BY LOUIS DUBOSE

It really should have been called plutium. But we liked how plutonium rolled off the tongue.

Glenn Seaborg, co-discoverer of plutonium

and I am waiting for dad to come home his pockets full of irradiated silver dollars

Lawrence Ferlinghetti, "I Am Waiting"

IN JULY of 1992 Eileen Welsome placed a call from Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Dallas, Texas, and introduced Elmerine Whitfield to Elmer Allen—her father. Although Allen had died a year earlier and was buried only a few miles from the house where, as a child, Elmerine Whitfield had lived with Elmer and Fredha Allen, Whitfield never really knew Elmer Allen. Her father, Whitfield suggested in an interview in the Allen living room, was taken from her on July 18, 1947, two years after she was born, when doctors at the University of California Hospital in San Francisco injected a small amount of plutonium into Elmer Allen’s leg. Then they amputated it.

“You don’t understand what it was like living with my father,” Whitfield said. “I didn’t like my father and I didn’t understand my father.” She began to understand when Welsome called her from the offices of the Albuquerque Tribune. “She called me and mentioned plutonium and I was rather leery. But she had so much other information about my father. She knew names, dates, places and things that I had heard from him. She said, ‘I have some other documents that I can show you if I can come to Dallas to see the family.’”

Two days later, Welsome was at Whitfield’s house in Dallas, with the documents she had promised. The material, which the reporter had gathered through years of Freedom of Information Act requests to the U.S. Department of Energy, filled in a large gap in the Allen family history and helped explain who Whitfield’s father was. Or at least why he was like he was. “People thought my father was crazy,” she said, “because he walked around talking about how those doctors, he called them ‘people practicing to be doctors,’ had put a ‘germ cancer’ in his leg, then cut it off. My father couldn’t work. My mother had children to take care of and she had my father, who was like a child, to take care of.”

If, for Whitfield, Welsome’s visit was the beginning of a journey toward understanding, for Welsome it was a milestone in a trip she had begun five years earlier when, while working on a story about irradiated animals at Kirtland Air Force Base in Arizona, she discovered, in a declassified document, a footnote that led her to believe that similar tests had been conducted on humans. Ellen pitched her story to an editor who is no longer with the Tribune, she said in a telephone interview, and she was told “That’s a good story, but you’re the neighborhoods reporter.” For several years, Welsome worked the story on her own time, filing her first Freedom of Information Act requests with the Energy Department in 1989. In 1992, she was pulled off the story to work on the elections and later she was assigned to a story about pedophilia in the Catholic church.

Welsome began to piece together the story about the plutonium tests from information she obtained from the Energy Department and from Congressional documents, particularly a 1986 report by a House subcommittee, which investigated human experiments and was chaired by Massachusetts Democrat Edward J. Markey.

She determined there were at least 18 subjects of secret plutonium experiments conducted by some of the same scientists who, working with the Manhattan Project, had developed the first atomic bomb. Then she began slowly to gather information on the individuals. “I had 18 sheets of yellow paper, with information on each case,” Welsome said. “And I would make sure to source it, because I worked over such a long time that I would forget it.”

On a 1973 Department of Energy report Welsome had received as a result of a Free-

Continued on pg. 4
Central-Americanization of Mexico

The “Zapatista Uprising” in and around San Cristobal may come to be regarded as a major turning point in modern Mexican history. The conventional wisdom that Mexican society’s tolerance of inequality, corruption and the like can continue into the foreseeable future appears headed for significant change. Those who were eyewitnesses to the violence and upheaval that accompanied the end of the Porfirio Diaz era are for the most part no longer around, and public willingness to accept almost anything to avoid a repetition of those traumatic times seems to be going by the board. It is easily possible that the problems of the Central Americas may move north, now that the “social contract” seems to have come apart at the seams in Chiapas.

Concerning Guatemala, I am a number of years out of touch; however, I cannot fully agree with Messrs. Campbell and Rivera (See “Remember Guatemala,” TO 3/11/94) that the military is the force that runs the country. My observance, in the early to mid-1970s, was that the economic elite has historically co-opted the military as its asset to help maintain the status quo; so long as the military “behaves” itself, officers can count on a modest share of benefits. Should a populist religious fanatic like General Rios Montt get too far out of line, he could certainly count on the limb that he has gone out on by being身亡 off behind bars.

I fully agree with Father Andres Giron’s assessment, as reported in the article, that neither the guerrillas nor the establishment greatly desire an end to the continuing violence in Guatemala because such a development would deprive each of a reason for being. I would not relish seeing this sort of thing spread north throughout Mexico.

Richard R. McTaggart
Col. U.S. Army (Retired), Menard

Keep Internet Free

I was pleased to see Jim Hightower take on the dark side of the “Information Superhighway” (“Send the Bosses to Mexico,” TO 2/11/94). He’s right to be skeptical, about the current mergermania which is largely a fight to see who can control the media oligopoly of the next century. The lucky millions who are already plugged into the prototype information superhighway known as the Internet are participating in a flowering of free speech which may be unprecedented in human history. Step onto a digital soapbox and you can be heard by more people than if you had the announcee’s mike at the Astrodrome.

What’s more, as the saying goes, “On the Internet no one knows you’re a dog”—title, class, gender, skin color and disability matter far less in cyberspace than in real life. It’s common in digital academia to see the lowest common denominator debate the mightiest professor on equal terms.

One of the key issues here is whether the Information Superhighway under construction will retain the free-flowing traditions of the current Internet, both in terms of policy and in terms of hardware. Will it offer the free speech of the public square or the unfree speech of the private mall? When there is a Mississippi of information flowing into your living room, will the pipe flowing back upstream be big enough for you to make your own substantial contribution to the flow, or will it be a capillary just big enough to slip your credit card number through? In the latter case, expect the National Information Infrastructure to amount to little more than an online merger of Blockbuster and the Land’s End catalog—food for “mouse potatoes” indeed.

One more clarification of Hightower’s column is in order: You don’t have to call Washington to plug in with the digital activists concerned with these issues. At least two groups are active right here in Texas: EFF-Austin (512-465-7871, eff-austin@tic.com) and Electronic Frontiers Houston (713-661-1561, eff@blkbox.com).

In Memorium

A note to remark the passing of Jerry Jamieson, AIDS pioneer, editor and founder of Ad Vivendum Bene, the Tyler-based newsletter dedicated to HIV and AIDS issues (See “Bubba’s Got AIDS,” TO 2/11/94). An indigent rights activist, Jamieson worked for the poor because, as he said, “I don’t want to go to hell.”

Praise the splendid articulation of his spirit. Jamieson called us to scratch. If we needed an answer to the question What can one person do? well, Jamieson would have us answer, like Carlyle, do what is at hand.

Oh, those clear blue eyes from and on somewhere else, his zeal and his death too make us lament the loss of reticence, of the quietness which allows us to see where visions are. Now he rides the boat for the other shore. Abreast a darker passage. All peace.

Richard R. McTaggart
Col. U.S. Army (Retired), Menard

In Memorium

A note to remark the passing of Jerry Jamieson, AIDS pioneer, editor and founder of Ad Vivendum Bene, the Tyler-based newsletter dedicated to HIV and AIDS issues (See “Bubba’s Got AIDS,” TO 2/11/94). An indigent rights activist, Jamieson worked for the poor because, as he said, “I don’t want to go to hell.”

Praise the splendid articulation of his spirit. Jamieson called us to scratch. If we needed an answer to the question What can one person do? well, Jamieson would have us answer, like Carlyle, do what is at hand.

Oh, those clear blue eyes from and on somewhere else, his zeal and his death too make us lament the loss of reticence, of the quietness which allows us to see where visions are. Now he rides the boat for the other shore. Abreast a darker passage. All peace.

Mike Murphy, Tyler
**Democratic Infighting**

**DO YOU KNOW,** said one Austin political consultant and occasional Observer critic, “what a difficult position the Governor’s in?” And, how recent Observer opinion pieces only make life in the Democratic Party more difficult? His argument went something like this:

If Jim Mattox wins the Democratic primary, Governor Richards avoids presiding over a party torn apart by dissent and continued recriminations, “recycled in the Observer,” about how Richards hurt the Jim Mattox Senate campaign. But she also loses because she would like to see some money above her on the ticket and Jim Mattox won’t have the money Richard Fisher has to help get out the Democratic vote in November. If Fisher wins, then the Governor has someone other than herself spending at the top of the ticket. But she has a divided party and a campaign soured by recriminations about her failure to help Jim Mattox in his race against a country-club Democrat. And if the Observer plays the role it traditionally plays, it was suggested in the course of this conversation, it helps the Democratic party limp toward the November general election—divided, angry and with its progressive wing alienated. All and all, a net gain for the Georges (conservative Democrat Shipleys and Republican W. Bush Junior). And a loss for progressive Democrats.

What then, of the word on the street that the Governor has in one way or another signaled Democratic funders to withhold contributions to the Mattox campaign? “That is absolutely not true,” said Richards’ campaign manager Kirk Adams in a telephone interview. “It is true that in the special election we tried to unite the party around Bob Krueger. But with respect to the primary, no, the Governor has not endorsed in a primary and that is her position in this one.”

Mattox, it seems, faces fundraising problems for several reasons. The last time he set out to raise money to conduct a statewide political campaign, he could raise money as a state attorney general who had continuously held elected office for 14 years. And, he was raising money under the much more wide-open Texas campaign laws. Under federal election funding laws, Mattox cannot accept contributions larger than $1,000 from any single individual donor. Nor can Fisher, but federal laws do not prohibit a candidate from lending (read: contributing) money to his own campaign (and then paying himself back by raising money if he wins). Which explains why Richard Fisher is spending millions to Mattox’s hundreds of thousands.

When it is reported in the press that the governor is hampering Mattox’s fundraising, the fact that Mattox has little money to spend, while his opponent has a lot, lends those reports a certain logic that makes them almost irrefutable. Precisely, my Democratic Party source said, what is needed to open up the old fissures in the Democratic Party.

**SHIPLEY’S ATTACK** on Mattox in the New York Times on the day after the election — “Mattox is a loser who ran one of the most barbaric campaigns in Texas history”—also has the potential to exacerbate the grinding of the tectonic plates that underlie the Democratic Party. The Times might not have the context by which to frame that quote, but the Observer, I am reminded, should. “Shipley is not only a Richards adviser, and he is not her top adviser,” I was reminded. “He also works for [Supreme Court Justice Raul] Gonzalez, Henry Cisneros, Bullock and a lot of other Democrats. And, Richard Fisher. Could Shipley have said that because he’s working for Fisher?”

The comment, made by Shipley and snapped up by New York Times reporter Sam Howe Verhovek, does not come out of the Governor’s campaign, said Richards’ campaign manager Adams. “I wasn’t there when it was said. I don’t know that George doesn’t spin it that way, because it helps his client. But it is not the truth that we encouraged him, asked him, or led him to go to work for Richard Fisher,” Adams said. Shipley, according to Adams, is doing some work for the Governor’s campaign, which will probably become more visible after the April 12 runoff, but he is not advising the Governor on the Senate campaign.

Where does all of this leave Democrats approaching the April 4-8 early voting period and the April 12 election? At odds with one another, as is normal in Texas. But in this office, and with my friend whose criticism informed these 750 words, there is not even the beginning of a disagreement about whether to vote for Jim Mattox or Richard Fisher.

—L.D.
To Bury Our Fathers

Continued from page 1

dom of Information Act request, there was a reference to a letter written to a physician in Italy, Texas, a small town south of Dallas. "I got the report, looked at it and saw Italy, Texas," Welsome said. "And I knew that had to be a small Texas town."

(Welsome, a 1980 University of Texas journalism graduate, started at a small Texas weekly newspaper, then worked her way up through the Beaumont Enterprise, the now-defunct San Antonio Light and the San Antonio Express-News. "San Antonio was a city where we did two-fisted journalism, competing against the other paper. We didn't do New-Age, feel-good journalism, we covered the news. It wasn't the best journalism but it was honest and it wasn't pretentious." From San Antonio, Welsome moved to Albuquerque, where she began working at the Tribune in 1987.)

"By then, I had a lot of information on the people, I knew their dates of birth, dates of death, dates of injection, whether there had been an exhumation or an autopsy. I called the city hall [in Italy] and asked about an elderly black man with his left leg amputated. They told me that would have to be Elmer Allen."

Two days later, Welsome was in Elmerine Whitfield's Dallas home, matching the details of the life of the man she had come to know by his Atomic Energy Commission Code name, Cal-3. To Elmerine Whitfield, Cal-3 was Elmer Allen.

"I didn't hear from Eileen much after that," Whitfield said. "She went to Italy the next day to talk to my mother. And then the story came out, and I couldn't believe how much information that she and my mother put together."

The story Welsome wrote more than a year later, as part of a three-part Tribune series that ran in mid-November of last year, told how in 1944 a Pullman porter working in El Paso met a young graduate of Tillotson College (now Huston-Tillotson) in Austin who was traveling to Los Angeles to visit her aunt. From El Paso Elmer Allen followed Fredna Handley back to her hometown of Italy and by September they were married. The couple moved to Richmond, California, near Oakland, where Elmerine and her brother William were born.

A week before their second wedding anniversary, a train in Chicago jolted to a halt, and Elmer fell on his left knee. What seemed to be a minor accident quickly created a chronic problem with Elmer's knee and changed the course of Elmer and Fredna Allan's lives. Almost a year later, when Elmer Allen walked into the outpatient clinic at the University of California Hospital in San Francisco for treatment, he was selected for an experiment in which he would be, without his consent or knowledge, injected with plutonium. After the injection, his left leg would be amputated.

"They told him he had cancer and that was why his leg was amputated," Fredna said in an interview at her home. "We didn't know any better so we believed them." According to Welsome's reporting, those conducting the experiment never suggested that plutonium had any therapeutic value, but, rather, recognized its carcinogenic potential. In fact, the experiments were a response to an incident in which 10 milligrams of plutonium exploded in the face of a Manhattan Project scientist, who survived and is still living.

From information gathered from memos circulated among a group of scientists that included Glenn Seaborg, the Nobel prize-winner who was a co-discoverer of plutonium; J. Robert Oppenheimer, the Manhattan Project scientist who gets much of the credit for the development of the first atomic bomb; and Berkeley scientist Louis Hempeilmann, Welsome pieced together the decision-making process that led to the plutonium experiments conducted on at least 18 unknowing individuals. (In an interview with Welsome, Seaborg was distressed and said experiments were approved for animals only.)

"As for the biological sides of the work, which may involve animal, or even human experimentation, I feel that it is desirable if these can in any way be handled elsewhere, not to undertake them here," Oppenheimer wrote in mid-August of 1944. By the end of the month a study that would include "tracer experiments of humans to determine the percentage of plutonium excreted daily," had been approved.

The ideal subjects, according to what Welsome learned, would be "ordinary people with one thing in common: life-threatening illnesses that made survival beyond 10 years highly improbable."" I don't know if the amputation was necessary or unnecessary," said Whitfield. "I would have to talk with a doctor. With the medical technology in the '40s, I'm not sure they could repair the knee. But I do know that he didn't have the [cancerous] sarcoma they said he had or he wouldn't have lived for more than five years."

For Elmer Allen the loss of his leg, and the intuitively knowledge that some wrong had been done to him at the San Francisco hospital, utterly changed his life. "He was a Pullman car porter," his daughter said, "a very good job for an African American in
Admission Stirs Action

WHEN SECRETARY OF Energy Hazel O'Leary on December 7, 1993, officially acknowledged that the Department of Energy and its predecessors had authorized some 800 radiation experiments on human subjects, it was only the beginning of government activity to make amends after a half-century of secrecy. Secretary of Veterans' Affairs Jesse Brown promised a full investigation of radiation experiments involving patients at veterans' hospitals and Brown said the department was prepared to help veterans who might have suffered. But the announcements also stirred Congressional committees and legislators into action (All of the the committee chairs are Democrats):

• Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, chaired by John Glenn of Ohio, on January 25 heard individuals testify on cases of human testing of radiation.

• Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, chaired by Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, heard testimony on January 12 and is collecting names of people who feel they might have been a part of the experiments—and then passing names on to the Department of Energy. The committee staff estimates it receives five letters a day from people who believe they might have been unknowing victims.

• House Energy and Commerce Committee, chaired by John Dingell of Michigan, is pushing for the rapid declassification of documents that keep secret experiments, like the one exposed by the Albuquerque Tribune, hidden from public scrutiny. Medical follow-ups and corrective action for victims of improper radiation experimentation are being sought, as well. The subject of human testing as a whole also is being discussed and debated. Edward Markey, a Massachusetts Democrat and senior member of the committee, has been involved in the issue of human testing since 1986.

• House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, chaired by G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery of Mississippi, in a February 8 hearing examined the Veterans Administration’s involvement in secret radiation testing. Joseph P. Kennedy, a Massachusetts Democrat and member of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, said that it is time for the government to make amends. “We can accept no less than a comprehensive investigation and a full, independent review demanded of a free society,” Kennedy said. The committee urged the rapid release of relevant information about all VA testing.

• Rep. Martin Frost, a Dallas Democrat, introduced H.R. 3743, the Radiation Experimentation Compensation Act, on January 26, 1994. His bill proposes payment of $50,000 to each person who was a subject of an intentional radiation experiment without his or her consent. In a letter circulated to all House members, Frost wrote “we can never fully compensate these people for what their government has done to them. However, we can provide some measure of relief with this payment and recognition that the United States Government was wrong to conduct secret experiments on its citizens.” Rep. Frost joined Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, a Dallas Democrat, in sponsoring a resolution to the House of Representatives that denounces government-sponsored radiation experiments on humans. H.R. 337 would put the House of Representatives on record as condemning the experiments and would direct such experiments to cease. Elmer Allen, who was injected with plutonium in 1947, lived in Frost’s Congressional district.

Kim Young

Welsome’s trip to Italy provided her editors with an incentive to put more of the newspaper’s resources into the story. Even before her trip to Italy, Welsome said, her editors were reasonable. “How many papers will let a reporter follow a 50-year-old trail. ‘The DOE didn’t come to the table,’ Welsome said, ‘they were dragged. It was Loretta Garrison, a lawyer with the Cleveland, Ohio, law firm that represents the Scripps-Howard chain, who set out to bring the DOE to the table. ‘Loretta’s name belongs on this story. It couldn’t have been done without her,’ Welsome said, adding that Garrison was moved and angered when she learned what had happened to the Allens.

In July of 1992, using the Freedom of Information Act, Garrison began a paper war with the Department of Energy. “The Tribune had filed some earlier requests, FOIA requests on their own,” Garrison said. “And, they had some conversations with the DOE and there had been an appeal. Based on what Eileen had already received, we were able to ask for very specific documents as well as categories of documents,” she said. “We were trying to do this in a way that would make the DOE respond. In other words, so they couldn’t come back and say ‘Well, this is really ambiguous. We don’t really know what you mean.” If we asked for a letter dated July 7, 1972, from so-and-so to so-and-so, I mean, how can they say they don’t know what the request means?

“We had established that they have the original [medical] records,” Garrison said in an interview a month ago. And they did not want to produce them to us. … Then they made a decision that maybe we weren’t entitled to them at all, because they weren’t really agency records. I mean, we went round and round. Finally, after the story broke, and it became a national news item, those records were ordered to be shipped to the central office.”

But the individual medical records, Garrison said, an essential piece of the story, remained in Washington: “Even when Elmerine was testifying, before Congress—man [Philip] Sharp’s committee, saying to the panel, ‘The one thing that we have asked for, and that we would want from the Department of Energy, are my father’s medical records,’ those records were sitting there in the DOE’s office.”

Elmerine Whitfield not only pressured the Congressional subcommittee for her father’s
medical records, she took advantage of the unscheduled arrival of a network news crew at her mother’s home on a day Energy Secretary Hazel O’Leary was scheduled to call her there. O’Leary, who had been advised on the day of the scheduled phone call that news cameras were present, promised to do what she could to get the DOE records to Fredna Allen and her daughter.

On March 2, the DOE released some medical records. “They gave them to us in redacted form,” Garrison said, “with the patients’ names and other important information blacked out.” But with the information Welsome had already compiled, she was able to identify all but three of the 18 secret subjects of the plutonium experiments. (Welsome was traveling and not available for a second interview for this story.)

Asked if she believed that the agency is intentionally stonewalling, or if the slow delivery of the documents is caused by bureaucratic mismanagement, Garrison said that what is happening is intentional, but she is not certain that Washington is responsible for it: “I think that what’s going on here,” Garrison said, “is that in the regional offices the local folks have the documents. And they’re obviously in control of them. And they know what’s in it. And those documents are embarrassing. They don’t want to produce them. In fact, somebody in Chicago I spoke to said as much to me. We understand that the same thing might apply to the folks out in the Albuquerque area, too, where they feel fairly autonomous, that they are protected. And if the central office doesn’t know that the documents even exist there, then how are they going to enforce [FOIA] requests? On the other hand, while I think that the central office is well-intentioned, I’m also concerned about what I see as some foot-dragging here.

“There are some indications,” Garrison also said after the March 2 release of records, “that there were more than 18 people involved in the studies.” If so, Energy Secretary O’Leary, who attracted wider attention to the story with her public apology on behalf of the government when the Tribune published the story in November, and then by bringing the topic up again in a December 7 press conference, could make a difference. “I have to think that what she and her senior staff folks intend to do is very laudable,” Garrison said in February. “My problem is that, while I applaud what she says, I’m concerned that they haven’t performed. And I don’t know whether it’s because of other people, the bureaucrats, are stalling on this process and they don’t know about it, or, if in fact there is something else going on.”

Welsome also thinks O’Leary has helped keep the story alive. “I don’t think she’s a heroine as she has been depicted in the media,” Welsome said. “But while her predecessors probably would have covered it up, she said she was appalled and shamed by what had been done.”

Elmer Allen died of respiratory failure, in a nursing home in Italy, in June of 1991. He was 80. He had never consented to, nor was he ever informed of, what had been done to him, although his family physician knew and was told to inform the DOE when Allen died. In March, Elmerine Whitfield finally received some of the medical records the secretary of energy promised to help secure. There was no information about what happened prior to 1972, “nothing significant” in them she said. Whitfield said that she will get the complete records. “I am doing this for my mother,” she said. But another comment suggests another motive. “I want those records,” she said. “You know, I learned more from Eileen than I learned from the records they sent us. ... Now I know that when I was growing up in Italy, I didn’t live with Elmer Allen. I lived with Cal-3.”
Whacking Budget Priorities

When Bill Clinton laid his new, improved, streamlined, $1.5 trillion budget on us, he claimed his team had gone through the thing with an industrial-sized squeegee to get all the fat out.

That claim made me think of little two-year-olds who believe if they squeeze their eyes shut real tight, we can't see them. It's cute in a kid—less so in a president.

It's easy to see through Clinton's "lean and mean" budget claims—just look at that $264 billion whopper of a Pentagon budget sticking out of his back pocket. That's a $3 billion dollar increase over this year and $120 billion more than we were shelling out in 1980—back when we were still wrestling with the Russian bear.

Of course, a budget is about priorities, not numbers. For example, Clinton and Congress say they just can't find the money to improve our schools and universities—yet every year they spend $3 billion to defend South Korea from North Korea—that fearsome foe whose total military budget is only $2 billion?

But in the wacky world of Washington, our leaders are budgeting twice as much to police the North Korean border as is spent for all cops at all levels here at home, from federal drug squads to school crossing guards. Go figure.

The President's new budget happily whacks $3 billion from public housing, which is more needed than ever, yet budgets $4.5 billion for a new aircraft carrier that even the Pentagon admits it doesn't need. And Clinton chops in half the program that helps poor people pay heating bills in the dead of winter, but retains full funding for the U.S. Army's "School of the Americas"—an officer-training college that's graduated Manuel Noriega and other Latin American militarists engaged in the deadly arts of coups, massacres and assassinations.

If you'd like to take a whack at Washington's whacked-out budget priorities, a watchdog group called Center for New Priorities can point you in the right direction. Call them on 202-544-8222.

Jim Hightower, a former Observer editor and Texas agriculture commissioner, does daily radio commentary. May 14 he will begin a weekend talk show on ABC Radio Network.
MOLLY IVINS

Whitewater Over the Falls

I am working womanfully on the Whitewater Scandal. I'm going to get a grip on it any day now. One of my secret vanities as a journalist is that I'm nonpartisan about ethical lapses, a veritable Ahab, I like to think, in relentless pursuit of do-badders of any persuasion.

I pride myself on the roster of Democrats and/or liberals I have roasted, toasted and basted on matters both fiscal and moral: Lyndon Johnson, former House Speaker Jim Wright, Lieut. Gov. Bob Bullock, former Attorney General Jim Mattox, former Texas House Speaker Gib Lewis, etc., etc.

It's just that every time I see Senator Al D'Amato waxing indignant about Whitewater, I start laughing. You have to cut me some slack on this: I used to work for the \textit{New York Times}, where I covered D'Amato, who is one of the most awful weasels I ever ran across. Believe me, if you know Al D'Amato, watching him wax indignant about an ethical question is comic beyond all hope of redemption.

Nevertheless—operating on the theory that with all this horsepuckey around, there's bound to be a pony somewhere—I have been studying Whitewater. Here's the deal:

Sixteen years ago—possibly on a cold, dark night—Bill and Hillary Clinton invested in a real estate deal that didn't pan out, lost about $47,000, and took a deduction for at least part of the loss on their income taxes. So far, I fail to ignite. Like Queen Victoria, I am not amused by politicians who make money while holding public office, but I've never had to take a stand on a politician who lost money and failed to take a deduction before. Hillary Clinton later got shrewder about tax deductions, even taking off for donating Bill's old underwear to the Salvation Army, but that is apparently not part of the current complaint.

There follows the usual tangled tale of how the Clintons' partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the Clinton's partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the White House had any interest in Madison Guaranty; it's only been on the front pages for two years now.

The only truly distinguishing feature of the Madison Guaranty saga is how absolutely average it is. Notice that I am talking on the theory that with all this horsepuckey around, there's bound to be a pony somewhere—I have been studying Whitewater. Here's the deal:

Sixteen years ago—possibly on a cold, dark night—Bill and Hillary Clinton invested in a real estate deal that didn't pan out, lost about $47,000, and took a deduction for at least part of the loss on their income taxes. So far, I fail to ignite. Like Queen Victoria, I am not amused by politicians who make money while holding public office, but I've never had to take a stand on a politician who lost money and failed to take a deduction before. Hillary Clinton later got shrewder about tax deductions, even taking off for donating Bill's old underwear to the Salvation Army, but that is apparently not part of the current complaint.

There follows the usual tangled tale of how the Clintons' partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the Clinton's partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the Clinton's partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the White House had any interest in Madison Guaranty; it's only been on the front pages for two years now.

The only truly distinguishing feature of the Madison Guaranty saga is how absolutely average it is. Notice that I am talking on the theory that with all this horsepuckey around, there's bound to be a pony somewhere—I have been studying Whitewater. Here's the deal:

Sixteen years ago—possibly on a cold, dark night—Bill and Hillary Clinton invested in a real estate deal that didn't pan out, lost about $47,000, and took a deduction for at least part of the loss on their income taxes. So far, I fail to ignite. Like Queen Victoria, I am not amused by politicians who make money while holding public office, but I've never had to take a stand on a politician who lost money and failed to take a deduction before. Hillary Clinton later got shrewder about tax deductions, even taking off for donating Bill's old underwear to the Salvation Army, but that is apparently not part of the current complaint.

There follows the usual tangled tale of how the Clintons' partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the Clinton's partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the Clinton's partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the White House had any interest in Madison Guaranty; it's only been on the front pages for two years now.

The only truly distinguishing feature of the Madison Guaranty saga is how absolutely average it is. Notice that I am talking on the theory that with all this horsepuckey around, there's bound to be a pony somewhere—I have been studying Whitewater. Here's the deal:

Sixteen years ago—possibly on a cold, dark night—Bill and Hillary Clinton invested in a real estate deal that didn't pan out, lost about $47,000, and took a deduction for at least part of the loss on their income taxes. So far, I fail to ignite. Like Queen Victoria, I am not amused by politicians who make money while holding public office, but I've never had to take a stand on a politician who lost money and failed to take a deduction before. Hillary Clinton later got shrewder about tax deductions, even taking off for donating Bill's old underwear to the Salvation Army, but that is apparently not part of the current complaint.

There follows the usual tangled tale of how the Clintons' partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the Clinton's partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the Clinton's partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the White House had any interest in Madison Guaranty; it's only been on the front pages for two years now.

The only truly distinguishing feature of the Madison Guaranty saga is how absolutely average it is. Notice that I am talking on the theory that with all this horsepuckey around, there's bound to be a pony somewhere—I have been studying Whitewater. Here's the deal:

Sixteen years ago—possibly on a cold, dark night—Bill and Hillary Clinton invested in a real estate deal that didn't pan out, lost about $47,000, and took a deduction for at least part of the loss on their income taxes. So far, I fail to ignite. Like Queen Victoria, I am not amused by politicians who make money while holding public office, but I've never had to take a stand on a politician who lost money and failed to take a deduction before. Hillary Clinton later got shrewder about tax deductions, even taking off for donating Bill's old underwear to the Salvation Army, but that is apparently not part of the current complaint.

There follows the usual tangled tale of how the Clintons' partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the Clinton's partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the Clinton's partner in the real estate deal, James McDougal, owns this property, and how the White House had any interest in Madison Guaranty; it's only been on the front pages for two years now.
Whitewater and Other High Water Marks

Washington, D.C.
The high water mark of the Confederacy is somewhere along a ridge—but not the one Faulkner thought it was, at Gettysburg where Pickett's men were foolishly expanded—near Camp Hill overlooking the great stone Pennsylvania Railroad bridge across the Susquehanna at Harrisburg. If the Confederacy had captured that bridge, as Early's men could have done if supported by the rest of Lee's army, it would have been as dramatic as the capture of Vicksburg was, that same week, to the North: a means of cutting the enemy economy in half.

The high water mark of the new Confederates, who consist of all the usual Republican suspects plus their nominally Democratic allies whose business ties are stronger than their populism, is likewise on its way. If they don't knock Bill Clinton out in the next nine months, they'll have to be content with watching his reelection from their Congressional, editorial, and country club bastions.

But it is no mistake that the concatenation of events, suppositions, and public relations gestures currently going under the name of Whitewater is the conservatives' only chance to derail the Clinton presidency. At a time when health care ought to fill the airwaves, instead we get the vulpine features of Whitewater Republican point man Senator Alfonse (Still Inexplicably Unindicted) D'Amato of New York. But Molly Ivins has already done proper execution on that subject elsewhere in this issue.

The fight is so vicious over Whitewater exactly because if the conservatives do not now cripple Clinton, he will make the business-as-usual case for more than it is worth.

The extinguished journalinguist Chalmers M. Roberts (who was hired—after a long career of dispensing the conventional wisdom—to do an official history of the Washington Post, and was thereupon rewarded with additional company stock for the bland and inoffensive nature of his efforts) has recently pointed out that Franklin D. and Eleanor Roosevelt came in for some similar pounding early on in office. He leaves one with the surprise that the FDR and WIC cases are parallel in that the Republicans know they have already lost on the issues, and have no recourse but personal attacks (since statesmanlike bipartisanship is traditionally above them).

Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole recently quoted former Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater as finally having said, within weeks of unindicted former President Richard Nixon's resignation, that "the smell" had to be investigated. Dole neglected to mention that Republican leaders never noticed the stench from the White House until the defunct object was about to be removed. Pretending that such noisome emanations are currently resident at 1600 Pennsylvania is a fairly weak political card, but, as it is the only one they have, they are playing it for more than it is worth.

To hear the Republicans on Whitewater, you would think you were hearing, through a distorting glass, the Democrats on Iran-Contra... except the Democrats' case was based on serious constitutional issues while the Republicans' is, at best, esoteric bean-counting. In fact, the Republicans' reproduction of Democratic investigatory zeal reminds me of the distinction between the National Enquirer and the New York Times. In the Republican and the Enquirer cases, the forms of investigation and of journalism are carefully preserved, while the judgement that vivifies those forms, and should govern their use, is wholly absent.

But the seriousness of the political attack on President Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton cannot be underestimated. For all practical purposes, it is the Republicans' final onslaught. If they cannot bring down the moral standing of the President with the people through this farago of confused allegations and retrospective anathemization, the Republicans are going to look even more petty and silly than they do now. And they will have even less of a chance of affecting, much less passing, legislation. So Whitewater really is make-or-break for ending government gridlock. A crippled Presidency will continue the effective blocking alliance between Republicans and conservative Democrats. Whereas, if he skates on this one, Bill is bombproof.

Last week my 12-year old proclaimed, while crossing the Potomac at Chain Bridge, "Dad, This is the real Whitewater affair!" He was gesturing at the accumulated waters of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia and Ohio as they boiled through the gorge that divides Washington's Virginia suburbs from their Maryland suburbs. And he was right. The annual spring rise in the river, (brown, frothing, spreading out into the trees lining the lower shore and rising up the rocks along the higher shore,) is much greater news than the Republican attacks over what is, at worst, questionable investment behavior. Basically, the Republicans are all mad that Democrats would have the nerve to pull the same accounting tricks they do.

San Antonio Democratic Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez has defended calling Iowa Republican Rep. Jim Leach, chief custodian of the Republican Whitewater attack in the House, "obdurate" by observing that Leach's record stands on its own, for those who know the meaning of the word. And, while personally squeaky-clean, Leach has been faulted for not condemning the Iran-Contra peccadillos of two of his party's Presidents as wholeheartedly as he is pursuing the Clintons' finances.

The Clintons do have real problems. "This Administration has a positive genius for going for the capillaries," says Maurice Rosenblatt, the world's oldest living lobbyist, a notorious lecturer of political neophytes. But that is also the nature of reform. You don't get real reform until you get all the fake ones out of the way, and the Clintonic hordes have barely started, measured against the geological time span in which national movements occur.

The erection of one's parochial preferences into national needs is a mechanism best understood by country club Republicans and business Democrats, who are offended (and who therefore charge others with the elitism they themselves manifest) when reformers pursue national needs, such as health care reform, which are not parochial at all. Meanwhile the residual power of the imperial presidency shields even a Democrat, leading to the necessity of attacking the First Lady. Neither Bill nor Hillary has descended to the cartoon depths of incompetence and greed attained by the fabulous Reagans, actor and actress alike.

The Republicans hope that hearings will produce that result, probably in vain. Fifty-three percent of Americans say the Whitewater story is overplayed in the media, noted the Washington Post, slyly adding, "See accompanying stories on pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10."
We need to set aside, I think, everything we’ve been told by the establishment about radiation.... They missed the boat almost totally. And they have very severely misled us.

—Dr. Rosalie Bertell, Feb. 20, 1994

I refuse to have my scars hidden...to be reduced in my own eyes or the eyes of others from warrior to mere victim simply because it might render me...more acceptable or less dangerous to those who believe that if you cover up a problem it will cease to exist.

—Breast Cancer Survivor, Feb. 20, 1994

A N OFFICIAL MYTH has been poisoning the public for 50 years. The myth is that there is no harm from radiation, especially low-dose radiation (or “low-level” as the nuclear industry alludes to it, hoping to make it seem somehow benign).

For years a maverick group of scientists—many of whom once worked in secret government projects (including the Manhattan Project that brought us The Bomb in the first place)—have been exposing that myth as a coverup by what some now call the Cancer Cartel. This conglomerate of powerful vested interests is comprised of state, national and international government entities, several mega-industries, and a few large “charitable” organizations.

Some of these gutsy scientists—Drs. Vladimir Chernousenko, Rosalie Bertell, Jay M. Gould, and Ernest J. Sternglass—were in Austin in February to kick off a Campaign Against Breast Cancer. They support their argument with scientific studies and raw data—gathered from Chernobyl to Pantex, from the years of atmospheric testing through the decades of nuclear power—which they believe prove that low-dose radiation is the principal cause or promoter of the alarming increase in breast cancer. These studies and data, they believe, have been ignored or deliberately suppressed by the Cancer Cartel.

As they used to say in the 1960s, when everyone was trying to get a piece of Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty, “there is money in poverty.” Today, we know there is money in cancer.

Gayle Hudgens is a researcher, writer and organic gardener near Manchaca. Betty Brink is a freelance writer in Fort Worth.
Mangano (on downwinders near Oak Ridge National Laboratory) indicate that downwind cancer incidence and mortality exceed regional increases and far exceed national increases.

These studies also provide compelling evidence that low-dose radiation from atmospheric tests, nuclear plants, and nuclear accidents is involved in inducing and/or promoting cancers, immune system damage, low birth weight, birth defects, infant mortality, and many life-threatening diseases such as AIDS, diabetes, lupus, multiple sclerosis, and hepatitis, as Sternglass, Gould, and Bortell have long argued. Chernouzenko has also seen increases in damage to the cardiovascular system and internal organs in the aftermath of the Chernobyl tragedy.

Radiation—in the form of nuclear fission products, especially Iodine-131, Strontium-90, and Cesium-137—assaults the immune system at various states of development, even the fetal state. (See “Radiation and the Immune System,” page 12.) Sternglass, Professor Emeritus of Radiation Physics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, says that these fission products in the diet and drinking water are the principal previously neglected factor in the rise of breast cancer, other types of cancer, and the resurgence of infectious diseases. They create charged particles called “free-radicals” that can penetrate and destroy blood cell membranes of the immune system much more efficiently at low-dose than at high-dose rates. Moreover, these free radicals often act synergistically with other toxic agents and hormones that also end up in the food chain and water supplies.

In a study conducted for the foundation that sponsored the Austin conference, Susan Lee of Austin, emphasizing that the data are raw and still being compiled, nonetheless cited troubling increases of cancers identified by the Texas Cancer Registry, during different periods beginning in 1976 through 1991, in four counties near Amarillo, downwind of Pantex, the final assembly plant for nuclear weapons from the late 1940s until today. (Pantex is the DOE’s current choice for a plutonium research laboratory, a plan fully supported by the Governor, most of the state’s elected officials and a “research consortium,” made up of Texas Tech, the University of Texas and Texas A&M systems, which hope to bring in big bucks for research. According to the Amarillo Economic Development Corporation’s fact sheet, dated September 1993, “the consortium is already consulting with DOE on expansion of potential new research missions at Pantex...some (to) commence as early as this fall.”)


And in Carson County where the plant is located, seven leukemia deaths occurred in 1989 and 1990, compared to one for the four previous years. All cancer rates for the several counties surrounding the plant are significantly higher than state rates. Lee found, and the occurrence of some, such as leukemia in adults, were twice as high or more than state rates. In Potter County, brain cancer—a rare cancer and a bellwether for something gone terribly awry—was triple the state rates in 1988.

(It is important to note here that these counties are rural, populated by farmers and ranchers who live on land that has been in their families for generations. They grow their own food as well as wheat and other crops for most of the country; a major aquifer, the Ogala, flows under these counties and provides water for the Panhandle and most of the breadbasket states of the Midwest. Arrowhead Mills, a producer of organic grains and legumes, gets its water from the same source, and has been at the forefront of the fight against contamination.)

Because the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, according to its Toxicology section director JoAnn Wiersema, is legislatively prohibited from monitoring and regulating radiation, opposing the proposed low-level radioactive waste dump in Sierra Blanca, the South Texas Project or Texas Utilities’ Comanche Peak Nuclear Plant, and knowing what is really going on in the state vis a vis radioactivity/water contamination/wind patterns might add up to more than your proverbial uphill battle. (See “Annvironmentalism,” TO, 3/11/94).

**Study Links Cancer, Nuke Releases**

In a major new study, “Breast Cancer: Evidence for a Relation to Fission Products in the Diet,” published last year in the International Journal of Health Services (edited by Johns Hopkins’ Dr. Vincente Navarro), the authors, Ernest J. Sternglass and Jay M. Gould, found that the new epidemic of breast cancer—especially heavy in the Northeast—was linked to radioactivity from nuclear power plants’ releases into the air, water, and food chain. They ascertained a strong correlation between the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s published releases (1970-1987) of airborne Iodine-131 (and other fission products) and the National Cancer Institute’s data on regional breast cancer mortality rates, with the cases rising most steeply at the lowest doses. These results are consistent with laboratory studies on low-level radiation and free radicals and with more than two dozen epidemiological studies around the world which have found increased cancer and leukemia rates near nuclear facilities with radiation levels lower than present standards.

They looked at several bodies of data, each of which confirmed their overall findings.

First, in the 17 years between 1970-72 and 1987-89, Suffolk County (only 10 miles across Long Island Sound from the three units aptly named Millstone 1, 2, and 3) showed the greatest rises in newly diagnosed cases of breast cancer and in breast cancer mortality—a 39 percent increase using New York State Department of Health data. Millstone is notorious for the largest fission product releases ever reported for a normally operating commercial power plant during this period.

Next, from information in the Connecticut Tumor Registry—“the oldest and best in the country,” according to Gould—they found there was a slight decline in breast cancer between the years 1935 to 1944. It swelled after bomb testing and rose even faster after Connecticut’s Haddam Neck and Millstone nuclear plants went on line. By 1987, a peak in incidence occurred that was 25 percent above the expected rate. These data strongly support the causal connection between breast cancer rises and the release of fission products.

Then the rates in New York City actually declined after the main source of drinking water was moved 50 to 150 miles upwind from any nuclear reactors. Rates in Westchester—where the water supply continued to come from reservoirs contaminated by releases from the Indian Point reactors—rose sharply to 29 percent above those of New York City in the mid-eighties.

Finally, communities getting their water supplies from deep aquifer wells showed a lag time in breast cancer rate rises which Sternglass and Gould explain by the fact that rainwater (containing fission product fallout) may take five to 10 years to permeate the aquifers.

—G.H.
Radiation and the Immune System

A SUSTAINED nuclear chain reaction takes place, Uranium-235 atoms split apart (fission) releasing large amounts of energy in the form of heat and fragments (or fission products). If inhaled or ingested, many of these isotopes mimic their non-radioactive cousins. For example, Strontium-90 behaves like calcium...of the body may be assaulted by radioactive chemicals. While humans have evolved an immune system capable of combating natural background radiation and cosmic rays to some extent, they are totally unprepared biologically to deal with man-made fission product.

In an interview after his presentation, Dr. Gould—epidemiologist, author of Deadly Deceit: Low-Level Radiation, High-Level Cover-up, former science advisor to President Carter, and director of the Radiation and Public Health Project in New York City—said that the introduction of man-made fission product into a pristine atmosphere is responsible for a tremendous wave of immune deficiency diseases that began in 1945 with the first A-bomb test but has now reached the stage of "an enormous health crisis...because of the harm done to immune systems throughout the past 50 years."

That radiation has these effects is not a novel idea—just one that has been suppressed. It in fact was predicted in 1958 by physicists Linus Pauling of the United States and Andrei Sakharov of the Soviet Union, both Nobel Prize winners, working independently of one another. Sakharov had designed the Soviet H-Bomb and understood it as a biological weapon; from animal studies he was able to calculate how many premature deaths would result from every 50 megatons of the bomb yield—up to one million deaths, the same number Pauling predicted. Sakharov believed that radiation would mutate all microorganisms, and from past experience, they would all be more lethal to deal with.

Which is exactly what the scientists at the conference think is happening in the Ukraine and White Russia, following the disaster at Chernobyl. Dr. Chernousenko points out that no "truly scientific" statistics exist, because "it would be too expensive...[and there is no more money in Russia] so we are forced to speak about various 'pieces' that are taken in various categories and even these data astonish people [but] they do not give you a complete picture of...our tragedy."

Dr. Chernousenko, as the head of the Ukrainian Academy of Science at the time of the accident, was solicited to oversee the emergency cleanup mission; his physician in Germany, where he now lives, expects him to live only three more years.

Radiation levels too high to measure—the dark side of "electricity too cheap to meter"—occurred in the first few days after the accident, when 50 percent of the exposure occurred. The other 50 percent has occurred through the food chain, the Russian physicist said.

Sixty-five million people, according to Chernousenko, are now showing the effects of the radiation. "In the next three to five years, one million people will die because of that exposure..." Already, he says, 15,000 workers who participated in the Phase I cleanup have died. Most were young draftees, ages 18 to 21. The number of people in need of physical exams, according to Chernousenko, is staggering: 600,000 of the Phase I cleanup workers; 500,000 evacuees; 500,000 additional workers who replaced the first crews. The medical establishment is overwhelmed, he said.

(In a chilling commentary on the magnitude of the medical problems resulting from nuclear disasters in what was the U.S.S.R., Chernousenko told of "special reservations," which he compared to leper colonies, set up in Siberia even before Chernobyl for victims who have been "genetically affected" by nuclear accidents. More will be built, he said, for the Chernobyl victims. He urged journalists to enter the camps with videos so that "all the world would see.")

"I recently returned from White Russia and the Ukraine," he said, "and there are...between 12 and 20 percent of the children born there with genetic defects...children in the Ukraine suffer daily from radiation sickness...and they have cataracts...it is a horrible tragedy...when children of three years old get cataracts...."

In addition, he says, there has been a large increase in breast cancer and immune deficiency in Byelorussia; thyroid cancer in Belarus children increased from two or three cancers a year to between 35 and 40 in a year in a four- or five-year period. (The increase in thyroid cancers in Belarus has also been reported in Nature, and con-
"The fact that cancers, including breast cancers, can appear so quickly has never been seen before," Stemglass said. The industry, he added, has a powerful incentive to hide this information, as it is now trying to do, because "widespread knowledge of this effect would be the end of the nuclear industry..."

Dr. Rosalie Bertell, president of the Canada-based International Institute of Concern for Public Health, discussed the absence of a latency period in new breast cancers that are occurring so soon after the Chernobyl accident. She believes this shows how we have been misled by the way cancers are "counted" by government officials, who only count "radiation-induced fatal cancers." Every word is important, she said. Radiation-induced fatal cancers, which are the only ones "counted" by government officials, represent only a small percentage of the cancers related to radiation exposure, she said. "You have radiation-promoted cancers," induced by something else, but radiation is enough to destabilize the tumor cells and send them off reproducing...when you have an accident like Three Mile Island or Chernobyl, people are walking around with tumor processes but they are subclinical...your immune system is keeping it down...If you are suddenly insulted with a radiation blow, you throw off that balance and you are unable to keep down this...process and it becomes clinically visible. This is not a 'radiation-induced cancer,' it is a 'radiation-accelerated cancer' and if you work for the International Atomic Energy Agency, you don't count it."

Sternglass agreed with Chernousenko's observation that for the first time in history we are seeing a whole population exposed to radiation through diet and environment. After the initial accident the people have been exposed "gradually [through the food chain], from the embryonic state to the fetal state through early childhood and we must look at that population in order to fully understand the much greater consequences of continuous low-level exposure for which we have no previous human experience."

But the Cancer Cartel might already be putting up new smokescreens to divert public attention from the harm radiation can do. NCI, with its incestuous ties to the chemical, nuclear, and pharmaceutical industries and to the medical establishment, is poised to launch a new strategy. Its 20-year effort to find a viral cause of cancer not only failed miserably, but bought time for the Cancer Cartel—and time, in this instance, was definitely money. NCI's 'blame the victim for her lifestyle choices' scheme backfired quickly. The heredity diversion was cast aside since genes account for only a small percentage of all breast cancers. Now, in its latest gambit to divert the public's attention from the radiation link, NCI is shifting its focus to hormones.

The scenario goes something like this: Start with a scare tactic, like the suggestion that the loss of estrogen might cause Alzheimer's. Then appeal to the academic establishment with promises of plentiful grant money followed by liberal funding to study estrogen mimics, pharmacological fixes, and hormonal approaches. Make sure some of the studies suggest that anyone on hormone replacement therapy now will need anti-estrogen strategies. Finally, as the highest priority, establish a Laboratory of Hormonal Carcinogenesis and Cellular Proliferation. The discoveries made here will require new chemicals, new drugs, new treatments, new equipment, new technology—all of which will make the drug companies, the chemical enterprise, and the medical and nuclear industries very happy and very rich.

This can only happen if the myth about radiation and cancer continues to kill us. How unfortunate for the Cancer Cartel that the Campaign Against Breast Cancer has its own global strategy. And it does not include keeping the radiation link or any of its scars hidden behind the myth.

From Stardom to Scandal
by Arthur Frederick Ide

The first edition, released as Kay Bailey Hutchison: Lone Star Girl was out of print within 3 weeks. Now there's an expanded edition: From Stardom to Scandal. Having scoured all public and private records, draining Texas public papers and journals of every shred of information, the author coupled his research with live interviews and depositions to uncover the true character of Texas' most junior senator: Kay Bailey Hutchison.

From Stardom to Scandal chronicles

♦ Kay's early relationship with Travis County DA Ronnie Earle
♦ use of campaign contributions to entertain friends and cronies in Colorado and elsewhere
♦ public paranoia over Democrats, especially Bob Krueger, Richard Fisher and Jim Mattox
♦ public lies from her real education background to a fantasy burglary in Dallas and Austin
♦ use of state employees to buy and fix up her Austin home and for personal errands
♦ what Texas Treasury tapes were erased and why
♦ political indebtedness to health, insurance and energy PACs
♦ why Republicans went to Earle and demanded an investigation of Treasurer Hutchison

and includes the text of indictments and laws cited as broken. Over 340 pgs. In paperback: $18.50 (incl. tax & p/h).

Monument Press
P. O. Box 140361 / Las Colinas, TX 75014-0361
Sierra Blanca Resists ‘Green’ Nuke Storage

During the past five years residents of the small West Texas town of Sierra Blanca were unable to stop the state from locating a low-level radioactive waste disposal site in their community. And they were caught off guard when the Texas Water Commission, in a record 23 days, issued a permit to MERCO Joint Ventures, an out-of-state operation now spreading New York sewage sludge on a huge ranch four miles west of the center of town. Recently, when word got out that an Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Westinghouse subsidiary had bought an option on two sections of land to use for a temporary storage for low-level nuclear waste, public reaction forced the company to reconsider.

“We stepped into a hornets’ nest,” Scientific Ecology Group (SEG) business development director Chuck Bernhard said in a telephone interview. “There is obviously a lot of public concern about the sites that are already there, which is unfortunate. The people feel, I think, that these sites have been shoved down their throats. And we, as a company, do not work that way. So we’re pulling back for now.”

SEG had planned to use two sections of a 3,600-acre ranch for temporary storage of low-level nuclear waste from a number of states. According to Bernhard, waste at the proposed storage site would be held in containers in an above-ground storage building. The waste, Bernhard said, would come from states that have not yet provided for their own storage of low-level waste, either by entering into compacts, as Texas has done with Maine and Vermont, whose waste will be disposed of in Texas, or building their own disposal facilities. “Sooner or later some of those sites [in states with no current disposal options] are going to have to be developed, Bernhard said. “And in the interim, there is going to have to be somewhere for that waste to go. That’s what we were going to provide. Temporary storage.”

The Oak Ridge company had purchased an option to lease land from Cynthia Hoover, an El Paso accountant who recently placed third in a field of three in the Democratic primary race for county judge in Hudspeth County (where she is registered to vote and her husband is a resident). In a telephone interview, Hoover said that in January she traveled to Oak Ridge at SEG’s expense to tour its facilities. In the course of a two-day visit, Hoover said, she was convinced. “Until then, I had only heard one side of the nuclear waste argument,” Hoover’s ranch adjoins the ranch the state purchased to use for the low-level radioactive waste site. “A long time ago,” she said, she had surveyed her property to “sell it off in 50-acre tracts.” No one was interested once there was “talk of a nuclear dump coming in [on the adjacent ranch].” She said her political campaign was not “anti-dumping” but admitted that she had voiced some concerns about the storage of nuclear waste. It was her first—and probably last, she said—attempt to get elected to public office. The ranch was once owned by her grandparents and is currently used to raise racehorses, according to Hoover. She would have continued to raise horses there, she said, if the SEG facility had been established. She said she had been approached by SEG, which was founded in 1987, when the company was looking for property in the region. Hoover also said she was motivated by the prospect of creating 30 jobs in Sierra Blanca.

According to Bernhard, SEG selected Sierra Blanca because topographical and geological studies conducted by the state provide much of the information the company needs to obtain a permit, in what Bernhard said would be similar but not as “intensive a permitting process” as required for the state’s low-level site. “A lot of the characterization work that we would have done to permit a facility had already been done. That’s the number-one reason; it would save us money and time because there was a lot of work done relative to that project. It would have saved us a lot of front-end costs.”

Bernhard said SEG also designs and produces containers for weapons components at a Carlsbad, New Mexico, plant. When asked if the containers are similar to the plutonium storage containers used at the Pantex weapons plant in Amarillo, he bristled. “Don’t confuse us with the DOE. We are a private company that provides solutions,” Bernhard said. “We are a green company. They don’t come greener than we do. And if there is any attempt to characterize otherwise, I’m going to be really upset about it. I’m an environmentalist, that’s why I’m working for this company. I’m trying to solve problems.”

Bernhard said he had been talking to the Roger Mulder in the governor’s office and Rick Jacobi of the Texas Low Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority. The state officials, he said, discouraged SEG’s effort. “The last thing we want to do is complicate issues for the people who are trying to get that site [the state’s low-level site] approved. So, out of respect for Rick Jacobi and others, we are pulling out.”

Susan Rieff, who directs environmental policy for the Richards Administration, said that her office is completely opposed to the SEG proposal. “Our feeling would be that we don’t want them in Hudspeth County,” Rieff said. “We’re not interested in any Texas county becoming the site of any national operation like that. We are building our project because it’s our view that we have to. The Governor has made it clear all along that we don’t have any interest in becoming a national site.” Rieff characterized as disturbing the idea that SEG would be able to “national holding site and have radioactive material shipped to and from Sierra Blanca,” which is located on Interstate 10, 90 miles east of El Paso. “We hope it’s come and gone,” Rieff said of SEG, adding that her office is looking at the statute that applies to permitting such storage facilities.

The SEG facility would not be as difficult to permit as the state’s low-level site, she said, and her office is looking at the statutes “to see what tools we have to tighten things up. If SEG comes back, or if another group applies, we can be ready to deal with it.” Rieff said. A storage site, which is not “forever and ever,” Cynthia Hoover said, requires a license from the Texas Department of Health and not a permit from the Radioactive Waste Authority.

Bill Addington, a Sierra Blanca business owner who has been at the forefront of the opposition to the sludge dump and the low-level radioactive waste site, said he does not believe that the Governor’s office will oppose the SEG project if the low-level site is approved. “They don’t want another nuclear dump complicating matters until they get their permit,” Addington said. He also took issue with Hoover’s claim that she had not opposed the dump, saying that he supported Hoover’s candidacy—until Hoover came into his family-owned store and told him that she had been contacted by SEG. “I thought she meant she was contacted by their lobbyists. We have all sorts of nuclear carpetbaggers down here lobbying all the time,” he later found out that she was dealing with company officials working on a land lease. “We took her campaign sign out of the store window,” he said.

Bernhard maintains that SEG is out of Sierra Blanca and said his company’s loss is a loss for the nation, which is running out of storage space, and for Sierra Blanca. “We bring jobs, we bring new technology to communities. We have been invited to several places to set up facilities. If we’re not wanted, we will not be there.” —L.D.
Pig Feedlot Plans Concern Bosque County Residents

CLIFTON

Some Bosque County residents smelled money when a British-owned company talked about settling thousands of breeding sows in this rural Central Texas county west of Waco. But Regina Hanson, who lives across the road from one of the proposed sites, feared other odors traditionally associated with swine and their habits. Hanson, a former county judge, heard three months ago that Kentucky-based Pig Improvement Co. (PIC) was planning to move in with a major swine-breeding operation.

The idea of living downwind from thousands of pigs concerned potential neighbors not only for their noses but also for the polluted Bosque River watershed which would have to absorb the prodigious porcine waste.

PIC, a subsidiary of a British holding company, operates huge pig-breeding feedlots in three states and has contracted to northwestern Oklahoma, where it has operated a concentrated feedlot near Enid and is seeking to expand its operations.

In a telephone interview reported in the March 23 Clifton Record, Dwain Bankston, the environmental operations manager for PIC, said the company has been looking at sites in Bosque County since the fall of 1993, but he said the company also is looking at other Texas counties and other states.

In the face of a March 24 organizational meeting of the Alliance for Bosque County to oppose the confined feeding operation, PIC appeared to retreat, as they told local economic development boosters they no longer were considering Bosque County for the breeding site. PIC officials later denied that the citizen opposition had anything to do with their decision to look elsewhere.

At the meeting, which drew 70 people to Clifton’s Civic Center, representatives of the Bosque County Economic Development Corporation said the company had decided not to locate in Bosque County because of concerns about soil quality and water availability. He confirmed that decision to the Observer on March 28 but added that if PIC had wanted to locate in Bosque County and the soil and water conditions had been right, the company would not have let what he considered a relatively small number of residents stop it.

As far as Mel Robinson is concerned, PIC can take its pigs elsewhere. Robinson ranches near Cranfills Gap and he started raising the alarms when he learned that PIC was looking at a neighboring tract. Even if PIC has an exemplary record, which he doubts, there remains the possibility that its owners might sell the property, or turn it over to less scrupulous operators. He showed a videotape of news reports on big hog feeding operations in North Carolina that showed open cesspools, with dead hogs thrown in, waste running into public streams and neighbors complaining of strong, foul odors.

In any case, Robinson said, the county water supply already is endangered by runoff from farms and dairy operations upriver in Erath County as well as the municipal sewage systems that dump their waste into the river. A report by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission has shown high levels of fecal coliforms in the river, and the Brazos River Authority is conducting an intensive survey of the river basin to determine the damage and its sources.

Ken Kramer, director of the state chapter of the Sierra Club, later said the state has drawn dairies and other livestock producers, many of whom are leaving more restrictive environments, such as California and Nevada, but Kramer noted that the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission and its predecessor, the Texas Water Commission, in the past year have denied three major dairy permit applications in the North Bosque and Paluxy watersheds, largely because of concerns raised by neighbors about the impact on water quality.

While many farmers and ranchers are wary of environmentalists, Robinson said they were coming to understand that they can either protect the environment or have other people impose regulations upon them. "These are the very things that destroy property rights," he said of the big agribusinesses. "They’ll bring the EPA in—not that they’ll do anything to stop them, but they’ll tell you how much fertilizer you can apply. We’re here to protect the hard-earned investments you’ve put in your farms, your ranches and your homes," he told residents at the organizational meeting.

Mike Hobbs said PIC came to Hennessy, Oklahoma, where his family has a ranch, in the fall of 1992 with plans to breed 1,250 sows on three quarter-sections of land. (A quarter-section is 160 acres.) The company plans to expand to six more quarter-sections, but Hobbs said the operations threaten to pollute the area’s shallow aquifers and contribute to erosion of the sandy soil, because the company cleared the area of trees in order to facilitate the circular irrigation systems that disperse the waste water. Hobbs, who now lives in Round Rock, said the vegetation cannot absorb the nutrients.

Hobbs said economic development boosters in Enid, 30 miles away, determined that pig feedlots would be a good industry and teamed up with the state Department of Commerce to bring PIC in. "If you listen, they'll tell you they spent twenty to thirty million dollars and created 250 jobs at 20,000 dollars a year and local business tax receipts are up, but once the construction is done, the employment goes down." He said the actual breeding operation employs relatively few people.

Russell said PIC actually has a good environmental record. "We tend to be perceived as very good neighbors everywhere we operate. I think that’s safe to say at every location we’re at today, and we certainly don’t want to jeopardize that reputation."

Told that opponents were citing complaints of odor and water pollution and violations of construction and discharge permits in Kentucky, Russell said, "I’m not aware of anyone in Kentucky that’s been able to show any deterioration of the environment that’s been caused by PIC. ... We just won an EPA award for the things we’ve done in Kentucky with regards to waste management. ... I’m certain that you could find some complaints, but I’m also certain that they’re isolated, whether in Kentucky or Oklahoma."

He added that opposition of neighbors is far from unanimous. “Some people think it’s just a part of living in the country, so I wouldn’t say everyone has a problem with it, but there are obviously people—and you might have a problem with somebody coming in and putting several thousand sows across from you.”

Bosque County Judge Ernest Reinke Jr. doubts the local opposition to the pig operation is as widespread as Robinson and Hanson claim. “The people who have emotionally objected to it have made a lot of noise,” he said. But, he added, there is not much popular support for the project either. But Reinke said a man from San Saba had called him after hearing PIC was pulling out of Bosque County; the caller was hoping to interest the pig breeders in his county and Reinke figured Bosque County’s loss was some other county’s gain.

Former judge Hanson, whose family has ranched near Meridian for 114 years, said the alliance would not give up until it receives proof that the company no longer is...
considering Bosque County. "We need to stay alert and on our toes to protect our county," she said.

Meanwhile, in the High Plains of the Panhandle, National Hog Farms has moved in with a giant hog feedlot with fanfare and practically no protest. Scott Fitzgerald, editor of the Dalhart Daily Texan, said the mammoth hog plant about 30 miles northwest of town has been operating since May 1992 and will have 17,000 sows and as many as 200,000 pigs, or nearly one-fourth of the swine produced in all of Texas in 1993. The hog plant, an investment of the Bass brothers of Fort Worth, is being promoted as a major new industry for the Panhandle.

Fitzgerald said he visited the plant during its last public tour in October. "I was impressed with what looked to be a very efficient, state-of-the-art-type thing," he said, adding that he has not heard of complaints about the plant in an area where cattle feeding operations already were well established and the 80 jobs, expected to grow to 180-200 employees when it is completed this fall, are sorely needed.

But while National Hog Farms promotes its cleanliness and efficiency, county officials in Greeley, Colorado, in 1993 found that a National Hog Farm operation there was using the wrong kind of waste disposal system for the sandy soil and that groundwater was showing signs of pollution.

Harold Meyers, general manager of the Dalhart operation, said the Colorado operation was required to redrill some wells, but he said, "We obviously feel the contamination allegations were unfounded and we feel we are on the leading edge of taking care of the environment." Texas has a reputation as a promoter of livestock production. According to the January 1994 issue of Successful Farming, among the draws are cheap land and labor, a dry climate and wide open spaces. Also, NAFTA, in opening the Mexican market, may boost livestock processing plants.

Keith Jones, the governor's agricultural policy adviser, said the state has seen more movement of dairy and beef cattle operations into Texas than hog feeders so far, but as the demand for pork grows he expects more interest from hog producers. In such cases, he said, the High Plains or the Trans-Pecos in West Texas, where aquifers are relatively deep, there is relatively little surfaceto water to be polluted from runoff and populated areas are few and far between, are more logical places to promote confined animal feeding operations than Central or East Texas. "We certainly don't want confined feeding operations in areas that are already under pressure in terms of water quality problems," Jones said. "You don't want to bring those operations into areas where you know they'll generate problems."

VISIT CADDOAN MOUNDS
HISTORIC SITE IN BEAUTIFUL AND PEACEFUL EAST TEXAS

The Caddoan Mounds Historic Site is located in East Texas, in Cherokee County, 30 miles west of Nacogdoches along State Highway 21. The Caddos, part of the Mound Builder Culture, were sophisticated traders and attained the most highly developed pre-historic Native American culture known in Texas.

One of the state's premier pre-historic Native American sites, the Caddos lived and worked here for several hundred years. The site has contributed greatly to the body of knowledge of the Mound Builder Culture, and much of that information is displayed in the Caddoan Mounds museum and bookstore located on the property.

SPECIAL EVENTS AT CADDOAN MOUNDS
(for more information call 409/858-3218)
April 16 — SNAKES ALIVE! Meet your East Texas Snakes.
May 21 — CADDO ADAIS Texas Caddo traditional dance performance.
Admission to the park is $2 for adults and $1 for children.

STAY A WEEKEND OR A FEW DAYS
A treasure trove of fascinating things to do and places to stay, the Cherokee-Nacogdoches-Rusk County area is a perfect place to get away. Less than four hours from most of Texas' major metropolitan areas, there are great accommodations that suit almost any taste and budget. A few examples:
The Fredonia Hotel — Located in historic downtown Nacogdoches, the Hotel has first class accommodations and reasonable rates. Thirty minutes from Caddoan Mounds. Reservation number is 800/594-5323.
Lincrest Lodge — Just about 15 minutes from Caddoan Mounds, this is a great Bed and Breakfast located amidst the beautiful pines of the East Texas countryside. Call 409/858-2223 for reservation and rate information.
Mission Tejas State Historic park — Approximately six miles west of Caddoan Mounds, this park has one of the most beautiful public campgrounds in the state. Contact the park at 409/687-2394 for reservations and more information.

COME AND EXPERIENCE
THE HERITAGE OF THE CADDOS!
Ethics, the Law, and Good Living

By Bernard Rapoport

He stole a loaf of bread! One individual responds, "He should be put in jail! He is a thief!" Legally he is absolutely correct. Another says, "Why?" He has ethical concerns and wants to understand this situation which caused the stealing.

There is so much discussion about ethics today—so much of it in arcane terms that sometimes it is difficult to fathom what the subject is that is being discussed. We talk about ethical reformation which is really an oxymoron. I am most suspect about those involved in the pursuit of this discussion and mainly it is because too often those engaged in it are failing to delineate between the law and philosophical ethics. Ethics is a way of living, believing and doing. Primarily, it relates to those areas outside the law. Obviously, we can't have a civilized society unless ours is a government of laws. But, and this is even more important, we can't have a good society without ethics!!

Being a good citizen requires obeying the law. Being a good citizen does not necessarily mean being an ethical or good person. That falls within the realm of ethics. Being non-caring about what goes on in the world, being oblivious to the tragic state of our current educational system, or not addressing the problem of welfare in a very serious way, ignoring the causes of poverty, standing aloof to prejudice whether it relates to religion, race, creed or color. These are ethical concerns. So many who engage in "mouthings" about goodness and virtue need to be reminded of Samuel Johnson's advice: "Be not too hasty to trust or to admire the teachers of morality; they discourse like angels, but they live like men."

In the opening of this short essay, the attention-getter is the "no" response to the question of whether the stealing of the loaf of bread was ethical or not. Obviously, the ulterior motive was to stir the mind to understand that ethics involves situational considerations. There is always room for dialectic relative to ethics. As relates to the law, something is either lawful or unlawful. But what really happens in the real world? In too many instances, legislation—seemingly good legislation—is passed into law. Then guess what? The accountants and lawyers begin the pursuit of how to circumvent exactly what the intention of the law was. That is why the term "tax evasion" is non-acceptable, but "tax avoidance" is glorified as a highly intellectual pursuit.

One might ask if there are any ethical considerations in this process? The immediate response is "everybody does it." But the sad result is the quest for ameliorating the quality of life becomes increasingly difficult. We relegate the ethics to insignificant legislation that seeks to control how much lobbyists can spend for a lunch for a legislator. That is a legal question. It has nothing to do with ethics, which cannot be defined in monetary terms or even numerical terms. To repeat, failure to address problems of education, poverty and the deficit are ethical questions. One thing that is essential in ethics is accepting responsibility and most importantly, meeting our responsibilities. If we as a society don't address these problems we are transferring them to the generations that follow. That unquestionably indicates that we are not a very ethical society. Perhaps we need to be reminded of H.L. Mencken's caveat: "The difference between a moral man and a man of honor is the latter regrets a discreditable act, even when it has worked and he has not been caught." Tragically, we are being caught, but those who follow us are going to be even more so.

Certainly materialism has its rewards, but I am always reminded of Ezekiel's words when he asked the Israelites to return from Babylon, where they had achieved a relatively high standard of living after the second temple had been rebuilt. He exhorted them to return and they were reluctant. They loved the good life, but he reminded them, "You have run after nothing and you have become nothing." These words might give us pause to consider where we are at this point. It relates to his inability to delineate between lawful and ethical.

Among those of us old enough to remember the Spanish Revolution of the 1930s there were some who knew, but too few who would listen, that this Revolution was a harbinger of things to come. It was there that Hitler and Mussolini tried out their weapons of destruction. After the fascists won the Civil War, a few years later Hitler invaded the Sudetenland, which was part of Czechoslovakia. There was nothing unlawful in what the nations of the world did. The fact is they did nothing! Unlawful? No! How about ethics? The ethics of the free world was questioned then, and with good cause, as future events demonstrated. As I write these words, it is the day after a number of the children were killed in Sarajevo. They were playing in the snow. So today again, the world stands by. We justify and rationalize our failure to do anything and we certainly are acting within the framework of the law. I am sure those people who are in the besieged city of Sarajevo are a lot more worried about ethics than they are about the law. Perhaps they wish the world would hearken to the words of Walter Lippman, who said, "The whole speculation about morality is an effort to find a way of living which men who live it will instinctively feel it is good." Yes, the test of ethical commitment individually or as a nation almost exclusively is defined as a way of living in which those of us who live it will feel that it is, indeed, "good-living."
Las Americas

Colosio's Tijuana

BY ELIZABETH KADETSKY

Tijuana, Mexico

WO NIGHTS AFTER the first assassination of a Mexican national leader in 66 years sent the country's markets, political figures and armchair analysts spinning, what passes for the mundane ... a city that had no nationality; young men occasionally stopped midstep and simply howled, picking up pace seconds later.

I was sitting in a Mexican diner—in one of those requisite pink-and-yellow vinyl banquettes—with Jorge Hinojosa, a Tijuana human rights activist. Behind Jorge was a wall of miniblinds painted in garish magentas and oranges; on one side was an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, on the other Frida Kahlo—the doyennes of modern Mexican mythology, both representing Mexico's much-talked-about mezclado, or mix, of the Indian and the European.

Jorge was talking about a new kind of mezclado—the mixture of U.S. and Mexican culture that is quickly replacing the old. He said, "The border is a mixture of three realities," Jorge was saying: "a Mexican reality, a U.S. reality, and a reality that is a mixture of both, people who speak both English and Spanish. If you don't understand this last culture you're almost missing a third of the reality."

American tourists have long seized on one element of Hinojosa's paradigm: It can often be heard that Tijuana is not "really" Mexico—it is far too tacky, too scary and too overrun with gringos to live up to their placid image of Mexican taco vendors by the sea. But Tijuana—its cash registers clicking in dollars, its drug cartel serving its neighbors to the north, its Denny's, its thousands of would-be immigrants lined up in the nightly shadows along the Tijuana River—is fast becoming a profoundly Mexican city. There is a certain poetic justice to the fact that the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, the future president of Mexico, took place in border Tijuana—the city for post-NAFTA, post-Zapatista Mexico.

Mexico's Lee Harvey Oswald is 23-year-old Mario Aburto Martinez. Like Oswald, the confessed assassin is a mysterious and methodical figure, a B-student with political ideals but with vague and somehow illegitimate-sounding connections to any political movement. A true border denizen, Aburto is one of those members of Hinojosa's "third reality," someone fluent in both U.S. and Mexican culture who moves between the two. It is chillingly apropos that Aburto probably purchased the gun that killed Colosio in the United States—it was last registered to an owner in San Francisco. Until last year Aburto worked in a U.S. furniture plant just 90 miles away in Torrance, where his father and brother also work and live nearby. Evicted by immigration authorities, Aburto then came to Tijuana and took up as a mechanic in one of the 700 maquiladoras, or factories, the majority of them U.S.-owned, that crowd the zone.

Having dominated much of the debate over the North American Free Trade Agreement, maquiladoras themselves have come to represent the future of U.S. influence in Mexico. Here, U.S. companies have taken advantage of what are essentially tax breaks that have since 1965 facilitated their relocation to the 2,000-mile border maquiladora zone. NAFTA extends those breaks to the rest of Mexico, so both supporters and opponents of NAFTA have looked to the maquiladora zone as, in a sense, the future of Mexico.

For those who opposed NAFTA, Tijuana itself told much of the story: A vapor explosion at a U.S.-owned chemicals company in Tijuana last September killed two workers; since 1991, the 170-family neighborhood just down the hill from Tijuana's Johnson & Johnson plant has seen the births of six babies without brains, a condition known as anencephaly, which also occurs at a disturbing rate along the Lower Rio Grande and has been related to chemical runoff; after several on-the-job accidents including a miscarriage and a loose drill bit that took out a worker's eye, employees at a Boston-based manufacturer of "environmentally sensitive" garbage bags started a union—and were fired.

"Any of these companies are here because they can do things they can't do in the United States," Fred Sanders, the manager of one Tijuana maquiladora park, told me blithely about the people he represents. "They can spray industrial lacquer, for instance. It's toxic. It's hard to apply. It's messy. You can't do it there. We can do it here."

Jorge Hinojosa speculates that Aburto's employment at such a place was a defining element in his decision to carry out the assassination. "Anybody that works in a maquiladora and is paid a hundred dollars a month is very conscious of the fact that I'm working for a North American company," Hinojosa says. "Their work, their labor, is going to create wealth for another country. So does that have an effect on somebody's psyche? Of course."

Aburto lived in a working-class Tijuana barrio typical in all senses except that it could have been worse. Houses in the barrio Buenos Aires del Norte, with their pit latrines, brick walls and tar-and-corrugated-tin roofs, seem if not palatial at least middle-class compared to their neighbors'. In contrast are the many neighborhoods where handbuilt shanties with cardboard and mattress-spring walls seem to—and sometimes do—slough off steep dirt hillsides next to raw sewage and chemical waste. That more aptly describes Lomas Taurinas, the closely built colonia, as the border's poorer barrios are called, where Luis Donaldo Colosio took his last stroll, via steep mud path, on March 23.

A resident in the neighborhood next door, known as Barrio 70-76, described Lomas Taurinas like this: "The difference between this barrio and this one is that over there is for paracaidistas," the well-appointed university student, Ariel Tapia, told me using an expression that translates literally into "parachutists" and is often used to describe maquiladora workers. "They're people who make less money, who drop down and sit on a piece of land that's not theirs. Then when it rains it all washes away. Here," Tapia added proudly, "we own our homes." His friend Raul punched his toe into the curb and added, "The real difference is here we have paved streets."
Barrio 70-76 sits at the top of a hill that cuts off at a sharp decline, below which we could see the lights of Lomas Taurinas—electricity came to Lomas Taurinas just four years ago.

Seventy-Seven-Six has had electricity for two decades—anyone there can tell you as much because the name of the barrio refers to the dates of the sexenio, as Mexico’s six-year presidencies are called, of the man who gets credit for this neighborhood’s good fortune: former president Luis Echeverría Alvarez, who has gone down in Mexican history as a great populist and friend to poor neighborhoods.

Down the hill in Lomas Taurinas, a reincarnation of such a figure was hoped for in the person and presidency of Luis Donaldo Colosio. It was in neighborhoods like this where Colosio the populist personified dreams for new roads, electricity, schools, clinics, social programs. Lucia Sosa Rojas, a teacher at the church in whose park Colosio was assassinated, witnessed the killing. “This is a loss for Mexicans, not just for party people,” she said of candidate Colosio. “He was good, and human. The assassin said he was doing it because of the poverty and the misery, that they won’t help us economically. But Colosio wasn’t going to cheat us and lie and tell us I’ll give everyone a good house. He was going to come and work with us. He would lead us to work. We’re poor. We don’t know how to do things. We don’t want promises that they’re not going to make good on. We were going to work together, and now they’ve cut off hope.”

Indeed, the unassuming if sometimes clumsy Colosio played up his image as a man of the people—so much so that at his assassination, the media and public were shocked. But Colosio wasn’t going to cheat us and lie and tell us I’ll give everyone a good house. He was going to come and work with us. He would lead us to work. We’re poor. We don’t know how to do things. We don’t want promises that they’re not going to make good on. We were going to work together, and now they’ve cut off hope.

Indeed, the unassuming if sometimes clumsy Colosio played up his image as a man of the people—so much so that at his assassination, the media and public were shocked. But Colosio wasn’t going to cheat us and lie and tell us I’ll give everyone a good house. He was going to come and work with us. He would lead us to work. We’re poor. We don’t know how to do things. We don’t want promises that they’re not going to make good on. We were going to work together, and now they’ve cut off hope.

But perception is rarely reality, and Colosio’s career has been marked by disaster. His credentials as a populist have fallen under constant question: His rival, Manuel Camacho Solís, a catlike, Harvard-educated, Clinton-esque political strategist who represents the liberal wing of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party, underscored as much in his constant upstaging of the Colosio campaign. As Camacho was readying to address demands of the Zapatista guerrillas in the southern state of Chiapas January 1, the hand-picked Colosio was taking time off from his fledgling presidential campaign to entertain some guests. The newsmagazine Proceso reported at the time that they included a party functionary who has been linked to a massacre of student protesters in Mexico City in June 1971, and another best known for his comment that pacifist activists “should be exterminated.”

Unfortunately for Colosio, the guerrilla uprising coincided almost exactly with his campaign, a fact that couldn’t help invite almost daily comparisons in the Mexican press with the peace mission of Camacho, the government envoy to Chiapas. Colosio, it was said, responded to the overwhelmingly popular uprising with noncommittal “abstractions”; Camacho, with a “drive” to come to a solution. (The PRI eventually bought off Camacho, according to a report in Zeta, promising him the PRI candidacy in 2000 if he backed off from his nascent opposition campaign this year.)

Also, had it not been for Colosio, the guerrilla uprising might have never even transpired. In the months before the Zapatistas’ first salvo, Colosio received the news that Chiapas police, hiking through the jungle, stumbled upon guerrilla training grounds.

Zapatista leader subcomandante Marcos later jokingly revealed to the Los Angeles Spanish-language daily, La Opinión, that judiciales had come upon the guerrillas’ life-sized mockup of the town of Ocosingo—a training set for the coming occupation.

Colosio responded to news of such encampments by dispatching a several-million-dollar anti-poverty grant to Chiapas; the state government reportedly squandered it in an instant. “He was trying to put out the fire so there wouldn’t be so many small eruptions,” Eraña recalled. “There was talk of guerrillas and the government denied it. We now know they denied it to save NAFTA. They sent a huge sum of money and they bought Chiapas. And a few months later was the uprising.”

“Colosio,” Eraña added, “has become a martyr. But his only real significance in Mexican history will come from the fact that he was assassinated.”

But more than Colosio’s prestige, it was the prestige of the nation as a whole, and its long misunderstood border city, that preoccupied those in Tijuana in the days following the assassination. In all corners, people talked about self-doubt—about Tijuana’s “black legend,” its “lawless” past as opposed to its economically vibrant and industrial present, and Mexico’s now-sullied image as a burgeoning democracy.

“It’s not that I’m afraid for Mexico,” Tapia told me. “It’s that I have doubts. It’s lost its prestige.”

“It’s such a huge stupidity,” Raul added. “How could we kill a candidate who’s going to bring us forward? If there’s democracy, how could this happen? ... This [violence] is not what Mexico is about. It’s something more solid, more educated.”

By now it was near midnight, and the lights from Lomas Taurinas cast strange shadows over the few who remained outside. Mostly, there were boys sparring in silhouette, laughing and colliding into each other, rolling onto the pavement like cats.

For the rest of the world, a political assassination, like that of Sweden’s Olaf Palme, India’s Rajiv Gandhi or our own JFK, blends into a backdrop of political intrigue. Conspiracy theories eventually settle into the realm of mere curiosity, vicarious as a spy novel. But for Mexico in its adolescence, every act is a defining moment. Every individual doubt casts the entire future in question.

“We’re ashamed of what happened,” as a 14-year-old girl who witnessed the murder told me. “You feel. You share for the neighborhood. You share for your country.”

PEOPLE
Make a world of difference!
We’re proud of our employees and their contributions to your success and ours. Call us for quality printing, binding, mailing and data processing services. Get to know the people at Futura.

FUTURA
COMMUNICATIONS, INC
P.O. Box 17427
Austin, TX 78760-7427
389-1500

THE TEXAS OBSERVER • 19
A SOUTH TEXAS entrepreneur I once interviewed told me of the very night he realized his profession had gone bad. It was not that his brother-in-law brought him a small machine gun, but that he knew he needed it. In the late '60s in South Texas, marijuana deals were done among friends and acquaintances and sealed with "a smoke and a handshake." When strangers in business suits began to show up, often in the company of armed escorts, my drug-dealing acquaintance put off the inevitable as long as he could—until the warm Gulf Coast night when his brother-in-law walked in with the machine gun. "I can almost remember the exact moment when it became big business and Corpus Christi get hooked up with New York," said this gentle man, who never discharged his weapon, never served a day of jail time, and lost all he had earned to the IRS.

The moment has arrived for the organizers of the South by Southwest music conference—Louis Black and Nick Barbaro, of the Austin Chronicle, and music promoters Louis Meyers and Roland Swenson—to buy the machine gun. This year, the conference, which began in 1986 as an attempt to bring together people in the music business who did not live in Nashville or Los Angeles, drew 500 bands from 3,200 applicants, attracted from 4,200 to 4,400 registrants, disposed of a $750,800 budget and brought an estimated $5 million into the Austin economy. All in all, probably more than any single venture created by Cathy Bonner while she was doing economic development at the Texas Department of Commerce—and not bad for a project launched by four white boys sitting around talking.

Not everyone in Austin is completely satisfied with SXSW's explosive growth. "Why don't you write about how we buy these wristbands so that we can stand in line for hours and then not get in," said a video producer at Tish Hinojosa and Craig Barker's Always Open South Austin House, on the night of the Austin Music Awards. The complaint, I discovered on the following night a few blocks north, where the True Believers and the Oyster Band were playing at the Terrace, was a valid one. "Turn around, go park on Congress and walk in," said the big guy with the flashlight, whom my son informed me is the "nicest bouncer at Liberty Lunch." This is a town where even a four-block walk and a wait in line can turn some of us away from a music venue; unfortunately, a sense of entitlement about live music becomes common in a place where for $4 you can squeeze into the Zona Rosa dining room and listen to Jimmy LaFaye backed by one of the tightest back-to-the-basics, rock-and-roll bands in a town crawling with good bands, then a week later for an embarrassing $2 sit in the same place and listen to the dark, introspective lyrics of James McMurtry.

It's also a place where preferences in music can become downright parochial. The best of the two acts I saw at a four-band "Oh, Canada!" show was something of a NAFTA jam, in which Austin-based guitarist David Grissom and Austin-based bassist Glen Fukunaga connected with Sue Medley, a Toronto roots/rock singer with a voice in the range of Lucinda Williams, for a too-short set. Grissom, a fine guitarist who has moved from Joe Ely's to John Mellencamp's band and back again, has long since convinced Austin audiences of his electric guitar virtuosity. Yet on this occasion, he unselfishly spent most of the evening in the background (despite protestations of the hometown crowd), deferring to Sue Medley and only on occasion trading licks with Medley's regular (and very good) guitarist, Robbie Stinagar. Standing between the two guitarists, at this Doc Marten-Tony Lama event that was so impromptu that Grissom was reading number charts from a page taped to the floor, Fukunaga, an exceptional bass player (and book binder), rocked.

The easy accessibility to a singer as good as Sue Medley should not suggest that this conference actually works. Hinojosa, who herself fills La Zona Rosa's Marcia Ball room every time she plays, got stifled at the door of a Sixth Street venue when she set out to see a Mexico City band and couldn't even find out what they time the band would be on stage. And on the night before the Sue Medley show, I set out driving about the city, looking for a venue where there was not a mob scene at the door. I landed at an international night at Scholz.
Garten, listened to a band from Copenhagen, then drove directly home and mailed $50 contributions to Senator Alan Simpson and Representative Romano Mazzoli.

But maybe it's the fact that people here will still fight to listen to music that makes the South by Southwest conference successful. Lenny Kalikow, who publishes the industry-insider publication *New on the Charts*, said there is no other conference like South by Southwest—except perhaps the New Music Seminar in New York. The difficulty there, Kalikow said, is that bands are booked in venues all over the city and listening to music becomes a difficult and expensive proposition. Kalikow's take on South by Southwest seemed to sum up what I heard from other conference participants I talked to during the five-day mid-March gathering. (The conference always corresponds with the University of Texas spring break, and this year for the first time included a film festival with a focus on Texas films or Texas-based filmmakers. See "Cinema South by Southwest," *TO* 3-25-94.)

"A number of the other conventions, one that I was recently at, seem more like shoe salesmen's conventions," said Kalikow, who attends four or five music conferences each year. "There is no music in the [trade show] hall, like there is here. People are buying and selling product instead of music. They're not listening to what they're buying and selling. They're talking about product and not music. Here, people are talking about bands: 'Did you see this band? Did you hear this group? You've got to go and see this group!'

"So the whole feel of this," Kalikow said, "is a lot more about what a lot of us got into the business for in the first place, which is the music."

According to Kalikow, the lack of focus on doing business, in an odd way, makes the South by Southwest conference a better place to do business. "People seem to get more done here in a much more relaxed way," he said. "The A&R [artist and repertoire] VPs from the record companies come in for this one when they ordinarily don't come in for most conventions," Kalikow added, suggesting that the reason the record companies send their A&R people is that the bands selected to perform at South by Southwest have only recently signed with record labels, or are on the verge of signing. "This in not an after-the-fact convention, but a place to hear new material," he said.

Greg Blackmore, who works in production for a Canadian record company and was working at the Canadian booth at the trade show, said that signing with a record label is not the only advantage for bands attending the conference. "Just connecting with college radio DJs and getting them to listen to your material, makes it worthwhile," Blackmore said. He also compared the Austin conference to New York's long-established New Music Seminar, and to Berlin's Independent Days festival. (The Canadian delegation—bands, booth and roadies it is worthy of noting—was underwritten by Canada's Ministry of Commerce and Culture, some of their literature was printed in two languages, and yet, according to what I read in the *Wall Street Journal*, the country remains solvent and sovereign.)

By the geography of Texas music, all roads lead to Lubbock and so it was for this year's South by Southwest conference. Just as much of the best theater on Broadway occurs off Broadway, much of the best of South by Southwest's music occurs as non-sanctioned events that concur with the conference itself. And this year, two of the best of those events were put together by flattlanders who have taken up residence in Austin. Jimmie Dale Gilmore's St. Patrick Day music festival, a fundraiser for Austin's Open Door School, was reported to have been among the best shows put on during a week of exceptional shows and brought together Gilmore, and fellow Lubbock expatriates Joe Ely and Butch Hancock, and other members of the legendary Flatlanders band and included a Gilmore appearance with Seattle grungers Mudhoney.

And at Hancock's Lubbock or Leave It art gallery and music hall, there were back-to-back nights of music, featuring on one night Hancock, guitarist Jesse Taylor (who plays better with the guitar held behind his head, *a la* Hendrix, than most players can manage when they hold it in what Hancock calls the "folksinger position") and Terry Clarke, an English/Irish singer who at last year's conference grabbed the attention of *Rolling Stone* music writer David Fricke. Just as Ramblin Jack Elliott, once a son of a physician from New York, was reborn as a cowboy, Clarke, as Fricke wrote, is something of a born again Texan—with his musical roots deep in the Caprock. (He knows his way around the state well enough that several weeks earlier, in an altogether chance encounter and in a moment of Big Bend magical realism, a canoeing partner and I witnessed him drop out of a small waterfall in the Santa Elena Canyon, only to be followed by Taylor, unfortunately sans guitar.)

On the second night at Lubbock or Leave It, Clarke held a hard-core Texas music audience captive with "Sligo Days," a song that he had finished writing on that same Rio Grande raft trip. "I like your waters," said Michael Ventura, the Austin/Los Angeles writer who ministered to and presided over this Caprock congregation, with intermittent readings of poetry, some as stark and somber as the Texas flatland Hancock has recreated in his Brazos Street gallery.

Clark, accompanying himself on an acoustic guitar, followed "Sligo Days" with a haunting historical and genealogical ballad that chronicled the arrival of an Irish couple in the United States, the birth of their son in Detroit and the tragic conclusion of his life in that city, long after a tour of duty in Vietnam had left him broken and bewildered.

If that alone didn't justify the $5 cover, seeing Gilmore and Hancock on the same stage singing and playing together did. With Gilmore on the road promoting his new *Spinning Around the Sun* and Hancock on the river, behind his 35-millimeter camera or in the studio with what seems like every interesting performer in the state, those appearances, as Gib Lewis might have said, are "far and few between." The contrasting textures of those two voices together is something exceptional and in itself justifies giving the city over to musicians for one week in March.

This is Texas today. A state full of Sunbelt boosters, strident anti-unionists, oil and gas companies, nuclear weapons and power plants, political hustlers, underpaid workers and toxic wastes, to mention a few.

**BUT DO NOT DESPAIR!**

**TO SUBSCRIBE:**

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

☐ $32 enclosed for a one-year subscription.

☐ Bill me for $32.

307 West 7th, Austin, TX 78701
CONVERGENCE OF soul and flesh, the human species is a veritable house of spirits—La Casa de los espíritus, as Isabel Allende called her first novel, published in Spain in 1982 and translated into English in 1985. A critical as well as commercial success in the United States, The House of the Spirits was a precious piece of real estate, magical realism appropriated to mapping life in a country very like the author's native Chile during four generations and seven decades of the 20th century. Allende, who is the niece of the martyred leftist President Salvador Allende Gossens, reinvents recent Chilean history as a saga of the fictional Trueba dynasty, particularly its women.

Though Allende long resisted bids to turn her book into a movie, she eventually capitulated to Danish director Bille August. August, who is best known for the Swedish production Pelle the Conqueror, brings a Nordic sensibility to his version of The House of the Spirits, which was shot—in English—in Portugal and features a largely European and North American cast. The opening credits crawl in English—an effort by Ingmar Bergman, the Swedish master who in 1992 recruited August to direct his own autobiographical screenplay The Best Intentions. Whatever its intentions, The House of the Spirits, which might have been an Andean Doctor Zhivago or Gone With the Wind, seems on screen almost as austere as Carl Dreyer’s Danish chiller Day of Wrath. Though the new movie clocks in at well over two hours, it haunts us not with bounty but with gauntness.

Of course, any book that sprawls across 368 pages must be reduced in order to find space on the local screen. August eliminates episodes and characters—including two Trueba children, twins Jaime and Nicolas. He compresses and combines, most notably in attributing to Blanca Trueba many of the experiences and perceptions that Allende assigns to Blanca’s daughter Alba. In the movie’s final frames, Alba is still a child, and Blanca prevails as the emotional center of the entire story. “Our memory is fragile,” declares Blanca, in the voiceover that begins and concludes the celluloid House of the Spirits. “A lifetime is very brief.” Readers of the novel will remember a denser universe, one in which the life is brief but the exposition expansive. While Allende establishes as her base of operations a capacious house of spirits, a sprawling family mansion in whose nooks and crannies we can linger without exhausting them, August offers few closets or skeletons.

The film’s spare intensity is most evident in its glancing treatment of the story’s supernatural ingredients. Clara Del Valle is a clairvoyant with uncanny powers over physical objects. She foresees the sudden death of older sister Rosa, whom Esteban Trueba, an indigent but ambitious miner, would woo to be his wife. Many years later, after extracting enough gold to make him a wealthy patron, Esteban weds Clara. On their wedding night, Clara levitates a bedroom table, but the incident is framed so frugally and swiftly that Jorgen Persson’s camera has no need to linger, and does not.

Most remarkable about this production is the ensemble of brilliant virtuosos assembled to play the parts. They include Jeremy Irons as Esteban, Meryl Streep as Clara, Glenn Close as Ferula, Vanessa Redgrave as Clara’s mother Nievea, Armin Mueller-Stahl as Nievea’s husband Severo, Winona Ryder as Blanca, and Antonio Banderas as her proletarian lover Pedro. Instruments of exquisite expression, they can weep on a dime, as if, despite prodigious fame and fortune, they can still appraise the value of a coin. Ryder alone, as Blanca, seems too callow and confined. For the rest, they make their dramatic points so deftly and swiftly that Jorgen Persson’s camera has no need to linger, and does not.

The story begins in 1926 and jumps to successive scenes in 1944, 1963, and finally 1971, when a military coup ousts the popular People’s Front from power and imposes a reign of terror that abuses even ancient reactionary Senator Trueba. A champion of the Conservative Party, Esteban initially welcomes the violent overthrow of constitutional authority as a means of restoring control to the patriots he represents. “These people are children,” says Esteban about the peasants he exploits on his sumptuous estate Tres Marias. “They need a strong hand.” But those who hold the strongest hand in 1971 are brutal vulgarians, and they are openly contemptuous of the decorous old oligarchs whose hypocritical strategems made possible their own more flagrant tyranny. As in a Faulknerian, or Biblical, parable of cosmic justice, Esteban Garcia (Vincent Gallo), the bitter, banished fruit of seignorial rape committed against a noble serf returns to serve as the agent of nemesis against Trueba privilege.

“Do you know who I am?” the venerable Senator asks a crude soldier who insults him. Like King Lear’s plangent “Who is that can tell me who I am?” the question echoes throughout the film. As Esteban, Irons is a wonder to behold, not merely in his ability to impersonate a Latin lord through six decades but in how he renders the man’s shifting degrees of villainy and selfawareness. “You must know nothing your Papa does comes from malice,” Clara insists to Blanca, and it is a credit to Irons’ performance that the viewer is willing to be almost as generous.

But it is the women in the film—Nievea, Clara, Ferula, Blanca, and Alba—who, collectively, provide the spirit behind The House of the Spirits. In contrast to Esteban’s dedication to power and logic, they embody the values of love and intuition. It is a formula for sexual stereotyping that would be insufferable were the story not such a genial fantasy of consolation for the dispossessed. For all the progress toward reform, a man named Pinochet still commands the Chilean military. As in The Piano, where Holly Hunter’s Ada chooses to be mute, Clara expresses her helpless-
ness by staying silent for 20 years (it is only six in the novel) after the death of her sister Rosa and then much later by refusing to speak to her husband Esteban. Allende, however, expresses and overcomes women's subjection through words.

August gives the final words of the film to Blanca, who has survived the worst abuse that men inflict. Beyond despair and bitterness but also beyond partisanship, for even a worthy cause, she has attained a state of serene beatitude. "To me, life itself has become the most important thing." Those may well be words of supernatural wisdom, but when Winona Ryder voices them you wish her Clara's 20 years of sage silence.

The War Room, a cinéma vérité record of how the 1992 Clinton presidential campaign was run and won, is no revelation to true political junkies. The cameras, granted access to strategists and coordinators but not to the candidate himself, disclose prodigious quantities of popcorn consumed during planning sessions. Much time is spent in deliberating whether handmade signs are preferable to standard ones for convention demonstrations. But the film is no exposé, of flaws or misdeeds, and it is not even an examination of the campaign was run and won, is no revelation to true political junkies. The cameras, granted access to strategists and coordinators but not to the candidate himself, disclose prodigious quantities of popcorn consumed during planning sessions. Much time is spent in deliberating whether handmade signs are preferable to standard ones for convention demonstrations. But the film is no exposé, of flaws or misdeeds, and it is not even an examination of the film's dysfunction in Texas. Individual membership $15, P.O. Box 190933, Dallas, Texas 75219.

ATTENTION LIBERALS! Respond to Blanca, who has survived the worst abuse that men inflict. Beyond despair and bitterness but also beyond partisanship, for even a worthy cause, she has attained a state of serene beatitude. "To me, life itself has become the most important thing." Those may well be words of supernatural wisdom, but when Winona Ryder voices them you wish her Clara's 20 years of sage silence.

The War Room, a cinéma vérité record of how the 1992 Clinton presidential campaign was run and won, is no revelation to true political junkies. The cameras, granted access to strategists and coordinators but not to the candidate himself, disclose prodigious quantities of popcorn consumed during planning sessions. Much time is spent in deliberating whether handmade signs are preferable to standard ones for convention demonstrations. But the film is no exposé, of flaws or misdeeds, and it is not even an examination of the election process. Instead, it is chiefly a character study of two engaging and complementary figures: James Carville, the flamboyant campaign manager, and George Stephanopoulos, the bright, young communications director who provided calm—and even vision—at the eye of the partisan storm.

The War Room, named for the Little Rock headquarters where national strategy for gaining the presidency was plotted, comes across as a benign Pentagon. If the Clintons indulged in dirty tricks, it, like violence in Greek tragedy, occurred offstage. At one point, Carville tries to interest CBS News in a Brazilian video that implicates Bush forces in a $65 million missappropriation, but, though the allegations are eventually dropped, they seem to have been advanced in good—albeit malevolent—faith, and the evidence was not counterfeited. We view occasional flashes of wit, as when Carville characterizes the Perot candidacy as "the most expensive single act of masturbation in history." Unlike other, cynical handlers who are most intent on selling their candidate, the Clinton people depicted by Hegedus and Pennebaker genuinely believe in their man, and they seem almost as concerned about issues as about image. (Or is it that issue has become image?) They are assiduous in their dedication to the task and eclectic over its accomplishment. Like Top Gun, The War Room should be an effective tool for recruiting volunteers.

Sea Horse Inn
Kitchens — Cable TV
Heated Pool
beside the Gulf of Mexico
on Mustang Island
Available for private parties
Unique European Charm & Atmosphere
Economical Fall and Winter Rates

PETS WELCOME
1423 11th Street
Port Aransas, TX 78373
call (512) 749-5221 for Reservations

PROOF JESUS FICTIONAL! $5 —
Abalard, Box 5652-C, Kent, WA
98064 (Details: SASE)

PRACTICAL SCHOLARSHIP in the humanities. Dr. Reed Harg, the harbor, Port Aransas, Texas 78373. (512) 749-7029.


MERCHANDISE
OKIN! IF YOU LOVE RUSH! Bumper sticker that says it all. For $5. Hard Response, P.O. Box 845-T, Seabrook, TX 77586.

PUBLICATIONS
WEIRD NEWS ANTHOLOGIES: The wildest, funniest, most bizarre news items are found in "Strange, But True News" newsletter. Dozens of weird news items per issue. Sample copy $2. Write to: SBTN, 7522 Campbell Road, Suite 113, Room 162, Dallas, Texas 75248.

MISCELLANEOUS
ATTENTION LIBERAL! Respond to Rush Limbaugh. Pick a current issue or just give your perspective on Limbaugh. Selected commentaries run on a national 900 number updated weekly. Call Now! 1-800-591-1885.

REALESTATE
HOUSEBUYERS — The Consumer's Agent. Our allegiance is to the residential buyer. 201 Jefferson Square, Austin, Texas 78731. (512) 452-2565.
SENATE RUNOFF. Jim Mattox picked up endorsements of former Sen. Ralph W. Yarborough, who said Mattox "will do to ride the river with," eight Democratic members of Congress and a farmers' and ranchers' coalition as Mattox pledged to work to ease problems the North American Free Trade Agreement may cause them. He also promised to push for improved access to health care in rural areas. The Austin American-Statesman quoted Richard Fisher's campaign manager saying NAFTA would have negligible effects on Texas agriculture and might help the industry with better roads through Texas, although Wes Sinns, a Big Springs farmer, predicted that as many as half of Texas family farmers could be ruined if Congress does not act next year to offset effects on farmers from free trade. Meanwhile, Mattox brandished a copy of a $1,000 check signed by Fisher to George Bush's 1992 campaign. Fisher, who has acknowledged contributing to Republican campaigns, said the contribution, which was meant to be from his wife, was later reimbursed.

AGINNERS. Nearly 100 Republicans—out of 525 U.S. Senators and members of Congress—voted against virtually every piece of major federal legislation in 1993. "They voted 'no' on Family and Medical Leave, 'no' on Motor Voter, 'no' on the President's Budget, 'no' on the Brady Bill and 'no' on National Service," the Democratic National Committee observed. Among the Republican Oh-fer's (batting 0 for 5) were Texans Sen. Phil Gramm and Reps. Dick Armey of Dallas, Henry Bonilla of San Antonio, Larry Combest of Lubbock, Tom DeLay of Sugar Land and Sam Johnson of Dallas. Houston suburban Republican Reps. Jack Fields and Billy Archer must have been mightily chagrined at their exclusion from the DNC's Shame List.

WHAT RECOVERY? Democratic National Committee Chairman David Wilhelm and Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Vic Fazio in an early March presented the Chicken Little Awards, given to those sky-is-falling Republicans whose economic predictions during 1993 were so dire that the recovery therefore cannot possibly be happening. Among the Top Ten Most Outrageous Predictions by Republicans About the President's Economic Plan were statements by Rep. Henry Bonilla, who ranked fourth with his May 26, 1993, statement on the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour that the President's budget was "going to take a tremendous amount of money out of the hands of the working people and the small businesses in this country and put it into big government, and I don't think that's what we need right now," and Sen. Phil Gramm, who ranked second with his remark in the Aug. 5, 1993, Congressional Record: "We are buying a one-way ticket into a recession." (The Number-One Chicken Little statement was by Rep. John Kasich, R-Ohio, who said on CNN August 28, 1993, "This plan will not work. If it was to work, then I'd have to become a Democrat and believe that more taxes and bigger government is the answer.")

TAKING SIDES. State GOP leaders took the unusual step of endorsing Bobby Ortiz against Dick Bowen in the April 12 Republican runoff in El Paso for the nomination to challenge Democratic Rep. Ron Coleman. All nine Texas Republican Congressmen endorsed Ortiz and labelled Bowen "an embarrassment to our party." Bowen in a 1992 primary fight dismissed Henry Bonilla as "the great brown hope of the Republican Party" and "an Oreo with double stuff—brown on the outside and white on the inside." The El Paso Times noted that Ortiz has started airing ads noting that on March 8 Bowen attacked affirmative action programs, which is not normally considered far outside mainstream Republican thinking, although Bowen added that laws allowing preferences based on ethnicity could result in sending Jews to the gas chambers.

STRAIGHT TALK AT GOP. State GOP Secretary Diane Rath walked out of a senatorial district convention in San Antonio after being overpowered by Christian right forces. Even in Travis County, conservatives gutted an attempt to fashion a minority report that sought to preserve abortion options and deleted reference to homosexuality. Texas Republican Chairman Fred Meyer, who faces a challenge from hard-right-winger Tom Pauken this June in Fort Worth, rejected the endorsement of the predominantly gay Log Cabin Republicans. Meyer said he opposes "any attempts to present homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle."

POLICING THE STATS. Gov. Ann Richards was proud to report the state's major crime rate—the rate of crimes per 100,000 population—was down 8.8 percent over the past year, while the actual number of crimes reported also fell by 6.8 percent and the crime rate has fallen two years in a row to the lowest rate in almost a decade. Richards credited reductions in parole and a doubling of prison space (which has led to the highest per capita incarceration rate in the world, according to Texas Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants), but Republican challenger George W. "Junior" Bush was not about to let a drop in the crime rate get in the way of his demagogery. His spokeswoman, Debra W. Wade, noted that the actual number of violent crimes was still up 6 percent since 1990, while juvenile crime was up 52 percent.

GUN DELAYS. Some police grumbled about the extra work and gun buyers had to wait five days before they could lay hands on their new pistol, but in the first two weeks after the Brady Bill took effect on Feb. 28, Houston police ran checks on 1,306 gun purchasers and rejected 150, mainly for criminal records or outstanding warrants, the Associated Press reported. Despite criticism that criminals would not try to buy a gun in a store, Dallas police refused 95 of 1,286 applications in two weeks while San Antonio tossed out 31 of 849 applications.

POWER SLAM. When U.S. Rep. Barney Frank sent up an amendment to trim $2.5 billion from President Clinton's military budget as a test of liberal muscle in the House, U.S. Rep. John Bryant, D-Dallas, was the only Texan who joined Frank and 103 others who would rein in post-Cold-War military budgets. According to The Nation, Frank saw the amendment as pivotal in efforts to change spending patterns after Clinton proposed to increase military spending by $11.7 billion over the next five years from the current annual budget of $260 billion. The White House vowed heavily against the amendment, which was slammed on a 313-105 vote.