires an organizer.

And the way you do the organizing, the first step is real simple. In San Antonio, I did a thousand individual meetings, one-on-one meetings, with a thousand persons in the community. After a while you begin to draw a map, a mental map, of that particular community: Who are the leaders, what are their

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Former Observer *editor Linda Rocawich is the managing editor of* The Progressive, *where this interview was originally published.*

concerns? After doing enough of these individual meetings in a particular area, you can pull people together. You can begin to talk about a particular issue that people are concerned about.

Then you get people involved in a discussion; you call a house meeting. So after a lot of these individual meetings, you begin to hold small group meetings. In Los Angeles, when we began in 1976, we held more than a thousand house meetings.

These would have how many people at them?

Eight, 10, 12. Some would have a lot more. But the purpose is to get people to know each other, to get people to form relationships, to talk, and finally to get the committee to take some action and do some kind of research.

So the idea is to come to some consensus, to pick an issue. The one that's most important?

Not necessarily the most important, because some of the most important ones are the hardest ones to do something about. In the beginning, you're thinking: How do I build the organization?

So you pick something that's doable, and people can have a success. Is that the idea?

Yes, more or less. The idea is to pick something that you need, that you can get hold of; that will give the people a picture of what they can do. Then you can say afterward: Well, now that you've got this done, what about this? This other thing is possible. That's all part of what you're doing as an organizer.

You're also thinking about the people who are involved. Is this person a potential leader? Is this person going to mature, to develop? Does this person have the curiosity and the passion? Or is this person just going to be concerned about this one local issue and that's the end of it? Is this person just ambitious to be on the city council? So part of what the organizer is doing is looking for talent. Sophisticated organizers know that they are never going to be the builders. What they're going to do is find the leaders who will come together and build the organization.

Your role as an organizer is to teach people how to organize. You can't do it yourself. So you get into these house meetings, and you're always looking for people whom you can spark, whom you can challenge, whom you can agitate. You want to tap their energy, tap their vision, tap their imagination and their curiosity. And you're also trying to see if you can get them to see beyond themselves and their situations.

Give me a concept of size. How many people are fairly active in COPS as members, and how many paid staff?

There are two full-time organizers and a secretary. How many members depends on what level. I mean, there are hundreds of people involved in the leadership, who are volunteers who don't get paid. Valley Interfaith has the largest staff, three full-time organizers, but there are easily a thousand leaders involved in some sort of way, giving from five to 10 hours a week of their time.

The staff's job is to recruit new leaders, constantly to bring new people in, so there's always a mix of experienced and new leadership, so the organization stays fresh, stays on the cutting edge, doesn't get lulled into security or into complacency.

Let's turn to some particular issues. Tell me about indigent health care.

We worked very hard to pass a bill back in 1985. One thing it does is try to prevent "dumping." Private hospitals used to dump poor patients, take care of them just long enough to stabilize them and then move them over to a public hospital, because they didn't have any insurance. So this bill stopped that. Not totally stopped it, but at least the most egregious aspects.

Is it enforced?

I think so. Like all things, you have to constantly maintain vigilance, or go back and redo it. So that is one thing the bill did.

The second thing it did was inaugurate an experimental prenatal program and expand health services for children and pregnant women. That took effect in 1985.

Is it possible yet to tell whether there has been an effect on the infant-mortality rate?

I think it's had some effect in the Rio Grande Valley. I guess the best indicator, or one of the best, of success is that the Department of Human Services has a half-billion-dollar deficit, because people are using these programs.

You mean they have to keep providing services even when they're out of funds?

Yes, because people have a legal right to them now. We have also been working with Senator Lloyd Bentsen's office, trying to develop a multi-county health district in the Valley. We're not sure yet how to structure it most effectively, but it would be to expand health services available to poor people. In the Valley virtually no one has health insurance. One study says two out of every five kids born in Texas are born into homes with practically no access to health care. Because they are born poor. In the Valley, it's probably more like four out of five, at a minimum three out of five.

Let's move on to the water situation in the colonias. This is not widely known outside of Texas; can you describe the situation?

You have to understand, first, that in Texas there are no county governments worth talking about. Counties here are creatures of the state. There is no county home rule; they only have the powers that the state of Texas gives them. Outside the city limits of any city in Texas, in unincorporated areas, the counties are responsible but they have no ordinance-making power.

So a county cannot, as a matter of course, control development. It cannot — or could not — in reviewing a plat or issuing a building permit, tell the developer he must provide water or sewer services if he creates a subdivision. The county could not tell that developer, "Well, now, wait a minute, where is the water, where are the sewers, where are the roads?" None of that, okay?

You had a fair number of developers who were relatively unscrupulous. They would lure people into areas — particularly such areas as El Paso, where you had a housing crisis, no affordable housing for poor people. They would come out and subdivide the land and build people homes on land contracts, which meant the homeowners basically paid rent until the last payment, so they had no equity. They'd tell them, "Hey, eventually there's gonna be water here."

These folks are very poor. So they move to these areas; for them it's an opportunity to get out of some very congested and debilitating public housing or whatever. So they move in and they have no water and no sewer services. They operate either with outhouses at the worst or sometimes with septic tanks. Now, there's nothing wrong with a septic tank, except that, when you get to certain densities, to certain levels, they will flow and you will begin to have seepage. So you have these drainage pits in the Valley where there's just nothing but raw sewage. When it rains heavily and there's flooding, there's no drainage. Sometimes you'll see kids walking to school in sludge.

I've seen photographs of people keeping their water in the front yard in drums used to ship chemicals to the maquiladoras, the manufacturing plants along the border.

Yes. In El Paso. In the Valley, there were these co-operative water-supply companies, and there was water, at least, in a lot of the colonias, though not every one. In El Paso, people had no water. No sewage and no water. And they'd keep water, as you said, in these drums.

And there are stories. Some of our leaders would notice these little girls coming to school smelling really bad. They'd smell bad because they'd bathe in these chemical drums.

And where there was a water-supply company, people were paying outrageously high prices for water on a monthly basis just to get by. Valley Interfaith began organizing on this issue back in the early 1980s and got [Governor] Mark White, to make some small grants to particular colonias. But we didn't feel that was going very well. So we got Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby to come to a convention of Valley Interfaith, and he made a commitment for $100 million of state assistance for water and sewer services.

And we helped pass the Texas Water Plan, major legislation, with the understanding that both Hobby and White would appoint people to the Water Development Board who would be sensitive to this issue, who would be willing to work with us on this issue. By and large, they kept that commitment. But then the state went into a very serious downturn, and we had a hard time keeping the financial commitment alive. We got the Water Development Board to come down to the Valley and tour the colonias, walk in the sludge, walk in the mud.

That should stick in their minds.

It was a very important day. The board

began to get a sense of the importance of this. And finally, in this last session, 1989, we worked very, very hard and passed a bill providing $100 million worth of sewer and water services to the colonias. We had a lot of help, bipartisan support.

So that's starting to get put in place now?

It took effect last year. But there was still a lot of work to do. The counties are not real happy about this bill because they have to pass model rules and they have to start taking some responsibility for the colonias.

It is, in fact, a very conservative bill. It requires the colonias's residents themselves to pay for the sewers. It's not a giveaway program. The grant money is primarily to make it possible to buy down the cost of interest. Really, we're just stretching out the long-term payments on these sewer projects to make them more affordable. There are some grants to get hookups to the homes, but the residents have to pay for these projects.

Some good may come of that, too, in terms of a commitment to help yourself.

Well, we believe in the iron rule. Never do for people what they can do for themselves. It's real important to enable, to empower, to inspire, to challenge people to begin to take responsibility for their lives. I don't mean this in a harsh way, I don't mean it in a mean way. I mean in a way that they begin to see that they have to be co-responsible for what goes on with them.

Somebody in Texas — Lieutenant Governor Hobby, I believe — shocked everybody a few months ago by calling for an income tax.

Yes, and the corporate community across the state is for an income tax.

What turned those people around?

Two things. One was the Tax Reform Act. Sales taxes are no longer deductible from Federal taxes. And then they began to notice that they were paying franchise taxes and other fees regardless of whether they were making any profits, and the idea of a corporate-profits tax — an income tax — began to look very attractive to them.

Because of the Texas recession? Because all of a sudden they weren't making any profits?

Exactly. Alinsky used to say, "When you people do the right thing, you do it for the wrong reason." Virtually every corporate leader I know of is for an income tax. It's ironic, because the Texas Association of Taxpayers was formed to fight the income tax, and now it's one of the biggest proponents.

That's a corporate lobby? With a name to make it sound like "just us folks"?

It's really Exxon.

We've been talking a lot about statewide issues. Now, COPS and the other Interfaith organizations have been famous over the years for their confrontational meetings with local officials, city council people and so on, holding their feet to the fire. Does that work with state officials as well?

It varies. When we first worked on school finance, one of the lobbyists described us as "the circle-and-conquer group." We'd have these sessions with legislators, gather 30 or 40 people around him. We'd bring our people to the Capitol to get state representatives to commit themselves. So I would say the tactic works, with modifications.

But there's a bigger distance to cross with, say, the lieutenant governor than with a city council member or state representative.

That's true. But Hobby has been to our accountability sessions ... Ann Richards, all those people. So it's yes and no. The accountability forum works well. We don't need to do the kind of confrontations we used to. Those were to get public officials to deal with us.

And now they know they have to?

When somebody is willing to deal with you, for you to be confrontational, you're just being a bully. You don't do it for its own sake. We're trying to teach people *politics*. Politics means negotiating and being reciprocal and thinking about the other person. The importance of an action is to put yourself in a position where you can sit down and really do some hard negotiating.

I've heard people say at one time or another over the years that one characteristic of the Interfaith organizations is they don't work in coalitions with other community groups. Do you think that's a fair generalization? If it is, is that just a pragmatic result of local conditions or is it a basic philosophy of organizing?

Well, we work in coalition with a number of groups.... We're selective about whom we work with. We want to be sure that whomever we work with is somebody we *can* work with, someone we can trust, someone who will be accountable in some kind of way to us. Probably the reason you hear that is we don't join these huge, big coalitions.

We particularly don't do that in the beginning. When you're trying to develop an organization, that's not the way you do it. And, frankly, a lot of people see that we've got numbers and we've got a constituency, and they will try to use that. So to that extent, the generalization is not fair.

You mean there's a self-protective reason not to join?

It's a recognition that it's not the way to develop the organization, particularly in its early stages. The people who have to get the recognition for your work are your own leaders, the ones you're working with. You're trying to teach them. If they are going to get buried in some coalition effort, then it doesn't teach them any sense of recognition of their own power.

Remember that we think our primary task is developing leadership, not just resolving some problem, not just doing good. We're building an organization, so we have to think about these questions. So people who make those accusations or complaints are only thinking about their particular issue.

The organizer has to be thinking about all this — how do you develop the organization? So you make a determination or recommendation. Let's work on this issue rather than that, on the basis of: Is this going to help build the organization or not? You might get into a fantastic issue that will take 10 years to resolve, and you may solve the problem eventually by going to court or all kinds of other ways, but you won't have an organization in the end. Because people get tired. There's nothing for them to do; the work is all being done by lawyers. So another thing we don't do is file lawsuits.

Lawyers want to go into court and be heroes. But there's no role for our folks in the court. And there is an ideological question here. We think too many things are having to be solved in the courthouse in the United States.

My point is that the courtroom freezes the action for people. There's no role for them. We're trying to teach people how to become involved, to be participatory. From an organizer's perspective, a negotiated political solution teaches more effectively. And people then begin to see their role, see how important they can be. So that's what we do. And sometimes that means we don't get into coalitions.

Turning to something more personal, you've stayed active and involved for a long time now. My impression from everything I've heard is you work long and hard. How do you keep that up over 20, 30 years, that level of commitment? Burnout is a common problem with grass-roots activists.

Well. One of the things I've always liked about the Industrial Areas Foundation approach is it allows you to do things differently. There's no one way to do this business. I like to teach. For me, organizing is teaching, and the organizations are mini-universities. So as long as there is an opportunity to try to teach different people, new people, new insights and new dimensions of this process, then it stays real interesting. If I were teaching the same thing over and over again to the same people, I think I probably would have had a hard time sustaining myself.

One of the reasons I'm in Arizona now is because it's new turf, there are new people, there's a new dimension, I get my head into a new situation. Phoenix, Tucson. Probably in four years I'll be in New Mexico. Or Colorado. Or both. □

One On One

Profiles of IAF Leaders

BY WENDY WATRISS

Virginia Ramirez

Leader and community coordinator for Communities Organized for Public Service in San Antonio.

I came to COPS for a special reason. I wanted them to solve my problems. I lived in one of the oldest neighborhoods in San Antonio, Colonia Amistad. I had an old neighbor who died, and I remember the paramedics saying it was because she didn't have enough heat. I was angry. I wanted something to be done about the housing in my neighborhood. I had heard about COPS because I had a friend who belonged. She told me about it, but for a long time I didn't go. Then my neighbor died.

COPS had a local action, and I decided to go to talk about housing problems. But I left angry: They didn't solve my problems. Later one of the organizers, Christine, came to my house. She came in and she talked to me, about me. She wanted to know how I felt, why I was angry, what I was thinking about. I told her I wasn't going to help, couldn't help, because I wasn't an educated person.

But one night I went again. I remember that meeting: It was the end of the year and cold, December 1981. I remember listening to all those people. I said to myself, "Jesus, these people must really be educated. They sound so intelligent." But they were people like my neighbors. I was very proud.

I wanted so much to take the first step, but I was afraid — afraid of the unknown, afraid of failing. My English was very limited. I was embarrassed. I didn't want people to know the limits of my education. I left school at 14 and married at 15. I stayed home for 24 years. I was a wife and mother.

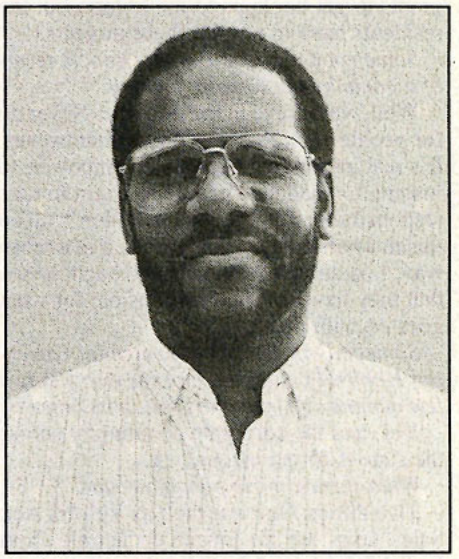
The COPS leaders worked with me. They taught me how to run meetings, how to plan an agenda, how to speak publicly. They gave me the courage to take risks. I was hungry for more education. My hunger got so deep that I actually enrolled in school. I was 44. I got my GED and I started college. I wanted to learn everything.

I got out of the house when I joined COPS. It was like a whole new world. I never knew I had so many talents. In 1982, I was elected area vice president. One of my first actions was to go before the city council to demand where money allocated for our neighborhood had gone. Christine, the organizer, coached me. We did a lot of research. There was $300,000 allocated for Amistad, and the money was moved elsewhere. We formed a committee and met with our city council representative and then the head of Community Development Block Grants. We demanded to see the notes of a meeting when the money was discussed. We learned that it was moved to another part of the city as a loan and we could demand it back. I always remember the day we went to city council. My throat was dry, my legs were shaking. I was petrified. Just before I started to speak, I turned around. There were 40 leaders from my parish behind me. I'll never forget that. That is the strength we have.

If they hadn't been there, I probably couldn't have done it. I barely remember what I said, but I must have done a good job because we got the money back. But I do remember what I felt when I got home: "My God I can do things! I am able to make changes." Suddenly I became a public person, with school and work and a future. I am going part-time to college to get a degree in public health. I am effective in the community. I know exactly how far I can go and who are the people I can push. I have a strong relationship with the community that has taken years to develop. Once people trust you in these organizations, you have that trust forever.

People think the organizers come to train us, but it's a two-way street. We teach them our culture, our people, our problems. Sometimes we go after them, sometimes they go after us. We share ideas back and forth. Especially at COPS, we've always had strong leaders. I know they are the bosses, and we are not afraid to say no. There is always tension between the organizers and the leaders, but that tension is good, I think. We need the expertise of the organizers, but if we don't think we are the owners, it won't work.

We have many experienced and talented leaders now. We have to take a step further. We are people of vision, and this is part of the vision that we are expanding.



Monte Elliott

Leader with Allied Communities of Tarrant County (ACT) in Fort Worth.

I like the process, the one-on-one meetings. That's the way you get to know where people are and what their feelings are about things. They give you an opportunity to share your own feelings, and you learn from them.

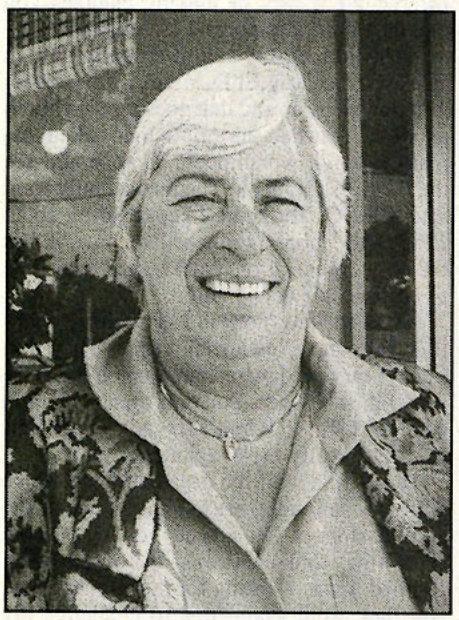
My father was an engineer, and I am manager of external affairs and public relations for Southwestern Bell. My parents always stressed education. I had always felt frustrated by the apathy of people, and I wanted to get people more involved. A lot of the apathy is because people know what the problems are but don't know how to do anything about them.

What I like about this organizing process is the potential for empowering people to do things. I like the non-partisan approach of the organization because I want to hear what everyone has to say.

The organizer's role is primarily to agitate the leadership — analyze an action, critique what I do. It's the role of facilitator, agitator, and evaluator. And my role is to do the same thing to my congregation — challenging

them and critiquing their actions.

The issues should come from the people. Our church had a Mt. Pisgah ACT meeting, and we asked the congregation to voice their concerns and their issues and write them down. From that, we put together our agenda: education, crime, utilities, taxation. There are cases in which we didn't have as much community input as we should have. It depends on how much we want to get involved. On some issues, education and utility reform, some communities have had more input than others. Like the colonias, it's not a priority with us, but we will be involved. These are issues that are important to everybody and they all touch us in some way. After all, our issues were brought to the table too.



Jan Wilbur
Leader in The Metropolitan Organization in Houston.

Within our organizations, within our churches, we talk to people about the issues they are frustrated about and how to put issues together for different parts of the city and make them work. How can we put an issue in the Memorial area together with an issue in the Fifth Ward and have them work together? Take crime, for example. What do you do about that? We can put more patrols here, but that doesn't help the people over there.

We had a two- to three-year research period on crime. We were a committee of 12-15 community people who wanted to do the work and had time. We wanted to find something that would benefit the most people and also was doable. We met with criminologists, professors, corrections people at Sam Houston University, and police officers in Houston. We had a team that worked with Chief Lee Brown for seven months. In addition to the working committee, we had 40-50 people who would come to the smaller meetings with officials. We had several major meetings with Brown where there were 700 people. We focused on the neighborhood concept and pushed it with Brown. We helped get neighborhood programs in the Third and Fifth Wards.

In the early days, people didn't want to meet with us. Maybe it was because we were new in town and not just like other organizations. They would call a leader to say a city official would meet with that leader and not the whole group. We said no, you have to meet with all of us. They would try to play one part of the city off against another: "If we give this to you here, we'll have to do it there, and it's too expensive." But that didn't work when we went in with all parts of the city represented — blacks, browns, and whites. We had negotiated those issues amongst ourselves first.

Frankly, one of the reasons I have stayed with this for more than 10 years is that you are constantly learning — whether it's an issue, or what you do with it, or what kind of action will work and make us feel satisfied.

When I first heard about IAF in Houston, I said I wanted to know more about it. I thought it would be great to work in an organization that had men, blacks, browns, and whites. It's putting the research with a community base. I went to the first meeting at our church, and then we looked at all the forms of organizing in Houston at the time. We recommended IAF because there was no other group that looked like it could bring together Protestants and Catholics, triracial groups, some Jewish communities, and different geographic areas of Houston.

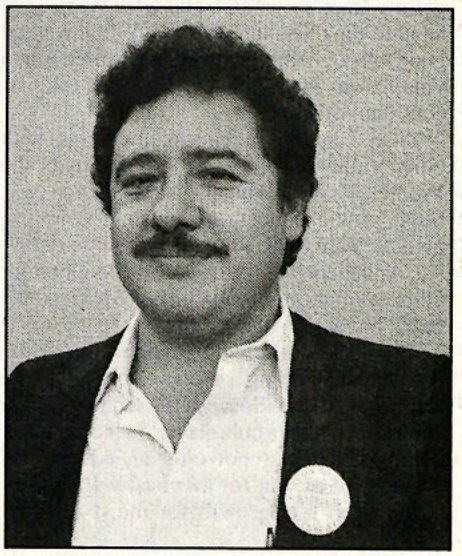
We had an IAF organizer come to do a three-day training session with 30-40 people from 15-20 different churches. I liked the sessions on power. I had been in a consciousness-raising session for women, and we had talked about power there. I had been thinking about it. I also liked that they were looking for people who are the real leaders in a community — not necessarily the council member or the head of the NAACP. Someone who community people look to for help. For example, if your kid has a problem at school and you've been to the school and still need something done, who do you call?

We began the one-to-one meetings right away. We started to train ourselves about the concept of self-interest, public versus private, relational power and unilateral power, and why we were doing this as an institutionally-based organization. These one-to-one meetings are a means to engage people — not to simply get to know them or persuade them to do something. You are trying to build a public relationship. You are trying to get them to think about what they want to accomplish and what are the points that are rubbing against their skin. The only reason for someone to get involved in this is for them to get something out of it. You want to get more people engaged to create a critical mass that can do something.

These are things that organizers think about. That is their value to us. They've been involved with other fights to get things done, and they've seen similar obstacles and the ways to get around them. There's a small incident I remember that illustrates this: A water main was broken and water was running in the street. A group of people in the church wanted to get it fixed. The organizer said; "Well here's one thing to try. Call the person who is responsible. "They couldn't get the person to respond." The organizer said: "Call his supervisor and get different people to call him every 15 minutes." Before the fourth person called, they had a meeting set up. The people had power, but they didn't know how to use it. After they did this, they became somebody in the neighborhood. People saw them as people who could get things done. It built respect.

The organizers are always challenging — challenging us and challenging each other. We are not always comfortable with that. It's still hard for me to challenge others. The whole idea of confrontation is an integral part of these relationships....

If we can move the Legislature to spend the money it should for education and we still have the people at home to see that it's being well spent, we will really have done something. It's having a vision. Like education: It's the idea of schools really being a community of learners with students, parents, teachers, administrators all learning.



Javier Parra
Leader with Valley Interfaith in South Texas.

I grew up in Brownsville. My father only went through second grade. He worked for cotton gins and did migrant work in Illinois, Michigan, and Montana. But he was very concerned with our education, and we'd always get back in time for school. In 1971, I was drafted and started studying for college in the Army. I got a degree in computer science and went to work for Union Carbide from 1975 to 1985, when they shut the plant. I work for Brownsville as a senior computer operator now.

When Valley Interfaith came to the Valley

in 1982, a lot of people were talking about it. There was a lot of propaganda against it. The propaganda was mostly Anglo, but they were using Mexicans to get to us. People heard priests saying it was Marxist and Communist. The propaganda was out there so much that the media picked it up quick.

I heard the organizers, Jim Drake and Ernie Cortes, but I was skeptical at first. All of sudden, there were these people saying: "We can do a lot for you."

But they also told us: "We're not going to do it for you." I liked the idea we could do things. People in the Valley had been taught to understand that the system was only supposed to work for a few. People were passive. In the men's class I attended at my church, I was watching the same problems go on and on. I didn't see why my people had to get help through cheese lines — waiting, sometimes two to three hours in the sun, to get five pounds of cheese and some canned goods. It was embarrassing, insulting, and I became angry — an anger that makes you want to struggle against those who don't understand.

We went through six months of workshops, twice a month. We looked through what was attacking the unity of the family — unemployment, lack of education, lack of health care, lack of basic services. The unity of the family was at risk. We looked at our spiritual and material needs, what we were getting from our church and what we needed beyond the religious services. When we had gone through the process, we called for a vote. It was 200 to one, and we had the first contract with IAF.

Then I started attending meetings with other Valley leaders in different parts of the Valley. That is how the first agenda was born: public education, housing, colonias, medical care, lack of water and sewer service. And there was the question of incinerator permits offshore in the Gulf of Mexico. We had a big action against that.

Then I was showing reporters around a colonia and leading a group of people to the Capitol in Austin. Some of the senators didn't even know what a colonia is: "Is it coronas or colonias?" It was not only an educational process for us, but for them as well.

It's been real growth for me. I couldn't stand in front of people and talk when I started. Now I have been on stage in front of 5,000 and 10,000 people. When I see these people, I am energized. I see through their eyes that I am growing. Seven years ago, I never would have thought that one day I would be in Washington talking to one of the Congressmen. It is a "university of the people" — that's what we call our organization in the Valley. At this point, I don't know where or when to stop.

Rebecca Rojo
Leader in EPISO (El Paso Interreligious Sponsoring Organization) in El Paso.

I was born and raised in Fabens, which had 150 families then. I think one of the biggest impacts on me was in '60-'61 when I was in first grade and saw the black school. We had three schools then — Mexican, black, and Anglo. The black school was behind the Mexican school. My teacher would send me over with messages for the other teacher. I saw all of them in one room, grades 1-12. Why were they there, and we here, and where was everyone else?

After third grade, when we were put with the Anglos, I asked why all the Anglos were in Section A classes. I was labelled a troublemaker because I asked questions. My mother didn't ask questions. My mother didn't speak English, and she was just glad her children could get an education. It wasn't within our culture to ask questions or challenge authority.

I was determined to go to college, despite the system. I loved to read — maybe it was escapism. But I scored high on tests in seventh and eighth grades and met a teacher who cared. When I graduated, out of 100 people in my class, seven of us went to college and four were Anglos. I said I wasn't staying: I went to college in California and then to law school at UCLA. Because there were so many lawyers already in Los Angeles, I came back to El Paso.

I started work with the city attorney's office in 1981, and I was living at home in Fabens. I looked at Fabens: nothing had changed except for the worse. We had grown from 500 people to 5,000, and we had colonias without water. I wanted to do something about education.

In those days, EPISO was still something you stayed away from. They said it was a radical Mexican organization and anti-church. But I knew one of the leaders, Maggie Martinez, and I thought she didn't look so bad. I also noticed that EPISO was willing to take on issues that no one else wanted to take on, like water. Then there was the question of accountability. The commissioner from Fabens had been in office 28 years. EPISO offered me a way of making changes you couldn't do under normal circumstances.

Why did EPISO have so much trouble in El Paso? Because El Paso has a very close-knit power group and that goes for the church as well. You had editorials that called Alinsky a 'devil worshipper.' You should see the EPISO scrapbook. The media really went after EPISO. The more I kept hearing about EPISO, the more interested I became. It was the only organization that seemed to be able to hold people accountable.

I went to New York to IAF national training. They gave me a rough time. They told me: "You're a lawyer, aren't you? You're just a like a lawyer. You don't really want to change things." When they talk about agitate, they really mean agitate.

That's true with the organizers too. Once EPISO challenged me to take on one of the commissioners. "It's time you take some risks," they told me. It was kind of like being slapped. I was working for the city attorney, and they were asking me to challenge my boss. A year and a half later, I did take him on. It was about $2.5 million set aside for roads and water in our area, and we were not getting any roads or water. He called a press conference the next day to ask if I had been on county time, and he threatened to investigate my salary. I challenged him publicly, and he had to retreat.

I went to law school because I wanted to make changes. The first thing the dean of the law school told us was: "You are not going to change the world, the law is going to change you." It was a real downer. But with EPISO I know I have brought about change.

And I see people like Mrs. Lesdesma from Sparks. She is an old woman, and she has no education. She needs water. You should see the house she has to live in. You should also see the kind of leader she has become. A leader and a fighter. If you had seen her at the convention, you would understand what I am saying. That's what this organization does for people.

Wendy Watriss is a journalist living in Houston and chair of the Live Oak Fund for Change.

Agenda for the '90s

BY LOUIS DUBOSE

San Antonio

ON THE THIRD DAY of the Industrial Areas Foundation's mid-October leadership meeting in San Antonio, it suddenly occurred to me how very extraordinary all of this was. It was Tuesday morning and some 250 IAF leaders from around the state were gathered in a meeting room at the Airport Holiday Inn. Most, I assumed, had jobs or family obligations in places as near as downtown San Antonio or as far away as El Paso. All had been in town since Saturday, participating in a series of meetings, breaking only to attend a Sunday afternoon plenary convention which brought together 10,000 participants from the IAF's organizations.

Yet here they were, engaged in a spirited discussion with Cornell University labor economist Vernon Briggs. The topic of the discussion was job training. More specifically, what exactly did the IAF leaders want to see included in job- training legislation? They had heard from Briggs on the previous day, along with University of Texas professor James Galbraith on a state income tax, human-services lobbyist DeAnn Friedholm on health care, and Tom Luce and Craig Foster on school finance. Dr. Briggs, scheduled to return to New York on a midday flight, was back by popular demand — to answer more questions on the topic he had discussed on the previous morning.

And nobody wanted to quit. Briggs left, slouching toward Ithaca, only to be pursued by several questioners. He had been tested by a dentist from Port Arthur, a school-bus driver from Austin, and a nurse from Victoria. As Briggs left the podium, his last lines trailed off behind me in Spanish, where a computer programmer from Brownsville was translating for a woman who owns and works on a shrimp boat in Port Isabel.

For most people not immediately involved with the issue, a discussion of the arcana of job training — the Job Training Partnership Act, lump-sum disbursement of unemployment benefits, and certification of proprietary training facilities — is no more relevant nor interesting than a debate about the number of angels who can be accommodated on the head of a pin. Yet here were 250 women and men determined to learn as much as possible about these issues so that in the coming months they could participate in drafting a policy paper that will become part of their long-term legislative agenda.

I had seen the other end of this process, when the IAF's staff education expert worked hand-in-hand with a member of state Senator Kent Caperton's staff, in what was the last best hope of getting an equitable education bill through last summer's special legislative sessions. Not only did the IAF's policy analyst shepherd a near-moribund bill through the committee process, its volunteer lobbyists, many of them the same people who were clinging to the job-training talk, worked their legislators in the Capitol during the week, and over the weekend mounted a call-in campaign. Their effort, according to state Representative Libby Linebarger, was the single most important factor behind the House's passing a bill that would have provided an equitable system of public school finance and kept Commissioner of Education William Kirby out of court. Then came Bill Clements's veto and the subsequent enactment of a lesser bill, which after November 28 will be rejected by the Supreme Court.

Somehow, in the Legislature, it never occurred to me how labor-intensive the IAF process is. But this is an organization that is about as democratic as an effective organization can be. It's not as if there is complete procedural participatory democracy, but there is always the potential for an outbreak of democracy. This is evident in the dynamics of the relationship between the leaders and the paid staff of organizers.

What will the IAF offer in the coming legislative sessions? Their statewide agenda will emphasize public education, health care, job training, affordable housing, and taxation.

In education, they look beyond public school finance equity and toward the quality of education children will receive. The schools they envision will be much more a part of a community than of a central urban school district. In public schools, they contend in a position paper: "Bureaucratic control replaced democratic deliberation as school systems grew larger." Their response, which in part agrees with the thinking of many education reformers, is to return control of schools to the communities, to empower parents and involve them in their children's education. Schools, by the IAF model, would be more democratic and more accountable, and more responsive to the "local culture of attitudes, values, and understandings." Getting from here to there will not necessarily require a large infusion of money. It will, however, require "shattering our paradigm" of a school.

The reform of the health-care delivery system proposed by the IAF is informed by one radical principle: Health care is an inalienable right. The long-term policy goals would broaden accessibility, opening the private/public system up to small-business owners, working poor, and the elderly, disabled, and unemployable. The cost of insurance would be lowered, and coverage designed to follow a person as he changes jobs, schools, or becomes unemployed. One recommended first step is the expansion of Medicaid coverage, which now is only available to female-headed families earning less than 22 percent of the poverty line, poor pregnant women, poor young children, and the disabled. A corollary to the Medicaid expansion, which would cost little, would have the state redirect into the Medicaid program money now used to treat the poor who fall just outside of the current state-mandated Medicaid eligibility guidelines. The change would allow the state to capture millions of available federal dollars, since the federal government funds 60 percent of the Medicaid program.

A comprehensive job-training system, linking the private and public sectors, is another component of the IAF agenda. A centerpiece of the proposed program would be an individual training account, to provide unemployed or displaced workers with vouchers with to purchase vocational training through community colleges, proprietary schools, vocational institutes, and apprenticeship programs. A prerequisite for such job training would be basic literacy skills, which could be obtained through a training program separate from the voucher system.

An affordable-housing program that would redirect funds into older, inner-city neighborhoods is the fourth policy recommendation included in the IAF agenda. The IAF plan includes a Texas Housing Trust Fund, strategies to direct private money to low-income housing, and greater accountability from the Texas Housing Agency, now under review by the Sunset Commission.

A critique of the current system of raising state revenues tends toward an income tax, but doesn't quite get there. What is clear is that the current system of property and sales tax, which raises most of the revenue in the state, has reached its limit. IAF recommends a system which can raise sufficient and stable revenues, is not unduly burdensome because of its narrow focus, and distributes tax burdens equitably. That doesn't describe the current system. And the IAF has yet to declare it heretical to say that "the need for increased government spending is clear."

Where will this organization go with this shopping list? And did it squander its political capital by bringing 10,000 members to San Antonio, rather than marching on Austin during the first or second week of the next legislative session? "This is not an agenda for a legislative session," IAF state director Ernie Cortes said when asked that question. "It's an agenda for five, 10, 15 years. We're thinking about the long-term."

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What Is Our National Interest?

By Ralph Lynn

Saddam Hussein another Hitler?

Iraq a reincarnation of post-1918 Germany?

The Middle East a Europe in resources?

The Middle East a Europe in relation to United States strategic interests?

What are our real national interests in this explosive situation and what are our prospects for emerging with an outcome we can call a victory?

Psychologically, or perhaps psychiatrically, Saddam Hussein may be rather like Hitler. He is certainly shrewd in the sense of animal cunning. He has demonstrated total ruthlessness in murdering his domestic opposition. And clearly he has no scruples against attacking weaker neighbors.

But Hitler could not have been Hitler apart from the German people and Europe itself. Hitler led a cohesive, disciplined nation rich in natural resources and equipped with a sophisticated scientific-industrial system supported by a highly educated, skilled population.

In sharp contrast, Saddam Hussein presides over a barbarous, ramshackle, medieval state which is formidable only because of the oil wealth it has used to arm itself with modern weapons.

The Middle East is not remotely similar to Europe. Whereas all of the European nations are much like Germany, the Middle East is composed of economically backward, internally warring tribal states not one of which, save Israel, has a cohesive, patriotic, disciplined, educated population.

In relation to America's strategic interests, the Middle East — as compared with Europe — is insignificant.

We have fought two great wars and one nearly interminable Cold War for one good reason: We must keep any nation unfriendly to us from gaining a foothold on the Atlantic Ocean.

If this case is at all valid, we must ask why we are massing men and the materiel of war in the Arabian Desert.

Probably we should discount the argument that we are making sure that, in the post-Cold War world, aggressor nations are effectively discouraged. The more significant reasons are more mundane and they are two in number.

First, we are interested in an unending supply of cheap oil.

Unfortunately, several arguments tend to invalidate this aim. One is that the billion dollars per month our military initiative is costing would buy a lot of expensive oil. Another is that if the shooting starts (It is probably inevitable.) the oil producing and processing facilities we are "protecting" will be so damaged that the price we pay for oil will be relatively astronomical from here on.

Still another argument is that responsible oil people in the United States say that we can produce the oil we need domestically if only we are willing to pay $40.00 per barrel for it. This effort would employ American men and women in productive enterprises — less glamorous but also much healthier than the prospect our soldiers face in the Middle East.

A second — and more defensible — reason for our military involvement is that we can use the occasion to prevent Iraq from developing nuclear weapons.

What are our prospects for emerging from this imbroglio with any conclusion we can legitimately call a victory?

President Bush has enunciated two aims most clearly. One is that Iraq must abandon Kuwait and allow the restoration of the deposed government. The other is that Iraq's hostages must be released unharmed.

An aim to which he has hinted darkly is the elimination of Iraq's nuclear threat and its biological weapons.

If these are, in fact, our sticking points we are probably foolish in hoping to avoid all-out war — a war which would leave Kuwait a shambles and probably claim our hostages as its first victims. One cannot seriously suppose that this proud man and his proud people whom the West has scorned for a hundred years will back down when they have the opportunity to kill thousands of Americans and cause us untold economic damage.

Saddam Hussein is probably much too much like Hitler. Like Hitler, he will probably prefer an Islamic version of Hitler's Götterdammerung to retreat or surrender.

Ralph L. Lynn is Professor Emeritus of History, Baylor University.

State of Change

BY LOUIS DUBOSE

Austin

THE POLITICAL tide that carried Ann Richards and Bob Bullock to victory also swept a number of progressive down-ballot candidates into office. Because it did, the Legislature will be a better place.

While most progressives have long since written off the House, a few, like Austin political consultant David Butts, have maintained that the House is only a few elections away from being a reasonably decent legislative body. This was one of those elections.

The election of Austin businesswoman Sherri Greenberg, who replaces Republican Terral Smith, and of Senator Gonzalo Barrientos's legislative counsel Elliott Naishtat, who defeated a do-nothing Republican, will make a difference. As will the election of Leticia Van de Putte, who prevailed over unlikely Republican underachiever Bart Simpson, to take the San Antonio seat vacated by Orlando Garcia.

In Houston, Richards's voters helped elect Ken Yarbrough and Kevin Bailey. Both prevailed over Republican incumbents who won Democratic seats in 1989. Yarbrough's opponent, Ken VanderVoort, was one of those famous-for-nothing representatives, best known as the Republican most frequently mistaken for Doyle Willis. But Charlie Hartland, whom Bailey defeated, was one of the young Ayatollahs of the Christian right. And Sue Schechter captured the Houston seat held since 1976 by Brad Wright, best known for his homophobic opposition to AIDS-prevention legislation last session. Schechter was described as an enlightened candidate with a background in women's issues.

In District 81 in Wichita Falls, John Hirschi, a good-government Democrat and Common Cause activist, defeated Republican Tom Haywood to replace John Gavin, who has represented the interests of the insurance companies. Look for Gavin, hoary head, florid face, and glad hand, in the lobby. And in the Valley, Rene Oliveira reclaimed the seat he lost in 1986 to a lesser candidate, Eddie Lucio, who moves on to the Senate.

The House elections could have been better. Kay Taebel could have prevailed over Ken Grusendorf and struck a blow for equitable education and good manners. And someone might have defeated George Pierce, Jeff Wentworth, or Alan Schoolcraft, the trio of San Antonio reactionaries who helped keep the state's public school system in court.

Democrats picked up three seats in the House, where they will hold a 93-57 advantage. But the House is full of bad Democrats. What is notable about this election is the quality of the candidates elected — and the banana slugs they replaced.

Across the rotunda the good news is that Bob Bullock will preside in the Senate. Bill Hobby was an enlightened and fair lieutenant governor — particularly in his last years in office. He was, one lobbyist said, "as good as any converted Tory could be." Bob Bullock need not be converted. He is one of those rare public officials who has a vision of the state as a commonweal.

Some of the losses in the Senate occurred in the primary, particularly when Hector Uribe missed his wake-up call and was defeated by Representative Eddie Lucio. And Art Brender, the Fort Worth civil rights lawyer, lost last spring to Mike Moncrief, in a race to replace Fort Worth Senator Hugh Parmer.

Moncrief, who comes from big money and the far right of the Democratic Party, now replaces the progressive Parmer. And the District Six seat, occupied since 1981 by Kent Caperton, now goes to Democrat Jim Turner, a former House member with a conservative voting record. Turner is an unlikely hero, but a hero he is nonetheless, having defeated Richard Smith, a House member whose ugly disposition complements his voting record. The best news in the Senate is Peggy Rosson's cakewalk in El Paso, where she defeated Republican Frank Lozito.

THE BIGGEST BLOW to progressive forces was Ag Commissioner Jim Hightower's upset loss to Rick Perry. The formula was simple: a Lee Atwater campaign and a Michael Dukakis response.

Hightower never anticipated what so much consistent negative television can do. The day after the election, TDA employees gathered around Hightower in his ninth-floor office as he attempted to make some sense of what happened. "This was not a referendum on you or what you have accomplished," Hightower said. It was not, he maintained, a referendum on keeping pesticides out of the food chain and off the backs of farmworkers. It was not a referendum on farmers markets or co-ops, or any of a number of entrepreneurial projects the TDA has put in place during Hightower's eight-year tenure. What this was about, Hightower said, was money and the power of negative campaigning.

He was right. Perry spent more on a negative ad campaign in four of the state's major media markets than Hightower spent on the entire campaign. Ads with a flag burner superimposed over an image of Hightower, Hightower shaking hands with Jesse Jackson, and the Hightower TDA under investigation by the FBI appealed to the worst instincts of the worst voters. And somehow, the ads didn't have a great deal to do with agriculture in the state of Texas.

Hightower said that by the time he recognized the effect of the negative campaign, which went on the air three weeks before the election, it was too late. He personally tried to raise money, but found that most funders believed the polls, which showed him comfortably ahead of Perry and Ann Richards closing on Clayton Williams. The money moved to the governor's race, and five days before the election Houston pollster Richard Murray released a poll that showed Perry and Hightower in a dead heat.

"There is no place in government like this place," Hightower told some 50 employees crowded into his office. And there isn't. Some outside the TDA never quite understood what this was all about. One writer who never got it was Roddy Stinson, the *San Antonio Express-News* columnist who writes with all the insight and grace of an AM radio talk show host who doesn't quite understand the difference between provoking and annoying. Stinson has waged an ad hominem newspaper war against Hightower for several years — without ever explaining why.

Maybe Stinson didn't get it because he never spent a December night in the San Jose labor camp at Hereford, where migrant farmworkers who winter there will tell you that before the ag department began to seriously regulate aerial pesticide applicators, farmworkers in the Panhandle fields were often sprayed with agricultural chemicals. Or that workers were required to re-enter fields still "hot" from pesticide applications.

Or perhaps Stinson never talked to the farmworkers in the Rio Grande Valley who had abandoned the migrant stream to grow organic produce in a TDA pilot program that spent no tax money, yet found entrepreneurs in a class of people who had previously owned nothing but their cars and their clothes. Or perhaps Stinson never visited Medina, a town within his newspaper's circulation, where an apple-processing co-op was recently transferred from the TDA to local owners. The once-moribund town has a number of new businesses which resulted from the recent "apple boom."

And it could be that Stinson never met with Hill Country truck farmers who gathered in the TDA office in San Antonio, only a few blocks from the *Express-News* office, to draw up articles of incorporation for a vegetable co-op that now provides central market sites and higher earnings — in the place of individuals selling their produce from the backs of pickup trucks at giveaway prices.

But, then, maybe Roddy Stinson just didn't have anything else to write about. Sometimes it's hard to tell. □

Gramm Strikes Out

Three Swing Seats, Three Misses

BY BRETT CAMPBELL

HOW CAN A candidate get 60 percent of the vote and still lose? Ask Phil Gramm. He had labored mightily to pile up enough of the vote to bolster his Presidential credentials and to spread his influence in Congress and the Republican Party. For Gramm, the 1990 election was a setup for a 1996 Presidential run. As a second step, Gramm sought the chairmanship of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, a position he could use to build a national base by raising funds for GOP candidates around the country.

This strategy required more than a personal triumph in Gramm's 1990 re-election race; he had to prove that his success in bringing conservative voters into the GOP column was transferable to at least the candidates just below him on the ballot — the candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives. By revealing whether the junior Senator's popularity could be translated to other Texas candidates, the 1990 campaign would show whether Gramm could help elect Republicans in other states.

Accordingly, Gramm, wielding a broom marked "GOP Clean Sweep 1990," campaigned furiously on behalf of GOP Congressional candidates, especially in three critical races targeted by him and the national Republican Party: House Districts 11, 13, and 14. He funneled $600,000 of his own campaign funds into the GOP statewide effort, recruited candidates, made dozens of fundraising appearances on their behalf, and even helped plan strategy. Political observers in both parties acknowledged that it would be Gramm's coattails, not his almost certain victory, that would be the test of his political future.

By that standard, Gramm failed. Because while his $7 million special-interest war chest guaranteed a win over underfinanced Democratic state Senator Hugh Parmer, Gramm's influence stopped just below his own name on the ballot. It didn't pull Clayton Williams over Ann Richards in the governor's race. And despite the incumbent U.S. Senator's unprecedented schedule of personal appearances and campaign fundraising on behalf of Republicans in conservative swing districts, not a single one of his chosen candidates prevailed. It was a clean sweep, all right, but for the Democrats.

Gramm's most extensive efforts were exerted in Central Texas's District 11, where Democratic state Senator Chet Edwards (formerly of Duncanville, henceforth of Waco) squared off against Republican state Representative Hugh Shine of Temple, to replace retiring Tory Democrat Marvin Leath. Edwards is an old Gramm foe who came within a few dozen votes of nosing out Gramm in the 1978 Democratic primary for the Sixth Congressional District seat. That fight might explain why Gramm worked so hard on Shine's behalf, leaking word of Edwards's appearance at a Houston gay and lesbian function (*TO* 10/26/90) to the Texas Farm Bureau in an effort to stop a Farm Bureau endorsement of Edwards. Or it may be that Shine was, like Gramm, a turncoat former Democrat. Most likely, it was the area's Bible- Belt conservatism that made the GOP see it as a likely takeover target. Whatever the reason, Gramm took a Shine to Hugh, paid for a TV ad urging voters to elect "the Gramm-Shine team," and made over 30 appearances on Shine's behalf, topped off by an election-day rally in Waco in which Gramm, President Bush, and Clayton Williams joined Shine.

Gramm's tactics may have backfired, though. After anonymous mailings about the Houston gay and lesbian banquet began arriving in homes in the district, Edwards preempted the whisper campaign about the incident by calling a press conference to denounce the gay-baiting tactics — a risky but assertive move that made him seem more victim than sinner. Edwards, however, so effectively reconfigured his image — opposing gun control and the closure of Fort Hood, coming out for term limits, calling himself a "common sense conservative" and "Leath conservative" in billboard ads — that a reporter from the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* wrote that he "comes from the party's conservative wing" — a statement that would surprise anyone familiar with his voting record in the Senate. Edwards also countered the wimpy liberal label by cleverly securing a TV endorsement by Baylor University football coach Grant Teaff, and the popular Leath (offended by Shine's scurrilous tactics) appeared in TV ads on the weekend before the election, telling voters that Shine was lying to get the seat. (Informed observers believe that Leath's involvement was crucial to overcoming Shine's huge monetary advantage; state and national Republican entities dumped hundreds of thousands of dollars into Shine's coffers.) Edwards ran another negative ad at the same time, criticizing Shine's involvement in some S&L shenanigans. Finally, the national Democratic Party helped by guaranteeing Edwards a spot on the House Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs committees — assignments vital to the home of Fort Hood.

The race for West Texas's 13th District was quite similar to Shine vs. Edwards. Again, Phil Gramm was a peripatetic presence in the area, embracing the Republican challenger, state Representative Dick Waterfield of Canadian, and ensuring that money poured down from the Republican National Committee in grain-elevator quantities. (Waterfield significantly outspent incumbent Democratic Congressman Bill Sarpalius.) But according to news sources in the district, the extensive campaigning by national figures apparently backfired, conveying the impression to independent-minded West Texans that Waterfield would be a Gramm puppet.

His own negative campaigning appeared to work against Waterfield. The GOP campaign ran radio ads publicizing a bizarre incident in which someone taped a cellular phone call of Sarpalius asking a woman for a date. (*Canadian Record* publisher Ben Ezzell, a veteran observer of the Panhandle political scene, called the release and reporting of the taping incident "the all-time record for campaign sleaze.") Though the Panhandle is the Bible Belt, it's also the Bubba Belt, and many voters (males especially) saw little wrong in a 40-year-old bachelor asking out a woman in her twenties — and resented Waterfield's campaign for harping on the incident. Though Sarpalius didn't call her, Barbara Bush came to the district to say she wouldn't vote for the Amarillo Democrat "if he were the last man on earth" — just a few months after praising him. Governor Bill Clements, in a fit of apparent senility, falsely accused Sarpalius of not actually graduating from the locally revered Cal Farley's Boys Ranch. Gramm ran radio ads accusing Sarpalius of spending taxpayers' money for obscene art, when in fact Sarpalius had merely voted against a meaningless procedural motion affecting the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). When, a few weeks before the election, the GOP candidate's wife was caught tearing down Sarpalius signs — in the interest of public safety, she explained — it seemed to symbolize the nasty tactics of Waterfield's campaign.

Sarpalius — perhaps remembering that five-term Congressman Jack Hightower had

lost the same seat a few years ago by failing to respond to negative ads run by Beau Boulter — was quick to refute the disinformation before it could stick. It helped that Sarpalius, though considered a bit of an amiable dizzard, had a mud-resistant reputation, because of his Horatio Alger, boys'-ranch history, the contacts he'd cultivated with agricultural interests as a former Future Farmers of America president, his earlier high visibility in the district's largest city as its state senator, and finally because he had crafted a good record in his first term in Congress. The national Democratic Party, recognizing a swing seat in the conservative Panhandle, chipped in as well: Sarpalius obtained a coveted seat on the Agriculture Committee (vital for the largely rural area), was elected president of the House freshman class (a meaningless office that gets good press), obtained national park status for Lake Meredith, and also had U.S. Senator Lloyd Bentsen campaigning for him. Not that Sarpalius was afraid to get down and dirty; a week before the election he called a press conference to announce that Waterfield (who'd campaigned on the usual "send a businessman to Washington" theme) had managed a feedlot into bankruptcy.

In the end, Waterfield, despite his own local popularity and significantly more bountiful campaign treasury, never gave voters a reason to reject a popular, conservative incumbent — a candidate who was able to turn the tide of negative advertising into an asset for his own campaign.

In District 14, which runs from the outskirts of Austin to the Gulf Coast (Victoria is the largest city), you could almost substitute the names "Greg Laughlin" for "Bill Sarpalius" and "Joe Dial" for "Dick Waterfield." In both cases, very conservative first-term Democrats faced even more conservative Republican challengers, financed and supported by Phil Gramm and the national GOP. And both challengers lost for similar reasons. Like Sarpalius, Laughlin had, thanks to smart Democratic Congressional leaders, snared a seat on a committee of importance to his district (Maritime for Laughlin, Agriculture for Sarpalius) and used it to bring federal help to the district, including beach-development and erosion-control projects. He'd also helped bring the multibillion dollar (and environmentally dangerous) Formosa Plastics contract to Calhoun County. Laughlin is also said to be quick to respond to constituent concerns (unless the constituents in question happen to be environmentalists, many of whom supported him in his first campaign when he defeated an incumbent Republican, Mac Sweeney). And Laughlin made it back to the district 40 out of 52 weekends in the preceding year.

Gramm also ran a full-scale campaign in the area, appearing at least 30 times since his election, and, in the past year, campaigning with Dial on every visit. But again: Gramm may have been *too* involved. At the same moment he and Vice President Dan Quayle and Clayton Williams were holding a rally for Dial in Victoria, Laughlin was trumpeting his own vote against the proposed federal budget, whose high gasoline taxes (among other features) were wildly unpopular in the large, mostly rural district. Paradoxically, by running as a self-described "maverick" Democrat, incumbent Laughlin (like Sarpalius) was able to paint himself as an independent voice — while challenger Dial, overwhelmed by Gramm's pungent personality and the presence of Barbara Bush, Quayle, former Senator John Tower, and several Cabinet members, began to be perceived as part of the Washington establishment, according to local observers. As in the Shine-Edwards race, the well-publicized fact that the national Republican Party had dumped the maximum allowable $60,000 into the district contributed to that perception.

LOUIS DUBOSE

Phil Gramm, Clayton Williams, Joe Dial and Dan Quayle

The Republicans also mis-Dialed in slinging the slime. Gramm tried to link Laughlin to the NEA vote, but the Democrat was able to show he'd consistently voted against funding the arts agency, and Dial was forced to back off the issue. A Dial tough-on-crime strategy foundered against Laughlin's background as a tough, successful former Harris County prosecutor. And clumsy attempts to link Laughlin to Big Labor bosses in Detroit backfired by galvanizing union get-out-the-vote efforts. Once again, the Republicans failed to give voters a reason to turn out of office a representative who voted his district and took care of his constituency's concerns.

The results of these three close races (13 other Congressional candidates ran unopposed, and most of the other 11 faced only slight opposition) demonstrate that even in very conservative areas of Texas, in regions that voted heavily for Gramm and below the state average for Ann Richards, Democrats can still triumph, though perhaps at the expense of Democratic Party principles. (The burgeoning tax-fairness issue that coincided with the national budget debate might also have helped the Democrats here.)

The party maintained its control of the Texas Congressional delegation, despite the handicap of the widest margin of victory in history for a Republican candidate at the top of the ticket, the largest for a U.S. Senator since Lyndon Johnson's days. Richards's and Bob Bullock's strong showings surely helped, but smart campaign strategy on the part of both the candidates themselves and the national Democratic Party indicate that the party may be learning the arduous lessons of campaigning in the 1990s.

As for Gramm, despite his lack of coattails, his demonstrated ability to extract huge sums of cash from big-money special interests managed to procure him the National Republican Senatorial Committee post, which will provide him a formidable base for his expected 1996 Presidential run. But his demonstrated inability to pull other candidates along with him — both this year and in previous election cycles — may have severely hampered his grandiose ambitions. (After the results came in, Gramm tried to pin the blame for his proteges' losses on Williams, but Congressional races appear above the Governor's race on the ballot — and directly below Gramm's U.S. Senate contest.) After Gramm's victory for the Senate campaign post, Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole praised the Texan's fundraising skills. But when asked whether the new job would help Gramm's aspirations for higher office, the Kansan replied, "I wouldn't start learning the words to 'Hail to the Chief.'"

Hispanic Vote: Hey Claytie, ¿Que Paso?

Clayton Williams and the Republicans predicted that 1990 would be the year they would finally make significant inroads into traditional Democratic consituencies. Good 'ol boy East Texas, the line went, wouldn't vote for a woman, and would be attracted to Williams's rural roots. And Hispanics, the GOP asserted, would be drawn to Williams by his macho tough talk, his rudimentary ranch-Spanish, and the conservative "family values'' with which Republicans have been trying to woo Hispanics (whom they consider more socially conservative than the American mainstream) for a decade now. In particular, Republicans thought the party's anti-abortion position would entice many Hispanic voters, most of whom are Catholic. Republican Party officials first contended that they'd get 40 percent of the Hispanic vote, then, a month before election day, boasted they'd snag fully half of it.

It was all for nada. Williams won only 19 percent of the Hispanic vote in Texas. That was slightly up from the 14 percent Republicans captured in the last two gubernatorial contests, but far below GOP expectations. The usual percentage of Hispanic votes for a Republican candidate, said University of Texas professor of government Rodolfo de la Garza, is 25 to 28 percent.

What happened? First, though Williams ran an extensive media campaign in South Texas, featuring him asking for votes in Spanish, the Midland oilman's *tonterias* hurt him in Hispanic areas just as much as in the rest of Texas. His discourtesy to Richards in the now-notorious incident where he refused to shake her hand might even have hurt more among Latinos because Hispanic culture generally places women on a pedestal.

Another factor was certainly the Democrats' extensive efforts in predominantly Hispanic areas. "We were down there two years ago, organizing, planning, getting everything ready," said Richards Hispanic coordinator Ninfa Moncada. She and Austin state Representative (and Richards campaign honcha) Lena Guerrero helped lock in Hispanic elected officials, and Moncada worked hard to involve local leaders in South Texas and El Paso in planning the campaign strategy. "We ran a grassroots campaign, they ran a media campaign," Moncada said. "That was the difference."

However, Unity '90, the statewide Democratic campaign effort, did run one extremely effective radio commercial (co-produced by Austin state Senator Gonzalo Barrientos and, rumor has it, featuring his voice) that poked fun at Republican "hypocritos" who quadrennially descend on Hispanic areas with a sombrero full of promises that they never keep. At the end of the ad, a voice portraying Williams says, in bad Spanish, "Oh, yeah. Me, your Republican candidate for governor, can sing with the mariachis and speak Spanish more better."

Campaign strategies aside, however, Ann Richards was simply a more appealing candidate for Hispanics. She had a long record of involvement in minority issues, and a documented history of hiring Hispanics at the state Treasury, and she stood for positions that were important to Tejanos. By contrast, Williams's standard reply when asked why Hispanics should vote for him was that he'd met his wife in a Mexican restaurant.

Moreover, the GOP approach was fundamentally flawed, according to Professor de la Garza. "Republicans always assume that Hispanics are more conservative than they really are because they [Republicans] link social values such as religion and family to political values and the role of government," he said. "Republicans don't understand that the policy issues that Hispanics care about — like education — require governmental support. Hispanics can be very family-oriented, but want government-supported programs," said de la Garza, who received a $200,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to study Latino involvement in the 1990 elections. The Richards and Democratic Party platforms promise such programs: aid for colonias, opposition to English as an official language, equalizing financing for rich and poor school districts.

This is not to deny that some Hispanics feel that the Democrats take their vote for granted. "The Democrats have not been good to Mexican Americans," said Roberto Villareal, professor of political science at the University of Texas at El Paso. "There have been no rewards for us, no high-level political or party appointments." In San Antonio, for example, the number of Hispanics identifying themselves as Democrats has dropped sixteen percent since 1982.

But the presence of Dan Morales on the ballot as the Democratic nominee for attorney general, and extensive campaigning on Richards's behalf by former San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros, who is revered by many Hispanics, probably helped persuade Spanish-surnamed Texans that the Democratic promises were much more likely to be fulfilled than those of the other party. The result: Richards received almost 200,000 Hispanic votes — twice the number of votes that made up her margin of victory, according to Robert Brischetto, executive director of the Southwest Voter Registration Project. That factor alone should give Texas Hispanics a lot of *influencia* in the next Governor's administration. — BRETT CAMPBELL

Louise Palmer provided research assistance for this article.

Public Opinion: Pollsters and Politicians

Much time and attention may be lavished on public opinion analysis these days, but polling is still very much an inexact science. This was particularly apparent here in Texas, where the major polls hit and missed on key statewide races.

As Clayton Williams has discovered, comfortable poll ratings won't necessarily win you the race, even when they are released just days before the election. The Texas Poll, sponsored by Harte-Hanks Communications, gave Williams a seven-point lead over Ann Richards, based on a poll conducted between October 20 and 28. The Gallup Poll and *The Houston Chronicle* Poll showed Ann Richards trailing 41-45 and 39- 44, respectively. The Eppstein Poll was the only one to indicate that the race would be close; a poll completed on October 21 showed the two candidates in a dead heat at 38 percent each. The final poll, completed by voters on November 6, had Richards ahead by 2.5 percent of the vote.

The variances in numbers reflect the fact that the governor's race was hard to predict, for pollsters, voters, or even seasoned campaign managers. Clayton Williams's most damaging gaffes happened for the most part during or after the last polling periods — before the remarks had a chance to be absorbed by the public. Bob Slagle, chairman of the Texas Democratic Party, said that regional polls completed in selected Congressional districts showed that Richards' popularity surged among likely voters during the end of October and beginning of November.

Another theory is that large numbers of Texans, disgusted with both candidates because of extensive negative campaigning, remained undecided (and therefore uncounted) in the polls until election day. The Eppstein Group put an interesting twist on the race by polling voters on a hypothetical situation: If, rather than Williams and Richards, the gubernatorial candidates were George W. Bush and Henry Cisneros, for whom would you vote? Cisneros won, gar-

nering 43 percent of the vote to Bush's 32 percent.

The treasurer and agriculture commissioner races were also difficult for pollsters to pin down. *The Houston Chronicle* Poll, conducted by University of Houston political science professor Richard Murray between October 20 and 30, was the only one to predict that the two Hightowers of the Democratic Party were in for a much tougher race than either candidate had anticipated. Earlier polls had the Democratic candidates ahead by a comfortable margin. The final Texas Poll actually reported that Jim Hightower had a 12-point lead over his opponent, Rick Perry. Neither the Eppstein nor the Gallup groups released statistics for the race.

In actuality, Kay Bailey Hutchison won over Nikki Van Hightower by a 3.3 percent margin. Perry edged out Jim Hightower, 49.1 percent to 47.9 percent of the votes. Pollsters say the turning point for the commissioner of agriculture came after Perry launched his negative TV campaign late in the season, which was unanswered by Hightower.

In other races, all major polls accurately predicted the outcome of the lieutenant governor and attorney general contests, but reported different point spreads — from nine to 15 points in the former, and from two to 13 in the latter. The actual differences were six points in the lieutenant governor's race and seven in the AG matchup.

How do the pollsters explain the discrepancies among the major polls? For one thing, the timing of a poll during a volatile race is critical; for the gubernatorial race, the political climate was transformed between August and November. Bryan Eppstein, of the Eppstein poll, also reasons that the polls will get radically different results by varying the polling samples and survey models. For instance, the Texas Poll interviewed 622 people; the Eppstein poll, 1206. Also, what is said to the respondents during the polling process — for example, mentioning the candidates' party affiliations or whether she is an incumbent — can influence the answers. All in all, skeptics of the polls continue to have plenty of reasons to stay skeptical. — JENNIFER WONG

Jennifer Wong is an Observer *editorial intern.*

Student Vote: Don't Trust Anyone Under 30

Efforts to rouse the most apathetic voter group — those aged 18 to 24 — apparently paid off in Texas, where a national foundation tested a pilot program that may go nationwide in 1992. On the two largest college campuses, the student vote turned out in relatively large numbers. And Clayton Williams was the principal beneficiary.

The Vote America Foundation (the folks responsible for the "Feel the Power" ad blitz) used Austin as a test market for its project to prod younger voters to the polls. "The point of the program in Austin was to test a program that could be run by someone other than ourselves," said Vote America's assistant program director, Rick Powell. "We wanted to set up a turnkey voter registration program. Someone organizing this in Dallas or New York or Chicago or Peoria wouldn't need much money."

Vote America joined forces with county workers, newspapers, and students in the city's five colleges, bringing student voter registration from 37,000 to about 45,000 in Travis County. According to Chris Bjornson, who organizes voter registration for the county, the effort involved school districts and student governments throughout the area, at a cost of about 69 cents per voter.

Bjornson said "no excuses" absentee voting — which lets people vote before the election even if they plan to be in town — made it easier to get students out to vote. "It's right there, and it's on campus," he said. "When it's off campus, it's a lot harder. The city elections prove that."

The two precincts in Austin made up entirely of students posted a turnout of 55 percent and 49.6 percent, compared with 19 percent and 25 percent in the 1986 gubernatorial election. However, those who viewed the University of Texas as a liberal bastion had better get hip to the times: Clayton Williams swamped Ann Richards in both student boxes, taking 71.5 percent and 62.5 percent of the vote.

Powell also credits liberal (in terms of restrictions, not political inclination) absentee voting for increasing student voting. "In states like Texas and North Carolina, which have progressive voting laws, student voting increases," he said. "In some states like Virginia, you have to prove your car was registered there, you have to prove you paid income taxes there, there's a lot of obstacles to students voting."

The issues at stake in the election may have given some students the final push they needed on Election Day. Both gubernatorial candidates supported adding students to university boards of regents, and Clayton Williams unveiled a plan to provide free college tuition to qualified students. One plank of that plan — a proposal for drug-testing of students and faculty — spurred a few students to vote, as well.

At Texas A&M, Williams exploited his Aggie roots and got a turnout of about 50 percent in the precincts dominated by A&M students. Those precincts broke about three to one for Williams, but the editor of the A&M newspaper said Ann Richards supporters mobilized as well. "You would think you'd think just hear a lot of Williams propaganda," said Cindy McMillan. "But the Richards supporters felt they had such an obstacle to overcome that they were probably more active than they would have been if Williams had not been an alumnus."

Student voting in Texas is far from spectacular — well short of 50 percent overall. But in a country where student voting averages 20 percent nationwide, Texans scored well on the curve. And at the two flagship universities, at least, Clayton Williams got extra credit. — KEVIN MCHARGUE

Kevin McHargue is editor of The Daily Texan.

Endorsements: Candidates and The Paper Chase

Are newspaper endorsements of candidates worth the paper they're printed on? The results of the 1990 elections suggest that they are since there is a correlation between endorsements of major newspapers and voters' choices. Voters switched back and forth between parties as they went down the ballot, starting in the Republican column with Phil Gramm, jumping back to the Democrats' candidates for Congress, governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, and comptroller, then returning to the Republicans to vote for chief justice, agriculture commissioner, and treasurer. Since party affiliation no longer seems to guide a majority bloc of voters, and the increasingly negative campaign ads on television turned many off, it could be that they looked to the newspapers for guidance.

What follows is a list of endorsements by selected newspapers in selected state races. The list should give readers an idea of the editorial inclinations of the state's print media outlets.

In the governor's race, Ann Richards received endorsements from the following newspapers: *The Austin American-Statesman, Corpus Christi Caller-Times, Dallas Times- Herald, Edinburg Daily Review, El Paso Herald-Post, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Houston Chronicle, San Angelo Times, San Antonio Light, San Antonio Express-News,* and *Waco Tribune-Herald.*

The following papers supported Clayton Williams: *The Dallas Morning News, Houston Post,* and *Victoria Advocate.*

For U.S. senator, only two major newspapers failed to endorse the victor, incumbent Republican Phil Gramm: *The Austin American-Statesman* and *The Edinburg Daily Review* endorsed Democratic state Senator Hugh Parmer. At the same time, all major newspapers endorsed Bob Bullock for the lieutenant governor's seat, except for the *Dallas Morning News,* which supported Republican Rob Mosbacher Jr.

All major newspapers except one endorsed Dan Morales, the winning Democrat, for attorney general. The sole exception was *The Houston Post,* one of the two daily papers

that circulate in Republican Buster Brown's home territory. (Brown lives in Lake Jackson.) This overwhelming support, and Morales's contributions from corporate interests, suggest that an implicit consensus was reached in the business community that the time had arrived to support a Mexican-American for a statewide executive position, and that the moderate Morales fit the bill.

In the state treasurer's race, winning Republican Kay Bailey Hutchison won the support of all major newspapers except *The Austin American-Statesman, Edinburg Daily Review*, and *Houston Post*, one of the two dailies in the hometown of Democratic candidate Nikki Van Hightower.

For agriculture commissioner, Republican challenger (and winner by a nose) Rick Perry received the endorsements of: *The Beaumont Enterprise, Dallas Morning News, El Paso Herald-Post, Houston Post, Waco Herald-Tribune, Houston Chronicle, Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, San Antonio Express-News*, and the*Victoria Advocate*. Losing two-term Democratic incumbent Jim Hightower collected support from: *The Austin American-Statesman, Corpus Christi Caller-Times, Dallas Times-Herald, Edinburg Daily Review, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, San Angelo Standard-Times*, and *The San Antonio Light*.

In the race for Supreme Court Chief Justice, all major newspapers endorsed Republican incumbent Tom Phillips, the winner by a large margin, except for the *Edinburg Daily Review*, which endorsed Democratic Associate Justice Oscar Mauzy.

In the race for Place 2 in the Court of Criminal Appeals, these newspapers endorsed big-spending Republican challenger Oliver Kitzman: *The Houston Chronicle, Houston Post, Lubbock Avalanche- Journal, Dallas Morning News, Dallas Times-Herald, Fort Worth Star Telegram*. Incumbent Democrat Sam Houston Clinton, who retained his seat by a narrow margin, received the following newspapers' support: *The Waco Tribune-Herald, Austin American-Statesman, Beaumont Enterprise, Edinburg Daily Review, Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, San Angelo Standard-Times, San Antonio Light, San Antonio Express-News*, and *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*.

In Place Four on the Court of Criminal Appeals, Republican incumbent David Berchelmann received the recommendation of: *The Houston Post, Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, Dallas Morning News, Dallas Times-Herald, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, San Antonio Light, San Antonio Express-News*. These newspapers supported the winner, Democrat Charlie Baird: *The Houston Chronicle, Austin American-Statesman, Beaumont Enterprise, Edinburg Daily Review*, and *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*.

In Place 5, incumbent Republican Judge Louis Sturns's candidacy won these endorsements: *The Houston Chronicle, Houston Post, Waco Tribune-Herald, Austin American-Statesman, Corpus Christi Caller-Times, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, San Angelo Standard-Times, San Antonio Light, San Antonio Express-News*, and *Victoria Advocate*. These newspapers endorsed the eventual winner, Democrat Morris Overstreet (who became the first black elected to statewide office): *The Beaumont Enterprise, Dallas Morning News, Dallas Times- Herald*.

— Vince Lozano

Vince Lozano is an Observer *editorial intern. Jennifer Wong provided research assistance for this story.*

Election Returns

The following is based on information from the Texas Secretary of State. Vote totals are shown for contested races only, and reflect 100% of the precincts reporting. (*) Denotes Incumbent (D) Democrat (R) Republican (L) Libertarian (I) Independent.

Governor		
Ann W. Richards (D)	1,921,895	49.6%
Clayton Williams (R)	1,825,148	47.1%
Lt. Governor		
Bob Bullock (D)	1,998,125	51.7%
Rob Mosbacher Jr. (R)	1,738,771	45.0%
Attorney General		
Dan Morales (D)	1,961,306	51.9%
J.E. "Buster" Brown (R)	1,705,692	45.2%
Comptroller		
John Sharp (D)	2,310,301	62.9%
Warren G. Harding Jr. (R)	1,148,758	31.3%
State Treasurer		
Nikki Van Hightower (D)	1,769,170	46.6%
Kay Bailey Hutchison (R)	1,892,745	49.9%
Land Commissioner		
Garry Mauro (D)*	2,198,389	59.8%
Wes Gilbreath (R)	1,334,426	36.3%
Commissioner of Agriculture		
Jim Hightower (D)*	1,818,698	47.9%
Rick Perry (R)	1,865,808	49.1%
Railroad Commission		
Robert "Bob" Krueger (D)	2,090,389	56.3%
Beau Boulter (R)	1,494,861	40.3%
United States Senate		
Hugh Parmer (D)	1,433,691	37.5%
Phil Gramm (R)*	2,298,896	60.2%
U.S. House of Representatives		
U.S. House District 1		
Jim Chapman (D)*	89,072	60.9%
Hamp Hodges (R)	57,230	39.1%
U.S. House District 2		
Charles Wilson (D)*	76,881	55.5%
Donna Peterson (R)	61,560	44.5%
U.S. House District 5		
John Bryant (D)*	65,228	59.6%
Jerry Rucker (R)	41,307	37.7%
U.S. House District 9		
Jack Brooks (D)*	79,739	57.8%
Maury Meyers (R)	58,320	42.2%
U.S. House District 10		
J.J. "Jake" Pickle (D)*	152,642	64.9%
David Beilharz (R)	73,754	31.3%
U.S. House District 11		
Chet Edwards (D)	73,667	53.4%
Hugh D. Shine (R)	64,270	46.6%
U.S. House District 12		
Pete Geren (D)*	98,026	71.3%
Mike McGinn (R)	39,348	28.7%
U.S. House District 13		
Bill Sarpalius (D)*	81,502	56.4%
Dick Waterfield (R)	62,996	43.6%
U.S. House District 14		
Greg Laughlin (D)*	89,211	54.3%
Joe Dial (R)	75,151	45.7%
Texas Senate		
Senate District 5		
Jim Turner (D)	74,425	50.1%
Richard A. Smith (R)	65,277	44.0%
Lou "English" Zaeske (I)	8,784	5.9%
Senate District 6		
Gene Green (D)*	49,878	69.3%
Linda L. Rowland (R)	22,120	30.7%
Senate District 11		
Chet Brooks (D)*	56,285	55.3%
Jerry Patterson (R)	45,519	44.7%
Senate District 12		
Mike Moncrief (D)	73,759	63.4%
John Lively (R)	39,259	33.8%
Senate District 13		
Rodney Ellis (D)	68,126	75.5%
Bill Batts (R)	22,145	24.5%
Senate District 16		
Jack F. Borden (D)	49,968	40.2%
John N. Leedom (R)*	74,356	59.8%
Senate District 21		
Judith Zaffirini (D)*	81,263	68.2%
Larry Vick (R)	37,886	31.8%
Senate District 29		
Peggy Rosson (D)	51,487	68.3%
Frank Lozito (R)	23,920	31.7%
House District 3		
Jerry Mainord (D)	14,938	46.1%
Bill Thomas (R)*	17,458	53.9%
House District 4		
Keith Oakley (D)*	17,640	51.2%
James R. Pitts (R)	16,807	48.8%
House District 5		
Bob Glaze (D)	16,689	50.8%
George Winn (R)	16,193	49.2%
House District 6		
David Hudson (D)*	12,639	49.7%
Ted Kamel (R)	12,797	50.3%
House District 7		
James David McBride (D)	10,409	39.1%
Jerry Yost (R)*	16,202	60.9%
House District 9		
Paul Sadler (D)	14,544	56.8%
Pamela McWilliams (R)	11,082	43.2%
House District 11		
Elton Bomer (D)	16,624	69.9%
Frances Ann Dear (R)	7,160	30.1%
House District 14		
Jim James (D)	15,236	46.8%
Stephen Ogden (R)	17,303	53.2%
House District 15		
John McCall, Jr. (D)	15,774	48.3%
Kevin Brady (R)	16,870	51.7%
House District 16		
Cynthia Valone Wood (D)	9,411	35.1%
Bob Rabuck (R)	17,378	64.9%
House District 24		
James Hury (D)*	14,166	61.8%
Joe Kelly (R)	8,766	38.2%
House District 25		
Mike Martin (D)	17,450	65.8%
Lewis Carter Parker (R)	9,072	34.2%
House District 32		
John W. Griffin Jr. (D)	13,269	49.0%
Steve Holzheauser (R)*	13,837	51.0%
House District 38		
Ken Medders Jr. (D)	9,043	46.7%
Kenneth R. Fleuriet (R)	10,337	53.3%
House District 39		
Rene O. Oliveira (D)	8,930	70.1%
Marvin M. Brown (R)	3,818	29.9%

House District 41		
Roberto Gutierrez (D)	11,679	65.0%
Jeff Waguespack (R)	6,281	35.0%
House District 45		
Tom Cate (D)	16,833	59.4%
Jim E. Jenkins (R)	11,482	40.6%
House District 48		
Sherri Greenberg (D)	33,467	56.7%
Leonard Smith (R)	25,529	43.3%
House District 49		
Elliott Naishtat (D)	27,914	53.1%
Bob Richardson (R)*	22,472	42.8%
House District 52		
Parker McCollough (D)*	27,216	61.0%
Randall Riley (R)	17,415	39.0%
House District 53		
Jack Jones (D)	9,649	48.7%
Dianne White Delisi (R)	10,157	51.3%
House District 55		
Jim Dunnam (D)	16,244	47.9%
M.A. Taylor (R)*	17,638	52.1%
House District 57		
Allen Place (D)	10,933	52.8%
Bill Siddons (R)	9,775	47.2%
House District 58		
Bruce Gibson (D)*	18,262	56.3%
Bernard Erickson (R)	14,192	43.7%
House District 59		
Curtis Paul Ramsey (D)	13,165	40.8%
Jim Horn (R)*	19,129	59.2%
House District 63		
Ric Williamson (D)*	20,376	58.9%
Kyle H. McCain (R)	14,199	41.1%
House District 64		
John Cook (D)	16,366	50.1%
Fred Gough (R)	16,318	49.9%
House District 70		
Paula L. Thomas (D)	6,753	30.9%
Jack Vowell (R)*	15,086	69.1%
House District 71		
James T. Allen (D)	10,219	44.8%
Pat Haggerty (R)*	12,585	55.2%
House District 75		
Gary Watkins (D)*	11,165	56.6%
A.G. "Lonnie" Sims (R)	8,548	43.4%
House District 78		
David Counts (D)*	16,973	63.9%
John A. Pennington (R)	9,590	36.1%
House District 81		
John Hirschi (D)	12,446	52.8%
Tom Haywood (R)	11,106	47.2%
House District 83		
Bidal Aguero (D)	6,040	37.3%
Delwin Jones (R)*	10,157	62.7%
House District 88		
Guy Hazlett (D)*	13,528	45.6%
David A. Swinford (R)	16,120	54.4%
House District 89		
Gib Lewis (D)*	22,070	60.9%
Charles E. Gore (R)	14,151	39.1%
House District 91		
Alton Easton (D)	11,748	37.9%
Bill G. Carter (R)*	17,494	56.5%
House District 94		
Kay Taebel (D)	14,579	40.7%
Kent Grusendorf (R)*	21,217	59.3%
House District 96		
George Petrovich (D)	15,207	39.4%
Kenneth "Kim" Brimer (R)*	23,395	60.6%
House District 98		
Mike Moore (D)	6,804	32.0%
Gwyn Shea (R)*	14,480	68.0%
House District 102		
Goldye E. Levi (D)	7,168	21.6%
Will Hartnett (R)	26,003	78.4%
House District 106		
Bill Arnold (D)*	11,578	59.1%
Ray Allen (R)	8,019	40.9%
House District 107		
David Cain (D)*	9,644	69.7%
Kenneth Green (R)	4,200	30.3%
House District 115		
Leticia Van de Putte (D)	11,006	71.5%
Bart Simpson (R)	3,821	24.8%
House District 122		
Peter Koelling (D)	10,676	35.0%
George Pierce (R)*	18,410	60.3%
House District 123		
Melvin N. Eichelbaum (D)	10,684	23.3%
Jeff Wentworth (R)*	33,333	72.5%
House District 127		
Robert M. Wood (D)	6,753	22.4%
Dan Shelly (R)*	22,309	74.0%
House District 128		
Fred M. Bosse (D)	9,792	59.8%
Dan Lang (R)	6,251	38.2%
House District 129		
Harold Shaffer (D)	7,201	40.6%
Mike Jackson (R)*	10,549	59.4%
House District 130		
Doug Posey (D)	10,724	36.3%
Randy Pennington (R)*	18,845	63.7%
House District 132		
Paul Colbert (D)*	16,859	69.2%
George Loeffler (R)	7,491	30.8%
House District 134		
Sue A. Schechter (D)	11,021	50.9%
Bob Higley (R)	10,639	49.1%
House District 138		
Ken Yarbrough (D)	9,210	54.1%
Ken VanderVoort (R)*	7,816	45.9%
House District 139		
Sylvester Turner (D)*	11,949	66.0%
Harold Hector (R)	6,158	34.0%
House District 140		
Kevin Bailey (D)	6,421	56.2%
Charles Hartland (R)*	4,999	43.8%
House District 144		
Erwin "E.W." Barton (D)*	7,318	53.8%
Kevin M. Stanley (R)	5,863	43.1%
House District 145		
Ralph Wallace (D)*	8,651	56.0%
David Bray (R)	6,789	44.0%
House District 146		
Al Edwards (D)*	10,303	73.5%
Naomi Cox Andrews (R)	3,722	26.5%
House District 149		
Johnny Mark Teague (D)	9,965	41.0%
Talmadge L. Heflin (R)*	14,338	59.0%
Supreme Court Chief Justice		
Oscar H. Mauzy (D)	1,517,542	40.8%
Tom Phillips (R)*	2,197,438	59.2%
Supreme Court Place 1		
Gene Kelly (D)	1,584,231	44.3%
John Cornyn, III (R)	1,989,724	55.7%
Supreme Court Place 2		
Bob Gammage (D)	1,983,152	56.4%
Charles Ben Howell (R)	1,530,608	43.6%
Court of Criminal Appeals Place 1		
Frank Maloney (D)	1,885,652	54.4%
Joseph A. "Joe" Devany (R)	1,581,410	45.6%
Court of Criminal Appeals Place 2		
Sam Houston Clinton (D)*	1,746,076	50.7%
Oliver S. Kitzman (R)	1,696,600	49.3%
Court of Criminal Appeals Place 4		
Charles F. Baird (D)	1,754,042	51.4%
David Berchelmann (R)*	1,658,440	48.6%
Court of Criminal Appeals Place 5		
Morris Overstreet (D)	1,753,709	51.3%
Louis Sturns (R)*	1,662,314	48.7%

Practical Visionaries

BY ELLEN HOSMER

Cold Anger:
A Story of Faith and Power Politics
By Mary Beth Rogers
Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1990, 222 pages, $14.95.

OVER THE LAST 17 years, the Industrial Areas Foundation and its state director, Ernesto Cortes Jr., have organized a political force in Texas. Made up predominantly of poor and disenfranchised minorities, IAF organizations have changed the power structure in the cities they have organized. Recently, working collectively, IAF organizations have become a power at the state level. First with COPS, Communities Organized for Public Service in San Antonio, and then with a number of similar organizations from Houston to El Paso, the IAF has organized groups that previously were considered unorganizable, empowering poor working-class citizens to take on city, county, and state officials. It has been a long and arduous process and one that would have been all but impossible without Cortes.

In her book, *Cold Anger: A Story of Faith and Power Politics*, Mary Beth Rogers tells the story of Cortes and the IAF. Rogers, who served as a deputy state treasurer under Ann Richards and then as manager of the Richards campaign for governor, obviously is inspired by the work of Cortes and the dozens of other members and organizers of the IAF she interviewed while researching the book. Having grown increasingly skeptical of politics as it has come to be practiced, Rogers sees Cortes *et al.* as the power behind a return to the democratic ideals displaced by big-money politics and apathy. "For me, then," she writes, "the significance of this story is how Ernesto Cortes, Jr. and other leaders of the Industrial Areas Foundation organizations are helping ordinary men and women awaken to their power as 'we, the people.' It is a story that makes me feel hopeful once again about American politics."

The story of Cortes and the IAF is inspiring. It is important not only in demonstrating an organizing strategy that is effective, but also in helping to dismiss the myth that the poor and disenfranchised cannot be organized into a political force. Cortes and the IAF prove that politics can once more be the domain of the local citizen, and that the mixture of religion and politics, rather than something to be avoided, can in the end revitalize both. Cortes has mixed the two with considerable success. He has spent 19 years with the IAF, most of them in Texas, organizing low-income Hispanics, blacks, and whites. It is through his work that the IAF has developed powerful and independent community organizations throughout the state. In Rogers's book, Cortes appears as more than a practical organization man. "We operate out of Ernie's vision," one organizer says.

It is a vision of a world where the beatitudes of the Bible are put into practice. In a speech celebrating the 10th anniversary of COPS, Cortes talks of the vision upon which the organization was founded: "to teach those who have no stake, no role, and no status how to participate responsibly and effectively in the promise of American life, to have self-respect, dignity, and self-worth."

Rogers introduces the reader to one individual after another who had no stake, no role, but through working with one of the IAF organizations was able to stand up and be counted. It makes for inspiring reading. There is Inez Ramirez, a resident of San Antonio and mother of 10. When COPS needs a spokeswoman to confront city officials to explain how their failure to re-invest tax revenues in the West Side is affecting the neighborhood, she is selected, and eloquently states her case. "Heaven knows what you would do if you were in our shoes," she tells San Antonio's city manager. "We're taxpayers, too, yet people wake up in the morning in our districts with snakes in their bedroom from poor housing and rats in the bathroom from the junkyards. We have no parks or recreation centers, so our children are forced to find 'amusement' in the secluded areas where they must associate with the glue sniffers and dope peddlers. We want our fair share of city revenue for our projects."

COPS is by far the most successful of the IAF organizations in Texas. In the early 1970s, residents of San Antonio's West Side had become so accustomed to being ignored by their own elected representatives that they no longer even made demands of the city. Years of neglect had left their streets in shambles, their schools dilapidated, and their neighborhoods infested with rats and under water when it rained. Poor and mostly Hispanic, they considered such conditions their lot in life. In 1973, Cortes started laying the groundwork for organizing the city's West Side residents to fight back. Working through the neighborhood churches, Cortes helped found an organization that depended on the community to provide its leaders and to articulate its issues. And the issues they chose were very specific. When delegates from 27 churches joined together to tackle a single issue, they didn't select discrimination or police brutality, notes Rogers, but drainage problems.

Each year when the rains came, floods destroyed homes and claimed lives on the West Side, where the lack of proper drainage left tens of thousands of homes vulnerable to flooding. COPS organizers showed city officials how neighborhoods had been systematically denied proper services. With a strong and organized battalion of COPS members pressuring for change, city officials quickly acquiesced to their demands. A $46 million bond issue to pay for drainage improvements was quickly approved.

COPS took the city by storm, not only by size of membership and quality of research, but by developing creative strategies to compel city officials to respond to the new organization. Representatives from COPS proposed a city budget more equitable to the West Side than the budget proposed by the administration — and then forced city leaders to consider the proposal by threatening to disrupt the workings of San Antonio's central business district. COPS members went to the Frost National Bank and changed dollars into pennies and then got back into line to change the pennies into dollars. Other members crowded into Joske's department store, tying up clerks and retail space with trying-on sprees, calculated to get the attention of the downtown business establishment. Though the tactics did not compel the bank or department store management to pressure city hall to take a look at the COPS budget, retailers were concerned, and ultimately the West Side won commitments for another $100 million in local improvements.

By 1976 the *San Antonio Light* was describing COPS as one the city's 10 most powerful organizations. And the election of Mayor Henry Cisneros in 1981, writes Rogers, could "be directly attributed to [Cisneros's] relationship with COPS and the new political climate it established in the city." COPS transformed both the city and

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El Paso writer Ellen Hosmer now divides her time between journalism and her new son, Landon Joshua, who arrived as expected on October 23.

the lives of those it organized. "Today San Antonio is one of the most open cities in America," said Cortes at the group's 10th anniversary. "It is a place where the values of pluralism, family, and freedom of speech and assembly have become a reality."

Although the subject of *Cold Anger* is powerful, the book is not without defects. Rogers's admiration for her subjects often results in overwriting. And her work seems to suffer from a lack of organization; Rogers seems unclear about what she wants the focus of the book to be. We first meet Cortes, the organizer, with a group of farmers in Dallas in 1986. In the next chapter we're in La Meza, Texas, at a colonia with State Treasurer Ann Richards and several other state officials, meeting with residents to discuss the lack of water and sanitation. Next it's Austin's Texas French Bread Bakery and Deli and Cortes is back, talking about power and politics. With the little context or background that is provided, readers unfamiliar with Texas politics and the IAF organizations are likely be lost in the dizzying jumps. It is only in the second half of the book, where the reader learns about the organizations that Cortes and other IAF activists have built, that the first chapters begin to make sense.

Perhaps *Cold Anger* just attempts too much: it includes elements of a biography of Cortes; a history of Saul Alinsky, Ed Chambers, and the IAF; a consideration of how religion and politics mix; profiles of the many leaders and campaigns of the IAF groups in Texas. Ultimately, the book is the story of Cortes and his struggle to empower the state's poor. And while any biography of Cortes would have to include all of these topics in order to attempt to explain the man, without more focus, the variety of issues here makes the book seem scattered. Instead of proceeding to a conclusion, the book seems to run in tangents.

Yet despite its flaws, *Cold Anger* is a good place to begin to understand the new type of political organizations that Cortes and the IAF are building in Texas and across the United States. And, as Bill Moyers observes in his introduction, it is a "wonderful reminder that the American revolution is not over." □

Organization Man

BY DAVE DENISON

LET THEM CALL ME REBEL:
Saul Alinsky — His Life and Legacy
By Sanford D. Horwitt
New York: Alfred A. Knopf,
1989, 595 pages

SANFORD HORWITT tells us he first became acquainted with Saul Alinsky one afternoon in a university library when he picked up an interview published in *Harper's* in 1965. Before he had finished reading, Horwitt says in his book's introduction, "Alinsky had leaped from the pages, ten feet tall, the most fascinating person I had ever encountered."

It is a tribute to Horwitt's skill as a biographer to say that Alinsky — who was in reality just under six feet tall — leaps from Horwitt's pages at about five feet eleven-and-a -half.

The author makes no pretense that it has been an easy task to render accurately the history of a man who so enjoyed cultivating a larger-than-life reputation. As he was making a name for himself as one of the premier political organizers of our time, Alinsky welcomed press portrayals of him as a savior of American democracy. He seemed to relish just as much his enemies' certainty that he was a truly dangerous man. He seldom tried to discourage either opinion.

Added to that, he loved to tell stories. "As the years rolled by and the Alinsky stories accumulated," Horwitt writes, "the line between fact and fiction often blurred." Like most good storytellers, Alinsky had a tendency to embellish. But he was also outlandish enough that what may have sounded like just another yarn was often a true account. Alinsky "was a character," Horwitt says. "But even his close friends were often not quite sure which character he was."

There is enough here about Alinsky the man to satisfy the reader, but this is not a character study. The bulk of the book examines his major organizing drives — his relentless efforts to make democratic participation work for ordinary city dwellers, most of them in machine-controlled or long- neglected ghettoes.

Horwitt has written a detailed, even meticulous, account. He begins with Alinsky's roots as a young sociology student investigating youth gangs on Chicago's West Side in the 1930s, then takes us through the innumerable battles that were part of Alinsky's community organizing in the next three decades, until his death in 1972 at the age of 63. Throughout the book, Horwitt is careful to sort fact from fiction; he seems to be as much, or more, concerned with the historical record as with a seamless narrative.

And yet the narrative is good. The depiction of Alinsky is sympathetic without being tendentious. Horwitt has no interest in defending his subject on all counts. Indeed, he says at the outset that he thinks Alinsky's life suggests "that one can be heroic without being saintly."

BY THE END of the book the reader can hardly fail to admire Alinsky's heroism. He worked year after year attempting to be a catalyst for democracy in one hostile climate after another. His world was not one of romantic ideals; his world was the city of Chicago, where the Poles didn't like the Irish, the Catholics didn't like the Protestants, the whites dreaded and resisted the black migration, and political power was the last thing any of them would expect to taste for themselves.

Alinsky went into the teeming, stinking, Southwest Chicago neighborhood known as the Back of the Yards in the late 1930s. The area, immortalized by Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle*, was dominated by the meatpacking industry, which was reliant on the cheap labor of immigrants, most of them Polish. Alinsky helped build an organization — the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council — which over the next few years gained attention as a promising experiment in community activism.

With funds from the wealthy Chicago merchant Marshall Field, Alinsky established the Industrial Areas Foundation in 1940 to support his organizing efforts. Through the decade Alinsky preached that the success in the Back of the Yards could be repeated in communities across the nation. He foresaw a movement of "People's Organizations" that would transform capitalism by shifting power to ordinary citizens. He outlined his vision in *Reveille for Radicals*, published in 1945.

With varying degrees of success, Alinsky's methods were put into practice in other parts of Chicago, and then in California, Minnesota, and New York. He recruited talented young organizers such as Nicholas von Hoffman and Ed Chambers. And Fred Ross and Cesar Chavez launched a group of Community Service Organizations in California before Chavez split off in the 1960s to organize the United Farm Workers Union. As the civil rights movement was beginning to pick up steam, Alinsky and von Hoffman were behind the Temporary Woodlawn Organization on Chicago's south side, which a writer for *Fortune* magazine described as "the most important and the most impressive experiment affecting Negroes anywhere in the United States."

Alinsky firmly believed in gradual integration of urban areas. He believed that if different racial and ethnic groups could begin to perceive common economic interests, they would all end up with a bigger share of the

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Dave Denison, former editor of the Observer, *is now a writer at large.*

power. The daunting complexity of this kind of work comes across quite clearly from Horwitt's detailed retelling. In the 1950s especially, the race question was almost insurmountable. Cross-religious animosities were almost as formidable. And as a backdrop to the rivalries and hatreds, a world of real estate manipulators and machine politicians were accustomed to going about their business as usual.

Alinsky's message in short form was simple enough: Power responds only to one thing — power. For democracy to work as it was envisioned by early American thinkers, power needs to be distributed evenly. And to distribute it, the power that flows from organized money would have to be met by the power of organized people.

Alinsky was a master at making use of America's native political vocabulary to justify action that seemed radical to most of his contemporaries. His language was simply the language of democracy, applied to working people and poor people. His interest was in organizing, not ideology. "The Radical ... will realize that in the initial stages of organization he must deal with the qualities of ambition and self-interest as realities," he wrote. "Only a fool would step into a community dominated by materialistic standards and self-interest and begin to preach ideals."

Yet one notes in Horwitt's book the inevitable back-and-forth between ideas and action. Says the author, "Ideas, and the language to express them, were important for another reason. Alinsky understood that the way in which political acts are explained — the intellectual and rhetorical justification — is as important as the action itself and, often, a prerequisite for action." But later Horwitt writes: "Alinsky positioned himself above the familiar ideological battles .... [He] seemed to be saying that even if in theory there were a better set of economic arrangements, the first order of business was to arouse a democratically minded citizenry in working-class areas. At least initially, the *process* of becoming a participant was more important than the content of any particular program."

On the other hand again, one of Alinsky's organizers told Horwitt that Alinsky was, in fact, dedicated to the battle of ideas. "Saul was always talking about how we had to change people's minds by rhetoric, by publishing things of some kind." There is nothing necessarily inconsistent in these statements; participation and persuasion go along fine together. But there is perhaps a fuzziness on the question of how important it is to arrive at answers about what kind of society one is ultimately working for.

Those with a taste for ideological compass-setting would probably agree with a criticism made by Christopher Lasch in 1971, which Horwitt quotes. Lasch wrote that Alinsky, "having divested his movement of any suspicion of 'ideology,' having substituted 'citizens' for 'workers' and interests for classes, and having exalted process over objectives, was free to define 'participation' itself as the objective of community organization — of politics in general."

Yet the weight of Horwitt's book forces the reader to question whether it really matters that Alinsky's overall political objectives were not coherently drawn up in advance. It's a lifetime's worth of work just to promote the idea that the many need not be pushed around by the few. Saul Alinsky created a lot of necessary havoc by promoting that idea. And what's more important, his shrewd and sensible methods live on today in the work of the surviving Industrial Areas Foundation groups, as Horwitt notes in his epilogue. He gives special mention to Texas IAF groups and their organizer, Ernesto Cortes Jr.

It's an unusual man or woman who departs this earth leaving an actual, living political legacy. Alinsky's legacy is the existence of a battalion of vital organizations that continue to hold out the promise that democracy could be made to work. □

Social Cause Calendar

WOMEN AND AIDS RALLY

On the south steps of the Capitol, ACT-UP will hold a rally on women and AIDS on Monday, **November 26,** from 12 to 1:30 p.m. The event is part of a nationally coordinated week of activities related to December 1, World AIDS Day. The World Health Organization has chosen women and AIDS as the focus of the week to recognize the effects of the epidemic on women, who now represent an estimated two million of the eight to 10 million people in the world with the HIV infection. For more information, call (512) 477-AIDS.

BENEFIT FOR UTILITY REGULATION GROUP

Citizens for Fair Utility Regulation will have a benefit on Thursday, **November 29** at Club Clearview in Dallas. Bands include Fever in the Funkhouse and Sleepy Heroes. Admission is $5. Call (817) 336-1990.

ANIMAL RIGHTS BENEFIT

The Rock Against Fur Concert, benefitting the Animal Connection of Texas, is scheduled for Friday, **November 30** at Trees in Dallas. The concert will feature Brave Combo and others. For more information, call (214) 373-7867.

OBSERVANCES

November 24, 1947 • House of Representatives cites Hollywood Ten for contempt of Congress.
November 28, 1978 • Gay activist Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone killed in San Francisco.
December 1, 1955 • Rosa Parks arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat, touching off Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott.
December 2, 1954 • Senate censures Joseph R. McCarthy.
December 3, 1985 • Union Carbide accident in India.
December 4, 1969 • Chicago police kill Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark.

PARTY FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

Austin Peace and Justice Coalition is having its holiday party on Sunday, **December 9**, from 6:30 to 10 p.m. The party will be held at Red Bluff Studio, 4907 Red Bluff Road and will feature live music. Admission is a $3 donation. For more information, call (512) 574-5877.

FUNDRAISER FOR AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

The Pueblo to People Holiday Crafts Festival, the fifth annual holiday sale and fund-raiser for the American Friends Service Committee, will offer crafts and clothing from Latin America. The festival will be held in the AFSC's Austin offices at the Peace Building (227 Congress Avenue) on Saturday, **December 1**, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, **December 2**, from noon to 5 p.m. Call (512) 474-2399.

ANTI-WAR TEACH-IN

The Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, a coalition of community and UT-Austin activist groups, is sponsoring a multi-media Teach-In to protest war in the Middle East. Speakers will analyze the myth of dependence on oil, distorted and racist media coverage of the Gulf Crisis, the history of U.S. interference in the region, and many other topics. Local activists and UT professors will talk about ways the community can respond to the threat of war. There will also be slide and video presentations. The event is scheduled for Monday, **November 26**, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Texas Union Theater on the UT campus. For more information, call (512) 471-3166 or (512) 471-4857.

And Not a Ray of Hope

BY MICHAEL KING

CURRENTS OF DEATH: Power Lines, Computer Terminals, and the Attempt to Cover Up Their Threat to Your Health
By Paul Brodeur
New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989, 333 pp., $19.95

FIRST, A WORD of warning: This is the sort of horror story likely to cause night terrors in sensitive readers, particularly parents of small children, people who live near high-voltage transmission lines, and people who work every day at personal computer terminals (all uncomfortably large categories, of course). This is not an alarmist book, yet its thesis is alarming: Virtually all of us living in the industrialized world have been unknowingly subjected to an extended experiment on the health effects of electromagnetic field radiation, and there is mounting evidence that those effects are deleterious, including the increased risk of cancer, leukemia, eye diseases, psychological stress, birth defects, and related disorders. Furthermore, and predictably, the governmental and industrial institutions having the most responsibility for and capability of researching and ameliorating the problem have instead responded by repeated attempts to wish it away, to deny it exists, to dismiss the evidence, and to revile the motives and reputations of those who have demonstrated that the problem does, in fact, exist. So what else is new?

Paul Brodeur's book, the latest in a series he has written on the hazards of industrial life, readably recounts the development of the research on the effects of electromagnetic radiation, its relation to the daily circumstances of most Americans, and the continuing political battle over what, if anything, needs to be done about it. It is a scientific detective story of interest to anyone with an eye for the relations of technology and biology, and it is also an intertwined political history, complete with heroes and villains, for anyone interested in the increasingly important battles over the degenerating state of our environment.

The central scientific question concerns the relatively recent discoveries of the possible biological effects of the electromagnetic fields generated, under certain conditions, by radar equipment, power lines, computer video-display terminals (VDTs), and even ordinary household tools and appliances (most specifically of all things, electric blankets).

According to Brodeur, until the early 1970s, it had been generally assumed that the only dangers from such sources were fairly apparent ones — accidental electric shock, or microwave radiation intense enough to heat or burn living tissue. (Statistical evidence of other dangers might have been available from military sources somewhat earlier but, in the standard operating procedure, it had been kept secret or ignored.)

About 20 years ago, researchers working on cell microbiology on the one hand and epidemiology on the other began to believe that there might be electromagnetic effects, at the cellular level, which might "directly ... affect the growth, development, and health of individual cells and thereby whole organisms, e.g., people.

The research proceeded in fits and starts, partly because the researchers were somewhat perplexed by their own findings, and partly because the results ran against the grain of both received knowledge and vested interests, and therefore the usual sources of governmental or corporate support were generally unavailable. Hired public relations and scientific guns went on the counterattack immediately, particularly because the troubling research had begun to appear just as power companies were planning new networks of extremely high-voltage transmission lines, and both the Navy and the Air Force were developing radar and communication networks which were based upon the transmission of extra-low-frequency (ELF) electromagnetic radiation fields. Public opposition to these projects was fueled by the new research, occasionally resulting in delay or even cancellation (e.g., the Navy's "Project Sanguine," the ELF radio transmitter once planned for Wisconsin, then Texas, then Michigan, and then scaled down but essentially imposed by the feds and the courts on Wisconsin and Michigan).

All this is in accordance with the usual patterns of corporate and military technology and politics, but what is particularly unnerving about the new research is that much of the electromagnetic hazard does not arise from extraordinary new technology. Nancy Wertheimer, the epidemiologist whom Brodeur credits with the initial breakthroughs on the public health threat, first discovered a disturbing correlation between certain segments of ordinary neighborhood electric distribution wires — that's right, those ubiquitous things on wooden poles — and clusters of cases of childhood leukemia. Similarly, the new, higher-voltage transmission lines are cause for concern and protest; but there are innumerable old high-voltage transmission lines which run through city and country neighborhoods, and which have been assumed until recently to be little more than benign eyesores. (I know; I moved next to one two years ago, and this book has prompted me to investigate its invisible dangers.)

Currents of Death, and Brodeur's articles on this and related subjects, have been dismissed as so much eco-hysteria, but overall this is a sober and level-headed book, even suffering a bit from the occasionally "New Yorker-ese" lifelessness of its prose. (The book also could use a few charts and graphs setting out the actual numbers and apparent risk levels involved; these are difficult to visualize.) A larger difficulty stems from the nature of the potential hazard itself. All of us can understand immediately and viscerally the danger of chemical wastes or air pollution, but electricity is now so ever-present and so indispensable, and the ELF threat so new and so invisible that it is hard to comprehend. (As if to emphasize this, Brodeur confirms that household appliances *do* generate ELF, but only at very small distances and only during intermittent use — the exception being old-style electric blankets, because their wiring configuration creates an extended field that people stay within for 8-10 hours at a time.)

Moreover, the scholars working on the problem are still uncertain of the exact mechanisms involved in ELF effects. The early research suggests that the electromagnetism may produce high stress, suppress immune reactions, and even stimulate uncontrolled cell growth, i.e., cancer. It has been known for some time that the body itself can generate ELF radiation, particularly at the site of broken bones; Brodeur describes intriguing research by neuroscientist W. Ross Adey, among others, who has shown that intercellular communication apparently has an electrochemical basis, and external ELF fields may interfere with or override it. The epidemiologists have confirmed that unhealthy biological effects do take place, and it was

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this statistical evidence in combination with the microbiological results that has prompted several scientists to speak out in public hearings against ill-considered projects.

Dr. Harrison Busch, a Houston oncologist testifying at a trial concerning the installation of a high-voltage line through a schoolyard, compared the 60-hertz electromagnetic field produced by such a transmission line to a ticking metronome: "A 60-hertz field is a field where first the magnetic wave moves in one direction, and then moves in another direction, just like [a metronome]. Only it happens 60 times a second. So what this means, then, is that any kind of [magnetic] molecule that is in a person's brain, or in a person's body, is being twisted [by the electromagnetic waves] 60 times a second up and back. Now, we do not function in that kind of an environment. We are earthly people descended from an evolutionary species that's been subject to gravity and the magnetic force of the earth itself. But they have nothing like the power of this movement. ... It is a daily interaction of the human body and mind with potentially dangerous forces. ... These fields go through glass, they go through concrete. They simply are not stopped by anything in the environment."

Following that trial and several appeals, Houston Lighting & Power was forced to reroute that line away from the school — and into another residential neighborhood. As Brodeur emphasizes, a more worrisome footnote from that trial, and admitted by HL&P witnesses, is that "the chief hazard [remains] ordinary low-voltage, high current neighborhood distribution lines," because these are everywhere, and certain segments of these emit precisely the same 60-hertz fields.

In the face of this knowledge, it is difficult to know precisely what individual citizens in potential danger should do, while trying to build a movement strong and persistent enough to effect widespread political-technological change. One scientist working on the problem has said frankly that people, particularly with children, should not buy homes next to high-voltage transmission lines; but this does nothing about the virtually universal threat of ordinary distribution lines. The threat from VDTs is real but more easily manageable; work-stations should be arranged to keep users roughly 30 inches away from the front and at least 4 feet from the sides and back of monitors (even beyond walls). (This is especially important for women, particularly pregnant women, who are usually the ones crowded into those dreadful banks of closely-spaced PCs, and who also have the least power to change their circumstances. For more details, see Brodeur's article in *MacWorld*, July 1990.)

This is a path-breaking book, which deserves wide distribution and follow-up. It is not the occasion for a sort of Luddite anti-technological reaction; the researchers working against ELF hazards rely perforce on the same technology which created the danger. (By the way, it's worth noting that they could not have discovered what they have without the availability of animal experimentation.) The polls (of both sorts) have shown that there is widespread support for extensive environmental action and remediation, whatever the necessary cost. That support needs organization, money, and human energy — which is at least as powerful, and more irreplaceable, than electricity.

□

Glamour Killers

BY STEVEN G. KELLMAN

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE
Directed by Barbet Schroeder
THE KRAYS
Directed by Peter Medak

"THE LAW IS A blunt instrument," declares Professor Alan Dershowitz to a class at Harvard. "It's not a rapier. It's a cudgel." So, too, is cinema, if any director dare use it to beat the truth out of a subject. Like *The Thin Blue Line*, *Patty Hearst*, *A Cry in the Dark*, *The Accused*, *A World Apart* and other recent fact-based features, *Reversal of Fortune* portrays life as a trial, for which the viewer is impaneled as juror. Did Claus von Bulow, himself worth a mere $1 million, attempt to murder his wife Sunny in hopes of gaining her $14 million? "You tell me," says Sunny to the viewer. The only footage that could answer that question would be videotape recorded at Clarendon Court, the von Bulow mansion in Newport, on the morning of December 20, 1980, when Sunny went into her second, irreversible coma. Director Barbet Schroeder is agile, but his film is a juridical cudgel. It is also a subtle study in character.

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It begins with the grotesque voiceover of Sunny von Bulow (Glenn Close), disconnected from her physical self. "This was my body," she declares, as the camera pulls back from a hospital bed in which her material form lies breathing but brain-dead. Like a phantom of the operating room, Sunny, throughout the film, speaks to us from the other side of incertitude. "There is all you can know, all you can be told" is her commentary on Claus's final acquittal at the end of *Reversal of Fortune*. "When you get where I am, you will know the rest." She is a cinematic tease, with the promise that absolute knowledge beckons, just beyond the final frame. Within the reel, we must make do with human judgment.

Following his conviction in 1982, von Bulow seeks out Dershowitz to mount an appeal. Distraught over two indigent black clients on Alabama's death row, the clever liberal lawyer is both repulsed and fascinated by a Brahmin demon who has little trouble meeting his fee of $300 per hour. "I should tell you that I have the greatest respect for the intelligence and integrity of the Jewish people," insists Claus, in a bid to charm Dershowitz into taking his case. It works, perversely, as Dershowitz, so devout in his litigiosity that he dreams of taking Adolf Hitler as a client, is stimulated precisely by the challenge of defending an ogre. Von Bulow's blood is as blue as it is cold, and, regardless of whether he is "innocent," Dershowitz is convinced that even the devil deserves a fair trial.

From his best students past and present, Dershowitz assembles an ad hoc crew of legal crackerjacks to help prepare Claus's case. One of them, Minnie, is incredulous that Dershowitz, renowned champion of the underdog, should waste his time on Sunny von Bulow's lethal lapdog. Dershowitz responds with a blunt professional credo: "I take cases because I get pissed off," he explains, and the belief that a man has been sentenced to 30 years without an impartial hearing strains the lawyer's kidneys. Like the viewer, Minnie decides to stick with the pack, who all camp out in Dershowitz's rambling house during the scant weeks they have to organize an appeal. Amid spaghetti suppers and driveway basketball, Dershowitz and his lieutenants plot their strategy. Though some of the plot bogs down in forensic details of encrusted needles and suppressed evidence, the kinds of technicalities on which briefs and not screenplays are built, we share the exhilaration of a college team preparing for the big game. "This is the most dangerous case I've ever worked on," declares Dershowitz, aware that a fumble with von Bulow could destroy his brilliant career, and invigorated by that very threat.

The Rhode Island judiciary gives Dershowitz official standing to represent von Bulow, but, despite the vast chasms separating a son of the Brooklyn working class and

the European aristocrat, the defense attorney also represents the defendant in ways neither would want to admit. "In America, it's fame rather than class," notes Claus, who is the equal of Alan in the nobility of celebrity. Sarah (Annabella Sciorra), a former student and lover whom Dershowitz woos back merely to work on the case, comments on how time erodes relationships, and the film suggests some parallels between the deterioration of the von Bulow marriage and the alienation of Alan and Sarah.

"It's very hard to trust someone you don't understand," says Dershowitz to von Bulow, whom neither he nor we ever fathom. In Jeremy Irons's splendidly elusive performance, Claus is mum even over the rumor that he had murdered his mother. By contrast, Ron Silver's Dershowitz, clearly propelled by the thrill of the game, is more trustworthy and less haunting. "Legally, this was an important victory," he tells von Bulow when the final verdict is announced. But he rejects the elated victor's overtures of friendship. "Morally, you're on your own," insists Dershowitz, the shyster as Biblical prophet.

Reversal of Fortune is richly layered with flashbacks and hypothetical scenes about what may have caused Sunny to fall into an irreversible coma. Though Claus remains an enigma, the version that emerges is what we see on the screen — a self-indulgent, lonely woman who probably drugged herself into oblivion, though her son attempted to organize evidence to inculpate his adulterous stepfather. However, *Reversal of Fortune*, based on a book by Alan Dershowitz and co-produced by his son Elon, never enters the mind of Alexander von Auersberg, Claus's stepson and principal accuser, or even of Claus himself. This is no epistemologically pluralistic *Rashomon*, merely one uncertain fix on a broken human life.

The guilt of Ron and Reg Kray is as unambiguous as the blood that gushes onto Reg's face as his pokes a knife into a rival's eyes. "Glamour is fear," declares Ron to the captains of "The Firm," the gang that ruled the London underworld during the 1960s. "If people are afraid of you, you can do anything." Absolutely uninhibited in the use of violence, Ron and his twin brother Reg did almost anything they wanted during the years in which they basked in the glamour of English affluence. Philip Ridley's screenplay recounts the rise and fall of two schoolyard bullies whose actual name, the Krays, is an accurate diagnosis.

The Krays begins, as it concludes, with the voice of Violet Kray (Billie Whitelaw) and an image of the beautiful white swan she dreamt she was. From the creature's egg will emerge two cygnets that the proud mama fails to recognize as ugly ducklings. They will later adopt crocodiles as their signature image. "Men are born children," declares Violet's mother more than once, "and they stay children ... They think they are in control, and they don't know the half of it." Pampered by four misandrous women — Violet, her two sisters, and their mother — Ronald and Reginald Kray (played by brothers Gary and Martin Kemp, of the rock group Spandau Ballet) are arrested in childhood, long before they are arrested for murder. Their feckless father Charlie is as inconsequential in this woman's world as the doctor Violet assaults when she liberates young Ron from the hospital that has been treating him for diphtheria. "No one takes my boys away from me," insists Violet, who will always regard her psychopathic progeny as mama's boys. Oblivious to their brutal business, she dotes over The Firm when it meets at her house and serves them trays of tea.

After time in the brig for punching out their tyrant sergeant, Ron and Reg return to civilian life and an uncivil career of intimidation and mayhem. When the smirk on someone's face offends him, Ron pulls a sword and cuts out the man's tongue. The brothers soon acquire an impeccable taste for fancy clothing and a prosperous empire of fashionable nightclubs. Judy Garland is not embarrassed to be seen in their club or their company, and a Mafia chief from the United States journeys across the Atlantic to cultivate their friendship. The boyishly handsome Krays think they are in control, but we know the other half of it, that they are compulsive braggarts and brutes.

The Krays suggests the synergy of twinship, of two men so mystically attuned to each other's feelings that no outsider can stand against the formidable tandem. Reg does marry, but his sweet young bride lacks Violet's mettle, and, smothered by Reg's despotic attentions, Frances (Kate Hardie) takes her own life. Ron's male lover is no substitute for the twin he narcissistically adores more than anyone else, and he is relieved by Frances's death to recover his brother. Reg, however, is the better half of the pair (in director Peter Medak's algebra that means heterosexual and civilized in contrast to his savage, homosexual doppelganger), and he is overwhelmed by the loss of his wife. "You've got to make him fight this," says Violet to Ron, anxious that her beloved Reg snap out of debilitating depression. A particularly crazy, bloody caper restores Reg to Ron and to the childish delusion they are in control of the Krays. The final frames of *The Krays* are an aerial pullback from a wreath worded *MOTHER*. The year is 1982, and the two boys stare at a newly dug grave. Surrounded by what appears to be their retinue, Ron and Reg seem to be in control, even of death, until we notice that they are handcuffed to the people standing beside them, the police.

This is a bumper year for bumping off. *The Krays* joins *The Godfather III*, *GoodFellas*, *Miller's Crossing*, and *State of Grace* in a season of exceptional, and exceptionally sanguinary, gangster films. What distinguishes it from the others is its English setting and the theme of a divided personality projected onto twisted twins. They all emit a certain glamour from a universe so carefully coded that crime seems organized though it really is random. If, as Ron Kray contends, glamour is fear, their appeal might be in the fear that that world is our own. □

S&L Zombies

BY JAMES MCCARTY YEAGER

Washington, D.C.

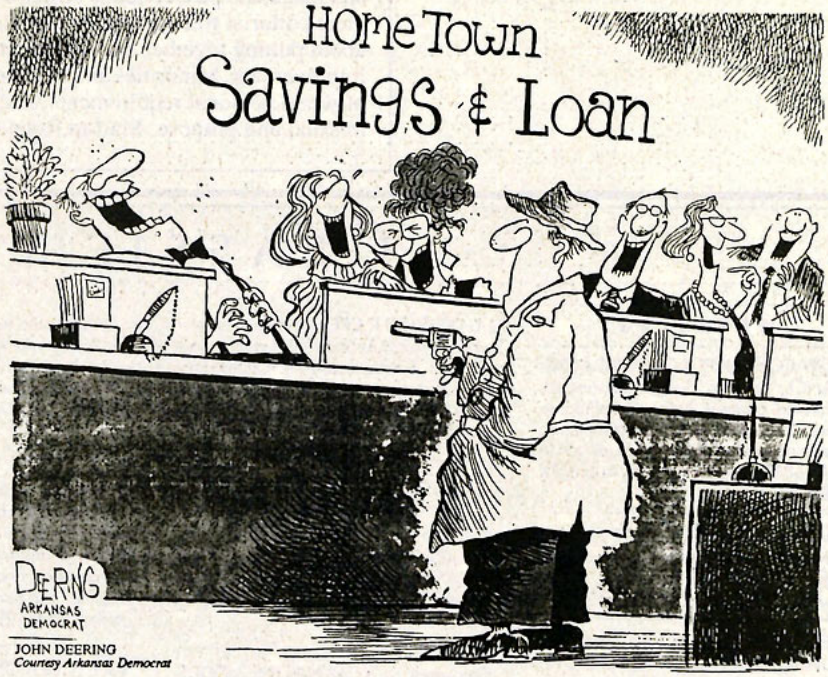
IN TEXAS, we're used to seeing tarnished figures overcome, or at least survive, their difficulties and go on to achieve notoriety. John Connally did an advertisement showing he isn't ashamed of being bankrupt, and Ben Barnes didn't mind hurriedly leaving the Lieutenant Governorship to make money in private enterprise. Various fragrant Texans have stepped in piles of ordure while in office, yet retained their clout.

But things are a little different on the national scene, what with those nasty newspapers and networks ready to spread scandals that get nicely hushed up, or at least played down, in the Lone Star State. After all, former House Speaker Jim Wright and former House Minority Whip Tony Coelho sailed too close to the edge of financial propriety and were subsequently deprived of their power. Nowadays we have the moral equivalent of wartime wasteful spending in the S&L bailout, with Neil Bush starring as the S&L poster child. And the fallout may decimate an institution.

Wandering around the floor of the U.S. Senate these days are several zombies. These are not the brain-dead, as so well exemplified by Dan Quayle before his translation to the Old Executive Office Building, and now embodied by well- nigh inarticulate figures like Symms of Idaho or Murkowski of Alaska, who are both, mercifully, Republicans.

No, the real walking dead are Glenn of Ohio, Riegle of Michigan, Cranston of California, and DeConcini and McCain of Arizona. These are the Keating Five, infamous in song and story, who took their contributions from a savings and loan owner so corrupt that even his fellow S&L owners noticed. Charles Keating is behind bars and well on his way to bankruptcy now, and these five are well on their way to oblivion. It just hasn't caught up with them yet, though Cranston recently announced he will not seek reelection, citing his health, and the Seante Ethics Committe continues its investigation.

Not directly S&L-contaminated (but owing to ethical insensitivity, still, of course, totally electorally dead), are D'Amato of New York and Durenburger of Minnesota, the latter lately sacrificed on the ceremonial pyre to the Senate Select Committee on Ethics, the former doomed by his involvement in the Housing and Urban Development scandals under former Secretary Samuel Pierce.



JOHN DEERING
Courtesy Arkansas Democrat

Do not for a moment imagine that any of these men can survive their next elections. And yes, it is lamentable but accurate that the truth, if any, of their defenses has absolutely nothing to do with it. The American people can sit still long enough to receive only one impression about any person, idea, or product. And once that idea is received, it's all over. There is no going back on, and very little changing of, the opinions of the electorate as applied to individuals. As part of the great forthcoming swing against Republican greed, people have somehow gotten the idea that senators can be bought, and indeed have been bought within the living memory of mankind, possibly even as recent as last year!

Those seven senators are dead ducks. Their past services may have been great; their future usefulness to the republic incalculable. Their innocence of the matter under judgment may be pristine. But none of that matters in the court of public perception.

A president can ride out a scandal; a senator almost never can. We all know the king has always been incompetent; his only real job being to decorate the currency and hold secret councils. But the ministers, who actually write the laws, well, even we peasants know they're a different matter. A minister must have some ability to run our empire, and must not be seen accepting bribes in public, even when called contributions.

As principal culprits of a scam wherein almost a tenth of the Senate is summarily to be discarded, neither the media nor even the self-serving system under which elections are financed in this country get the credit; though both are certainly in need of what somebody's Puritan ancestors called a root-and-branch thorough reconstruction.

As proximate cause, I don't even blame the Republicans for deregulating savings and loan institutions; Republicans think government exists to keep people off the streets and to hold up the price of dollars. Republican government is only to prevent people from being robbed, not to prevent them from being fleeced. If these senators had been primarily Republicans, it would have been understandable: It's a natural Republican instinct to think that those who own the country ought to own its governors.

But I do think that an empire, even a declining one, should have a better class of scandals than the merely financial. The doomed seven senators have set no new standards. Neither in venality nor in virtue are they remarkable. These poor sacrificial senators, if they are the best we can do in the way of proving betrayals to the country's ideals, demonstrate that either our ideals are awfully low or our standards of proof are awfully high. □

James McCarty Yeager is a former Texan who now lives in Maryland.

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