

INSHORT

By Joel Bleifuss

The day after

The best preview of what we're in store for in the next four years came from the mouth of the president-elect himself at a post-election press conference. This former director of the CIA—pre-empting charges from critics that he will rely on agency friends to help him manage the world—told how he plans “to keep in touch” with the American people:

Reporter: Mr. Vice President, how are you going to communicate with the American people?

Bush: Reach out and touch someone, use the telephone. And I'm not going to change in terms of my belief that the more personal contact you have the better. I recognize the parameters of this job are quite different, but I will continue to do what I've done in terms of contact. And I am one who works with—closely with—the people that I've, you know, associated with on my staff. It's not just one person I talk to. I will continue, just by way of example, what I've been doing as vice president and in terms of being briefed directly by the Central Intelligence Agency every single day. It's a little bit of a departure but that's the way I'm going to do it, and it puts me in contact with the experts. But I'll try to keep in touch as best I can.”

And they call it democracy

Three out-of-state utility companies poured in big money to defeat a grass-roots referendum on radioactive waste that was one the ballot in Nebraska in this election. Dick Russell reports that initiative 402 would have pulled Nebraska out of a five-state regional association, in which Nebraska has been chosen to receive, for the next 30 years, the “low-level” wastes from the region's seven nuclear reactors (see *In These Times* Aug. 31). But utilities operating nuclear plants in Arkansas and Louisiana, two of the states in the Central States Compact, spent \$1.5 million to defeat the measure, using a last-minute onslaught of deceptive TV ads and direct-mail campaigns. The initiative lost by a two to one margin, after leading in a poll taken only 10 days before the vote. U.S. Ecology Inc.—recently acquired by Browning-Ferris Industries (BFI), the world's second largest waste-disposal conglomerate and a leading environmental felon—now has the go-ahead to build a nuclear waste dump in Nebraska.

Speaking of trash

William Ruckelshaus, former director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has been chosen as the new chief executive officer and board chairman of BFI. As Will Collette points out in the bulletin of the Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste of Arlington, Va., “Last year, Neiman Marcus came out with a new line of designer garbage bags. This year, BFI continues the trend toward wrapping nasty garbage in pretty packages by picking Ruckelshaus as its new CEO. Some will recall President Reagan brought Ruckelshaus in to head EPA after it was rocked with scandals during the first three years of the administration. There was little noticeable change in EPA conduct, but things seemed better. This seems to be BFI's motive for [choosing Ruckelshaus].” And the company certainly could do with a new facade. BFI has been fined a record \$2.5 million for more than 1,700 violations at its hazardous-waste dump in Livingston, La. Then there were fines of \$700,000 after BFI and “competitor” Waste Management Inc.—the world's largest waste disposal firm—pled guilty to a price-fixing conspiracy in Ohio. Most recently in Birmingham, Ala., BFI had to pay \$15,000 for dumping spoiled ice cream down a storm drain in front of the state's environmental protection office.

Schools for scoundrels

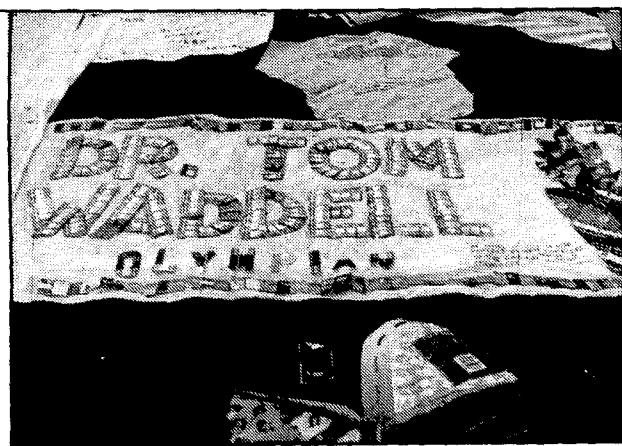
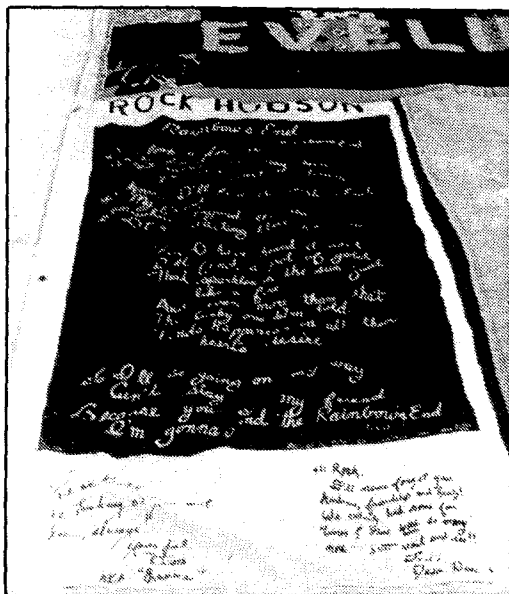
Once Ruckelshaus tires of the corporate world, he might want to try the noble life of an academic at Tufts University. Tufts will soon be offering a degree in hazardous-waste management. Explains Professor Gene Blake, associate director of the Center for Environmental Management: “We've received a lot of support from industry because there's no other program like this in the country right now.”

Unwanted evidence

On August 30 U.S. Customs Service agents raided Trade for Peace Inc., the Madison, Wisconsin-based company that has openly defied the U.S. embargo on trade with Nicaragua. Customs agents



M.J. Murphy



Rex Wodner

An estimated 200,000 people saw the AIDS quilt when it was displayed last month in Washington, D.C. Two who did not were Ronald and Nancy Reagan. If they had bothered to cross the street, the Reagans would have seen more than 10,000 commemorative pieces of the quilt, including memorials to Rock Hudson; Olympian Tom Waddell; and Gaetan Dugas, otherwise known as “Patient Zero,” one of the first people to contract AIDS.

Time to put the AIDS quilt to bed?

The growing popularity of the “AIDS quilt” may be endangering its future. With more than 10,000 commemorative panels already pieced, the 16-ton quilt now requires a tremendous effort to transport and store. At its exhibit last month in Washington, D.C., some 2,000 volunteers were needed to fold, unfold and care for the quilt. Meanwhile new panels pour in to the San Francisco headquarters of the Names Project—the group behind the quilt. Given that 20,000 people are expected to die from AIDS over the next 15 months, and that 30,000 past deaths are not yet commemorated, logistical problems are imminent.

Sue Baelen, Names Project spokeswoman, says finding a permanent home for the quilt has become a pressing issue. With a current span of more than eight football fields, there is little hope to display the quilt in its entirety. Rather, Baelen says, organizers want to find a place with storage space that would allow

panels to be displayed on a rotating basis. Whether that space would be rented or bought has yet to be determined. “First we have to evaluate our own needs,” Baelen says. “Then we have to start fund raising.”

It is this fund-raising aspect, as well as the use of limited human resources, that has sparked criticism over the otherwise non-controversial quilt. Concerned with the lack of funding for AIDS research and the poverty suffered by many people living with AIDS, some people question the value of channeling effort into the Names Project. Others express impatience with the non-political agenda of the group, which declines to issue policy statements or align itself along party lines.

Steve Abbott, a writer for the *San Francisco Sentinel*, a gay news-weekly, is concerned that the quilt is now being “sentimentalized,” “politicized,” and “commodified.” Abbott told *In These Times* he is concerned that the mainstream media has seized on the quilt as a symbol of the AIDS epidemic, and thus, the gay population. In fact, he notes, the quilt has become so identified as a chronicle of the impact of AIDS that

the Smithsonian Institution recently announced it would select several panels for its permanent collection.

Abbott is not particularly pleased with the positive response the quilt has evoked. He accuses the general public of trying to assuage its guilt over AIDS by focusing on the quilt. “One reason the quilt can be so readily embraced by the media is because it can also be read as a memorial to a dying subculture,” he says. “They like the quilt because it gives a pretty picture; they like to see gay people in a sewing circle.”

Baelen agrees that media coverage has been better than expected, with articles printed as far away as Turkey and Japan. She also thinks it is the quilt's “non-threatening” approach that has garnered the attention. But unlike Abbott, she sees that celebrity as an asset. “In addition to raising money, we wanted to show the humanity behind the AIDS statistics and to provide an outlet for grief. The value of the quilt is the broad appeal it carries. We figure over 200,000 people saw it in Washington.”

According to Baelen, panels are still coming to the workshop at the

rate of 20 per week. And more cities have asked to be included in the quilt's next tour, tentatively scheduled for January to July 1989. In addition, selected panels will be displayed at the United Nations on De-

Southern African counterrevolutions awash in elephant blood

Recent congressional testimony has implicated the South African military in an arms-for-ivory smuggling operation that included Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi, the Mozambican rebel group RENAMO and corrupt Zambian officials. Craig Van Note, vice president of Monitor, a coalition of environmental organizations, recently told a Merchant Marine Fisheries subcommittee that "a massive smuggling ring has been operating for years, with the complicity of high-level South African government and military officials to funnel ivory and other contraband out of Africa."

With raw ivory selling at a record \$80 a pound, the African elephant, the world's largest land mammal, is now an endangered species. These magnificent beasts that once roamed most of the African continent live in highly social matriarchal societies. The defense and care of young is shared by extended family units. Today only a remnant of a once vast population survives.

Van Note provided Congress with details of the three major supply lines used by the smugglers. First, "South African four-wheel-drive

vehicles" carry arms to Savimbi across the Caprivi Strip, a narrow stretch of Namibian land that separates Angola and Botswana, and then return "laden with ivory and tropical hardwood." It is estimated that the U.S.-backed UNITA rebels have killed possibly 100,000 elephants to finance their 12-year-old war against Angola. As the *Windhoek* (Namibia) *Observer* reported in 1984, "There are some ugly rumors attached to [the mysterious transport of containerized trucks to South Africa]—some of them so ugly that only the fate of being incarcerated in a cell of the Windhoek Prison stops us from telling the public what we know."

A second route begins in Zambia's Luangwa Valley, where more than 10,000 elephants are being poached annually. Van Note said this poaching and smuggling is aided by "corruption at the highest level of the Zambian government." Sources have said that most of this ivory leaves Zambia in sealed railway boxcars via the South African-owned railroad. The third route is through Mozambique, where RENAMO guerrilla fighters, financed and directed by South Africa, have "killed tens of thousands of elephants in recent years to finance their insurrection." The State Department estimates that over the last decade RENAMO has killed more than 100,000 Mozambican civilians as well.

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Harvard yard, yuppie heaven

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.—If we are to believe President-elect George Bush's attacks on "Harvard Square liberals," Harvard and the surrounding community is an outpost of granola-munching '60s leftovers and equally anachronistic liberal "eggheads." Yet as is immediately apparent to anyone who spends a few hours exploring Cambridge, Harvard Square is a yuppie heaven—not a left-wing hangout.

On campus, a seemingly endless file of highly-accessorized students head off to job interviews with New York and Boston investment banks. For these preppies, who have for eight years listened to a Republican administration preach the virtues of getting rich, the allure of Wall Street beckons. Not surprisingly, the intellectual atmosphere on campus has suffered. Now only a tiny group of radical faculty members are to be found. Harvard's innovative "social studies" program, inspired by '60s-era activists and radical intellectuals who sought to make social science critical and relevant, has been toned down. For example, the economics department has canceled the "radical" sections in its popular introduc-

tory course.

More ominously the Kennedy School of Government recently received a three-year \$1.2 million research grant from the CIA. As part of the program, Harvard faculty will provide "executive training sessions" for CIA analysts. In a similar vein, a government department faculty member was recently forced to resign as head of the Middle East studies program after it was revealed that he had secretly received a \$150,000 grant from the CIA. The terms of the grant allowed the agency the right to censor his work.

The changes in Harvard Square are conspicuous. With rents skyrocketing, posh shops—like Benetton and Urban Outfitters—have supplanted the cheap diners and cafeterias of '60s Cambridge. And the public space once occupied by the countercultural scene continues to be whittled down. Folk music hangouts like The Tab—where Joan Baez played in the early '60s—as well as independent theaters and cheap bars are becoming a thing of the past. With the exception of the ever-popular Brattle Theatre, the area's movie theaters have been bought out by commercial chains. The overpriced yuppie bars on Harvard Street cater to Harvard business, law, and

haven't yet fulfilled our purpose. When we don't have to do any more panels—when the last one is sewn in—that's when the quilt will be done."

—Amy Lindgren

Van Note's testimony and a recent Savimbi interview in *Paris Match*, where he admitted sending ivory to South Africa, has led the South African military to deny involvement in the arms-for-ivory deals. And pressure from the South African parliamentary opposition has forced South African Defense Minister Gen. Magnus Malan to order an internal inquiry into the allegations. Two other investigations are being conducted by the South African parliament and the minister of the environment.

Van Note told the subcommittee that while South Africa "projects the image of a conservation-minded model for Africa, [it] is in reality one of the largest wildlife outlaws in the world."

Some observers suspect that the CIA and possibly the State Department have known about the smuggling operation and may even have been involved. David Phillips, director of the San Francisco-based Earth Island Institute, said, "The Reagan administration has failed miserably to enforce endangered species laws in this country, as well as to live up to international treaties in general. You can be sure that they wouldn't interfere with their so-called freedom fighters. Whether it's drugs or endangered species, their lack of respect for law knows no bounds."

—Todd Steiner

Kennedy School students.

One radical '60s alumnus whose daughter now attends Harvard commented that he was astonished by the "intensity of the shopping scene" in today's square. Indeed, in the last 15 years numerous shopping malls and their high-priced specialty shops have sprouted up. The square has become a weekend haven for suburban teens armed with their parents' credit cards. And on it goes. A contractor just bought a block of property on Brattle Street. He plans to build another mall. This will mean the end of The Casablanca, a long-time hangout for assorted Harvard Square intellectuals.

This gap between the reality of the Harvard community and the rhetoric of the Republican campaign shouldn't be a surprise: the American right has long relied on hyperbolic redbaiting and anti-intellectualism. More disturbing is the fact that changes in Harvard Square exemplify a trend too long ignored by the American left. The bars, cafes, co-ops, theaters, and restaurants that activists and intellectuals have relied on as places for meeting, arguing and romancing are quickly vanishing.

—W.E. Scheuerman

hauled off Nicaraguan postage stamps, contraband crafts and company records. Among those records was a copy of the World Court decision that declared the U.S. embargo on Nicaragua illegal. But customs officials judged the Court's opinion to be irrelevant to their case and returned the document.

Memories of Walden Pond

The people of Concord, Mass., remember 19th-century philosopher and naturalist Henry David Thoreau, and not fondly. Judith Gaines of the *Boston Globe* reports that Thoreau's "practical conservation message, his call for continued public exposure to 'the tonic of wildness,' still rankles those who would develop areas such as Walden Woods and those who, in philosophy and lifestyle, march to a more orthodox drum." When teacher Anne McGrath wanted to introduce Thoreau to the town's second-graders she had to call a special parents' meeting. The idea was not popular. Said McGrath, "The general opinion was that Thoreau had wasted his college education skulking around in the woods...[And] some people say he was an ingrate, an odd stick who drank too much and sponged off nice Mr. Emerson." Locals also complain that Thoreau gave up teaching public school after two weeks, did not go to church, accidentally started a fire in Deacon Wheeler's woods, refused to pay poll taxes and chose a hut in the woods over his father's fine townhouse. He was also a thief. According to Concord meter maid Pauline Wilson, "A lot of women said they'd cool their pies on their window sills, and he'd come and take them."

Millions of dead boys and girls

"Out of sight, out of mind" was never more true than for the 3.65 million children who died last year because they "didn't have 50-cents worth of vaccine in their veins." Dr. James Grant, executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), reports that each year measles kills 2 million children, tetanus 1 million, whooping cough 600,000 and polio 50,000. Add to these deaths from communicable diseases the 4 million children who die each year from diarrhea, and you have an annual, but hardly noticed, holocaust. Grant recently told a World Conference on Medical Education in Edinburgh, Scotland, that "without exception, the major health threats of today can be most effectively combated by changes in human knowledge and behavior. The toll they take among children could be at least halved by empowering people with what is already known." The problem is that the medical-industrial complex values and rewards doctors that work with cutting-edge technology, not those who toil in the mundane fields of public health. That is one of the first lessons students learn in the world's medical schools—schools where less than 1 percent of class time is devoted to the study of public health. As Grant asked his colleagues, "Is that what the corporate medical community has decided—that medical education does not include health education as a significant concern?" Well, when there's a dollar to be made...

Thanks for your vote

Last week the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) sent letters to more than 80,000 farmers telling them they were seriously behind in their loan payments and that they may face foreclosure. FmHA administrator Vance Clark insists that the decision to wait until a week after Election Day to send out the delinquency notices had nothing to do with politics.

We helped make it possible

The Bush-Quayle campaign made sure the televised image of furloughed convict Willy Horton was firmly imprinted on the minds of the American electorate. But few voters know anything about the creator of that furlough ad, Dennis Frankenberry of Milwaukee. The *Village Voice*'s Leslie Savan reports that Frankenberry was convicted in 1985 of hitting two men on a motorcycle and then fleeing the accident in his BMW and hiding out in a friend's house. One of the men he hit suffered permanent brain damage. Frankenberry, who was drunk at the time, was sentenced to 90 days in prison and ordered to perform 250 hours of community service. But he didn't spend all his time in prison. Through a furlough-like work-release program he was allowed to leave prison to work days at his ad agency.