Among FRIENDS *of LBJ*

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Lady Bird Johnson Receives National Parks Honor

National Park Foundation Officials Jim Maddy and George Bristol, with Mrs. Johnson and Daughter Luci

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Senate Democratic Leader Daschle Assesses LBJ's Legacy

As Democratic leader in the United States Senate, Tom Daschle said before a crowded LBJ Auditorium on November 9, he has "tried for six years to follow in the considerable footsteps Lyndon Johnson left." Senator Daschle called LBJ "the most extraordinary Senate leader either party has ever produced." Each time he opens the drawer of his desk Daschle sees LBJ's signature, which he left there by custom. And Daschle ponders: What made LBJ so successful in his dealings with Congress? What would he do if he came back today? And how will the future deal with his programs and ideals?

LBJ's prowess in the Senate was unequalled, Daschle asserted, and recalled a remark attributed to then-Senator John Kennedy, who chose LBJ as a running mate because, among other reasons, "It wouldn't be worthwhile being president if Lyndon were majority leader." [Ed. note: A number of LBJ's associates have recalled him saying that one reason among many that he accepted the vice-presidential nomination in 1960 was that if the Democrats won the White House, it wouldn't be worthwhile being majority leader. Clearly, both men could not have been right—or could they?] It was a unique combination of strengths that made Johnson so successful. He worked harder than anybody else. He knew senators and what made them tick, and how the Senate worked. And there was always the famous "Johnson treatment," which was much more than mere bullying, although "it did sometimes involve some pressure and even implied threats," said Daschle. "But just as often, it involved appeals to members' egos, their conscience, or their patriotism. And almost always, it was successful."

"But even these prodigious gifts—even LBJ's superhuman drive, and his extraordinary understanding of how Congress works . . . do not fully explain his legislative achievements."

Above all, believes Daschle, LBJ succeeded because he had a vision inspired by his youthful experience teaching poor Hispanic children in Cotuila. "Somehow," Johnson said later, "you never forget what poverty and hatred can do when you see its scars on the hopeful face of a young child. . . ." "It was extraordinary skill, combined with extraordinary moral courage, that made Lyndon Johnson the most effective legislator America has ever produced," Daschle affirmed.

Today the Senate is a different place than it was in 1960, said Daschle. Senators no longer hesitate to challenge party leadership. To achieve consensus, Daschle has found it necessary to have frequent meetings of the Democratic caucus, a thing LBJ almost never did. Senator Johnson would be appalled at the lack of real debate in Congress, by the crushing influence of special-interest money, and by what has been called "the politics of personal destruction."

As to the future of LBJ's legacy, Senator Daschle was clear: the American people want the Johnson agenda—aid to education, civil rights, environmental protection, and the rest—to survive.

Columnist Liz Smith Looks at Her Life

On November 13 "The Queen of Gossip," as Liz Smith is known, was in Austin to promote her memoir, *Natural Blonde*. She opened her address at the LBJ Library by reflecting, "I never knew President Johnson, but I always felt somehow I was related to him. He represented Texas to me. . . ."

But she did know long-time LBJ aide Horace Busby, a childhood friend of hers. So when Ms. Smith was working at *Cosmopolitan* magazine, and its new owner Helen Gurley Brown asked her to do a story on the Johnson girls, she said, "Okay, I have connections at the White House." She called Busby, who was horrified. "Don't call me here," he said. "Don't ever call me. I'll call you."

When she protested that she would write a really friendly piece, Busby replied, "No. Give this up. I'll call you the next time I come to New York, for dinner."

Then one day Busby did call his old friend in New York to ask her to dinner. Expecting an evening at "21" with a gallant White House aide, Ms. Smith dressed for the occasion. Instead they dined in Busby's hotel room. Disappointed, the columnist asked the reason for the seclusion. When Busby replied that he was on stakeout waiting for Ho Chi Minh's reply to a secret peace feeler, she demanded, "Isn't this a terrible breach of national security? Isn't this a state secret? Why would you tell me this?" Busby was not concerned. "Who would believe *you*?" he asked.

When first urged to write her memoirs, Ms. Smith demurred. She hadn't lived an interesting life, she said, and besides, her memory was very poor. Then the publisher substantially raised the amount of the offer. Ms. Smith's memory suddenly improved; she had done some interesting things, after all. "I had flown around the world with Malcolm Forbes. I sat next to Richard Nixon at Malcolm's funeral. I had interviewed Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor in all the world's capitals—Paris, Rome, New York, Hollywood, London, and Leningrad. I had been the only journalist at Elizabeth's last wedding.

"I'm just as amazed as you are that all of this happened to little Mary Elizabeth Smith."

"I incurred . . . the wrath of the Kennedys by delving into the history of Judith Exner, who had been an emissary between JFK and the Mafia king Sam Giancana, a woman forced to give up the news of her private life by a congressional committee, and a woman who slept with a gun under her pillow every night until she died, several years ago."

Ms. Smith had also feuded memorably with Frank Sinatra, and it was she who broke the news of the Donald/Ivanna Trump divorce. "It certainly didn't amount to a hill of beans. It was just a story about two rich people, adultery and divorce, and money."

Today she marvels at the media's interest in her sex life as it appears in *Natural Blonde*. "I thought it was pretty tame; I thought it was old. I knew it was; hell, *I* was old." Finally, she decided, "if the media was that interested in the sex life of a seventy-seven-year-old woman, I'd write another book, called *New Hope for the Dead*."

Natural Blonde has been a great success. "For a while there I was like horse manure at a rodeo," Ms. Smith confided, "I was everywhere."

April 30, 1965: Flanked by entertainer Danny Kaye and Sargent Shriver, Mrs. Johnson attends the first Head Start Day.

Lady Bird Johnson in the White House

(The following is adapted from an article written by Senior Archivist Claudia Anderson. The entire article will appear as part of "Report to the First Lady—2001," an initiative co-sponsored by the journal *White House Studies*; the National First Ladies' Library; and Nova Science Publishers. It will include scholarly articles on each modern First Lady and on the primary responsibilities and duties of the First Lady. The project is under the direction of Dr. Robert P. Watson, Editor of *White House Studies* and an associate professor of political science at the University of Hawaii at Hilo.)

Lady Bird Johnson once said, "The Constitution of the United States does not mention the First Lady. She is elected by one man only. The statute books assign her no duties; and yet, when she gets the job, a podium is there if she cares to use it."

On November 22, 1963, with the assassination of President Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson assumed the presidency, and Mrs. Johnson was catapulted into the position of First Lady. Throughout the administration she saw her primary role as one of creating a warm and comfortable environment for the President. Near the end of the administration when a reporter asked Mrs. Johnson about the role of a First Lady, she reiterated the theme, saying, "Her role principally, is to support and give solace and companionship to her husband . . . to give him an island of serenity in which to work, to do his job." But she did more.

On November 26, 1963, four days after the assassination of President Kennedy, Mrs. Kennedy invited Mrs. Johnson to tea. During the visit, Mrs. Kennedy asked Mrs. Johnson to safeguard and continue the work she had begun in restoring and preserving the White House and its contents. The next March, President Johnson signed an Executive Order establishing a Committee for the Preservation of the White House. Mrs. Johnson served as an active member of the Committee to ensure "continuity in all of the good things that have been done, [and] preservation of everything that has gone forward."

During the first year of the Johnson administration, as the President pressed for legislation to eliminate racial injustices and aid those in poverty, Mrs. Johnson made several high-profile trips, including a tour with President Johnson of desperately poor areas of Appalachia.

Soon after becoming First Lady, Mrs. Johnson inaugurated a series of "Women Doers Luncheons" at the White House. These luncheons highlighted issues of concern to women and recognized women's accomplishments.

Throughout the Johnson administration, Mrs. Johnson maintained a diary. When she had quiet time available, she would record her thoughts on a tape recorder and later have the recordings transcribed. After leaving Washington, she selected the most interesting days from the transcripts and published them in *A White House Diary*.

In 1964 Mrs. Johnson became the first wife of a President to campaign on her own for her husband. In October she traveled 1,682 miles in four days on a train dubbed the "Lady Bird Special." The train went from Alexandria, Virginia, to New Orleans, Louisiana, making 28 scheduled stops along the way. Johnson's civil rights legislative agenda was unpopular in the South, and Mrs. Johnson wanted to campaign there. She explained her reasons in a speech to the crowd as she departed Alexandria, Virginia: "I want to tell you from Alexandria to New Orleans that to this President and his wife the South is a respected and valued and beloved part of the country. I know that many of you do not agree with the Civil Rights Bill or with the President's support of it, but I do know the South respects candor and courage and I believe he has shown both." Mrs. Johnson also made a plane trip to campaign in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Indiana, and Kentucky.

With the landslide election of her husband in November 1964, Mrs. Johnson began to seriously evaluate her own role in the new administration. In 1965, Mrs. Johnson centered her attention in two areas, an interest in children and education, and conservation.

Although beautification consumed much of Mrs. Johnson's time from 1965 to the end of the administration, she also devoted considerable energies to Project Head Start. In February 1965, Sargent Shriver, head of the Office of Economic Opportunity, asked Mrs. Johnson to serve as honorary chairman for Head Start. That night Mrs. Johnson recorded in her diary, ". . . I don't like being just 'honorary' anything. If I take it on, I want to work at it." She became an active honorary chairman, traveling to observe Head Start in operation and hosting White House events to underscore her interest. Sargent Shriver once observed of the clients of Head Start: "They were poor, the very poorest of the poor. Their families were unable to help them. They were destined to a lifetime of poverty. They needed a call to waken and inspire them, not a harsh military bugle call, but a beautiful and melodious air to waken their hearts to the joy in the life of the mind. They needed a mother's touch. They needed Lady Bird."

In 1965 the Johnsons began to consider plans for a presidential library in Texas. Mrs. Johnson took much of the burden of planning off the President's shoulders, meeting with experts, helping select the architect, and visiting existing presidential libraries. Today she continues to take a strong interest in the Library's programs.

Mrs. Johnson lives in Austin, Texas, and enjoys the frequent visits of her seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. During retirement she has worked on numerous boards, committees and commissions. She served on the University of Texas Board of Regents, and President Carter appointed her to the Commission on White House Fellows.

Lady Bird Johnson Honored at Nash Castro Evening

On December 20, 2000, hundreds of Friends of the LBJ Library gathered in the LBJ Auditorium to honor Lady Bird Johnson and to enjoy An Evening With Nash Castro, former liaison officer of the National Park Service to the White House, and now Director Emeritus of the White House Historical Association.

But first, Library staffer Marge Morton and her husband Charlie led the crowd in singing Happy Birthday to Mrs. Johnson, who was 88 on December 22.

George Bristol of Austin, an outgoing member of the National Park Foundation, which traces its roots to the Johnson Administration, addressed the crowd, reading from a letter of congratulations to Mrs. Johnson from President Clinton.

National Park Foundation Director Jim Maddy then presented the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Medal of Honor to the former First Lady. The award recognizes a private citizen for "outstanding commitment to the preservation of America's greatest treasures, our National Parks." Since its creation in 1995 the award has been presented only once before, to Laurance Rockefeller.

Present were Andy Samson, Executive Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; Walt Dabney and Jim Larsens of the National Park Foundation, and Mr. Sanson's daughter Jennifer.

Following the award presentation, Mr. Castro spoke on the history of Christmas at the White House. President Coolidge started a tradition in 1923, when he pressed the button that lighted the first national community Christmas tree on the Ellipse.

Castro first attended a national Christmas tree lighting in 1941, he recalled, when he was a student at George Washington University. Pearl Harbor had been attacked only two weeks before. President Roosevelt appeared at the South Portico with his guest Winston Churchill. After pushing the button that lighted the tree, FDR somberly asked for "God's help in days to come." Then Churchill spoke. "This is a strange Christmas. Almost the whole world is locked in deadly struggle. Here then, for one night only, each home throughout the English-speaking world should be a brightly-lighted island of happiness and peace. And so in God's mercy, a happy Christmas to you all."

"The tradition of official presidential Christmas cards began in 1953 with President Eisenhower," Castro explained, observing that Ike was a talented amateur painter and designed his own cards. They are now important collectors' items. Castro, a Director Emeritus of the White House Historical Association, began his association with the White House in 1961, as liaison between the National Park Service and the Kennedy White House. Since then, he and his wife Betty have received a presidential Christmas card every year, no matter who occupied the White House.

"President and Mrs. Johnson sent five presidential Christmas cards," Castro observed. "Four of the five featured outdoor White House scenes, in keeping with Mrs. Johnson's love of natural beauty." (Remembering how he had worked with Mrs. Johnson and her Committee for a More Beautiful Capital, Castro noted that their interests continued to mesh thereafter. He has collaborated with Mrs. Johnson on national parks, the Washington memorial to President Johnson, and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.)

His presidential Christmas card collection now "commands considerable wall space, far more than the average home can accommodate," said Castro. So he, with Betty Castro and their daughters, agreed that they "should not be selfish, and that the collection should go to a public institution, where it would be enjoyed by far more people than otherwise would be the case. Hence our decision to offer it to the LBJ Library and Museum. Here we are sure it will have a long and productive life."

Former Congressmen Pay a Visit

A group of former members of Congress paid a visit to the LBJ Ranch in late October. They toured the house and grounds with Shirley James, Lady Bird Johnson's secretary, and had a visit with Mrs. Johnson to reminisce about bygone days in Washington and Texas. Several from the group visited the Library as well, and they are pictured here.

Kent Hance; Jim Chapman; J. J. "Jake" Pickle; Jim Wright; Jack Brooks; Jack Hightower; "Kika" de la Garza; Bill Sarpalius.

From the Mailbag

A researcher sent this email after visiting the LBJ Library and Museum website:

What a wonderful site. I love LBJ. I'm doing a paper for an English class that has about 25 know-nothing children in it and a very liberal teacher presiding. I'm sure she will give me some hell over the subject matter, but I will stand my ground. She is in her fifties and was raised poor, and I will bet some of her scholarship money came from some LBJ legislation. I'll call her on it.

Thank you, and I will be back again.

[name withheld]
Chicago, IL

A Word From the Opera

The following is an excerpt from an editorial by Rudolph S. Rauch in *Opera News*, December 2000.

It may be too much to expect a president to have a professional's knowledge of architecture and music, as Thomas Jefferson had, but Lyndon Johnson, who was no Jefferson, was an ardent supporter of both National Endowments, and his wife made the arts a priority. Of course, when she went to school, the arts were still part of the curriculum, and a high-school graduate knew something about most of them. I remember that when Lady Bird visited the Metropolitan Opera in the 1960s to hear *Il Trovatore*, she knew the piece well enough to speak glowingly of the performance of the duet "Home to the Mountains" in the last act.

The LBJ Library Oral History Project

In May 1967 White House aide Doug Cater called Professor Joe B. Frantz of the history department at The University of Texas. The President is very interested in a doing a history of his administration, Cater said, and when can you come to Washington to see him about it? Frantz flew to Washington and talked to LBJ. That same night at a social gathering LBJ introduced Frantz as the man who was running his oral history program.

Joe Frantz knew about oral history. With Professor Walter Prescott Webb, he had conducted an interview program with nearly a hundred distinguished scholars, and had done an extensive oral history project, sponsored by The University of Texas, about the oil business. Guided by that experience and with some advice from the oral history staff at Columbia University, he planned his approach.

Frantz put together a budget for $200,000 a year for two to three years. The University of Texas Foundation set up a special fund to accept private donations, and money began to come in. No one told Frantz how to spend the money; he simply kept a record of expenses. Frantz later said in jest that it was a system derived from the modus operandi of the university athletic department: Spend the cash and worry about the justification later.

A blue-ribbon panel of scholars convened to give advice on the project: Frank Vandiver; Richard Challener; Louis Starr; John Hope Franklin; James MacGregor Burns; Allan Nevins (considered by the profession to be the father of oral history); Harry Ransom; and Wayne Grover.

Frantz hired five senior graduate students as interviewers: Paige Mulhollan, T. H. Baker, Dorothy Pierce, Stephen Goodell, and David McComb. The team made up a "hit list" of interviewees, and began taping interviews with members of the administration, political associates, and old friends at a breakneck pace. It was a huge undertaking. They had to cover education and civil rights; the revolution in public health policy wrought by Medicare and Medicaid; the birth of modern environmentalism; consumer protection; the War on Poverty; the whole maelstrom of laws called the Great Society. Nor did they limit themselves to LBJ's presidency. His formative years, his time in the NYA, the House and Senate, his vice presidency; all were targeted.

The sixties had seen war in the Middle East and South Asia, near-famine in India, a major military intervention in the Dominican Republic, and rioting in Panama. A beloved president had been assassinated. Men had gone into space. France had spurned NATO. There was a youth revolution. Civil rights leaders had been kidnapped, beaten, murdered; the cities had exploded in violence. And hanging over all was the incubus of Vietnam. Decades might pass before historians could pronounce balanced judgments on this turbulent period. But what an advantage scholars would have if the testimony of the actors in that drama was theirs to consult.

By May 15, 1973 Frantz and his assistants had recorded 1,068 tapes with 638 individuals. The interviewing phase of the program was judged to be more or less complete, and the Archivist of the United States agreed to take possession of the tapes and complete the final transcribing, editing, and formal acquisition. The project was transferred to the Audiovisual Archives Division of the LBJ Library on September 1, 1973. The Library staff, mainly John Fawcett, Joan Kennedy (formerly of John Connally's staff), and Michael Gillette, got the job of completing the project.

In early 1974, the LBJ Foundation Board, led by Tom Johnson and Jack Valenti, suggested that the original list of interviewees should be expanded considerably. Frantz was still doing special contract interviews, but Michael Gillette now emerged as chief interviewer and program supervisor in the program's second phase, which lasted about fifteen years.

By October 1976, after a crash program of transcribing and editing, specially funded by the National Archives, all of the original Frantz project interviews had been transcribed, though much editing was left to do. But by that time another 126 interviews had been taped. The LBJ Foundation eventually hired two graduate students (Lesley Williams and Gary Gallagher) to join civil servants Kennedy and archivist Regina Greenwell to do research, transcribing, final editing, and the inevitable mountain of correspondence.

Mrs. Johnson took a strong interest in the oral history project from the first. She asked for regular progress reports, and volunteered to write to prospects who were reluctant to be interviewed. Mrs. Johnson began her own meticulous interview program with Gillette (later completed with Harry Middleton). In 1981 she donated the Library's first IBM word processors to the oral history office. These machines, IBM's original PCs, were then state-of-the-art stuff; blessed with a paltry 64k of RAM and no hard drive at all, today they seem incredibly antique. But for those in oral history who had been transcribing with electric typewriters, they seemed marvelous.

Reflecting on the first phase of the project, Frantz later recalled that the President and Mrs. Johnson had scrupulously avoided interference. They did suggest many people to interview, and there is evidence that LBJ used his persuasive powers to convince the hesitant to agree to be interviewed. But the President never tried to prevent or suppress an interview, no matter how critical it might be—and not all the interviews were friendly ones; many in the collection "have the bark off," as LBJ would have said.

The Frantz team, in the first phase of interviewing, enjoyed the indisputable advantage of exploring memories still new. In this second phase of activity, however, the expanded staff was able to take more pains to research topics in advance of interviews. They wrote detailed chronologies of LBJ's congressional and Senate years to help refresh the memories of interviewees. They

could consult written records. Many times more sophisticated, penetrating questions could be developed. The staff developed a style sheet to guide transcript editors. Each transcript was now edited at least three times.

Army veteran Ted Gittinger joined the staff in 1980. His primary specialties were interviews relating to the Vietnam War and policy in the Middle East, but he also traveled to South Texas to tape the recollections of a number of first-hand observers of the famous 1948 election, which sent LBJ to the Senate for the first time.

The LBJ Library oral history project is the largest in any of the presidential libraries, and it is still a work in progress. While the Library is no longer actively seeking interviews, an occasional "walk-in" does happen. A recent example was ninety-year-old Rabbi Abram Goodman, who wished to record LBJ's role, in the years immediately before World War II, in attempting to get the rabbi's cousin out of Nazi Germany. Rabbi Goodman still had the correspondence between himself, his cousin, and LBJ, which he donated to Library archives. (When after an interminable waltz with the bureaucracy, all of the cousin's papers finally were in order, the unfortunate man booked passage on a ship scheduled to depart Bremen for the New World on September 1, 1939. At six o'clock that morning the Wehrmacht invaded Poland. The vessel never sailed, and the cousin later died in a labor camp.)

About a hundred interviews are still awaiting approval by the interviewees before the Library can open them. A hundred more are still in the editing process. Still, there are nearly two thousand interviews available, representing the voices of about a thousand persons.

Senior Archivist Claudia Anderson, aided by Archivists Nicole Haddad and Mary Knill, and docents Judy Hocott and Gloria Watkins, has put the interviews of sixty people on the Library web site (http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu and click on "Archives Collections.") This is a labor intensive process, but eventually the whole collection will be available to anyone with internet access. In the meantime interviews can be read in the Library research room, or borrowed through interlibrary loan (contact Senior Archivist Linda Seelke; (Linda.Seelke@nara.gov).

Michael Gillette edits an oral history transcript while listening to the tape. July, 1976

Califano Delivers Erwin Lecture

Joseph A. Califano, Jr. was Special Assistant for Domestic Affairs in the Johnson Administration in 1965-1969. He helped develop and coordinate the body of legislation that today is known as the Great Society. Mr. Califano came to the LBJ Library on November 12, 2000 to give the biennial Frank Erwin Lecture, named in honor of the legendary head of The University of Texas Regents who was largely responsible for establishing the LBJ Library on the UT campus.

On this night Mr. Califano expanded upon some of the key arguments he made in his memoir of the Johnson Administration, *The Triumph and Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson*, which has recently been republished by the Texas A&M Press.

He noted that in the political campaign that had just ended—although the election certainly had not—the terms of the Bush-Gore debate had been set by programs laid down decades before under Lyndon Johnson. There was no argument about whether there should be federal aid to education, only on how it should work. "The issue," he said, "is no longer whether you have health care for the elderly under Medicare, and for the poor under Medicaid; the issue is how do you make sure that those programs are fully funded and survive?

"The issue on the environment is, how do you strengthen the laws? The issue on consumer protection is, how do you make it simpler and clearer? The issues in this campaign are based on all those programs that we had such difficulty passing."

Reflecting on what it was like to work for President Johnson, and what he was like, Califano read excerpts from his book. "I watched him laugh, swear, get angry, cry, get hurt, hurt others, dream, and achieve things most everyone thought impossible. He drew programs out of Congress that changed this nation irrevocably. The Lyndon Johnson I worked for was brave and brutal, compassionate and cruel, incredibly intelligent and infuriatingly insensitive, with a shrewd and uncanny instinct for the jugular of his allies and his adversaries alike.

"He could be altruistic and petty, caring and crude, generous and petulant, bluntly honest and calculatingly devious, all within the same few minutes. He had a marvelous sense of humor. Once he made up his mind, his determination to succeed usually ran over or around whoever and whatever got in his way. . . . He gave new meaning to the word "machiavellian," as he gave new hope to the disadvantaged. . . . And he changed the role of the federal government in American life."

One LBJ achievement which is often overlooked and almost always undervalued, Califano emphasized, was the reform of the country's immigration laws, which were antiquated, discriminatory, and based not upon the individual immigrant's worth but upon national origin.

One vivid description of the famous "Johnson treatment," confided Califano, came from Hubert Humphrey, who recalled LBJ's use on one occasion of "argument, mimicry, humor, statistics and analogy, while pulling one supporting clipping and memo after another out of his pocket." It was, Humphrey said, "an almost hypnotic experience. I came out of that session covered with blood, sweat, tears, spit, and spurs."

White House Telephone Tape Mystery Solved?

Senior Archivist Linda Seelke explains the telephone tape index system to Steve Pickering, of KLBJ AM radio.

The latest batch of White House telephone tapes was released on January 12, 2001. It covers the period April-May, 1965, and includes many calls to and from the White House Situation Room, which was monitoring the crisis in the Dominican Republic.

The staff of the Johnson Library found these Dictabelts among the Office Files of Mildred Stegall, the custodian of President Johnson's telephone recordings and transcripts, in a Dictabelt storage container labeled "TAPES—DOMINICAN CRISIS." They were not filed with those Dictabelts made by the President's personal staff that comprise the White House Series of Recordings of Telephone Conversations, although some of the conversations were transcribed by his staff, probably during preparation of the President's memoirs, *The Vantage Point.*

Calls to the Dominican Republic took place over non-secure telephone lines. Because they were concerned about their conversations being intercepted, the conversants used code names and other tricks to conceal identities. Abe Fortas, for example, at one point used the code name "Arnold," perhaps a reference to his law firm of Arnold, Fortas & Porter.

Historians of the period will probably find much to ponder in these conversations; they are weighty in content and tone, and do not exhibit as much of the spontaneity, humor, and "Johnson treatment" which have characterized so many of the tapes released previously.

There is at one startling exception, however. At one point during the crisis, Fortas (on this call known as "Mr. Davidson") was acting as LBJ's secret emissary to mediate between the quarrelling parties in Santo Domingo. He was on a highly confidential call with the President when a third caller suddenly broke into their line. It quickly became apparent that the third party—actually a couple, a man named Walter and a woman named Cecil—were phoning from Denver, and had placed a call to "Jim" in Washington. Fortas was infuriated at the interruption and profanely demanded that the interlopers hang up.

LBJ on the other hand was quite patient with Cecil, gently remonstrating at one point that he and Fortas could continue their important call "if you will just get out of our way, Honey."

The *Denver Post* recently featured an article on this amusing episode. A local physician read it and immediately recognized the couple, long since deceased, as the aunt and uncle of a friend now living in Florida. He notified the friend, 75-year-old Audrey McKay of Fort Lauderdale, who in turn phoned Senior Archivist Claudia Anderson. It seems that Ms. McKay's Aunt Cecil Messner was a White House telephone operator who had moved to Denver with her husband Walter when she retired. "I think maybe Cecil either knew a code that would get her patched into the switchboard or had a colleague who still worked there that would let her place a long-distance call for free," Ms. McKay told the *Post.* One White House veteran says this was a common practice among those in the know.

Bonnie Angelo Examines the Role of Presidential Mothers

Bonnie Angelo: "It was the mothers who shaped those presidents."

LBJ granddaughter Nicole Covert introduced journalist Bonnie Angelo to a December gathering in the LBJ Auditorium as a "former cub reporter from North Carolina, who went to the big top of *Time* and made it count."

"We know so much about the First Ladies," Ms. Angelo began, "but we just don't know anything about the mothers. First Ladies . . . are wonderful helpmates, but it was the mothers who shaped those presidents. The wives got these cookies after they were baked. The mothers rolled out the dough."

Ms. Angelo pointed out that while the presidential mothers in her book, *First Mothers*, represent a wide range of economic background, from dirt poor to the privileged wealthy, they shared certain characteristics. They were resilient under hardship, and it appears that they passed that virtue on to their sons. "They shared a philosophy. It boils down to 'Love 'em, and shove 'em.'" They had a passion for education, for reading; they believed, with James Russell Lowell, that "the best academy is a mother's knee."

Four of the presidents in her book; Harry Truman, Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, and Lyndon Johnson, she argued, would not have been president at all if it had not been for their mothers.

President Carter's mother, declared Angelo, "was a Georgia original. 'Miss Lillian' could light up a room. Her cloche of white hair was pulled snugly around her handsome face, a face much like her son's. But painter James Wyeth saw hers as the stronger face. Her deep-set crayola-blue eyes could twinkle or transfix. Those same eyes, on an irritated President Carter, became the icy blues dreaded by his staff."

Always the champion of the underdog, the oppressed, the forgotten; she implanted the same attitudes in her son. And without those attitudes, Carter could not have won the nomination of his party in 1976, let alone the election, Angelo concluded. She underlined her point with a story which originated with President Johnson's mother.

"When LBJ finished high school, he announced that he was through with education. He went to California and knocked about there for a year, came back to Johnson City, and was working on the road gang. He worked with a pick and shovel by day and caroused at road houses by night. His life was taking the downhill course that led straight to the quagmire." There came the worst night of many. There had been a brawl. LBJ came home hurt, hit, bleeding. After putting him to bed, Rebekah stood at the bedroom door and wept: "Oh, my first-born. To think you should come to this." Not long after, LBJ came home exhausted from a hard day on the road gang. "Momma," he said, "I've tried it with my hands. I'm ready to try it with my head, if you'll help me." Rebekah was ready. She called the president of the college in San Marcos; she lined up a loan for LBJ; she sat up nights cramming geometry into LBJ's head so that he could pass the entrance exam. "Few men can pinpoint so precisely a turning point in their lives, nor so precisely who brought it about," Angelo concluded.

Journalist Shribman Says Politics is Show Business

Pulitzer Prize winner David Shribman is Washington bureau chief of *The Boston Globe*.

He writes a column that appears in more than fifty newspapers, and another for *Fortune* magazine. He appears frequently on television's "Face the Nation" and "Washington Week in Review."

On October 12 Mr. Shribman came to the LBJ Auditorium to talk about "Politics and Entertainment: Same Thing." To some extent, Shribman pointed out, this is nothing new. In the past voters often chose their political parties by comparing how good their barbecue and beer were. Today the ties between politics and entertainment are more intimate than ever. In 1966, said Shribman, the most important book on politics was Theodore White's *The Making of the President*; in 1996 the most important book on politics was *Showtime*. Shribman observed that if President Johnson had been prime time television, President Clinton has often been afternoon soap opera. LBJ would never have appeared on MTV as Clinton did in the first place, let alone answer the question as to whether he preferred briefs or boxer shorts. Ronald Reagan was emphatically a man of Hollywood; Shribman noted that one biography of him is aptly titled *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime*.

Noting that the campaign competition between George W. Bush and Al Gore was largely about their on-screen personalities, rather than issues, Shribman declared that presidential appearances on television talk shows have become the common currency of politics.

Asked if he found this trend alarming, Shribman replied that he did, because it is making politics a spectator sport, something that other people do to entertain the rest of us. This is reflected in the declining percentage of eligible voters who cast their ballots, or who participate actively in politics in any way at all. Or, in the words of one apocryphal citizen: "I don't vote; it only encourages them."

Is this at least partly due to the more permissive, more invasive culture of the media, Shribman wondered? Yes, he thinks, but not in every case. Over a hundred years ago, he recalled, Mrs. Grover Cleveland was complaining, "My family, my whole life, has become a show." By contrast, Shribman pointed out that today we allow far more privacy to Chelsea Clinton than we did to Luci Johnson.

Concerning campaign finance reform, Shribman allowed that he is pessimistic about the chance for any serious changes. Why, he asked, should we expect the beneficiaries of soft money to vote it out?

Is the media biased? Yes, Shribman admits, but it is not the bias people often think of, a preference for liberals over conservatives. The really important media bias is the one in favor of change and against the status quo. "We live and die with change. If nothing happened yesterday, we'd have nothing to put in our newspaper."

A New Leader for the Museum Store

Carol Kay Johnson, the new Museum Store Director, flanked by Chad Davenport on the left and Assistant Manager Carol Malone on the right.

Carol Kay Johnson has filled the vacancy left by Walt Roberts, former manager of the Museum Store. Roberts retired recently to accept the ministry of two small churches near Nacogdoches.

Carol was born and raised in Iowa. She graduated *summa cum laude* from Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa, is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and holds an MA in comparative literature from the University of Arkansas. She came to Austin in 1969 when her husband joined the faculty at The University of Texas. Carol joined the LBJ Library and Museum as a volunteer in 1980, in the original class of docents. In 1982, she began working in the Museum Store and has been the Products Manager for several years. In 1999 she served on the Library's Strategic Planning Committee, looking at long-term goals for the Museum. Those who know her can tell you that Carol is fond of dogs, especially her mini-schnauzer, Lady. She enjoys reading, loves to garden, likes to travel, and finds Austin the perfect place to call home.

To allow more space for the Store, LBJ's Model T moves to the front lobby.

Library Security Gets New Look

Officer Phil Guerra takes a last look at the old . . .

. . . and Officer David Samuelson models the new.

A Narrow Escape in World War II

The *Los Angeles Times* recently reported the death, at age 84, of Saburo Sakai, the ace Japanese pilot who shot down 64 American, Australian, and Dutch planes during World War II. "Sakai kept meticulous notes on his combat years," the *Times* news story read, and "within these notes, eventually confirmed by U.S. records and pilots, was Sakai's near miss that could have altered history. On June 9, 1942, he attacked an American Army bomber called the 'Heckling Hare,' over his New Guinea base. He crippled the B-26 Marauder's right engine, but was unable to down the plane because it dove into a cloud and he lost track of it. Aboard the bomber, on a fact-finding mission for President Franklin Roosevelt, was a Texas congressman, Lyndon B. Johnson." Martin Caidin and Edward Hymoff have written a book titled *The Mission*, which narrates the incident. (We are indebted to Mr. Charles Johnston of Los Angeles, California, and former Governor of Texas Mark White, who both sent the *Times* article to us.)

A Lesson in Printing and Propaganda

Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist Ben Sargent recently came by the Library to look at several special items in Museum storage. They are relics of the time when drawings in books and newspapers were made using a technique known as stereotype printing, which required cartoon "mats" to create images. Sargent's hobby is printing. He works in his basement, with a turn-of-the-century machine inherited from his father. Sargent was able to explain the labor-intensive process that produced the mats.

The artifacts in question were made at the *Lake Geneva* (Wisconsin) *Herald*, during the period immediately before the U.S. entered World War II. The *Herald* stridently advocated the isolationist "America First" cause, and was secretly funded from Berlin, probably by the Nazi propaganda machine of Joseph Goebbels. The local German-American *bund* provided the front to funnel the money to the *Herald*, which often furnished its mats to college newspapers. John Roche, an aide in the Johnson White House, collected several of them which he donated to the LBJ Museum.

Museum technician Mike McDonald happened across the mats while working in the collections. Intrigued by their history, he mentioned them to Library public relations man Robert Hicks, who recognized their story potential and called Sargent's newspaper, the *Austin American-Statesman*.

Ben Sargent explained the newspaper mats lying on the table before him.

What If the Greeks Had Lost?

The broad sweep of history may often seem to have been inevitable, almost predestined. But great events can turn on the merest of chances. There are times when a minor change in the choreography of the past could have made a vast difference for the present.

The outcomes of great battles, for example, time and again have hung by threads. The victorious Duke of Wellington recalled Waterloo as "the nearest-run thing you ever saw in your life." On November 16, 2000 four distinguished historians met at the LBJ Auditorium to examine four crucial episodes in military history, and to ask what might have been, if events had taken a road less traveled. Panel moderator UTA Senior Vice President William Livingston called it a fascinating exercise in the history of "what if."

Victor Hanson began by reminding the audience that the heritage of Western Civilization can be traced to Periclean Greece in the seventh through fifth centuries BC. It was all nearly lost in 480 BC, he said, when King Xerxes of Persia invaded Europe. It would have been easy to submit, and many Greeks did. It would have been grander to come out of their towns to fight a battle on the plains, and be slaughtered; many Greeks did that, too. The last hope of the Hellenes were the Athenians. Had it not been for the genius and iron will of a single man, Themistocles, the Athenians could well have given in to one of those temptations. If they had, there would have been no naval battle of Salamis for historians to wonder at, and all of Attica would have been submerged in the huge, autocratic empire to the East. There would have been no birth of democracy, no Socrates, no Aristotle, no Alexander the Great, perhaps no Roman Empire.

Jumping forward almost two millennia, Thomas Fleming asserted that the American Revolution boasted "almost *too* many moments when the patriot cause teetered on the brink of disaster, to be retrieved by the most unlikely accidents." For all his human flaws, said Fleming, Washington was arguably the only man who could have kept the rebel side in the field during the long years of that conflict. What if the conniving, self-seeking, and inept General Gates had usurped Washington's place, as he schemed to do? No one can say for certain, but by all accounts it was a very lucky thing that he did not.

Then there was the case of the most famous traitor in U.S. history, Benedict Arnold. A capable and ruthlessly ambitious soldier, Arnold plotted to betray his command to the British, which would have opened the invasion route along the Hudson. It nearly worked. As it happened, the chief results of Arnold's treachery were no more than his own defection to the enemy, and the lamentable death of his British contact, Major André—bad luck on both men, perhaps, but another lucky break for the Americans.

Early in the war, when Washington was forced from an untenable position on Manhattan Island, his situation was not far from hopeless. His army had to retreat in the presence of a force superior in numbers and quality, always a tricky thing to pull off. He had no practicable way of covering his rear as he turned his back on the British. The Americans had to embark on small boats and cross a major river, presumably with the redcoats hot on their heels, and with the Royal Navy in striking distance.

It should not have worked. But just before Washington began his perilous maneuver, an impenetrable fog descended, and the Americans escaped. Without that providential

Historians Theodore Cook, Jr.; Robert Cowley; Thomas Fleming; Victor Hanson; moderator William Livingston.

bad weather, Washington's army would probably have been lost, and with it the war. What would that have meant for the history of the world over the last hundred years? Would the defeated American rebels have met the same fate as the vanquished Irish, second-class citizens to be ruled with an iron rod from London, governed by an arrogant, local aristocracy?

Robert Cowley next suggested that while World War I might not have been avoided—a conflict of some kind was inevitable, he believes—it should not have been such a catastrophe. The war need not have engulfed the entire world. It should not have lasted so long, nor inflicted such damage that it tore apart the social fabric of Europe. Whether better leadership on both sides could have reached a reasonable settlement much sooner than they did is a difficult question, given the raging nationalisms that existed in 1914. But it might have happened. It should have happened. If it had, Bolshevism would not have triumphed in Russia. Hitler would never have come to power. The British Empire might have survived. And the most melancholy reflection of all: the causes of World War II would have died aborning. There would have been no blitzkrieg; no Battle for Britain; no D-Day in Normandy, no Holocaust. "There are times," Cowley concluded, "when you can measure the lasting effects of a trauma only by imagining their absence."

Theodore Cooke pointed out that the Battle of Midway, in June 1942, which is generally regarded as the turning point of World War II in the Pacific, was yet another "close-run affair." *If* the Japanese had not decided to delay launching their aircraft in order to switch armaments; *if* the American dive bombers had not pushed their search for the enemy beyond the distance considered safe, or *if* they had arrived five minutes later. . . .

But the most unlikely event occurred well before the battle was joined. The Americans had broken the Japanese naval code, so they had advance knowledge that a powerful enemy fleet was on the move. But against what target? The enemy radio cryptically called it "AF." The U.S. naval communications intelligence chief, Commander Joseph Rochefort, suspected that AF was Midway. But he could not be sure, and it was critical that the badly outnumbered Americans be certain of the Japanese objective, if they were to counter it. In desperation, Pearl Harbor tried a ruse. A fake radio message went out in the clear—that is, uncoded—saying that the water purification system at Midway had broken down. Incredibly, the Japanese intercepted the message and relayed it to higher headquarters, *without wondering why the Americans had failed to encode such an important piece of information*. The Japanese message read: AF is short of water. Bingo. "AF" equals Midway. Admiral Chester Nimitz ordered his carriers to the waters north of that island base, where they were able to foil the Japanese design.

Cooke is sure that even if the Japanese had been successful at Midway, they would still have lost the war. But it would have taken America at least a year to rebuild its Pacific Fleet. The triumphant Imperial Japanese Navy might well have isolated Australia, expanded their moves against the Aleutians, perhaps even conquered Hawaii, thereby protracting the war and diluting American efforts against Nazi Germany, possibly with catastrophic consequences.

An Evening With The Author of *The Things They Carried*

The infantry in Vietnam carried more than the stuff of war, wrote combat veteran Tim O'Brien. "They carried their reputations. They carried the soldier's greatest fear, which was the fear of blushing. Men killed and died because they were embarrassed not to."

On January 10, five hundred members of the Friends of the LBJ Library and their guests defied a cold "norther" and driving rain to come and hear O'Brien speak.

The Vietnam War, mused the best-selling author, had its own psychology, even its own time. There was no *flow* to time in Vietnam. Instead it was an unending succession of hard pieces of Now. A soldier on alert in his foxhole at night might glance at the faint dial of his watch: 2:00a.m. After an hour he would look again: 2:01.

O'Brien's primary focus this evening was not on his time in combat. Instead he chose to reflect on his boyhood and how he decided to serve in a war he detested, where "certain blood was being shed for uncertain reasons." He wanted to tell the story, O'Brien said, about the man he once was, and the man he has become.

Tim O'Brien grew up in Worthington, Minnesota (pop. 9,000), the bucolic sort of place Garrison Keillor writes about in his tales of Lake Wobegon. A good part of the populace is German or Scandinavian; chiefly conservative, largely Lutheran. Worthington calls itself the "Turkey Capital of the World," and its leading civic event is the annual Turkey Day, each September. Little League baseball here is a major pastime and potent social totem. An adolescent O'Brien wrote his first novel about a kid baseball hero who played for the Worthington Kiwanis team.

O'Brien was in college from 1964 to 1968. As the Vietnam War escalated—a war which O'Brien detested—he became aware of an increasing sense of foreboding. His student draft deferment was running out, and he felt trapped. In retrospect, O'Brien suspects that Lyndon Johnson may have felt trapped by it too.

"Vietnam," O'Brien declared, "probably like all wars, was given to us by old men, and suffered by the young. And I was young. . . . I did not want to die, and I certainly did not want to die in a bad war. So what do you do?" O'Brien's parents, both veterans of World War II, were divided on Vietnam. But they loved their country, and had taught him to do the same. So a sense of duty pulled at him; furthermore he didn't want to go to jail as a draft evader. There was however the matter of his conscience, which told him that the war was wrong. So he waited.

He took an unpleasant job in a local meat-packing plant, which did nothing to improve his sinking morale. A draft notice came. Still O'Brien waited; confused, growing more and more angry, sorrowful to the point of self-pity. After two months the conflict in his soul became unbearable, and he tried to run away from it. He fled the town. His note to his parents, left on the kitchen table, said, "Taking off. Will call. Love, Tim." And without further thought or a plan of any kind, he drove away, north toward Canada.

Nearly mad with irresolution, O'Brien stopped just short of the border. He spent the next six days at an almost-closed-down tourist resort, miserable, "trying to decide the rest of my life. . . . If you're twenty years old, it's a hard thing. . . ."

Ultimately he broke down and wept, realizing that he hadn't the courage to say no to the war he hated. He went home. Two weeks later he was in the army, and four months after that he was a foot soldier in Vietnam.

There was, to be sure, a certain irony in the speech being delivered in the LBJ Library. Director Harry Middleton had been the one to invite O'Brien to speak. When O'Brien was done and had left the podium, Middleton approached him and said, "During the time you wrote about, I was writing speeches on Vietnam for President Johnson." After a moment of silence, the two men wordlessly shook hands.

Much but not all of O'Brien's writing has been about his wartime experience. In addition to *The Things They Carried*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, he has produced *If I Die in a Combat Zone (Box Me Up and Send Me Home); In the Lake of the Woods*, and the surrealistic *Going After Cacciato*. At present he is teaching a writing course at Southwest Texas State University.

Author O'Brien autographing copies of his best-selling *The Things They Carried.*

Docents Tour Cotulla and the Brush Country

LBJ with his class. The boy in the first row center is Dan C. Garcia, who in 1964 appeared on the television show "I've Got a Secret." Garcia's secret: He had once been spanked by the President of the United States.

In 1928, twenty-year-old Lyndon B. Johnson took a year off from his college studies and went to Cotulla as principal and teacher at the Welhausen School, which served the town's Hispanic students. The experience left an abiding impression on young Johnson. Many of his biographers cite the episode as a primary source of his deep sympathies for the disadvantaged.

On November 1, 2000 a group of volunteers who serve the LBJ Library and Museum retraced Johnson's steps to the Texas Brush Country, to tour the countryside and the town. Their guides were Julia Mellenbruch and her son Larry, who have long owned ranch property in the area.

The docents in front of Welhausen School. Photo by Novella Wiley.

Fire In Former VP Residence

Les Ormes, "The Elms," once the venue of Perle Mesta's fabulous parties, and later the Washington, D.C. home of Vice President and Mrs. Johnson, was gutted by fire on January 11, according to the *Washington Post*. In recent times the stately Tudor-style mansion housed the Algerian Embassy. Investigators are not certain of the cause of the blaze, but faulty wiring is suspected. Local preservationists are rallying to save the façade from the wrecking ball.

In Memoriam

William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 1964-1969.

J. Russell "Russ" Wiggins, Ambassador to the United Nations, 1968.

John T. Connor, Secretary of Commerce, 1965-1967.

Coming Events:

February 27:	An Evening With Shakespearean Michael York.
March 6:	Lawrence Luckenbill's one-man show, "Teddy Roosevelt."
March 22:	A panel of experts will discuss "Genetic Engineering: Promise or Peril?" at the LBJ Auditorium.
March 24:	LBJ Ranch Roundup (For more information on LBJ Ranch events, call 830-868-7128, ext. 236)
April 5:	An Evening With Steve Harrigan, author of *The Gates of the Alamo*.
April 20-22:	A scholarly symposium will feature papers on the topic "Vietnam: The Search for Peace in the Johnson Years." Contact Ted Gittinger, 916-5137 ext. 265 to reserve a seat.
May 2:	An Evening With Steve Wilson, Harry Ransom Center motion picture archivist, followed by the opening of "Treasures From the Harry Ransom Center." This is a major exhibit featuring an esoteric array of artifacts ranging from a Gutenberg bible, to the world's first photograph, to Scarlett O'Hara's dress in *Gone With the Wind*.

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Editor: Ted Gittinger
Research Assistance: Claudia Anderson; Michael Gillette; Regina Greenwell; Craig Johnson; Linda Seelke; Julia Mellenbruch; Judy Davidson Englert; Philip Scott; Mike McDonald; Robert Hicks
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