

THE TEXAS  
**Observer**

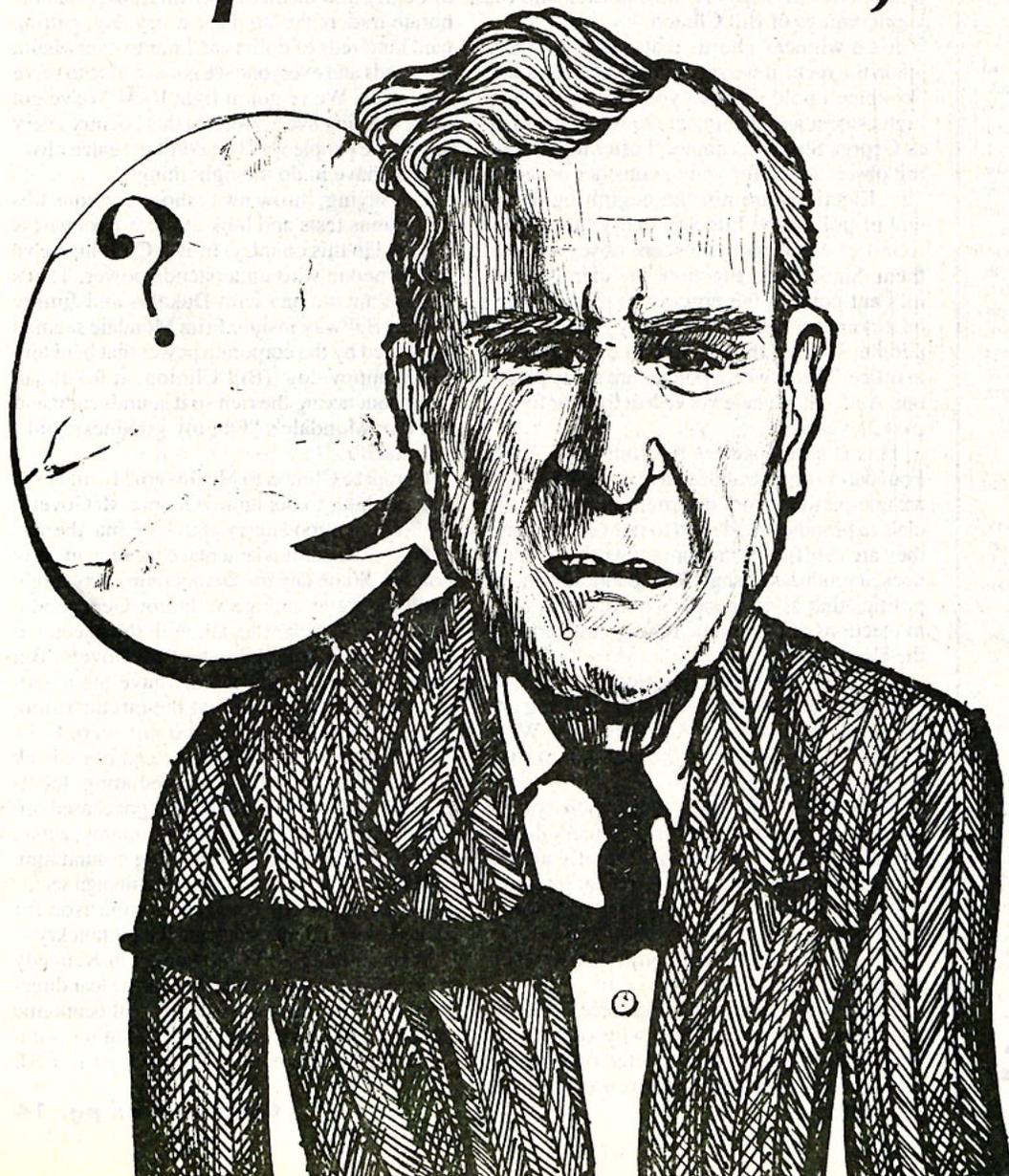
A JOURNAL OF FREE VOICES

SEPTEMBER 18, 1992 • \$1.75

**THE REST  
OF THE  
BALLOT**

*Pg. 5*

**Why George Bush can't talk,  
why he won't win, and why**



**it's time  
to close  
ranks  
behind  
Bill  
Clinton**



A JOURNAL OF FREE VOICES

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

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

SINCE 1954

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## DIALOGUE

# Ride That Horse

**C**ALL IT MID-LIFE CRISIS. Call it my bifocular political vision. Say, "What a falling off there was." But I just can't help wondering, as I sit here in my South Austin living room looking at the most recent Observers, when you guys are going to stop taking the political temperature at the wrong end of the horse.

It was the cover of your Aug. 21 issue that finally set me off: "Mourning in America." You can't read that without thinking of Joe Hill's "don't mourn, organize." But I look through your journal and several other magazines I read, and I come to wonder when you pointy-headed intellectuals are going to come around. What I'm reading about—when you talk about our side—is third parties and the shortcomings of Bill Clinton.

It's a whiners' chorus that could smash us all on the rocks if we succumb to its siren song. So, since I hold you and your writers in such high esteem and would hate to see you end up as George Shipley's dinner, I offer the following observations for you to consider or reject:

1. Elections are not the beginning or the end of politics. While you decry the current round of elections, you seem obsessed with them. Stand back. Elections are merely a significant point in the process. A more significant point, in terms of the daily lives of most people, is what the elected do once they are in office. That is where politics are really played out. And that's where we've lost the war for the past 25 years.

This is a perspective the Industrial Areas Foundation organizations have embraced. They are non-partisan. They determine to hold all officials to promises made and to right action when they are in office. Sometimes it works. When it does, it produces change. Real politics, then, the politics that affect people's lives, begin prior to elections and continue through the terms of the elected.

You want clean air? You elect the clean-air candidate and then you push, cajole, dog and praise her or him every step of the way. Why? Don't these people have the strength of their convictions?

Sometimes. But that's almost always not enough. Politicians and officeholders do not navigate their way through a morally neutral field of pushing and pulling special interests. It's war out there. The land mines are set by the moneyed interests long before you arrive. Their gunners man the high positions. Rarely is being right enough.

That's why a countervailing force is always necessary...at all times. That's why a decent guy like Jimmy Carter can be elected on a reform platform only to be delivered up on a platter four years later.

2. Bill Clinton is not the lesser of two evils, the triumph of money in the Democratic Party or the new face on the old Democratic order. He is a candidate who has the potential to be the best President we've had since the early days of LBJ and, beyond that, since FDR because he is someone who will be as good as we push him to be — or allow him to be.

Bill Clinton gets it. That's all we can ask for. The rest is up to us. Whether he succeeds, once elected, depends upon our abilities to organize and press our agendas. Sure, the Democratic Party in many respects is not much more than a shell. But if we can't take it and make it work for us, block by block, then let's create or work through other mediating institutions. The corporate traders are up there every day, getting paid hundreds of dollars an hour to overwhelm our needs and everyone we put in office to serve our needs. We've got to fight back. We've got to be working every block in this country every day so the people we elect don't get eaten alive, so they have to do the right thing.

I'm saying, throw away those precious liberal litmus tests and look at the way power is wielded in this country. In Bill Clinton, we've got someone who understands power. That's better than we had with Dukakis and Jimmy Carter. Beltway insider Fritz Mondale seemed paralyzed by the corporate power that held him like a puppy dog. (Bill Clinton, at least, can talk about taxing the rich so it sounds right and not like Mondale's "Oh, my goodness, did I say that?")

Compare Clinton to McGovern? I will never say anything to denigrate George McGovern. He brought a good many of us back into the system, gave us our fundamental education in party politics. Some day the Democratic Party might become brave enough to honor George at a convention, declare us all, with the exception of Richard Daley, children of McGovern. But the fact is, Bill Clinton may have the meanness to win this game that the circuit-riding preacher McGovern just did not seem to be able to call on. And maybe he can bring back some of that ward-healing, mediating, local-problem-solving substratum that got chased off.

Bill Clinton is not Hubert Humphrey, a man bewildered by the forces swirling around him. JFK. LBJ. While the Clinton campaign seems to be trying to milk the JFK comparison for all it's worth, I think—beyond the gimmickry—it bears looking at. What we had in Kennedy was a mandate for change without a clear direction. It's Bill Clinton without a real economic crisis, without guaranteed college tuition, without a health-care overhaul, etc. Or early LBJ.

**Continued on pg. 14**

# Censors on the Rise

I AM NOT FAMILIAR with *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, but some parent in Normangee did us the favor of objecting to its presence in the local high school library, for alleged "obscene language, lust, rebellion," and because it "portrays women only as objects of lust," and "portrays religious double standards." The objector also contended that the book would "lower [a student's] principles, or demoralize them."

My goodness! In a high school library? Children, run quickly and check out this book before someone gets around to banning it at your school! In Normangee, which straddles Leon and Madison counties, the school board restricted access to the book, requiring parental permission to check it out.

This was one of 27 incidents that earned Texas the distinction of tying with California for second place in the nation in the number of textbooks and educational materials challenged by would-be censors during the 1991-92 school year, according to a report by People for the American Way. (Florida led the way with 34 attempts at censorship, by the way. There must be a lot of sin in the Sunshine State.)

People For the American Way researchers documented 376 censorship attempts nationwide during the past year, a 50-percent increase over the previous year, while attempts in Texas were more than double the 13 reported during the 1990-91 school year.

In 14 Texas cases this past year, some the objections resulted in some restrictions on the books or educational materials and in two other cases the offending books simply disappeared from the libraries. Local chapters of the American Family Association and Citizens for Excellence in Education organized campaigns to remove the "Positive Action" self-esteem program in three communities, succeeding in Pasadena. An informal challenge to Richard Bradford's *Red Sky at Morning* at Diana resulted in the teacher's decision not to use the book next year. Works such as Jean Auel's *The Valley of the Horses*, Pat Frank's *Alas, Babylon*, and S.E. Hinton's *Tex* were among various books challenged throughout Texas.

Freedom of the press also saw some setbacks. Corpus Christ Independent School District trustees approved the new student newspaper regulations, which prohibit student writing that, among other things, "might reasonably be perceived to advocate drug or alcohol use, irresponsible sex or conduct inconsistent with the shared values of a civilized social order." The new regulations were based on a 1988 Supreme Court decision in *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, which signifi-

cantly broadened school officials' control over student publications. A journalism teacher complained that the new rules stifle creativity, while a student editor added, "It sounds like they're trying to avoid any issues that may cause controversy with parents."

Although Deer Park and Galveston school boards rejected the calls to remove Positive Action on the grounds that it promoted "humanistic tendencies" and "New Age religion," an elementary school principal in Pasadena dropped the program after the president of the local AFA attacked it and circulated anti-"Positive Action" materials in the community.

In other cases:

— In Angleton, an elementary school principal sought removal of *Animal Reproduction* by Malcolm Penny from an elementary school library after students were found "hooting, laughing and passing the book around in the school cafeteria before school." The school's media specialist managed to convince a review committee that removing the book would invite further challenges. It was placed in the library's reference section for overnight checkout.

— In Arlington, objections were raised to *The Mammoth Book of Murder* for containing "appalling filth" and for "being nothing short of pornographic and to *The Watchers* by Dean Koontz for sexual references. *The Mammoth Book of Murder* remains on library shelves, but *The Watchers* has disappeared.

— In Clute, a school principal, in apparent violation of district policy, unilaterally removed *The Witches of Zorn* by Zilpha Keatley Snyder from a middle school library after complaints it promoted witchcraft and Satanism. The book will remain banned until the objecting student graduates.

— In Elgin, objections to *I Have to Go!* by Robert Munsch, available in a pre-kindergarten through third grade library, for being "distasteful and unappealing" and using the word "pee." A review committee decided to keep the book, noting that there are children who would find the book helpful.

— In Garland, a parent objected to six books on a recommended reading list, including *Teacher From the Black Lagoon* by Mike Thaler, *Dinosaurs Beware* by Marc T. Brown, *The Rainbow Goblins* by El de Rico, *The Ghost Eye Tree* by Bill Martin Jr., *The Very Worst Monster* by Pat Hutchins and *There's a Nightmare in My Closet* by Mercer Mayer, for depicting adults as mean and looking like witches and for making references to sorcery. In response to the complaint, the teacher refrained from using the questioned books for the remainder of the school year.

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Cover art by Gail Woods

— In Grand Saline, parents objected to the *Junior Great Books* series, under consideration for elementary and middle schools. Although there was little specific criticism, the objector remarked that "about half this stuff is pretty weird," and singled out a story in which a young boy attributes a bird's death to the "will of Allah," instead of "God." In response to the complaint, the review committee dropped the series from consideration.

— In Houston, parents objected to 13 selections from the *Junior Great Books* series, used in fourth- and fifth-grade "Academically Aabled" classes. The objectors complained that "The Nightingale" by Hans Christian Anderson is "extremely depressing," that "The Secret of the Hattifatteners" by Tove Jansson "describes a father's lack of commitment to his family and

promotes an unhealthy view of family life," that "Vasilissa the Beautiful" by Post Wheeler "depicts abuse and unfairness to children" and "promotes the idea of magical powers, cannibalism and witchcraft," and that "The Devoted Friend" by Oscar Wilde "is about manipulation and taking advantage of those who display kindness." After two different review committees denied their request for removal of the series, the objectors appealed to the school board, which unanimously voted to keep the series.

— In Houston, parents objected to *The Ice Cream Cone and Other Rare Birds* by Arnold Lobel, available in an elementary school library, for containing drawings that allegedly could cause children to commit unsafe acts. The superintendent upheld a review committee's decision to keep the book.

— In Houston's Spring School District, parents objected to *Chance, Luck and Destiny* by Peter Dickinson, available in an elementary school library, for allegedly being a "how-to book on occultic practices for children." While six members of the review committee voted to keep the book, six voted to move it to the middle and high school libraries, to which the superintendent agreed.

— In Huntsville, a parent objected to profanity and "depictions of sex" in *The Valley of the Horses* by Jean Auel, recommended by the American Library Association and available in a high school library. The objector never made a formal complaint.

— In Irving, a parent objected to *Alas, Babylon* by Pat Frank, in a ninth-grade English class, for containing allegedly racist material. The objector noted the use of the word, "nigger," early in the story, which is set in the South after the Civil War. Rather than remove the book, an appeals board recommended that a lesson on the history of the period be taught to provide context for the book, which remains in use.

— In Leakey, parents objected to *ABZ Book* by Shel Silverstein, available in the kindergarten through 12th-grade library, for allegedly encouraging disobedience in children. The superintendent, without reading the book, ordered the material removed from the library, in apparent violation of district policy.

— In Leakey, a school district official objected to *Run Shelly Run* by Gertrude Samuels, available in a high school library, for foul language and homosexual situations. Rather than refer the complaint to a review committee, as is stipulated by the district's reconsideration policy, the superintendent called in each member of the school board and showed them passages from the book. The board later decided to remove the book, although the superintendent later admitted he had never read the book.

— In Leakey, a parent objected to *Starring Sally J. Freedman as Herself* by Judy Blume, available in an elementary school library, on the grounds it contained profanity and wording that encourages questioning elders. The librarian and the superintendent reviewed the book and decided it was acceptable. It remains on the library shelf.

— In Lubbock, a parent objected to *Stone Words: A Ghost Story* by Pam Conrad, in an elementary school library, for allegedly being

morbid, containing "New Age theology," being "anti-religion" and not promoting family values. *Stone Words* was selected for third- through sixth-graders by Texas librarians, educators and parents as part of the Texas Bluebonnet program, which encourages children to read and develop higher thinking skills. A review committee voted to retain the book. One committee member noted, "Students like to read this kind of book ... They ask us time and time again for scary books in our libraries ... it's a very safe and controlled way to scare themselves." Another committee member said the book had stirred at least one non-reader to start reading.

— In Lufkin, community members objected to *Phenomena* by Henry Billings and *Disasters* by Dan Dramer, supplemental reading for a seventh-grade class, for allegedly teaching cult practices, frightening children and leading to depression and suicide. The district superintendent upheld a review committee's decision to remove *Phenomena* and retain *Disasters*. An objection later was made to *Heroes*, the book that replaced *Phenomena*, because it contained a segment on Gandhi, but no formal complaint was filed. (Some of the objectors were members of the Eagle Forum and others reported attending a cult awareness seminar shortly before lodging their objections. Some did not have children in the seventh grade and others did not have children in school at all.)

— In Odessa, a parent objected to *Tex* by S.E. Hinton, available in the kindergarten through sixth-grade library, for profanity and a passage that mentions smoking "funny cigarettes." Instead of going through the formal complaint process, the objector apparently checked out the book and refused to return it to the library, opting instead to pay for the lost book. It is not yet clear whether the library will replace the book.

— In Refugio, a local ministerial alliance objected to "The Butterfinger's Angel," a play to be performed at a high school, on the grounds that it was blasphemous, portrayed the Virgin Mary negatively and as a prostitute, portrayed Joseph as a sadist, was degrading to women, promoted family dysfunction and rebellion and undermined religious teachings. Some of the objectors admitted they had never read the play. The superintendent immediately cancelled the

production. A student cast member said the play did not contradict Scripture, but merely presented a familiar story from a humorous point of view. The school principal refused to allow a cast member to write an article about the cancellation in the school newspaper and the faculty director resigned, citing the incident as part of the reason.

— In San Antonio, a parent objected to *On My Honor* by Marion Dane Bauer, available in a fourth-grade classroom library, for mentioning a character who chews gum. A review committee decided to keep the book, but objectors reportedly have been circulating a petition against books containing profanity at birthday parties, church events and museums.

— In Victoria, parents and a student objected to *Tiger Eyes* by Judy Blume, available in the elementary school library, for profanity. The principal ordered the book moved to the teachers' shelf of the library, where it is available to students with parental permission. One objector told the librarian she intended to examine every Judy Blume book in the collection and remove any objectionable material.

Some of these objections may be warranted and helpful, but particularly in smaller towns it is easier for a principal to take a book off the shelf than to put up a fight against an offended parent or a group of ministers. These days it takes a brave teacher or librarian to stand up in favor of freedom of expression, making it all the more important that good people in the community back them up. — J.C.

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# Redistricting and the 'New Texas'

BY JAMES CULLEN

Austin

**W**HILE GOV. ANN RICHARDS basks in 75 percent approval ratings, Republicans would like to set back her "New Texas" movement this fall by dumping Railroad Commission Chair Lena Guerrero. Richards has pulled out the stops to help Guerrero win an unexpired term on the commission, which regulates transportation and energy production. The Governor appointed the former Austin legislator as the commission's first Mexican American; then Richards got Guerrero a prime-time speaking engagement at the Democratic National Convention. Guerrero's Republican opponent is Barry Williamson, a Dallas lawyer and former minerals manager for the U.S. Department of the Interior in the Reagan and Bush administrations. He got a less prestigious daytime speaking slot at the Republican National Convention, but at least he made C-SPAN.

The same Dallas Morning News poll of 1,027 registered voters in Texas that showed the high approval ratings for Richards and a practically even race for President between incumbent Republican George Bush and Democrat Bill Clinton showed Guerrero held a slight lead over Williamson. Guerrero had support of 34 percent, Williamson 29 percent and 34 percent were undecided in the survey, which had a margin of error of 3.5 percentage points.

Republicans are excited about the prospects of solidifying the pro-business majority on the Texas Supreme Court, where they have set their sights on Justice Oscar Mauzy, one of the court's most liberal members. He will face Republican Craig Enoch, a judge on the Texas 5th Court of Appeals in Dallas. Mauzy, who has made it plain that he supports abortion rights, has support from organized labor, the Texas State Teachers Association and Texas Women's Political Caucus, while Enoch can expect help from business interests.

In other Supreme Court races, Justice Jack Hightower, a conservative Democrat, faces Republican John D. Montgomery, a state district judge from Houston. Rose Spector, a Democratic state district judge from San Antonio, faces Republican Justice Eugene Cook for the other Supreme Court place.

On the Court of Criminal Appeals, incumbent Democratic Judge Charles F. Baird is seeking re-election to Place 1 on the state's highest criminal appeals court. He faces Joseph A. Devany, a former judge on the Texas 5th Court of Appeals in Dallas. Judge Morris Overstreet, the first black elected to a statewide office in 1990, faces Republican Sue LaGarde, a judge on the 5th Court of Appeals in Dallas, for Place



PATRICIA MOORE

## Lena Guerrero and her mentor, Ann Richards

2. Judge Fortunato (Pete) Benavides, a former appeals court judge appointed to Place 3 by Gov. Richards a year ago, faces Lawrence Meyers, a judge on the 2nd Court of Appeals in Fort Worth.

## U.S. Congress

Texas received three new Congressional districts in the redistricting following the 1990 census, increasing the state's delegation to 30 members. Democrats, who now hold a 19-8 advantage, are expected to pick up the new minority-dominated districts in Dallas, San Antonio and Houston. Republicans have targeted a half-dozen Democratic incumbents, but all are expected to win re-election.

In **North Texas**, the toughest races are expected in District 5 (Dallas South), where Rep. John Bryant, D-Dallas, is favored over Republican Richard Stokely of Frisco; in District 24 (Dallas County South and West), Rep. Martin Frost, D-Dallas, is believed to have the upper hand for re-election against Republican Steve Masterson, a financial manager from Cedar Hill; and in District 12 (Tarrant County South and West), Rep. Pete Geren, D-Fort Worth, is favored over Republican David Hobbs of Fort Worth, a former congressional aide to Rep. Dick Armey. Longer shots are in District 4 (North Central Texas) where Ralph Hall, a conservative Democrat from Rockwall, is expected to beat Republican David L. Bridges of

Rockwall; in the redrawn District 6, which includes only 15 percent of the former 6th District, incumbent Rep. Joe Barton, R-Ennis, is expected to beat Democrat John E. Dietrich of Arlington, a former newsletter editor pushing term limits; in District 26 (North Dallas suburbs), Rep. Dick Armey, R-Lewisville, faces Democrat John Wayne Caton of Bedford; in District 30 (Southeast Dallas County), Eddie Bernice Johnson is expected to have an easy time against Republican Lucy Cain in November.

In **Harris County**, Gene Green, a Democratic state senator from Houston, survived a rerun runoff against Ben Reyes in District 29, a new district in East Harris County that was drawn 60 percent Hispanic to help elect a Mexican-American congressperson. Green should win easily, despite the bitter Reyes' endorsement of Republican Clark Kent Ervin of Houston. In other Houston-area congressional districts, the closest race is expected in District 25 (Harris County South), where Rep. Mike Andrews, D-Houston, is expected to beat Republican Dolly Madison McKenna. In District 8 (Harris County West), Rep. Jack Fields, R-Humble, will face Democrat Charles E. Robinson of Magnolia. In District 18 (Central Houston), Rep. Craig Washington, D-Houston, will face Republican Edward Blum in November. In District 22 (Harris County West), Rep. Tom DeLay, R-Sugar Land, will face Democrat Richard Konrad of Houston. Rep. Bill Archer, R-Houston, is unopposed in District 7.

In the **San Antonio** area, the closest race is expected in District 23, where Rep. Albert G. Bustamante, D-San Antonio, faces Republican Henry Bonilla of San Antonio in a district that stretches north along the Rio Grande. In District 21 (Hill Country West), Rep. Lamar Smith, R-San Antonio, will face James M. Gaddy, D-San Antonio, while Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez, D-San Antonio, is unopposed for re-election and Frank Tejada, a Democratic state senator, was unopposed for election to a new congressional district.

In the **rest of the state**, colorful incumbent Rep. Charles Wilson, D-Lufkin, also tarred with House Bank hot checks, faces a tough race in East Texas District 2 with conservative Republican Donna Peterson of Orange, but he is expected to eke it out. In District 16 (El Paso), Rep. Ronald Coleman, D-El Paso, is expected to beat gaffe-prone Republican TV sportscaster Chip Taberski despite Coleman's prominent placement among the House Bank bouncers. In District 13 (North and West Texas), Republican former congressman Beau Boulter of Amarillo is challenging Rep. Bill Sarpalius, D-Amarillo in what could be a close race. Incumbents expected to win re-election include Rep. Jack Brooks, D-Beaumont, dean of the Texas congressional delegation, over Republican Steve Stockman of Webster; Rep. Jake Pickle, D-Austin, over Republican Herbert Spiro of Austin; Rep. Chet Edwards, D-Waco, over Republican James W. Broyles of Moody; Rep. Greg Laughlin, D-Victoria, over Republican Humberto J. (Bert) Garza of Angleton; Rep. Kika de la Garza, D-McAllen, over Republican Tom Haughey of San Juan; Rep. Charles Stenholm, a conservative Democrat from Stamford, over Republican Jeannie Sadowski of Eastland; Rep. Larry Combest, R-Lubbock, over Terry Lee Moser, D-Amarillo; Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz, D-Corpus Christi, over Republican Jay Kimbrough of Beeville. Rep. Jim Chapman, D-Sulphur Springs, ended up unopposed when the Republican nominee, Robert E. "Swede" Lee of Texarkana, withdrew from the race.

## State Senate

Helped by a redistricting plan drawn by a trio of Republican-appointed federal judges, the GOP hopes to swing a half-dozen seats in the Texas Senate, which the Democrats now control with a 22-9 majority. Democratic senators who are thought to be vulnerable include Ted Lyons of Rockwall, Chet Brooks of Pasadena, Bill Haley of Center and Bob Glasgow of Stephenville and Republicans think they have a shot at the seats vacated by senators Frank Tejada in San Antonio and Gene Green in Houston. That would give the Republicans 15 seats, one short of a majority, although the Democrats are conceding none. "They're going to have to win them race by race," said Ed Martin, Executive Director of the Texas Democratic Party.

If Republicans claim more than one-third of the seats, as expected, they could force changes in the tradition-conscious chamber, which in the past has required a two-thirds majority to take up individual bills. A group of one-third or more also could block gubernatorial appointments, which under the state Constitution require confirmation by two-thirds of the Senate.

In District 1 (Northeast Texas), incumbent moderate Republican Sen. Bill Ratliff of Mount Pleasant is rated the favorite, but Bob Aikin, a Commerce businessman, former state representative and member of the State Board of Education whose father was a longtime senator, should be a strong candidate in the traditionally Democratic area.

In District 2 (Northeast Texas), Sen. Ted Lyon of Rockwall faces Florence Shapiro, an advertising executive and Mayor of Plano, in a marginally Republican district. Lyon has the support of organized labor and TSTA and his tough law-and-order stance should help him in what could be a swing district.

In District 3 (East Texas), Sen. Bill Haley, D-Center, is the favorite in what figures to be a tough race with Gene Shull, a Tyler contractor. Redistricting brought Republican areas of Smith and Montgomery counties, but the district remains marginally Democratic.

District 6 (Houston) is a marginally Republican district in which state Rep. Dan Shelley, a Republican, is the favorite against

Don Coffey, a Democrat.

District 9 (Central Texas): incumbent Republican Sen. David Sibley, R-Waco, is the favorite against Dr. Charles Osborn, a Waxahachie Democrat.

District 11 (East Harris County): Sen. Chet Brooks, D-Pasadena, is the favorite in this marginally Democratic district, but Republicans hope Jerry Patterson can upset the Dean of the Senate.

Democrats have slim hopes that Democrat Ronnie Harrison can upset Republican incumbent Sen. Buster Brown in District 17, where redistricting took his district to Houston's Montrose area. Although the district is still considered solidly Republican, it voted 50 percent for Gov. Ann Richards.

In District 19 (San Antonio) Republican Ernest Ancira has the name association with his car dealership in the race with Democratic Rep. Greg Luna, but a strong Democratic vote in Bexar County could carry Luna.

District 22, incumbent Sen. Bob Glasgow faces Republican Jane Nelson of Lewisville, a member of the State Board of Education, who will be helped from the Republican suburban voters in Tarrant and Denton counties.

In District 25 (West Texas), Sen. Bill Sims, a conservative rancher from San Angelo, is the favorite in the race, although Republican state Rep. Troy Fraser of Big Spring has taken issue with the Governor's appointments to the Texas Water Commission, which declared the Edwards Aquifer an underground river, subject to the agency's regulation.

District 26 (Hill Country) should be a Republican district, but it has seen its share of controversy after Rep. George Pierce, R-San Antonio, secretly helped draw the lines at the behest of U.S. District Judge James Nowlin, then ran for the seat, only to finish out of the race in the Republican primary. Jeff Wentworth of San Antonio beat Alan Schoolcraft of Universal City in a runoff of state reps, only to be thrown off the ballot because, although he had served two terms in the Texas House, a term on the Texas State University System Board of Regents to which Wentworth was appointed in 1987 does not expire until 19 days after he would be sworn in as state senator. The Texas Supreme Court reinstated Wentworth. The Democratic nominee is Carlos Higgins, an Austin lawyer, former deputy public advocate for the Public Utility Commission during Gov. Bill Clements' Administration and former Round Rock ISD president.

District 30, which stretches from Wichita Falls to the Panhandle, is considered a potential swing district, but incumbent Democratic Sen. Steve Carricker is favored over Republican Tom Haywood.

## Texas House

Redistricting opened up 28 seats in the 150-member House of Representatives; 68 candidates were



1988 FILE PHOTO

**U.S. Rep. Charles Wilson**

unopposed through the general election, including 48 Democrats and 21 Republicans. Both sides hope for gains, but little overall change is expected in the House, where Democrats hold a 91-58 majority.

Redistricting brought the Democrats new seats for Mexican Americans and African Americans in Dallas County, a new Hispanic district and an Hispanic-leaning district in Harris County and a net gain of a Democratic seat in Bexar County, but they are offset by Republican gains in the suburbs. Republican incumbents said to be in trouble include Ken Fleuriet of Harlingen, Bernard Erickson of Burleson and David Swinford of Dumas, while the Democrats expect difficulty in holding three rural districts that formerly elected Democrats.

In Northeast Texas, District 4 pairs two incumbents, Democrat Keith Oakley of Terrell and Republican Bill Thomas of Greenville in a potential swing race.

In District 10, which is open, Larry W. Wright, former Hill County Judge from Malone, faces Republican Jim Pitts, a Waxahachie lawyer, owner of an abstract and title company, farmer-rancher and president of the Waxahachie school board. The GOP sees this as a "good opportunity," but Democrats hope U.S. Rep. Martin Frost, a newcomer to Ellis County, will help turn out the Democratic vote.

In District 13, Republicans hope Roberta Mikeska, an operations manager and controller and Brenham City Council member, can make a race against Democratic incumbent Rep. Dan Kubiak of Rockdale.

In Jefferson County's District 21, Republicans hope a long shot will come in for Kent Adams against Democratic incumbent Mark Stiles of Beaumont.

In District 27 Huey McCoulskey, a Richmond retired teacher and administrator, is favored against Republican Mary Ward of Rosenberg, an investigator for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, municipal judge, mayor and justice of the peace.

In District 30, two incumbents, Democrat Tim Von Dohlen of Goliad and Republican Steve Holzhauser of Victoria, are paired in a contest rated a tossup.

In District 38, Democrats expect Jim Solis to beat Republican freshman Rep. Ken Fleuriet in this Harlingen.

Democrats also hope to steal the new Travis County District 47, where Susan Combs, a rancher, faces Democrat Jimmy Davis, an Austin businessman, in what could prove a swing district.

In District 52, Republicans hope Mike Krusee can challenge Rep. Parker McCollough, D-Round Rock.

In open District 56, Republican Kip Averitt of Waco is the favorite, but Democrats have hope for Jay Belew of McGregor.

In District 58, the Democrats expect trouble regaining the seat Bruce Gibson gave up, but they have nominated Geneva Finstad of Cranfills Gap to face Republican Bernard Erickson of Burleson, who won a special interim election.

In open District 63, Mary Denny James of Aubrey, Denton County Republican Chair, is the favorite in a Republican district, but the Democrats have hope for William (Tip) Hall of Ponder, a minister, cattle rancher and former House member. Libertarian Robert S. Atkins of Anna also is on the ballot.

In District 65, Democrat Chris Michalek of Frisco, a vocational trainer with Texas Women's Political Caucus support, hopes to upset incumbent Rep. Ben Campell, R-Carrollton.

In District 81 in Odessa, Republicans see an opportunity to take this district with George (Buddy) West, a safety engineer and member of the Ector County school board, but Democrat Betsey Ann Triplett Hurt is a ranch wife, community volunteer and former TV anchorwoman and the Democrats will not give up without a fight.

In District 84 in Lubbock Robert L. Duncan, a lawyer and former general counsel to the Senate State Affairs Committee, is favored, but

Irving lawyer, in the seat formerly held by Democrat Bill Arnold of Grand Prairie.

In District 107 Rep. David Cain, D-Dallas, who also is seeking to become House speaker, faces Joe L. Granado of Dallas, a self-employed Republican, and Libertarian Karen Tegtmeyer of Dallas.

In Houston's District 132, Republicans see an opportunity with Orlando Sanchez, who faces Scott Hochberg for an open seat.

In District 134 in Houston, Republicans hope Kyle Janek, a physician, can oust Rep. Sue Schechter, D-Houston, but Democrats hope pro-choice Republicans, particularly from Bellaire, will save Schechter.

In open District 144, Donald Peter Fogo, a Pasadena lawyer, faces Republican Robert E. Talton of Deer Park, a lawyer, in what could be a swing district.

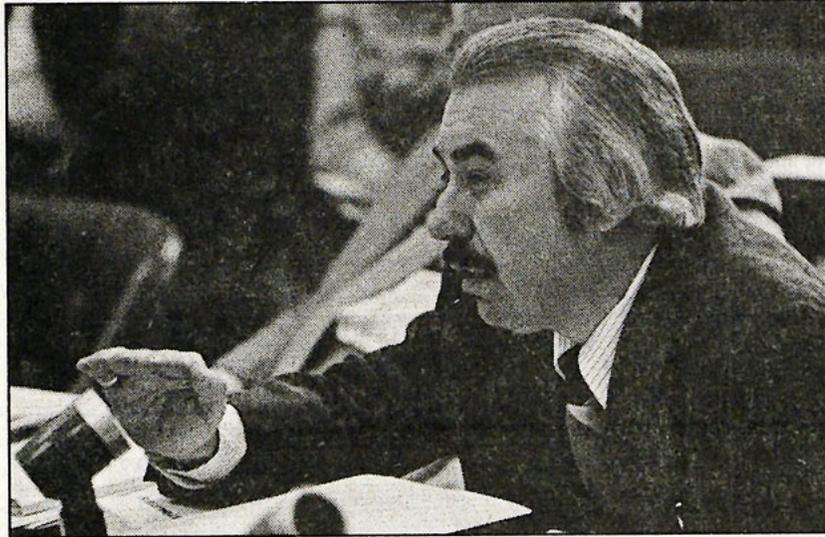
Among the contested Democratic incumbents expected to win are Pete Patterson of Brookston, Bob Glaze of Gilmer, Paul Sadler of Henderson, Ron Lewis of Mauriceville, Zeb Zbranek of Liberty, Eddie Cavazos of Corpus Christi, Sherri Greenberg of Austin, Glen Maxey of Austin, Betty Denton of Waco, John Cook of Brackenridge, Ric Williamson of Weatherford, Robert "Bob" Turner of Voss, Jim Rudd of Brownfield, Samuel W. Hudson, Steve Wolens of Dallas, Al Granoff of Dallas, Leticia Van De Putte of San Antonio, Ron Wilson of Houston, Debra Danburg of Houston, Ken Yarbrough of Houston and Garnet F. Coleman of Houston.

Other Democrats expected to win include Zeb Zbranek of Liberty District 20, Robert R. Alonzo of Dallas District 104, Jesse W. Jones of Dallas District 110, Yvonne Davis of Dallas District 111, Sylvia Romo of San Antonio District 125, Diana Davila of Houston District 145 and Yolanda Navarro Flores of Houston District 148.

Contested Republican incumbents expected to win include Bob Rabuck of Conroe, Jim Tallas of Sugarland, Edmund Kuempel of Seguin, Ben Campbell of Carrollton, Brian McCall of Plano,

Delwin Jones of Lubbock, Bill Carter of Fort Worth, Carolyn Park of Bedford, Toby Goodman of Arlington, Kim Brimer of Arlington, Anna Mowery of Fort Worth, Kenny Marchant of Carrollton, Bill Blackwood of Mesquite, John Carona of Dallas, Mike Jackson of LaPorte, Robert Eckels of Houston, Dalton Smith of Houston and Ashley Smith of Houston.

Other Republicans expected to win include Jerry Madden of Richardson District 67, Joe Driver of Garland District 113, John W. Shields of San Antonio District 122, Frank L. Corte Jr. of San Antonio District 123 and Joe Crabb of Humble District 127. □



FILE PHOTO

### Endangered Sen. Chet Brooks

Democrats have hope for H.L. O'Neal, a lawyer.

In District 87 in Amarillo, Rep. David Swinford, R-Dumas, is expected to have a tough fight with Democrat Bonnie J. Schomp, a lawyer and part-time instructor at West Texas State University.

In District 89, the Fort Worth seat Gib Lewis is giving up, Democrat Homer Dear, a school principal, faces Republican Tom Davis, an architect, in a swing district.

In open District 106, Republicans see an opportunity with Ray Allen, a Grand Prairie writer and president of American Cultural Tradition, against Democrat John Danish, an

# George Bush as Lazarus: On Presidential Comebacks

BY THOMAS FERGUSON

**P**OLLS TAKEN IMMEDIATELY after the Democratic Convention showed President Bush trailing Bill Clinton, the Democratic challenger, by truly enormous margins: 22 points according to a Gallup survey for CNN and USA Today; more than 30 points in others taken slightly later. Everyone expected this margin to shrink after the Republican Convention, and it did: Down to 10 points according to Gallup's first post-GOP Convention poll for CNN/USA Today; to anywhere from eight to 15 points in other polls taken after opinion had a few days to settle down.

Not surprisingly, a riot of speculation has broken out about the chances for a GOP comeback. The discussion has so far been largely data-free and highly impressionistic. This does not have to be, however: Twice in modern history (i.e., since the advent of TV, which definitely excludes the 1948 "miracle") Republican candidates have rallied from far behind to win (or, in the 1976 case, to lose in a photo finish after forgetting where Poland is).

This history is very instructive, and it contains both good news and bad news for the Bush campaign. First the good news: Both of the comebacks — 1976 and 1988 — were managed by James Baker. But now the bad news: In both cases, the long climb back up was not, in fact, very long. In both cases, it began immediately — after the Democratic Convention.

Consider Table I, which traces "change scores" week by week, as recorded by the Gallup Poll, beginning with the first poll taken after the Democratic Convention. (The change score is simply the difference from the previous Gallup Poll — +5 for example, means that the candidate's numbers rose five points from the previous poll. Note that Other/Undecided is a possibility alongside the two major candidates, and that errors in rounding off numbers make it impossible to distribute particular gains or losses exactly across the field of choices. The number of polls taken also varies.)

The main inference from the table is obvious: We have all heard about "convention bounce," but in fact, when the GOP is recovering from the depths, the improvement does not begin a

*Thomas Ferguson is Professor of Political Science & Senior Fellow at the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.*

1976	Carter	Ford	Other/Undecided
Post Democratic Convention Poll.....	62	29	9
Next Poll .....	-5	+3	+2
Next Poll (Post Republican Convention).....	-7	+5	+2
Next Poll .....	+4	-1	-3
Next Poll .....	-3	+4	-5
Next Poll .....	-4	+5	+2
Next Poll .....	+1	-3	+1
Next Poll .....	-1	-1	+2
Next Poll .....	+2	+3	-5
Next Poll .....	-1	—	+1
Next Poll .....	-2	+3	-1
Change From Last Pre-Election Poll .....	+4	+1	-3
Final Result .....	50	48	2

1988	Bush	Dukakis	Other/Undecided
Post Democratic Convention Poll.....	37	54	9
Next Poll .....	+5	-5	—
Next Poll (Post GOP Convention).....	+6	-5	-1
Next Poll .....	+1	-3	+2
Next Poll .....	-2	+1	+1
Next Poll .....	+2	+1	-3
Next Poll .....	+1	-3	+2
Next Poll .....	+3	+2	-5
Change from Last Pre-Election Poll.....	—	+4	-5
Final Result .....	53	46	—

1992	Bush	Clinton	Other/Undecided
Post Democratic Convention Poll.....	34	56	10
Next Poll .....	+2	—	-2
Next Poll .....	-4	+1	+3
Next Poll .....	+5	-1	-4
Next Poll .....	+2	-5	+3
Next Poll (Amidst GOP Convention).....	+2	—	-2
Next Poll (Post GOP Convention).....	+3	+1	-4
Next Poll .....	-3	+2	-1

month or so later with the GOP's conclave. (After the 1988 Democratic Convention, readers will recall, Dukakis famously went on vacation to reign as "Governor of the Berkshires." This left the field to Bush, who, the Gallup Poll suggests, used the time well.) In both 1976 and 1988, this initial rise, added to the "convention bounce" brought the GOP much of the gains it was ever to make. By contrast, after the Republican Convention, the rest of the race was trench warfare — until the very end, when,

perforce, the remaining undecideds finally had to make up their minds. (Note that in 1988, most appear to have broken for Dukakis as his campaign moved rhetorically to the left in the campaign's waning days.)

It is difficult to see any signs of such momentum in the current GOP campaign. Change scores calculated from various Gallup polls (for CNN/USA Today and Gallup's own news service) since the Democratic Convention, for example, run as shown in Table II.

Though one or another poll is occasionally startling, by suggesting narrower margins, there are excellent reasons for crediting Gallup as especially reliable, not least because the organization thoroughly absorbed the lessons of the 1948 debacle, and now strives mightily to filter out non-voters. Note, for example, that Gallup's polls do not exhibit the volatility shown by other surveys this year. As a consequence, one is squeezed to the conclusion that the president's progress has been feeble indeed. At this late date — now well into the "incremental" stage where additional voters have historically been won almost one at a time, the president needs to break the record for making up ground after the conventions. One must suspect that the constant invocation of the deity at the GOP Convention was less an electoral ploy than a hardheaded assessment of where the president's best hope now resides.

As an exercise, however, it is worth asking how an "October surprise" might affect the race. At the moment, the most likely "surprise" is probably the unveiling of some sort of Mideast Peace Settlement along the lines of Jimmy Carter's Camp David Accord, though it is interesting to note that some timetables mentioned by the press in connection with the South African talks also work out rather well for a late White House announcement of a timely intervention. Though conventional wisdom holds that most Americans care little about foreign affairs, Camp David gave the slumping Carter a sizeable lift: 11 points in a Gallup Poll taken shortly after. This poll, however, was of the normal "presidential approval" type — it did not pit the president against a challenger. Making the very generous — indeed, absurd — assumption that three quarters of the 11 percent might have been induced to vote for Carter against a challenger, we arrive at an "upper bound" estimate of the electoral effect of an October surprise: perhaps eight points at the very best (and most improbable: A better projection is that the president would be lucky to see even half of this).

One can also roughly estimate how a "mud-slinging" campaign, along the lines of 1988, will fare this year. Making the heroic assumption that all opinion change in 1988, after the poll following the GOP convention, was the result of skillful mud throwing (and that the GOP cannot realistically expect to do better than it did then in this department), we arrive at the figure of about half a point a week, or a full point a fortnight, as the "best estimate" of what the 1992 Bush effort can hope for.

In recent days, The Wall Street Journal and some Republicans have begun comparing Bush's chances to that of British Prime Minister John Major, who triumphed earlier this year. But British campaigns are very short by American standards, whereas the message of the 1976 and 1988 races seems to be that soon after the conventions are over, many Americans feel they have seen enough to decide.

In politics it is foolish ever to say "never." Every time the race closes up, Republican hearts — along with those of the media — will flutter. Still, the historical record on Presidential comebacks indicates that the president is prob-

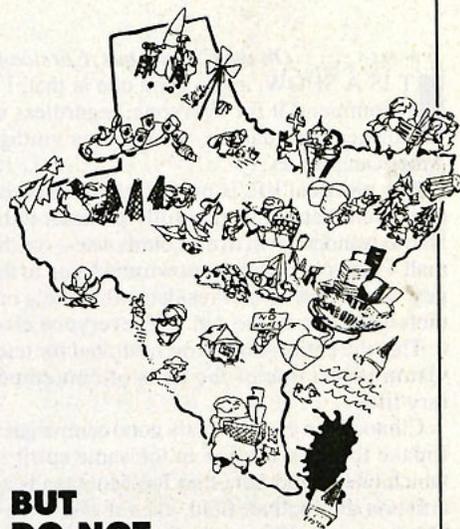
ably too far behind at too late a stage in the election to win — unless, of course, God really is a registered Republican.

Not all forecasts of an eventual Bush victory amount to grasping at straws. In particular, one very highly regarded statistical model that predicts presidential election outcomes, developed by Yale economist Ray Fair, calls for a Bush victory by a substantial margin. Fair has developed and tested a variety of formulations since the mid-'70s. The version he now uses tries to predict the Democratic share of the two-party vote based on the growth rate of real per capita Gross National Product in the second and third quarters of the year of the election, the inflation rate in the preceding two years, and whether or not the incumbent is running for re-election. His model's track record is impressive: its average error for the last six elections is a mere 1.1 percentage points (though in close elections, like, for example, 1976 or 1968, this was not sufficient to prevent mistaken predictions).

This year the model speaks in stentorian tones: Though the weakness of the American economy is a major election issue and many economic indicators are truly alarming, the numbers that are relevant for Fair's model are far from fatal for the Republicans. Indeed, they suggest that the President should win by a fairly hefty margin. Why then is the Bush campaign stalled? A brief response runs as follows. Let us first accept the findings of what I consider the best existing accounts of why people vote as they do. As first formulated by Stanley Kelley of Princeton (and extended by his student John Geer, now at Arizona State University) this suggests that almost no one votes on the basis of a single issue. People instead make up their minds by summing up sets of considerations for and against particular parties and candidates, and voting for the one they like the most or dislike the least.

Now many voters include considerations about the economy in their lists of issues they care about. As a consequence, while few voters cast ballots simply on the basis of the economy, broad changes in the economy nevertheless affect many voters at the margin. Because it correctly focuses on the marginal issue for many voters, Fair's model usually works well. This year, however, things look different in many senses. Because of the intense popular discussions of American economic decline, and perhaps some peculiar features of the current economic recovery (in which, to exaggerate for clarity, profits, but not jobs, are recovering, and everyone is worried about debts), many voters are "reading" the usual economic facts differently and paying more attention to economic indicators they usually ignore. (This is perhaps clearest with the many voters who supported Paul Tsongas or Ross Perot, but these candidates surely have no monopoly on anxiety in the 1992 race.) As a consequence, citizens are going to vote differently from what the model — which in its present form, does not make explicit use of, say, consumer confidence measures — predicts. At best, the president can hope for a squeaker, rather than the relatively easy time the model forecasts. □

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



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# Buses, Bush and Blue-pencils

BY MOLLY IVINS

*On the Clinton bus, Corsicana*

IT IS A SHOW, and a good one at that. I'd recommend it for everyone, regardless of political persuasion, who enjoys vintage American politics.

Our political life is now so dominated by television that it's wonderfully pleasant to be able to wander down to the courthouse — or the mall — in your own hometown and listen to the guy who wants to be President while he's out there sweating in the sun with everyone else.

That the entire show is orchestrated for television is just one of the facts of contemporary life.

Clinton is an exceptionally good campaigner. I make this observation in the same spirit in which one would note that Joe Montana is an artist on the football field, even if one were a Cowboys fan. What is, is. The "liberal media" is not inventing Bill Clinton.

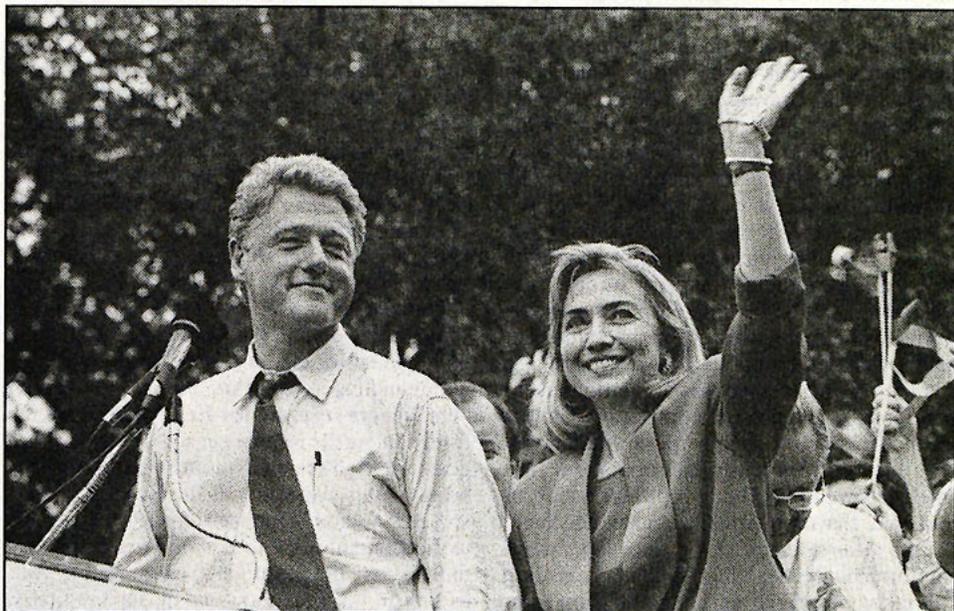
A couple of notable things about Clinton as a campaigner: His stamina is incredible, and he tends to get stronger as the day goes on. He blends gentle ridicule of the whole Bush era with a "We can do it" pitch that is actually classic Reagan — we're the optimists; they're the pessimists.

He has a standard litany of what he plans to do if elected. To my surprise, the one that crowds like most is the national service idea. Clinton wants to set up a national college trust fund, so any American can get a loan to go to college. Then, he emphasizes, the student will have to pay back the loan, either with a small percentage of his or her earnings after graduation or by giving two years to public service — as a teacher, as a cop, working with inner-city kids, helping old folks.

As the list goes on, the applause swells, "We can rebuild this country, we can save our cities, we can do it, we can!"

Clinton and Al Gore have a lot of material to work with, given George Bush's record, his dingbat mode and his latest goofy proposals. Both men needle the president constantly and are rapidly turning the "family values" convention to their own advantage. Meanwhile, the Bush team, now under Jim Baker, is already quicker at responding and has now dropped family values.

Bush probably made a mistake when he told the evangelical crowd in Dallas the weekend after the convention that the Democrats left



KAREN DICKEY

## Bill and Hillary Clinton in Austin

G-O-D out of their platform (that was before Baker nixed "family values").

An Episcopalian really should know better than to try to out-Bible a couple of Baptist boys. Both Clinton and Gore can quote Scripture to a fare-thee-well, but the ever-magisterial Barbara Jordan, daughter of a Baptist preacher, used it most witheringly at the enormous rally in Austin, "Everyone who calleth to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will not get in. Who will get in? Those who do the Lord's work."

Much of the Texas tour, viewed as whole, is an exercise in inoculation.

The Clinton campaign fully expects Bush to go on television with massive negative ad buys. In Texas, two obvious targets are guns and gays — if past Republican performance is a reliable indicator, the gay-bashing will be done below radar, on radio.

Clinton tried to defuse the gun issue (he supports the Brady bill, the seven-day hold on gun purchases) by citing Ronald Reagan's support for the Brady bill and touts it as a common-sense measure to help law enforcement.

The Republicans' Texas attack plan, entitled "September Storm," contains a memorable winner. The Rs refer to the political operatives with whom they plan to flood East Texas as "Stormtroopers;" you don't have to be Jewish to flinch at that lack of historical sensitivity.

There are three qualities that make Clinton such an effective campaigner — energy, stamina and joy. Of the politicians I have

watched, he is most like Hubert Humphrey and Ralph Yarborough. He loves doing this — he gets energy from people.

A lot of politicians, Lloyd Bentsen, for example, move through crowds smiling and shaking, but the smile never reaches their eyes, and you can tell they'd much rather be back in Washington cutting deals with other powerful people. In his book, *What It Takes: The Way to the White House*, writer Richard Ben Cramer suggests Bush despises politics, considers it a dirty business and consequently believes anything is permitted.

The different thing about Clinton is that he listens to people as he moves among them — Humphrey and Yarborough were always talking. Clinton listens and remembers and repeats the stories he hears.

I have read several of the poetic effusions produced by my journalistic colleagues about Clinton's bus tours and laughed. On Thursday evening, in the late dusk, moving among the thousands gathered on the old suspension bridge over the Brazos in Waco, I realized why so many of us wax poetic about these scenes.

It's not Clinton who's so wonderful — it's America.

## Politics and Planes

Austin

"I will never let politics interfere with a foreign policy decision." — George Bush, Aug. 20, 1992, Houston.

Molly Ivins, a former editor of the *Observer*, is a columnist for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Copyright 1992 Creators Syndicate Inc.

"We're proud to do this." George Bush, Sept. 3, 1992, Fort Worth, announcing the reversal of a 10-year policy against selling advanced jet fighters to Taiwan.

One fool said we Texans ought to feel insulted that President Bush came down here and tried to buy our votes by switching his policy on selling Fort Worth planes to Taiwan. Don't be silly. Grab the money and run.

Three thousand jobs is not a hare-lipped mule. Of course, there's nothing wrong with following the old motto of Texas legislators either: "Drink their whiskey, take their money and vote against them anyway."

Thirty-seven-and-a-half-million Americans living below the poverty line, including one out of every four children. That's \$13,924 a year for a family of four. If you haven't tried living on that lately, give it a go for a month and see how it feels. Texas' poverty level at 17.5 percent. Median household income down 5.1 percent — \$1,624 — since 1989.

Naturally, we were all looking forward to the Bush spin on the latest numbers from the Census Bureau. Marlin Fitzwater, the White House spokesman, emerged to announce that the numbers were "certainly understandable" and should be expected in a recession. What we didn't expect, Marlin, was a four-year recession.

There's really no great mystery here. Economics may be dismal, but it's not mysterious. Ever since John Maynard Keynes wrote *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* in 1936, we have more or less understood the government's role in managing a capitalist economy.

I always thought our current problems stemmed from the fact that Ronald Reagan went to college before Keynes published, back when some now-discredited theory by a guy named Say was being taught. Say's theory does bear an eerie resemblance to the Laffer curve.

If you want to be bipartisan about it, our current economic troubles can also be laid at the feet of Lyndon Johnson, who fought the war in Vietnam without paying for it. That in turn led to the stagflation of the '70s.

Then along comes Reagan with this dotty notion that you can cut taxes, spend \$2 trillion on the military and still balance the budget. Reagan subscribed to the quaint notion that dollars spent on the military had a "multiplier effect" that would gin the economy so that it would produce more tax revenue even at lower rates.

He was wrong. The '80s "boom" was a credit-card spree and it was poor Bush who inherited the bills.

Now I grant you, no one knows what Bush really believes. But I for one was laboring under the happy illusion that he really did think supply-side was "voodoo economics," as he called it in 1980. I just figured that his apparent conversion to this nutty nonsense was just another of his political conversions of convenience.

It's still hard to tell what Bush believes after four years in office. He did get serious about the deficit at one point and signed off on a tax increase, which he now repudiates. He says, "Congress made me do it." In fact, George Bush has used his veto 15 times now, and he's never been overridden. Lloyd Bentsen passed

an economic package that had all the economic stimulus stuff Bush says he wants in it, but Bush vetoed it because it also contained a surtax on millionaires.

On the spending side, Bush keeps whining about congressional big spenders and pleading for a balanced budget amendment. Really, he should thank Congress for having spent \$1 billion less than Bush himself proposed in his budgets.

The president's latest goofy proposal is this deal where we're supposed to check on our IRS forms if we want 10 percent of our tax money to go to the national debt. Listen, more than 10 cents of every tax dollar we pay now goes to the national debt! What is this man talking about?

Ross Perot deserves credit for dragging the debt into the public debate. Trouble is, Perot doesn't seem to have read Keynes either. If you cut government spending during a recession, it drastically weakens the economy. That's why Clinton is talking about all these investments in roads, schools and bridges, more or less paid for (fudge factor here) under his plan by cutting defense and taxing the rich.

The enthusiasm of the conservative establishment for Perot's plan, e.g., *The Wall Street Journal's* editorial page, reminds me of the zeal with which adults who don't have to take it urge castor oil on children. No, there is no easy, painless way out of this mess. On the other hand, there's no point in making it worse by trying to do it all in five years.

Perot himself originally said it would take 12 years to balance the budget. He was right the first time.

## Family Values and the First Amendment

Decoding Bush is becoming so exhausting that I turned to Dan Quayle this weekend for relief, thus stumbling across another of the defining moments of the '92 campaign. This was Quayle's speech pitting the values of Huntington, Ind., one of his hometowns (the other being Phoenix, Ariz.), against those of Hollywood, Calif. The tinny, inauthentic sound of Quayle as Moral Authority has to be heard to be properly appreciated, but I shall do my best to reproduce the gist.

It seems "They" in Hollywood do not understand Huntington, Ind. "They" do not appreciate Huntington. "They" do not like Huntington.

One's mind does tend to wander during a Quayle speech. Do you suppose people in Hollywood actually do spend a lot of mental and emotional energy thinking about Huntington, Ind.? Should the good citizens of Huntington refuse to see *ET* and *Indiana Jones* because Steven Spielberg has a complicated love life? What is this man talking about? What is he running for? Why is he Vice President of the United States?

Mercifully, before the minds of citizens who had accidentally flicked onto C-SPAN and then remained there, paralyzed by boredom, could turn into complete porridge, the tube produced an infinitely more informative discussion of the dark side of American culture. Tipper Gore

and Bill Buckley appeared, along with a rock critic from the *Village Voice*, to kick around the exploitation of sex and violence for profit by the entertainment industry. Since Tipper Gore, unlike Dan Quayle, has actually done something useful about all this — she being one of the chief instigators of the ratings system now used by the music industry — it was a pleasure to hear her educate Buckley on the subject. She combines respect for the First Amendment, appreciation of rock music and a determination to protect children with modesty and common sense. After hearing Quayle, it was such a relief to hear someone who knows what she's talking about.

Being a First Amendment feminist is not one of our society's easier roles these days. We often seem to be swimming through such a miasma of sexual violence — in advertising, television programming, heavy metal, rap, films and, worst of all, in the home — that even First Amendment absolutists sometimes daydream about how nice it would be to have government-as-nanny just outlaw all this effluent.

It is quite reasonable to subscribe both to the old saw that no good girl was ever ruined by a book and to the perception that it is not good for children to be constantly exposed to the sexual violence in our popular culture. Protecting children seems to me logically, legally and rather easily differentiated from censorship — and good on Gore for helping parents protect their children.

Sexism is comparable to racism in many ways, and one of them is that as racism has become less acceptable in our society, so have racist literature, films, music, etc. We have not outlawed racist expression, it continues to exist, you can order it from crummy mail-order houses in California. But you can no longer trot down to the Jiffy Mart and buy overtly racist magazines — not because of censorship, not because of laws, but simply because it is socially unacceptable. So eventually, pray God, will sexist literature and films be socially unacceptable. But anyone who thinks we can rid ourselves of pornography by passing laws against it needs to read more history.

The wonderful thing about the First Amendment is that while it protects even the most vicious and hateful forms of speech, it also protects our right to condemn such speech — in terms just as powerful and as vigorous as we can manage. So that if I want to condemn peddlers of sexual violence for puking the rancid remainders of their sick minds all over this society, I am free to do so.

Likewise, if Oprah Winfrey, herself a victim of incest, wants to put together a stunning television documentary called "Scared Silent" to educate the public and to give hope to victims of incest, she too is free to do so. In Dan Quayle's back-to-Ozzie-and-Harriet vision of "family values," there is no place for Winfrey's documentary about the tragic problem of incest. And as that documentary so painfully reminded us, incest is not caused by poor family values in Hollywood. The great majority of those who commit incest were themselves victims of it. It is a self-perpetuating problem that festers and flowers in silence. □

# Bush-Speak

BY PAUL BOELLER

*"You can tell these Yale men — articulate devils, you know!" — President Bush, chatting with members of the Young Astronaut Society, Jan. 24, 1992*

**G**EORGE HERBERT WALKER BUSH is famous for his gaffes. But he isn't the only President of the United States to achieve such fame. Jerry Ford once referred to California's S.I. Hayakawa as "Hiawatha," in a convention speech. Jimmy Carter called Hubert Horatio Humphrey "Hubert Horatio Hornblower" and Ronald Reagan called his Vice President "George Bosh" on at least one occasion.

But President Bush is far better than his predecessors. "Outside the protective tutelage of his media adviser," noted Newsweek in May 1988, "Bush seems to be a veritable gaffe-omatic." During the 1988 presidential campaign he denounced drug "ping-pins" (kingpins), called for increased "experts" (exports), and announced that he saw "an America in the midst of the largest peacetime explosion (expansion) ever." He also talked about the AFL-CIA.

But these are minor slips. At his best, Bush occasionally comes up with verbal gaffes that leave audiences rubbing their eyes in bewilderment. Speaking of bigotry during the 1988 campaign, he assured people that "I hope that I stand for anti-bigotry, anti-Semitism, anti-racism. That is what drives me. It's one of the things I feel very, very strongly about." There was a clarifying statement afterwards, of course, but a little later, speaking about unemployment, Bush promised that if elected President he would "make sure that everyone who has a job wants a job." He fairly outdid himself, though, when bragging to voters about his close relation to President Reagan. "For seven and half years," Bush declared, "I have worked alongside of him, and I am proud to be his partner. We have had triumphs. We have made mistakes. We have had sex..." There was a stunned silence in the audience and he quickly corrected himself: "We have had setbacks."

Tongue slips, however, form only a small part of the Bush style. Bush-Speak (or Bushspeak), as the President's spoken word has come to be called, contains preppyisms (like "deep doo-doo") as well as *lapsi linguae*. Bush attended Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., before going on to Yale and becoming a member of

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GAIL WOODS

Phi Beta Kappa, and traces of his prep-school background appear in his choice of words as well as in his occasional boyish gestures. This is something new in presidential style and it is not without a certain goofy charm. Charged with running a negative campaign in 1988, Bush insisted he wasn't going to let the Democrats get away with it when they started pulling "that naughty stuff" on him. He also expressed great glee over the way campaign aide Lee Atwater was "getting into their knickers," that is, angering the Democrats. And along more positive lines, he promised to "hit a lick for peace" if he won the election.

Along with tongue slips and preppyisms Bush-Speak includes a kind of goofy jocularity that goes with the president's efforts to make small talk on informal occasions. Offering a chair to a woman at a reception, he volunteered: "Chivalry is only reasonably dead." When Sen. Alan Simpson, entering a restaurant in Beeville,

Texas, with the president, ordered chablis, Bush said amiably: "Al, ya gonna have a draft?" Visiting a school in Harlem, he asked a third grader whether she was "número uno" in spelling, and when she hesitated, Bush said jovially: "Comme ça, comme ça!"

Far more striking than tongue slips, preppyisms and goofy jocularities, however, are the amiable meanderings with which the President so frequently indulges himself when speaking off the cuff in public. With these dizzy flights of words we come to the heart of Bush-Speak. Here, for instance, is what President Bush had to say in Knoxville, Tenn., when a high school student asked whether he planned to seek ideas overseas for improving American education. "Well, I'm going to kick that right into the end zone of the Secretary of Education. But, yes, we have all — he travels a good deal, goes abroad. We have a lot of people in the department that does that. We're having an interna-

tional — this is not as much education as dealing with the environment — a big international conference coming up. And we get it all the time — exchanges of ideas. But I think we've got — we set out there — and I want to give credit to your Governor McWhetter and to your former Governor, Lamar Alexander — we've gotten great ideas for a national goals program from — in the country — from the governors who were responding to, maybe, the principal of your high school, for heaven's sake!"

Bush's discussion of what he called "the religion thing," while campaigning for re-election in New Hampshire in February 1992, was equally flighty. Said he: "Somebody said... we pray for you over there. That was not just because I threw up on the prime minister of Japan either. Where was he when I needed him? But I said, let me tell you something. And I say this — I don't know whether any ministers from the Episcopal church are here. I hope so. But I said to him this. You're on to something here. You cannot be President of the United States if you don't have faith. Remember Lincoln, going to his knees in times of trial in the Civil War and all that stuff. You can't be. And we are blessed. So don't feel sorry for — don't cry for me, Argentina."

In March 1992, President Bush treated guests at a fund-raising lunch in Tampa, Florida, to another prosaic peregrination. "Somebody — somebody asked me, what's it take to win?" he said. "I said to them, I can't remember, what does it take to win the Super Bowl? Or maybe Steinbrenner, my friend George, can tell us what it takes for the Yanks to win — one run. But I went over to the Strawberry Festival this morning, and ate a piece of shortcake over there — able to enjoy it right away, and once I completed it, it didn't have to be approved by Congress — I just went ahead and ate it — and that leads me into what I want to talk about today..." He then segued into some carefully scripted remarks.

Sometimes, amid all the improvisatory weirdness that make up Bush-Speak, comes a strange rhetorical question that leaves people surprised and bewildered. Touring the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz in 1988, Bush suddenly exclaimed: "Boy, they sure were big on crematoriums, weren't they?" And at a Ford Aerospace facility in the spring of 1989, he exclaimed: "I want to give the high-five to high tech... The truth is, it reminds a lot of people of the way I pitch horseshoes. Would you believe some of the people? Would you believe our dog?"

Strange answers as well as odd questions adorn the Bush repertoire. When asked (December 1987) about his experience as a fighter pilot during World War II, when he was shot down over the Pacific by Japanese gunners, Bush exclaimed: "Was I scared? Floating around in a little yellow raft off the coast of an enemy-held island, setting a world record for paddling? Of course I was. What sustains you in times like that? Well, you got back to fundamental values. I thought about Mother and Dad and the strengths I got from them — and God and faith and the separation of church and state." There is surely something intriguing in the picture of a young man contemplating dis-

establishmentarianism at a time when his life is hanging in the balance.

Equally strange was Bush's response to a question about whether he ever sought Ronald Reagan's advice after entering the White House: "Life its own self, as Dan Jenkins said. Life its own self. Figure that one out. But what it means is, I have a lot more to learn from President Reagan." (Reporting these remarks, Newsweek dubbed the President "the mysterious Easterner.") And when reporters quizzed

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**Figure that one**

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the President about his flip-flop on taxes in June 1990, and one reporter asked whether it was naive of people to take campaign promises seriously, Bush had a puzzling answer: "I think people are smarter than a lot of us think they are, including me." Bushwatchers are still trying to figure that one out.

Along with tongue slips, peppyisms, goofy jocularities, amiable meanderings, and curious questions and answers, Bush-Speak includes what might be called the "thing thing." Listening to President Bush's public ruminations, one can't help thinking of the lines from *A Child's Garden of Verses*: "The world is so full of a number of things/I'm sure we should all be happy as kings." During the 1988 campaign, Bush referred to his lack of a grand world outlook as "the vision thing." On another occasion he talked about the "blame America first crowd from the post-Vietnam thing." He asked the Atlantis astronauts about "the deployment

thing," called his thyroid problem "the thyroid thing," talked about "the hostage thing" and "the Soviet thing," and once confessed: "I feel a little, I will say, uncomfortable sometimes with the elevation of the religion thing."

Bush may have a thing about things, but when it comes to what he might call "the clarity thing," he fails abysmally. At times the President has what Texas Monthly's Emily Yoffe calls "Olympian moments of incomprehensibility," and in these moments come the most egregious Bushisms of all: puzzling pronouncements. Here are a few choice Bushian ineffabilities:

- Drugs — In May 1988, when a reporter asked Bush how he planned to address the drug problem, he announced: "I'm going to be coming out with my own drug problem."
- Iran-contra affair — When Peter Jennings asked Bush what part he had played in the Iran-contra affair, he exclaimed: "You judge the record. Are the Soviets coming out of Afghanistan? How does it look in a program he called or some one of these marvelous Boston adjectives up there and — about Angola — now we have a chance — several Bostonians don't like it, but the rest of the country will understand."
- Advice — Soon after Bush became President, a reporter asked how he would do things differently in the White House and Bush responded: "Like the old advice from Jackman — you remember, the guy that came out — character. He says, 'And then I had some advice. Be yourself.' That proved to be the worst advice I could possibly have. And I'm going to be myself. Do it that way."
- Travel plans — On Nov. 9, 1991, clarifying his travel plans for the coming year, Bush told reporter: "No, you're not going to see me stay put. I am not going to forsake my responsibilities. You may not see me put as much — I mean, un-put as much."
- Endorsement — At a meeting of the National Governors' Association on Feb. 3, 1992, Bush told Colorado Gov. Roy Romer: "All I was doing was appealing for an endorsement, not suggesting you endorse it."
- Recession — Campaigning in New Hampshire in January 1992, Bush took time out to discuss the recession. Here are his lucubrations: "The guy over there at Pease — a woman, actually — she said something about a country-western song, you know, about the train, a light at the end of the tunnel. I only hope it's not a train coming the other way. Well, I said to her, well, I'm a country music fan. I love it, always have. Doesn't fit the mold of some of the columnists, I might add, but nevertheless — of what they think I ought to fit in, but I love it... But nevertheless, I said to them you know there's another one the Nitty Ditty Nitty City that they did. And it says if you want to see a rainbow you've got to stand a little rain. We've had little rain. New Hampshire has had too much rain. A lot of families are hurting."

Whence Bush-Speak? Whence the aimless clauses, awkward adverbs, dangling predicates, and jaunty jump-cuts that adorn the President's speech? Some observers attribute the verbal infelicities to the fact that Bush is left-handed,

like Jerry Ford, another (but far less accomplished gaffemeister). "Much research," writes Daniel Seligman in *Fortune*, "suggests lefties are indeed prone to 'language disturbances,' especially if they come from families genetically prone to leftiness." Seligman asked the White House whether there were other members of the Bush family who were lefthanded and was told: "We do not give that information out."

Not genes, but misguided energies probably account in large part for Bush-Speak. In private, the President can be charming and amusing. In public, his efforts to escape his patrician background and sound like a regular fellow almost always to lead him astray. "The worst thing you can do in politics," a Republican strategist once remarked, "is to try to be something you aren't." Many Bush-watchers attribute the President's linguistic awkwardness to his attempts to hide the signs of his upper-class upbringing as the son of a wealthy U.S. Senator (Connecticut's Prescott S. Bush).

The genteel President becomes particularly inarticulate whenever he tries to sound tough. Ordinarily a man of dignity, he "goes ballistic," to use his own phrase, when putting on a tough act in public; he speaks faster, with his voice climbing into the higher registers, looks increasingly frantic, and begins to sound slightly silly. Bush does not seem to realize, noted the New Yorker's Elizabeth Drew, than in most cases tough equals calm (e.g. Clint Eastwood and Gary Cooper).

But even when Bush is calm, he sometimes loses control of the language. Some observers attribute this to desperate attempts to avoid

taking stands on controversial public issues, or attempts to conceal the fact that he hasn't really given much thought to the subject under consideration. "His whittling of words," *The New York Times*' Maureen Dowd explains, "is a reflection of his distaste for reflection." Elizabeth Drew concluded that Bush's "mangling of thoughts or words when on his own" bespoke "a certain sloppiness of thought processes, or some of short circuiting that goes on in his head."

Some critics are harsher. They attribute Bush-Speak to plain and simple insincerity, and like to quote George Orwell: "The great enemy of clear language is insincerity." Bush is invariably at his worst, writes Daniel Seligman, when he finds himself in a situation requiring "massive insincerity." Harper's Lewis Lapham can't help feeling that the president's smile in public is frequently fraudulent and that his sloppy way of expressing himself off the cuff comes from uneasiness about "putting his conscience in escrow."

Bush is by no means oblivious to his speech problems. "I don't always articulate," he told some New Hampshire voters in February of 1988, "but I always do feel." He was doing the best he could, he told his campaign advisers early in the 1988 presidential race, and doubted that he could do better. For him, Bush explained, public speaking was like tap dancing. Even if he spent the rest of his life trying to learn to tap dance, he said, he would never be better than merely competent. And the same was true of his public speaking. But his campaign people were not appeased. They knew he was coming across (in Dowd's words) as "goofy,

ruthless, insincere, a man out of touch with the common people," and that he simply had to do better to win the election. In the end, they paid political consultant Roger Ailes \$25,000 a month to serve as Bush's top media adviser and help him improve his style. Ailes at once put an end to all interviews, and, through careful coaching, got Bush to pitch his voice lower, get rid of the nasal whine, and speak more slowly. Later on, the Bush people arranged for Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan to prepare both his 1988 acceptance speech and his inaugural address and see to it that he came across as a "quiet man" who wanted a "kinder, gentler" America.

Bush's inaugural address, written in what Dowd calls "High Noonan," came off rather well. After entering the White House, however, Bush resumed his old habit of straying from the script when speaking in public and as a result his propensity for saying ditsy things continued to embarrass his friends and amuse his foes. And as the Bushisms multiplied during his four years in office, some observers began to wonder if there was really any "there" there and whether Bush-Speak, in the last analysis represents absence, rather than confusion, of thought. Conservative writer Michael Novak bemoaned the lack of gravitas in the president's outlook. And George Will was convinced that the president was "on the losing side of a monologue with himself." Wrote the *Washington Post* columnist in January 1992: "Because Bush on the stump expresses synthetic sentiments in garbled syntax, Americans often wonder what he means. The answer may be that he doesn't mean very much." □

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### Continued from pg. 2

What brought the changes we think of when we hearken back to those Democratic glory days was the civil rights movement, the progressive power of organized labor. It was the organized citizenry that gave those two presidents the right to do right.

We can expect as much from Bill Clinton. There are not many presidents who could get the enthusiastic benediction of the late union organizer Franklin Garcia, who spent weeks traveling Texas with Clinton, organizing for George McGovern. And there's this: Bill Clinton's a Governor. He understands that all politics are local. He believes in the ability of communities to change and to provide models for broader change. He speaks the right language.

What I'm arguing for here is no more malaise. Who do you expect to come forward walking on water? Mario Cuomo? That's beside the point. We're the repository of the power to change things. What we need is to get ourselves organized and to find someone who understands what we're saying. Bill Clinton is going to be as good a President as we make him. That's as much as we can expect and more than we've gotten in what seems like forever. Let's start here. *Adelante.*

*Geoff Rips, Austin*

*Ed. Note: Rips is a former Observer editor*

# America's Third World Tilt

BY CHRISTOPHER COOK

**L**ABOR DAY JUST PASSED, which meant we at the Texas AFL-CIO received the usual telephone calls from news reporters writing their obligatory annual "state of organized labor" stories.

"What is the current state of organized labor?" these denizens of the newsrooms ask. By that they mean, "Has anything changed since the last time we bothered to get labor's opinion? You remember, around Labor Day a year ago?"

Well, perhaps I exaggerate. You see, we do get other calls. For instance, occasionally a reporter calls because some U.S. Attorney somewhere in Texas has leaked "off the record" allegations that labor is in bed with organized crime and other such nonsense.

Of course, the news reporter feels obligated out of his or her "duty to the public" to sniff around the allegations and maybe even print or broadcast them. After all, a serious reporter has a serious responsibility. Never mind that the story is untrue, unsubstantiated and just plain dumb. Meanwhile, all we can do is say the story is baloney.

But smear campaigns are a Republican specialty, especially now that they've controlled the White House long enough to have packed the U.S. Attorney offices, FBI, IRS and other federal police agencies with their ideological brethren.

As a result, Republicans without any serious public policy positions or strategies have ample assistance in smearing the opposition with rumor and innuendo. It's effective political strategy. Just ask Jim Hightower.

But that's another story. When the reporters called just before Labor Day, I put aside my grievances and answered their questions. Some of the larger daily newspapers even opened a slot on their op-ed pages for us. This year, one newspaper decided to run a Labor Day guest column defending the high wages of corporate executives, but the editor most generously let us rebut the column.

Truth is, most news media don't give a damn about organized labor. News media management isn't about to encourage coverage of a movement that could infest their own corporate structure, and very few news reporters have thought through their own personal or professional philosophies enough to have a serious opinion about workplace democracy, i.e. unionism. Moreover, reporters quickly learn to tread lightly around those subjects of which editors disapprove. (I know; I'm a former newspaper reporter.)

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*Christopher Cook is Director of Communications for the Texas AFL-CIO, the state federation of labor unions.*

I could go on and on about the defects of the news media (a subject dear to my aching heart), but that, too, is another story. Instead, please listen to what we told the news media this year when they asked for their annual report on the mindset of organized labor.

"America is being systematically turned into a Third World economy with working people competing for fewer jobs," we answered. "The jobs offer lower wages and less job security. In short, working Americans have serious concerns about the future we are creating for our children."

Naturally, such concerns lead to the second matter on the minds of trade unionists in 1992: the presidential election. The sad state of the economy — along with forecasts of continued high unemployment and anemic growth unless something dramatic is done — has become a call to arms for working Americans.

Consider the facts:

\* At least 17 million Americans are out of work or under-employed.

\* About one-fifth of full-time workers are living below the official government poverty line.

\* Working Americans have seen their wages fall from first in the world a decade ago to 13th in the world today. (Although, of course, the wages of corporate executives in the U.S. still rank first worldwide.)

\* Since 1980, America has lost 2.1 million good paying manufacturing jobs. We've lost 1.3 million of them just during the past four years.

\* About two-thirds of the U.S. jobs created during the 1980s were low-paying, minimum wage jobs.

\* Also during the 1980s, the top 1 percent of Americans doubled their after-tax income; their entire net worth is now higher than the combined total of the bottom 90 percent. During the same time, real wages of average American workers fell.

\* During this same period, the cost of health care has tripled. One-fifth of Texans are uninsured, and another one-fifth are underinsured. Nationally, 37 million people have no health coverage.

\* The health of the nation's infrastructure — roads, bridges, school buildings, water and sewer systems — is also at risk, needing billions of dollars of investment.

Those grim facts — what I call the "George Bush Misery Index" — weigh heavily on the minds of working Americans.

We trade unionists recall the words of George Bush, who in 1988 promised to create 15 million new jobs. He is more than 14 million jobs short on his promise.

We know that of the nine presidents since World War II, George Bush has presided over

the worst economic performance of them all.

We've seen the worst record for overall economic growth, the largest increase in public debt, the lowest job growth, the lowest growth in personal income, the lowest number of housing starts (despite low interest rates) and the only decline in industrial production during a four-year term.

This is a formula for continued catastrophe, and working people know it. It's also the formula for turning America into a Third World nation, and working people know that, too.

Historically, the American Dream has not been one of a nation of workers who cannot afford a home, medical care or a college education for its young people. Yet that is what we are creating.

Naturally, trade unionists are watching the presidential candidates — Republican George Bush and Democrat Bill Clinton — to see what they propose to head off further catastrophe.

So far, the Republicans have focused on "family values." Union members — teachers and electricians and telephone operators and automotive assemblers alike — believe strongly in family values. But they find it impossible to relate to what the Republicans are selling.

Example: Under the Bush anti-choice platform, a 12-year-old girl raped by her stepfather would be forced to carry the pregnancy to term. That seems just plain cruel to a lot of union folks with strong family values.

By way of contrast, Bill Clinton is focusing on economic concerns which directly affect the American family. Common sense tells us that economic stress can pull a family apart — whether it's a single-parent family or a family with two working parents.

Working Americans know that "family values" are connected to economic security. And that's why the fake "family values" agenda of the Republicans is hypocritical.

That's among the many reasons trade unionists have unanimously decided to back the candidacy of Bill Clinton in 1992. Bill Clinton is not perfect — who is? — but he does have a plan for the immediate and long-term economic recovery of the United States. And he has the energy and desire to focus crucial attention on the pressing domestic needs of America.

Like all working Americans, we in the trade union movement do not want to bequeath to our children a weakened nation with a Third World economy.

That is precisely what has been — and remains — foremost on the minds of union members during the Labor Day season of 1992.

And — just in case you couldn't tell from the news reports — that's exactly what we told the news media when they called. □

# Raw Deals in Point Comfort

BY KATE MCCONNICO

**"T**HE WATERS ARE really dying. The chemical companies will kill the whole area if we let them."

In Point Comfort, the lament of local shrimper Diane Wilson seems to ring true. Signs posted along the water's edge warn the few remaining sports fishermen to eat nothing they catch and, like the birds and fish, most of the tourists are gone. Homes are run down, old farmhouses are collapsing and the main street is a scattering of used car lots and a lonely Dairy Kream restaurant. Wilson and other environmentalists now argue that the economic cure for this town of 1,000 on Lavaca Bay could be worse than the disease.

The cure — the location of the Formosa Plastics refinery here — and the plant's expansion, the largest of any U.S. chemical plant in the past decade, has been encouraged and underwritten by the state. But recently Wilson and other environmentalists have drawn a line in the sand and vowed to fight Formosa, the world's largest manufacturers of polyvinyl chloride, the toxic plastic that composes PVC pipe.

PVC in its final state, as milk jugs or sewer pipe, for example, is an "inert" material. But the chemicals used to make PVC are not. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Texas Water Commission, the Texas Air Control Board and Formosa's own records, chemicals used to make PVC have been released at illegal levels for years — into the air, Cox Creek, Lavaca Bay and unauthorized landfills around the plant. Toxic carcinogens such as vinyl chloride monomer (VCM), ethylene dichloride (EDC), chloroform, benzene and methanol have been found by the Texas Water Commission in groundwater under the Formosa plant and in subsurface cracks that lead to drinking water sources.

Formosa was brought to the economically depressed area in 1983, drawn by an estimated \$225 million in tax breaks put together by then-Gov. Bill Clements and U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm. Formosa is not the only petrochemical company located on this part of the coast — Union Carbide, British Petroleum, and Alcoa (which has been blamed by fishermen and environmentalists for killing Lavaca Bay by mercury dumping) are only a few miles away. But according to environmentalists and Port

*Point Comfort*



KATE MCCONNICO

## Environmentalist Diane Wilson

Lavaca area contract laborers (who rotate from plant to plant), Formosa poses the greatest threat to the already degraded environment on this stretch of the coast.

According to permit applications filed with state regulatory agencies, Formosa's new plant will make 1.2 billion pounds of ethylene dichloride (EDC) a year. EDC is used to make vinyl chloride monomer and will melt metal, plastic and concrete. According to the EPA, EDC "is extremely toxic and has been shown to cause cancer in laboratory animals." Formosa began its expansion before obtaining permits required by the Texas Water Commission and Texas Air Control Board, and, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in possible violation of the endangered species and wetlands preservation acts. Now, Formosa is 85 percent finished with what Jan Werner of The Houston Press calls the "Big Daddy of chemical plants."

Environmentalists, who have cited Formosa's poor record of compliance with state and federal regulations, pushed for private negotiations with the company. An environmental investi-

gation prepared by Texans United Education Fund and the National Toxics Campaign Fund found that in 1988, according to the Texas Air Control Board, total air pollution levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as methanol, ethylene dichloride and vinyl chloride from the existing plant were about 31,000 pounds. New permits will allow the legal emission of 420,000 pounds of VOCs, including ethylene, benzene, toluene, butadiene, hydrochloric acid and other toxic substances. Authorized water pollution and solid waste levels will also rise.

As expansion got underway at Formosa, Houston environmental attorney Jim Blackburn and Diane Wilson of Calhoun County Resource Watch sued Formosa, demanded an environmental impact statement that would examine effects that the new plant might have on the area and a written agreement with the community groups and environmental leaders. What environmentalists were after, in Blackburn's words, was "a legally-binding extra-governmental contract" that would cover such issues as environmental concerns, safety in the plant and the community and the public's right to know.

To even put such a contract on the table in a community where the chemical industry pays the rent and buys the groceries seemed impossible. Although some workers are critical of cost-cutting during the expansion and warn of possible dangers when the plant starts up, none would speak publicly because of the fear of loss of jobs.

Criticism from local government is also unlikely because elected officials recognize that the chemical industry provides much of the area's tax base. (According to Texans United, a statewide network of environmental groups, expansion incentives given to Formosa included a seven-year waiver of school district, county and city property taxes, resulting in a \$109-million loss for the community and a \$26-million incentive provided by the Texas Legislature and Port Lavaca Navigation District to dredge and execute the docks and bulkheads used by Formosa at Port Lavaca. Formosa will make fixed annual payments in lieu of taxes to local taxing authorities.)

But Wilson has a way of getting people's attention. Her two hunger strikes have kept the public involved in the struggle between the plastic giant and the environmental community. And she has even forced government agencies to pay attention to what is going on in the Formosa plant. After Wilson was inter-

*Kate McConnico is a Texas Observer editorial intern.*

viewed on CBS's "48 Hours," the EPA in November 1990 proposed a record \$8.3 million fine against Formosa for numerous violations. (Formosa and the EPA later bargained this sum down to \$3.6 million, some say because of regional EPA administrator Bob Layton's close ties with U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm. The Houston Chronicle reported Oct. 24, 1990, a few months before the fine was reduced, that Formosa executives gave thousands of dollars to Gramm's re-election campaign. Gramm recommended Layton for the EPA job in 1986 and Layton, who is no longer with the agency, signed off on reducing Formosa's fine.)

In Wilson's second hunger strike, in May of this year, she demanded the end of Formosa's construction and the beginning of negotiations that would clean up the company and make it accountable to the public. Formosa still lacks an Air Control Board permit and a Water Commission permit for the new facility, so Wilson was pressuring the company while it was still vulnerable, she thought. On the 13th day of her fast, Wilson and her attorney, Blackburn, negotiated a 24-page document and thought they had an agreement with Formosa President Susan Wang, secured by a handshake between Wilson and Pamela Giblin, Formosa's attorney. The "agreement" concerned environmental procedures, worker safety and citizen empowerment. Soon after she began to eat again, Wilson says, Formosa began working on a new agreement that eliminated what Wilson considered fundamental provisions. Giblin said the company did not renege because "there never was any agreement."

Formosa saw the attempt to force a pact as a subterfuge to open the plant's gates to organized labor. It was not acceptable, according to Jim Shepard of the company's public information office because it would have allowed the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Worker's union (OCAW) to organize the plant. Joe Wyatt, the former Congressman who does much of Formosa's governmental-relations work, also spoke of the pact as part of a union organizing effort. "We don't just shove the union down our workers' throats. We live in a democracy," Wyatt said in a telephone interview.

Two years ago, in a vote among Formosa's full-time employees — about 10 percent of its current workforce, the rest are mainly non-union contract laborers — the majority voted against unionization of the plant, according to Formosa's public relations department. Yet some workers said they want union representation, but fear losing their jobs if they join or vote it in. When a Texans United/OCAW-sponsored safety-training meeting for the area's refinery workers was held in July in the Calhoun County Agricultural Building, Formosa employees who attended said they had been warned by supervisors not to go. Workers from other refineries said they had received no word on whether to attend or not.

Once Formosa began rewriting the agreement, Texans United, OCAW, Greenpeace and the National Toxics Campaign, all of which had played a part in the negotiations, backed away from the deal that had won praise from Gov. Ann Richards. Meanwhile, Blackburn, a highly

regarded environmental attorney, resigned as Wilson's attorney but continued negotiating with the Formosa. With representatives of environmental and labor groups abandoning the effort, Blackburn and Formosa were left scrambling for one "green" organization to sign the new version of the pact. They never succeeded.

Wilson did not even make the four-hour drive to Austin to witness the announcement of the final agreement. Formosa executives and Blackburn were left to present the pact to reporters, while hostile Greenpeace activists, dressed as lawyers and executives, conducted their own mock signing of the Formosa agreement.

"This is the best environmental agreement in Texas and possibly in the United States," said Blackburn of the pact. "We hope it can serve as a blueprint for negotiations between the public and chemical corporations in the future," said Giblin, Formosa's attorney. In fact, the agreement, which covers four years, provides for a commission that will conduct annual audits of the plant. The commission will include one Formosa representative, one "citizen representative," Blackburn and an environmental engineer — probably Davis Ford of Austin, said Blackburn.

It also promised regular audits that will cover safety and environmental matters. Air, water and solid waste audits will be done by a third party. All findings will be reported to Formosa and it will be Formosa's sole responsibility to implement recommendations. The two non-Formosa members of the Commission are bound by the contract not to "lobby with any agency," file suit against or go to the press with information on Formosa.

A third provision is for a citizens' committee to serve under the commission as a bridge to the community on environmental and safety issues. Anyone who signs the agreement can serve on the committee, which has no vote nor other means to compel the commission to accept suggested changes. The agreement also states that, the "commission may appoint committee members to provide a balance of community views."

Baseline water-quality studies of Cox's Creek and Lavaca Bay will be conducted and then these areas will be monitored for increases in toxic pollutants.

An endangered species review will be performed and commission members will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

A new rewards structure will provide employee bonuses based on environmental and safety improvements, rather than on production as in the past.

While the new rewards structure and water quality studies might improve some conditions at Formosa, critics of the agreement are left with serious reservations.

Rick Abraham of Texans United calls it a "closed-door agreement" and a "sweetheart deal which will create the false impression of accountability and grease the skids for Formosa's further permitting and expansion." The endangered species review, Abraham contends, goes no farther than U.S. laws on the sub-

ject; the water quality studies are only performed once a year (leaks and emissions can occur and clear up in just a few weeks); the commission includes no representatives of environmental groups that have worked to correct Formosa in the past; and the committee is technically powerless.

Christopher Bedford of Communities Concerned about Corporations wrote Blackburn: "I have watched you and Pam Giblin bargain subsequent agreements that dramatically gutted the citizen and worker protections Diane [Wilson] and her allies worked so hard for. What is left is a sham, a shell, a fraud."

Attorney Sanford J. Lewis, Director of The Good Neighbor Project, another former party to the Formosa negotiations, wrote Blackburn that "the heart and soul of the original proposed agreement — genuine empowerment of workforce and neighbors to oversee environmental and safety assessments and improvements — have been torn from the agreement by the decision to make public little if any information developed through audits." Because Blackburn has represented Wilson and Calhoun County Resource Watch in suits against Formosa while negotiating with Formosa when Wilson opposed the company, Lewis wrote, "given your unusual status in this agreement process ... it seems appropriate that some form of genuine public sign-off occur."

Blackburn said that the time had come to sign an agreement and that the public will be able to get involved after the agreement is in place.

Why an agreement in the first place? State and federal environmental laws, if enforced, could obviate the need for an extra-governmental agreement. But environmentalists contend that the reality of state-corporate workings requires something stronger. They cite Formosa's friends in high places, such as Gramm, who helped lure the company to the Gulf Coast; former Congressman Wyatt, on Formosa's payroll; and his wife, Mary Anne Wyatt, who serves on the Texas Air Control Board, one of the two state agencies regulating the plant. Although she recused herself on the vote on Formosa's Marine Terminal Permit, her position since 1987 as a consumer advocate on the board is an issue frequently raised by environmentalists. Formosa's security company, Triple D, is managed by state Sen. Ken Armbrister, D-Victoria, who serves on the Senate Natural Resources Committee.

Were Wilson's fasts and protests a wasted effort? Her activism has generated hostility — sometimes violent — from unknown sources. According to Wilson, two of her dogs were shot, her phones were tapped, windows were broken, her house burglarized and her shrimp boat tampered with. Several of her associates have expressed concerns about Wilson's safety. But even before the negotiations broke down, Wilson talked as if she had no choice but to actively oppose the Formosa expansion. "My grandad and dad were fishermen down here and they made a good living," Wilson said. "There are times when you can clearly see between black and white. I knew that this was the right thing to do." □

## Commencement Address at Brandeis University May 24, 1992

By Stephen J. Solarz

In 1956, at the historic 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in the midst of Nikita Khrushchev's famous speech on "the Crimes of the Stalin Era," someone shouted from the audience: "And where were you, when all this happened, Comrade Khrushchev?"

"Whoever asked that question, raise your hand," Khrushchev demanded.

There was a stunned silence

No one raised his hand.

Khrushchev banged his fist on the podium and shouted once again: "I demand to know who asked that question."

Once again not a single hand went up.

At which point Khrushchev said: "I was where then, Comrade, you are now."

I was reminded of that incident because it occurred to me, as a member of the Brandeis class of 1962, that on my graduation day, I was where then you are now.

But when I graduated from Brandeis thirty years ago, both the world and our country were very different from what they are today.

Internationally, we seemed locked in a long twilight struggle with the Soviet Union, where the most we could hope for was the preservation of a bitter and brittle peace.

The threat of nuclear war and of a cataclysmic confrontation between the U.S. and the USSR produced a blend of fear and fatalism that was strangely at odds with our hopes for the future.

In spite of two world wars that were supposed to "make the world safe for democracy," it sometime seemed, with friends like Somoza and the Shah, not to mention adversaries like Castro and Kim Il Sung, that the world had been made safe for dictatorships instead.

The year before I graduated, I had taken a course in international organizations with Eleanor Roosevelt, the "first lady of the world" and a member of the Brandeis faculty, who believed deeply in the United Nations.

Yet it was already clear, her high hopes for the world organization notwithstanding, that the East-West conflict, and the Soviet vetoes that were its hallmark, had pretty much paralyzed the U.N.

If the realities that confronted us seemed uncertain and unsafe abroad, the more tranquil certainties of our domestic circumstances had resulted in a far more stable and secure situation here at home.

To be sure, we were not without our problems.

As a result of institutionalized racism and pervasive sexism, the American dream seemed more like a mirage in the desert than a living reality for whole segments of our population.

Still, in the neighborhood where I grew up in Brooklyn, people rarely locked the doors of their homes, since burglaries almost never happened in our part of town.

When we went out at night, we didn't worry about being mugged, and we never considered large parts of the city "out of bounds."

When we heard the word "crack," we thought of the sound a hardball makes when hitting a bat, rather than a drug which can frazzle your brain and destroy your life.

Homelessness was something we read about in Calcutta rather than in the capital of our own country.

Here at Brandeis, when we went out on dates, our main worry was making sure our girlfriends got back to their dorms by the midnight curfew, rather than whether we would catch or convey a fatal disease.

And when we graduated, our primary concern was not over whether we would get a job or be admitted to graduate school—either or both were considered a certainty—but which job or graduate school we would choose.

What a difference three decades have made in both our country and the world.

Internationally, the cold war has ended, the Soviet empire has collapsed, the threat of nuclear war has diminished, the U.N. has emerged as an effective mechanism for the resolution of regional conflicts, and the winds of democracy, from South Korea to South Africa, and from the Philippines to Poland, are sweeping over the globe.

Yet, at the very moment when our values seem to have triumphed abroad, the dream of Martin Luther King threatens to become the nightmare of Rodney King here at home.

A host of seemingly intractable problems has sapped our national confidence and robbed us of our buoyant optimism.

Our inner cities have become little more than urban wastelands, harboring a resentful underclass with no stake in the present and little hope for the future.

Our schools produce students who, when they graduate, often cannot read or write at a level commensurate with a high school education.

And our national economy, once the envy of the world, not only is failing to produce jobs for the poor, but is increasingly unable to sustain high-wage jobs for the middle class.

For those inclined to challenge the accuracy of this assessment, the events in Los Angeles a few weeks ago should have disabused them of any illusions they may have had about the contemporary state or our American Union.

The verdict in the Rodney King case was unquestionably unjust.

But the response to the verdict, acted out in the streets of south-central Los Angeles, was clearly unjustified.

There can, indeed, be no justification whatsoever for the way in which lawless and rampaging mobs, with a predilection for arson and a preference for looting, turned parts of Los Angeles into a hellish inferno.

Do not get me wrong: those who have been battered and perhaps even broken by the burdens of life are deserving of our sympathy.

But between the arsonist who lit the match and the storeowner whose shop went up in flames... between the sniper who pulled the trigger and the innocent person whose life was snuffed out... our ultimate sympathies must lie with the victims far more than with the perpetrators.

Yet make no mistake about it: what happened in Los Angeles a few weeks ago could just as easily have occurred in almost any

major city around the country, which only needed a similar spark to set off a comparable conflagration.

Indeed, the truly surprising thing about the Los Angeles riot is not that it occurred, but that it didn't occur earlier.

Those of us who live in the safety of suburban enclaves, or work in the security of high rise office buildings, or study amidst the serenity of ivycovered campuses, may be tempted to ignore the troubles of the inner city and the turmoils of the underclass.

But unless we come to grips with the underlying and soul-destroying realities of joblessness, inadequate housing, drug addiction, violent crime, inferior education, police brutality, unequal justice, and racial discrimination that created the social tinder the Rodney King verdict transformed into a raging fire of looting and lawlessness, we will surely have other Los Angeleses in our future.

There are things that can be done, programs that have proved effective in attacking the conditions that have turned our cities into sinkholes of savagery and sorrow.

Head Start and remedial education programs can work - but only if we provide the funding necessary for them to reach the children who most require their services.

Drug rehabilitation programs can succeed - but only if we make treatment facilities available to those who need them.

Low and moderate-income housing can be built - but only if we are willing to subsidize it.

We need to recognize, however, that money alone is not going to solve the problems of urban America.

What is needed as well is a new concept of responsibility, a reinvigorated sense of discipline, and a recommitment to the work ethic.

If able-bodied people on welfare are going to receive assistance, they should be expected to take jobs, and if the private sector can't provide them, the public sector must.

If single men are going to father children out of wedlock, they should be expected to provide the child support necessary to enable their sons and daughters to grow into responsible citizens.

If we expect our schools to do something more than simply serve as holding centers for unruly adolescents, we should give principals and teachers the authority to enforce the discipline that makes learning possible.

Before we can even begin to search for the solutions to our domestic ills, however, we must confront and reject the fatalism that will otherwise render our task impossible.

Over the course of the past decade, there has been a growing feeling that problems like crime, addiction, and racism are so intractable that they can't be solved.

Yet the fact that a problem may be intractable doesn't mean that it is insoluble.

If we could find the wherewithal to bail out of the S&Ls, wage war in the Persian Gulf, establish a space station high in the heavens, and build a supercollider here on earth, then surely we can find the resources which are a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for real progress toward resolving the domestic difficulties that, like a malignant cancer, are threatening the vitality and even the viability of our society.

We have a right to demand that our leaders tell us what we need to do, not merely what we want to avoid.

Yet leadership alone, however inspired and inspirational it may be, is not enough.

Each and every one of us, especially those fortunate enough to have had a Brandeis education, must be prepared to make a contribution as well.

A few years before his death, Robert Kennedy journeyed to South Africa, where a racist white minority kept the country's black

majority in subjugation and servitude.

Seeking to rally those who would challenge the system of apartheid, Sen. Kennedy called upon his listeners to fight the "belief there is nothing one man or one woman can do against the enormous array of the world's ills against misery and ignorance, injustice and violence..."

"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself," Sen. Kennedy went on to say, "but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation."

"It is," he said, "from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped."

"Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

Individuals, Robert Kennedy was reminding us, can make a difference, and history bears him out.

Today, because of men and women like Nelson Mandela and Helen Suzman, the system of institutionalized racism in South Africa is being dismantled and a new and more just society is being built in its place.

Today, because of men and women like Natan Sharansky and Yelena Bonner, the Leninist dictatorship known as the Soviet Union has been replaced by parliamentary democracies belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States.

If they could bring about fundamental change there, then surely we can do so here.

Each of you, my fellow Brandeisians, can also make a difference - by upholding the standard of excellence to which Brandeis is committed, by recognizing your responsibility to the community in which you live, by continuing the search for truth even unto its innermost parts.

After you leave Brandeis, some of you will become teachers, inspiring the next generation of Americans.

Others will become doctors healing the broken in body and crushed in spirit, or lawyers giving new meaning to the concept of due process, or scientists advancing the frontiers of human knowledge, or entrepreneurs creating jobs and generating growth in the American economy.

A few may be tempted, as I was, by the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and even of nations through a career in public service.

But even if you never run for office, or secure a position in government, you can still, as Robert Kennedy so eloquently said, send out a tiny ripple of hope, and in the process, help to write the history of your generation.

And it is with this thought in mind, as you prepare to take your leave of Brandeis, that I would urge you to remember the advice of the great American jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes, who counseled the young people of his day to take part in the actions and passions of their time, at the peril of being judged not to have lived.

And I would also ask, as you leave this very special place, that you reflect on the wisdom of the Perke Ahvot, the Ethics of our Fathers, which tells us:

If I am not for myself, who will be?

But if I am only for myself, what am I?

If not now, when?

Good luck and godspeed.

*The Honorable Stephen J. Solarz is a member of Congress*

# The Wind Blows in Juchitán

BY ALISON GARDY

**W**HEN THE WIND blows in Juchitán, yellow dust rises from the unpaved streets and rages through town, causing people to avert their eyes and protect their faces. A city of 100,000, Juchitán sits in the state of Oaxaca on the western coast of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Mexico's narrow waist, where, before Panama was created, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans were to be connected by a canal. Despite its strategic location, Juchitán has suffered years of neglect by a Mexican government fearful of the city's dogged political opposition.

Politicians in Mexico City had — and still have — good reason to be worried about far-away Juchitán. Though election results reveal that the battle truly to democratize Mexico at state and national levels remains within President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's control, opposition wins on the local level are increasing — in spite of electoral fraud, intimidation and violent repression. Juchitán's homegrown political party, the Worker-Peasant-Student Coalition of the Isthmus (COCEI), is a model of local opposition success, distinguished from other Mexican grassroots movements by its unusual ferocity and resilience and its excellent record of victories.

While the nation's two major opposition parties — the populist left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and the conservative National Action Party (PAN) — struggle with a political system dominated for most of this century by the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), Juchitán's COCEI has won two mayoral victories in the last decade, and has also forced the ruling PRI to make serious concessions. More remarkable, the COCEI is led not by polished, well-traveled and connected politicians like those who head the PRI — as well as the PRD and the PAN — but by farmers, students and workers native to a region where people still conduct their daily business in the Zapotec language and still wear traditional dress. Some of Juchitán's bravest organizers cannot speak Spanish and do not wear shoes.

One such organizer, who wears an old house dress, her bare feet covered with dust and her face wizened and toothless, speaks in Zapotec

with a fiery passion. "She is one of the bravest grassroots organizers in Juchitán," said a Spanish-speaking translator. "She's always on the front lines of fights and protests and the community respects her highly. She has six kids, too, *pero le vale madre* — she doesn't give a damn. When there's a protest, she's right there risking everything. And her husband is not politically active at all."

"The COCEI has widespread support in Juchitán, from the masses as well as the educated and cultured who have read Marx and so on," said Macario Matus, director of the city's Casa de Cultura. "It's not that the pueblo is leftist," he added. "It's just tired of the PRI's betrayals and impositions."

In 1974, the COCEI began as an organization dedicated to the preservation of Juchitán's history and culture. Unlike most other Indo-American peoples in Mexico, *juchitecos* have made preserving their traditions, language and identity a top priority. Soon after it was founded, the COCEI took up the cause of peasants who were losing their land to powerful local caciques. For many *juchitecos*, supporting the COCEI has come to mean ensuring the survival of their culture. In 1977, the COCEI's Leopoldo de Gyves ran in Juchitán's mayoral elections and was arrested for being an unregistered candidate. De Gyves' arrest and the widespread electoral fraud started a COCEI-led protest that ended with the creation of a separate, parallel government.

Three years later, after then-President López Portillo promised a more politically tolerant Mexico, de Gyves was released from jail, just in time for the local elections of 1980. To qualify as a registered candidate, he affiliated with the Communist Party of Mexico. After their candidate's second loss, which de Gyves supporters attributed to election fraud, COCEI activists seized and held Juchitán's city hall until the election results were nullified. In elections held a few months later, de Gyves, who changed his affiliation to the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico, prevailed. During de Gyves' term in office, local PRI members and undercover police worked to sabotage the city's first non-PRI government, killing and wounding dozens of people affiliated with the COCEI and attempting to assassinate de Gyves, according to reports in *Proceso*, Mexico's leading political newsweekly. Finally, in 1983, López Portillo defined the limit to his "political tolerance" by sending in troops to remove the COCEI from Juchitán's

town hall. In the following round of elections, the PRI carried every town and village in Oaxaca, even in areas where the COCEI had broad popular support.

In 1984, the COCEI again established a parallel government, leading to the arrest of more than 200 individuals associated with the COCEI and the imposition of a temporary curfew in Juchitán. By that time, the COCEI had become an organized force in 18 other localities on the Isthmus, and opposition to fraudulent elections in other important towns around the state was growing.

By the elections of 1986, instead of risking the COCEI's wrath, the governor of Oaxaca nullified yet another fraudulent vote and established a PRI-COCEI coalition government in Juchitán.

From 1986 to 1989, Mexico underwent dramatic changes. During the presidential elections of 1988, the PRI resorted to fraud, violence and intimidation to ensure that its candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, won. Opposition protests, most notably one led by opposition candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, shook the country. Cárdenas, an ex-PRI member — and the son of Mexico's most beloved president, Lázaro Cárdenas, best known for having nationalized the country's oil in 1938 — is widely believed to have been robbed of the presidency in the 1988 election.

In Juchitán's elections of 1989, COCEI candidate Héctor Sánchez affiliated with Cárdenas' party, the PRD, and, having survived another round of electoral sabotage, won the town mayoralty. President Salinas made a special trip to Juchitán and walked through clouds of choking dust to shake the opposition mayor's hand. In an eerie echo of his predecessor López Portillo, Salinas praised the *juchitecos'* commitment to democracy and promised federal aid and political tolerance. (As the President spoke, the Mexican Army, under Salinas' orders, was violently putting down protests that had swept the nearby states of Michoacán and Guerrero following local elections that many perceived as being rigged in the PRI's favor. More than 50 people died.)

Mayor Sánchez listed the city's most pressing problems for the President: water, drainage, pavement, health services, schools and public lighting. He also said repression against COCEI members still existed, citing examples of political assassinations and harassment, including the kidnapping and torture of long-time COCEI activist Leopoldo de Gyves only a month before the President's visit. "And that's not all!" the

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crowd of *juchitecos* shouted to the President.

This time, the COCEI made sure the PRI made good on its promises of federal help. COCEI Mayor Sánchez developed an excellent relationship with both the governor of Oaxaca, Heladio Ramírez and President Salinas. Only the state capital, Oaxaca City, received more support than did Juchitán from Solidaridad — Salinas's pet economic aid program. In September 1991, Salinas selected Sánchez to speak before 1,000 Mexican mayors at a ceremony honoring Solidaridad. Newspapers ran front-page photos of the two men hugging.

So much public affection across political lines has the PRD wondering if the COCEI has sold out to the PRI. Aware that the PRI's genius for survival lies in its ability to embrace opposition, Cárdenas has insisted that PRD members not negotiate with the PRI. A party whose only platform is practicality, the PRI often lures rivals into its fold, then disciplines them along party lines. It is a party with no ideological enemies, only autonomous ones.

The COCEI has managed to remain loyal to its constituency, and its leaders have shown political agility in playing off both the PRI and the PRD. Over the past few years, the small regional party has repeatedly won a seat in the state legislature, and, emboldened by success, the COCEI symbolically broke with the PRD and backed an independent candidate in the gubernatorial elections held in August. When the PRD asked the COCEI to back its candidate instead, the COCEI leaders agreed in exchange for greater influence over the selection of PRD candidates for the state legislature. That one of the nation's two major opposition parties had to compromise with the regional COCEI suggests that its power is growing. The PRI candidate, Dióodoro Carrasco, won Oaxaca's governorship in August. An associate of the former PRI governor, he seems unlikely to jeopardize the fairly cozy relationship COCEI leaders have fostered with the state.

In November's mayoral elections in Juchitán, the COCEI, whether it wins or not, will continue to exert political influence in that city, the Isthmus, and, increasingly, throughout the state. The persistence and continuity of its leadership — the same people who founded the COCEI back in the '70s are leading the party today — make the COCEI a force the PRI has no choice but to recognize and reckon with.

The question remains: Is the success of Juchitán's opposition merely a symbolic safety valve, an isolated event that Salinas can afford to recognize and display to the world as an exemplar of Mexican democratization? Or is the COCEI's struggle a portent of future political battles which might occur on a state or national scale? Salinas' commitment to keeping a tight rein on state-level politics has only intensified pressure for democratic change on the local level. Since 1988, when he took power, Salinas has replaced 10 governors, or a third of the total 31, leaving about half of Mexico's population in the hands of presidentially appointed governors. Seven of these replacements came as the direct results of public indignation with fraudulent elections or allegations

of corruption. No other Mexican president in the last 30 years has replaced so many governors during even an entire six-year term.

In Michoacán, for example, Cárdenas' home state, the day after the PRI governor took office in 1988, he was removed by Salinas, who appointed an optometrist (and PRI member) in his place. Angry citizens occupied over half of Michoacán's town halls to protest what they claimed was a fraudulent election. Though they could change nothing on the state level, the people of Michoacán had their say in the local elections of 1989, in which neither promises of federal aid nor the manipulation of the elections could keep the PRI from losing over half of its seats in the state legislature. In resulting confrontations with the PRI, the opposition lost lives, and paid for its victory with blood. State legislature elections were held again in August of this year. The PRD has again cried fraud, and declared that if a comparison of the PRD vote counts with the official counts does not take place, the government will be responsible for instability throughout that state.

Over the last four years, more than half of Mexico's local elections have been marred by violence related to demonstrations against electoral fraud. In an authoritarian state, scattered local opposition victories mean little. President Salinas has concentrated on keeping middle-level power — which has produced three major challenges to PRI hegemony over the past three years — within his control.

The first challenge came in 1989 with the victory of PAN candidate Ernesto Ruffo as Governor of the state of Baja California, where the PRI was so despised that there was little Salinas could do except declare Ruffo's victory his own. The day before he was sworn in as Governor, Ruffo flew to Mexico City as the President's guest to attend Salinas' first "state of the union" address. On the following day, Ruffo returned for his inauguration in Baja California — in the Presidential plane with Salinas. Unlike many other prominent PAN members, Ruffo does not challenge Salinas' legitimacy and frequently speaks highly of the President. The second challenge came in 1991 from *The Wall Street Journal*, whose critical response to fraudulent gubernatorial elections in Guanajuato is said to have helped persuade Salinas to remove the PRI winner from office and appoint an interim PAN Governor.

The third challenge, which was years overdue, came about in August of this year with a resounding PAN victory in Chihuahua's gubernatorial elections.

But the PRI calls the final shots, and its absolute power is not being eroded from the top down, as Mexicans, who are accustomed to politics being played out far beyond their reach, might have hoped would occur after 1988. Instead, it is being chipped away on the grassroots level, where fissures have appeared in the PRI's wall of monolithic rule. Internal dissent afflicts the majority party at the local level, in part due to PRI members' clashing reactions to the central government's interference in their affairs. And on the Isthmus, the COCEI thrives off of the PRI's inner squabbles. The PRI there has grown factionalized and "undisciplined" in

the eyes of state and federal party leaders, while the COCEI has prospered as a strong and undivided movement. It now seems to be in the PRI's interest to secure the stability of the Isthmus by befriendng the COCEI.

The offensive (as opposed to defensive) strategy that has anchored the COCEI in the Isthmus over the last 15 years has not yet caught on elsewhere in the country. Although public displays of political discontent have occurred nationwide, until popular opposition becomes more than just post-electoral reaction, it will not pose a serious challenge to the PRI.

The people who have most to lose by continued PRI dominance, however, are the most difficult to organize. Grassroots movements lack resources, leadership and the almost reckless confidence required to take on the PRI. Much of the COCEI's strength comes from its provincial focus on local affairs and a deeply rooted tradition of resisting imposed rule that goes back to Aztec times. Juchitán may prove too much of a cultural anomaly to become a direct inspiration for grassroots movements nationwide. More likely, though, the stubborn success of the COCEI will encourage other disenfranchised Mexicans to abandon a fatalistic dependency on authoritarian rule and to organize. □

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# More Texas Memory

BY BRYCE MILLIGAN

**THIS PLACE OF MEMORY:**

*A Texas Perspective*

Edited by Joyce Gibson Roach

Denton: University of North Texas Press  
161 pages, \$15.95

**H**AD THE AUTHOR OF *Ecclesiastes* any familiarity with Texas he might have added "about Texas" to his comment on the making of books having no end. Unperturbed by her many predecessors, Joyce Gibson Roach has added to the ever-proliferating congeries yet one more title, *This Place of Memory: A Texas Perspective*, even invoking the name of the Alamo on the first page of her introduction as "the place by which we Texans measure ourselves history, politics, literature, folklore, philosophy, or at least we used to." (Italics not mine.)

But at least Roach had the good sense not to collect yet another nonrepresentative "definitive" collection of "Texas fiction," or to ask all the state's professorial prophets to pontificate on what the 21st century has in store for us or, worst of all, to redefine the meaning of "frontier."

No, Roach asked a simple question, or seemingly simple: What does this place called Texas mean to us as individuals? She found that the notion of having "a sense of place" was foreign to the mobile Pepsi Generation, and this disturbed her:

"This generation has been identified by politicians, anthropologists and psychiatrists as the Displaced, Disenfranchised, Lost, Hopeless, Homeless, Factually Overloaded, Disinherited — labels that suggest where their feelings of place are. Sense of place lacks definition and recognition except in negative terms. The hearth, the heath, the rock, *a donde nos juntamos*, the fire pit, the kitchen — all are disappearing. The home is changing."

All the offerings — short stories, essays, poetry, even a bibliography — focus on the notion of this sense of place. All in all, it is not as hackneyed an idea as it sounds at first; it's timely; best of all, it resulted in an interesting afternoon's reading. "Place" for this writer happens to be beneath two very tall pecan trees behind a century-old house about six blocks

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from the Alamo, which is where I enjoyed *This Place of Memory*. It was a good match.

A good many of the usual suspects are rounded up here — Elmer Kelton, Clay Reynolds, Robert Flynn, Betsy Colquitt, James Lee, Ab Abernethy — but the strength of the collection lies in its diversity. For example, Roach asked Robert Compton, book page editor of the Dallas Morning News, for a bibliography on the subject. About time. She also included work by black poet Tim Seibles, a first for collections of this ilk. And there are poems by cowboy laureate Red Steagall (not to be confused with Dr. Red Duke, though the twang is the same).

Of considerable interest is Jane Young's piece on the difference between Native Americans' sense of oneness with the land and the European concept of landscape. Unfortunately, Young's essay is a pared-down version of a larger work focusing on Native American place names in the Southwest. The complete version can be found in the New Mexico Folklore Record and is worth looking up. Also interesting is Margaret

Rambie's biographical sketch of Arturo Alonzo, one of the state's finest natural cattle breeders.

There are a few pieces that will stick in the mind for a long time, such as Paul Patterson's "Sometimes I Get Lonesome for Lonesome." Anyone who can wax poetic over Sanderson, Texas, deserves some sort of medal. In a similar vein is a short excerpt from Clay Reynolds' forthcoming novel, *Texas Augustus*. Here we find a Texan in New York who realizes that his hometown has just vanished from the latest maps, a psychological trauma more common among Texans, I suspect, than among any other geographical grouping in the country.

Yes, this collection is Nostalgic. Yes, it contains some dated material. Yes, it contains some bloody awful poetry. But it does succeed in offering some thought-provoking images and ideas about the notion of "place," even if those notions only end up reinforcing a truism, that home is where the heart is, whether that place is Dallas or Dimebox or somewhere that only exists in the back of the mind. □

# What's Good for GM

BY STEVEN G. KELLMAN

**ROGER & ME**

*Directed by Michael Moore*

*Scheduled for PBS broadcast, with update*

**W**HAT WAS GOOD for General Motors used to be good for Flint. For decades, the automotive giant, which was born in that southeast Michigan town, has been the principal employer of its 150,000 residents. When GM announced the closing of three plants — and the eventual loss of 30,000 jobs — in Flint, the county sheriff, busy evicting families for inability to pay rent, became one of the few who could count on steady work. Some laid-off employees landed jobs as guards in the jails that were filling up with desperate men. When a lint roller factory opened, a GM

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executive promised salvation for Flint in lint: "The city has a future in lint rollers."

It is a dirty deal, and no amount of lint rollers can sanitize what happened to Flint, which *Money* magazine judged "the worst place to live in America." *Roger and Me*, which had a successful theatrical run two years ago, is an impassioned, aggrieved and darkly hilarious introduction to Flint by novice filmmaker Michael Moore. It was made with a mere \$160,000, a bare fraction of the sums GM can afford to lavish on litigation. In 1992, as a North America Free Trade Agreement threatens to make it even more convenient for corporations to fire their workers and relocate where wages are cheaper, Flint is looking more grim and more typical. Scheduled for its debut broadcast on PBS affiliates during the week of September 21, *Roger and Me*, which incorporates a 20-minute update called *Pets or Meat: The Return to Flint*, retains enough bite to justify its PBS broadcast.

Moore, who was born in Flint, put out a newspaper there, and then was hired and sent packing by Mother Jones magazine, is the Me in the title. Roger is Roger Smith, the chairman of General Motors who is, suggests Moore, personally responsible for the death of Flint. Moore spends most of *Roger and Me* in a futile effort to get Smith to face the camera and explain his actions. As a cinematic doughnut, a portrait with a hole in its center, *Roger and Me* resembles *Marlene*, Maximilian Schell's 1985 documentary on Marlene Dietrich; because the actress reneged on an agreement to be interviewed on camera, Marlene features doors being slammed in the director's face.

Moore's bespectacled face is not nearly as handsome as Schell's, and we see much more of it than Smith's. Intercut between shots of Flint are scenes of Moore being evicted from GM headquarters, the Waldorf Astoria, a yacht club, and an athletic club and of Moore being silenced at a GM board meeting. We get the distinct impression that Roger Smith is trying to avoid him.

*Roger and Me* is whimsical, unfair and unashamed. It is an indictment, not a trial. If the wheels on a Chevy were as unbalanced as the presentation in this film, it would careen down the road creating as much of a spectacle. But,

despite the efforts of Anita Bryant, Pat Boone, Bob Eubanks and Ronald Reagan, caught on camera trying to smile away the city's woes, what Moore makes obvious is that something is rotten in Flint. The solution was not in AutoWorld, the \$100 million theme park designed to substitute tourists for Buicks that went bankrupt after six months, or in the luxury Hyatt Regency for which Flint paid \$13 million and that lasted little longer. Nor was it in evangelist Robert Schuller, whom the Mayor of Flint paid \$20,000 to pray away the unemployment.

In *Roger and Me*, we stare at capitalism with an ophidian face — one of the world's most powerful corporations failing to behave as a responsible citizen. GM seems in this film to belong in the company of Exxon and Union Carbide, institutions that evade accountability for the consequences of an obsessive quest for profit. If Roger Smith had told his story, he might have argued that executives should not be expected to sustain inefficient operations. Under the free enterprise system, a private factory cannot function as a public works project, lest the general economy become as sclerotic as the Department of Defense. But GM executives must bear blame for becoming inefficient, for manufacturing a product with declining appeal. They might have retooled and retrained, rather

than slink away from the scene of their shame.

Two years later, GM has eliminated an additional 10,000 jobs. Guns dealers and security services are thriving in Flint, but close to 17 percent of its work force is unemployed. Deputy Sheriff Fred has expanded his eviction business into car repossession. Moore, whose success has enabled him to give each family evicted on camera enough to pay their rent for two years, returns to his hometown as a celebrity almost as famous as the Pat Boone, who told him: "Flint is bedrock America." It seems more like a bed of nails.

Two years ago, Moore interviewed a woman named Rhonda skinning fluffy bunnies in order to sell their flesh. "That's our life with General Motors," he said. "First we're pets, then we're meat." Returning to Flint, we now see Rhonda reduced to selling rats as sustenance for snakes. Retired as GM chairman, Roger still slithers away from every attempt by Moore to interview him. But even Roger is getting a taste of hardship. His successor, Robert Stempel, has lopped \$100,000 off Smith's annual pension.

The image of GM that emerges from *Roger and Me* is of a callous corporation that exploited a community and then moved on. Roger is a vulgar old English verb that might describe what GM did to Flint. □

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## POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE

✓ **PHIL GRAMM** has called Senate Democrats "appeasement-before-country liberals" when they failed to support military action in the Persian Gulf. Now it seems that Gramm has problems explaining his own role in U.S.-Iraq relations. According to Roll Call, a Washington, D.C., publication, Gramm was a steadfast opponent of economic sanctions proposed against Iraq in 1989 and 1990, after Saddam Hussein's human rights abuses had come to light. Many at the time thought that Gramm was trying to protect Texas rice farmers, major exporters to Iraq. But Gramm also was a beneficiary of the largess of A. Robert Abboud, the former chair of the U.S.-Iraq Business Forum and, until 1991, the chair of First City Bancorp of Houston. The bank granted the Iraqi government-owned Rafidan Bank a \$50 million loan in February 1989 to buy agricultural commodities. Roll Call cited Federal Election Commissions records that Abboud and his wife contributed \$4,000 to Gramm and in 1989-90 Gramm listed \$25,000 in First City-related contributions. Gramm's office maintains that the Senator did nothing wrong. "His motivations were specifically to protect the interests of Texas farmers, period," said spokesman Larry Neal.

✓ **THE BUSH** homestead went for sale in Houston, as Houstonian Properties, which owns the 300-room hotel the President calls home, works its way out of Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The sale, crafted in a Houston bankruptcy court, was reported in the Houston Chronicle. It is not expected that the president will be asked to move, nor will he lose his status as a resident of Texas and thereby be required to pay income tax in Maine — where he has a house but no regular hotel to hang out in.

✓ **GOOD DEALS** for bankers, bad deals for taxpayers. This, according to a report on the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC), the federal agency charged with liquidating properties the government was left holding after the S&L collapse. The Southern Finance Project, a South Carolina based watchdog group that monitors corporate finance and banking, found the RTC received an average of 36 cents on the dollar for farm land, an average of 55 cents for commercial property and an average of 48 cents for all RTC properties in Texas. Who's buying in Texas? According to Southern Finance statistics: First River Place, BRW Real Estate, GE Real Estate, Longstop Ltd., Maxxam Corp, Richfield Investment, Interfin Uptown Ltd., Secured Capital, Trammell Crow, and Gemcraft

Homes of Texas. "The problem, from our perspective, is it's an insider's ballgame," said Marty Leary of the Southern Finance Project, in a wire report in the San Antonio Express-News.

✓ **PENNY WISE GUYS.** The Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission did an about-face after Gov. Ann Richards and Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock and several legislators slammed a staff proposal to close state parks and historic sites in an effort to save \$1.1 million in the 1993 budget. By the time the commission's finance subcommittee met on Aug. 25, the staff had scaled back the proposed park closures, but the next day, the commission heard more blasts at a public hearing; at least six of the lawmakers who criticized the proposal to close parks had voted against a bill by Rep. Rene Oliveira, D-Brownsville, that would have increased the cigarette tax 3 cents for state and local parks funding and would have made the cutbacks unnecessary. The Sierra Club, in its State Capital Report for September, noted that Oliveira's measure would have raised approximately \$13 million for state parks, \$13 million to local parks and \$13 million to a new heritage trust fund. The proposal was killed on the House floor by a 69-65 vote. Six tax naysayers who later rose to criticize the commission for trying to save money were Elton Bomer, D-Montalba; Harvey Hilderbran, R-Uvalde; Steve Holzheuser, R-Victoria; Curtis Seidlits, D-Sherman; Bill Thomas, R-Greenville; and Bob Turner, D-Voss. Dan Kubiak, D-Rockdale, also took the opportunity to upbraid the commission, although he missed the vote.

✓ **HEY BIG SPENDERS.** Imagine the surprise of National Taxpayers Union officials to find that Sen. Phil Gramm, the economics professor who loves to lecture about the deficit and usually lays the blame on profligate Democrats in Congress, did not sponsor a single bill this past session that would cut government spending, although he supported \$8 billion in spending. Gramm, who also loves to take credit for pork barrel projects in Texas, was one of only three members in the entire Congress who sponsored no bills that would cut spending, Rosalind Jackler of the Houston Post reported. The NTU found that nearly a quarter of members of Congress have taken steps to bring down the cost of their legislative agendas. The Texas delegation in the House ranked 28th out of 50 for spending, the NTU found. The Texans averaged \$28.5 billion in proposed spending increases for bills they sponsored this term of Congress — well below the \$75 billion aver-

age for all House members.

✓ **POLLUTION SWAP MEETS?** The Texas Air Control Board has given preliminary approval to a plan to allow industries to sell and trade pollution rights. A company would get credit if it shut down an old plant or installed more efficient equipment. The company could then trade those pollution credits to another company unable to meet its standards. The Sierra Club (among others) has concerns that such air emissions cannot be measured accurately enough to make certain that such a system is not abused, and the plan would allow companies to continue existing levels of pollution with little public input and hamper efforts to gain progress in Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, Beaumont-Port Arthur and El Paso. To register your opinion, write Bill Campbell, Executive Director, Texas Air Control Board, 12124 Park 35 Circle, Austin, Texas 78753.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency plans to get rid of 90 percent of hazardous waste by redefining it as non-hazardous and exempting it from regulation. Bill Collier of the Austin American-Statesman reported that Atty. Gen. Dan Morales and 36 other state attorneys general have joined environmental groups such as the Environmental Defense Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council and the Sierra Club in protesting the proposed revisions, which have the support of the chemical industry. Texas generates more hazardous waste than any other state — an estimated 66 million tons annually.

✓ **REVENGE IS SOUR.** Going to court has its risks, state Rep. Sylvester Turner found when the Houston Democrat claimed Houston's Channel 13 libeled him when the TV station tied him to a scheme to defraud life insurance companies by faking the death of a man whose will Turner had drafted. The report, aired nine days before the Houston Mayoral election, was credited with helping Bob Lanier to victory over Turner. But Alan Bernstein of the Houston Chronicle reported that a man summoned to give pre-trial testimony in the libel suit told the Chronicle that Turner was involved in a conspiracy, information that went beyond Channel 13's original presentation. "Within hours of the man's statements to a reporter, Turner's lawyers persuaded a judge to order witnesses to cease public discussion of the case," Bernstein reported. Turner, who is unopposed for re-election to the House, has indicated he would like to run for Mayor again. □