



OPINION

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"Publish and set up a standard; publish and conceal not." Jeremiah 50:2

Eugene Lorton • 1869-1949

EDITORIALS

GO Tulsa

Voters resoundingly favor bond issues

Despite the continuing carnival of controversy at City Hall, or perhaps because of it, Tulsa voters on Tuesday gave overwhelming approval to six bond proposals totaling \$250 million.

Voters, many of whom braved hail storms and torrential downpours — and in some cases waded standing water to reach their polling places — approved the six proposals by landslide margins ranging from 66 percent to 73 percent. The proposals, for police, fire, transportation, sewer systems, flood control and public facilities improvements, represent the largest bond package in Tulsa history.

The campaign in support of the bond questions was low profile, consisting mostly of yard signs, minimal TV advertising and personal appearances by Mayor Bill LaFortune. Still, there was a relatively good turnout. Despite the spring storms, about 36,000 voters went to the polls Tuesday, 14.5 percent of those registered.

The turnout was slightly better than that for the last city general obligation bond issue in 1999, when 32,728, or 13 percent of those registered, cast ballots.

Some observers feared that the divisive, often bitter, conduct of the present City Council might chill voters' ardor for the bond projects. Those fears, however, were not realized.

To all their credit, councilors, who have been so sharply divided on so many issues, were unanimous in support of the bond questions. The solid front presented by the council may have been responsible for the absence of organized opposition.

Tuesday's resounding support for the GO bonds, coming on the heels of the countywide Vision 2025 capital program, is gratifying. Tulsa voters seemed to be saying, "regardless of the mess at City Hall, we want the city to continue moving forward."

Conspiracy help

FBI finds old evidence of bombing

Like most infamous criminal cases, the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building has spawned a series of conspiracy theories, most of which have no validity. Most others — the Lincoln and Kennedy assassinations for example — are fueled by speculation and rumor. The Oklahoma City bombing, unfortunately, gains momentum with help from the FBI.

The latest is the announcement that a recent search of bombing co-conspirator Terry Nichols' former home in Herington, Kan., has turned up evidence missed during the initial searches of the house almost 10 years ago.

Following a tip, the FBI recently returned to Nichols' former home and found blasting caps and other explosive materials buried under a foot of gravel, dirt and rock in the crawl space. The materials are believed to be related to the 1995 bombing.

The obvious question is: How can something so important have been missed by an agency that prides itself on its thoroughness? The evidence was apparently in a difficult spot, but, still, the magnitude of the case — it was the biggest terrorist attack on U.S. soil at

the time — would have dictated that the house and property be searched from top to bottom.

"Depending on the situation, that's something that may not necessarily be searched, especially given the fact that there was no information there was anything in there, and even if you searched the crawl space at that time and dug through the rock and rubble you wouldn't find anything until you went at least a foot down," said FBI spokesman Jeff Lanza. That's not much of an explanation.

Nichols is serving both state and federal life sentences for his part in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building that killed 168 people. Timothy McVeigh was executed.

The FBI had earlier come under fire for causing a delay in McVeigh's execution after it found new documents in the case.

There is no doubt that McVeigh and Nichols planned and carried out the bombings of April 19, 1995. Federal and state courts have convinced three juries of their guilt.

That, however, won't stop the conspiracy theory yahoos. Unfortunately, they're getting some help from the FBI.

Rx progress

Industry establishes clearinghouse

Drug manufacturers facing increasing criticism for opposing mandates to bring down drug costs announced a new \$30 million program Tuesday that they say will help needy Americans get the medications they need.

The program — essentially a clearinghouse that can link citizens with an appropriate avenue for getting medications — seems to be a step in the right direction. But critics were wary, and the effort certainly isn't a cure-all.

Drug-makers said that there are hundreds of public and private programs that offer some assistance in obtaining medications. But even doctors don't know about them all and have trouble finding out about them.

The clearinghouse features a Web site and calling centers that will match consumers with a program that can help them obtain what they need. Advertisements and promotional efforts will help educate the public and medical profession about the effort. An estimated 1,200 medications will be routed through the clearinghouse.

Consumers can access the Partnership for Prescription Assistance program by calling a toll-free number — (888) 477-2669, or through the Internet at www.pparx.org.

Critics were skeptical, using terms such as "public relations re-

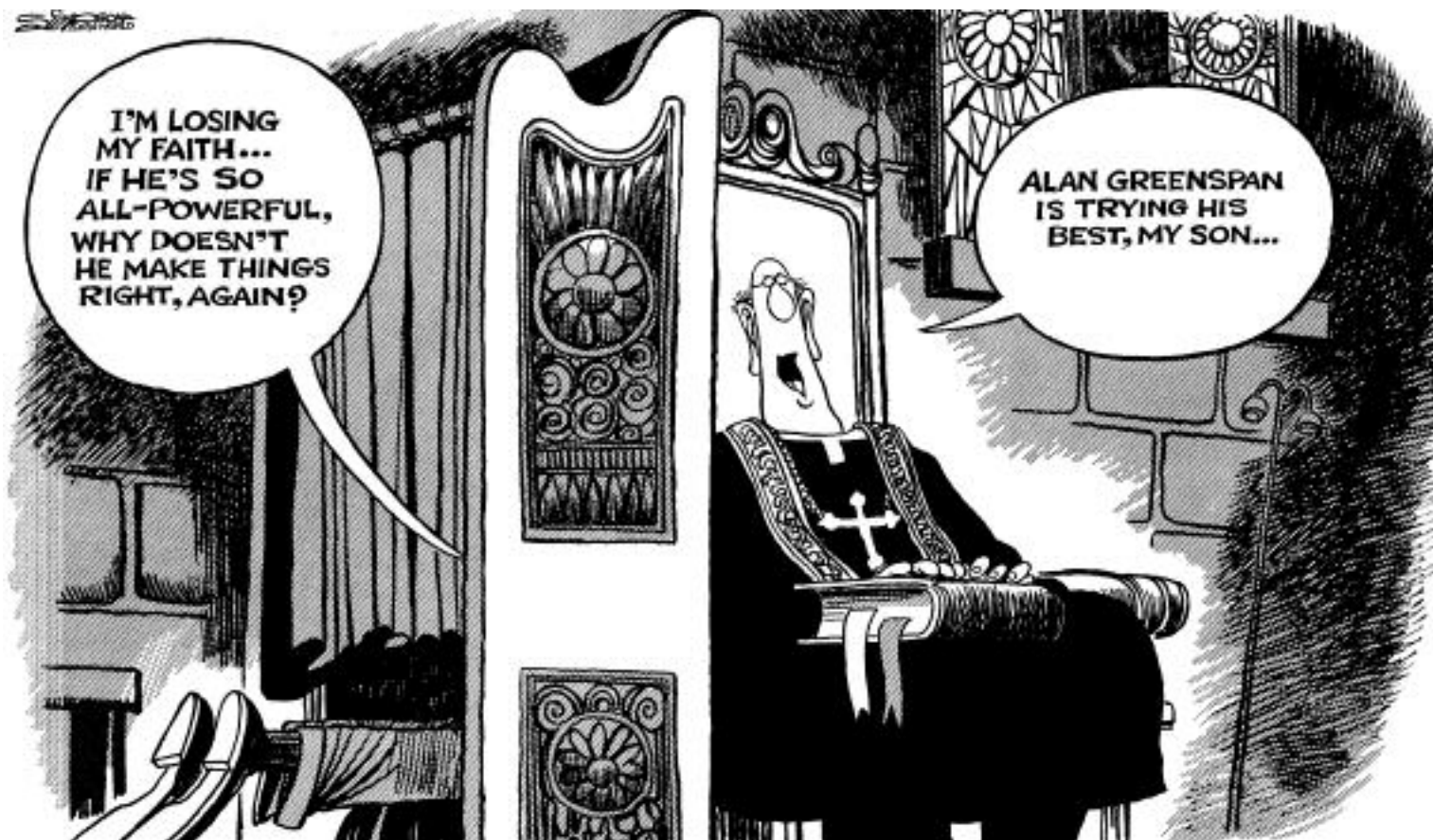
sponse" and "window dressing" to describe the new program. Some suggested efforts such as this one, while helping to obtain the needed drugs, also work to ensure patient loyalty to the product.

Spokesmen for the industry indicated drug-makers will continue to oppose any legislation that interferes with the free marketplace and moves toward government price controls.

This clearinghouse is a good idea, and no doubt will help Americans link up with the appropriate service. And it also is an indication that the drug-makers realize they've got to do more to get needed drugs in the medicine cabinets of needy Americans.

But they have a long way to go in the public-relations department, as this comment from Billy Tauzin, president and CEO of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, indicates: "The reason why PhRMA supports the free-market system is that it's the last bastion that rewards innovation. But we realize that if we're going to retain that system, we can't leave people out simply because they're impoverished."

Yes, Mr. Tauzin, that's right: Poor people need medicines too — sometimes more than people of means.



Reprint

The WRITE STUFF

Letters from our readers

Who's the name-caller?

In response to Brandon Coombs' letter (March 21): What an atypical right-wing hate-filled diatribe that was!

The basis of his comments was another "ditto head" regurgitating what he has been spoon-fed to believe by the right-wing media elite. He goes off about liberals' name-calling: "Liberal-azi, hissing wet cats, dunk tank clowns" are just a few of the ways he described those who disagree with him. Who is the name-caller?

His next point of attack was liberals who had no answers or solutions for why they lost the election. Nothing could be farther from the truth. There were plenty of answers, such as sending our jobs to China; our open borders to illegals; spiraling health care costs and the ballooning national debt.

But the right-wing media, including the Tulsa World that endorsed Bush, would only cover anything trashing John Kerry and making fun of his Purple Hearts — one of our military's highest honors. So, the way I see it, there are only two true enemies to America and its freedoms: Anybody willing to continue wasting blood and money in that Halliburton slush fund we call Iraq, and brainwashed conserva-nazis, shooting from the lip in places like Bixby, Okla.

D.R. Bowers, Tulsa

Rob and/or burgle

I wonder why local TV and radio journalists don't know the difference between a robbery and a burglary. I also wonder if the simple definitions of these two common words are taught in journalism classes.

Robbery is almost always used to describe crimes where anything is stolen. A robbery usually occurs when someone has something of value taken from them under threat against their will.

A burglary is usually the breaking or entering by someone who commits a crime. This crime could be larceny (stealing) of property or many other property crimes. Our local news directors should see that the proper terminology is used to describe these incidents.

Apparently the term robbery carries a little more impact when reporting these crimes. It's time to call a crime what it is.

Louie D. Moore, Tulsa

Looking ahead?

I read Brandon Coombs' letter (March 21) twice to make sure I didn't misinterpret his interesting logic. Mr. Coombs is angry at the left for complaining about how things are going. He accuses them of "sophomoric political spin and name-calling" (the "liberal-azis," who are guilty of being a "highly vocal, indig-



A. CUERVO / Tulsa World

Gloria Rubio and her daughter



A. CUERVO / Tulsa World

Jesus prays in the garden during Victory Christian Center's presentation of "He's Alive" on March 26.

nant minority hissing and spitting like so many angry wet cats"). So much for name-calling.

He says complaints and criticisms by the left are "baseless," a charge that Mr. Coombs does not substantiate. His diagnosis is "certifiable psychosis," which he does not corroborate with any evidence other than his opinion. Well, there are baseless claims and baseless claims, I guess. Sort of like weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Coombs takes comfort however, in the fact that his opponents were "humiliatingly crushed at the ballot box." I assume he refers to the 2004 presidential election where Mr. Bush won by a margin of 2.5 percent of the vote (3 million out of 121 million votes cast). Or is he referring to the 2000 election where Mr. Bush actually lost the popular vote? We aren't talking landslide here.

He looks forward to the day when the Democratic Party will "finish imploding and be shut up once and for all." Yes, sir, then we will have a real democracy, won't we?

Donald D. Bowen, Tulsa

Don't change Scriptures

I attended one of the supposedly Easter pageants at the Mabee Center. Since it was put on by the Victory Christian Center I should have known better.

Instead of a good depiction of the story of the Passion of Christ, I was subjected to a regular church service. I must say, however, that my main complaint was the liberty that they took with the Scriptures. In the first place Jesus did not utter the words recorded in John 3:16 at the Last Supper. He spoke those words in a private meeting with a Pharisee named Nicodemus.

Secondly, he was not seen by two of his disciples coming out of the sepulcher where his body had been placed. Shame on you. It is bad enough when so many things done today are changed by people to be "correct" in their eyes that you have to change the Holy Scriptures.

Gaylen Heath, Sand Springs

Apply legally

Illegal immigrant Gloria Rubio said ("Illegal immigrants pay taxes," March 16), "We're really honest and trying to do what is right." The honest and right thing for her to do would be to return to her own country and legally apply for citizenship to the United States.

Illegal immigrants steal from us daily. I'm sure my medical insurance paid for her to have her daughter in a Tulsa hospital — illegal immigrants rarely have medical insur-

ance. My auto insurance pays for them not having any.

My tax dollars pay for special classes in our public schools so that children of illegal immigrants can learn English and interpreters can be hired to speak with the parents. A handful of illegal immigrants paying income tax does not offset the amount they rob from us.

Cynda Eastham, Owasso

Don't dodge the issue

My congressman is dodging the Social Security issue by holding a panel discussion instead of the usual town hall meeting.

I expect handpicked panel members to say, "It's your money." Correct. It's the retirement money of 56 percent of Americans with total household incomes of \$50,000 or less.

Members of Congress opted out of Social Security in favor of their gold-plated retirement system, then refused to raise the minimum wage above \$5.25. CEO pay went from 42 to 525 times the pay of the average worker in the 20 years from 1980-2000.

About half the citizens over 65 would be living in poverty without Social Security. We will not silently endure the price and pain of a new system that costs \$2 trillion — paid for through higher taxes or by further burdening our grandchildren with debt.

Why doesn't Congress repay the Social Security Trust Fund the money it has borrowed and spent? What about a 401(k) program managed by the government that stays with workers when they change jobs? Why is the emphasis on privatizing (dismantling?) a well-managed program essential for families making \$50,000 or less per year?

Robert Stapleton, Oklahoma City

A sad day

It is interesting that Wes Watkins' record was expunged. This allows him to do the same thing and it not be considered a second offense. This, you can bet, would never have happened to a normal taxpayer — especially a student from Stillwater.

It again proves it's not the offense that makes a difference, it's who you are. This is indeed another sad day for Oklahoma politics.

Joe Conner, Tulsa

Letters to the editor are encouraged. Each letter must be signed and include an address and a telephone number where the writer can be reached during business hours. Addresses and phone numbers will not be published. Letters should be a maximum of 200 words to be considered for publication and may be edited for length, style and grammar.

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, Tulsa World, Box 1770, Tulsa, Okla., 74102, or send e-mail to letters@tulsaworld.com.