

Among FRIENDS *of LBJ*

February 2007



Lady Bird Johnson, Daughter Lynda Bird Robb, and LBJ Museum Curator Sandy Cohen, posing before photos from LBJ's childhood, on their way to review the new exhibit on Rural Electrification in Central Texas.

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An Evening With James Baker

"If you want to be a good lawyer, work hard, study, and stay out of politics." That's the advice James Baker's grandfather gave young lawyers who came to the Houston firm of Baker, Botts, and it is the title of Baker's memoir. On September 27 he came to the LBJ Library Auditorium to comment on his career as Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of State, and White House Chief of Staff, which included dealing with the Iraqi crisis, the conflicts in Central America, the Watergate scandal, and the Persian Gulf War. His hallmark has been quiet and effective diplomacy; his mantra was always "Never let the other fellow set the agenda." Time magazine once called him "the Velvet Hammer."

In his first statewide campaign—for Attorney General of Texas, his only brush with state politics—Baker, a newly minted Republican running against an establishment Democrat, tried to give some campaign literature to an anonymous voter in a Panhandle shopping mall. The man had seen Baker on television when he had been campaigning for another Republican, at a time when the GOP had no followers in the state to speak of. "Hey, did anybody ever tell you that you look like Jim Baker?" inquired the voter. "Yes, often," said the amused Baker. The voter didn't bat an eyelash, but asked with great sympathy, "Doesn't it piss you off?"

Baker considers serving as Secretary of State with the first President Bush to be the highlight of his career. The world changed during that period, Baker reflected.

We had just won the Cold War. Communism had collapsed. The Berlin Wall came down. We were the only remaining superpower; everybody want-

ed to get close to the United States. There were only four or five countries that didn't like us. . . . The Soviet Union had imploded, much to our surprise, and much to the surprise of the leaders of the Soviet Union. They thought that when they brought *perestroika* and *glasnost* to the Soviet people, that would be it; that would soften the edges of socialism and communism. They had no idea."

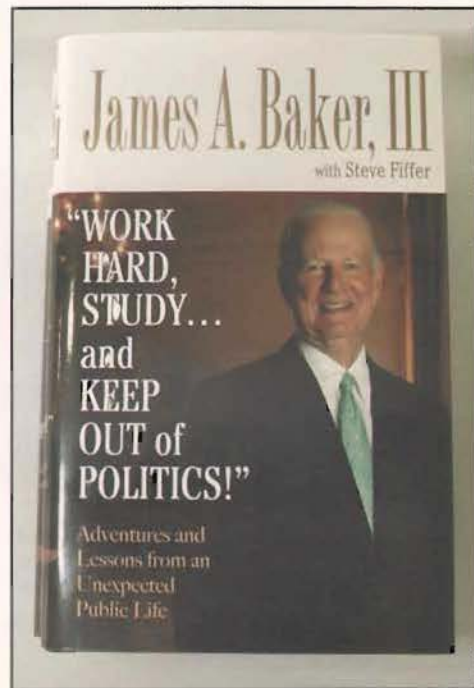
Reflecting on his years since leaving Washington, Secretary Baker said:

Life after politics is wonderful. You're your own boss. You can do what you want to do. Your schedule doesn't have to be what the President's schedule is. You've got time to go trout fishing, if you want, or shoot quail, or play golf. You can spend some time with your family. But I've stayed busy. I wrote that first book about being Secretary of State. I helped establish the James Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University. I joined Baker, Botts, that law firm that my great grandfather started way back in 1860. And I joined a merchant banking group in Washington for a while. A lot of public service projects came my way. Betty Sue Flowers mentioned my work for Kofi Annan at the UN. I spent seven years trying to resolve a really intractable dispute in the Western Sahara—very tough—and I failed. I told people it made the Arab-Israeli conflict look easy.

The Iraqi debt mission was especially interesting for me; it gave me the opportunity to use what I had learned both as

Secretary of the Treasury and as Secretary of State. I knew all these foreign leaders at the time. It came at a time with all the tension and angst over our invasion of Iraq, we needed to get back on good terms, if we could, with all these countries who had been our historic allies. I had worked with all these countries, and we were able to get an 80 per cent across the board reduction from all countries in the debt owed them by Iraq, with one or two exceptions, and those few have still not entered into a debt reduction agreement.

I was fortunate enough to be the representative of President Bush the elder at the tenth anniversary observance in Jerusalem of the assassination of my good friend Itzak Rabin. His assassination by his own countryman did more to set back the Middle East peace process than anything that could have happened, or has happened since then.



Practically all these things were pro bono projects. My salary on the Iraqi debt issue was a dollar a year, because they had to put me on the White House staff payroll. I was the lowest in ranking on that payroll. Not only that; I had to go in a back room with a little plastic cup to prove that I wasn't on drugs. [Laughter]

That's P-A-S-S-E-D.
[Laughter]

I've not talked a lot about what happened in [the election crisis in] Florida, but I do in this book. My really good pal, Bob Strauss, for whom you've named the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law in the LBJ School of Public Affairs, told me not to take that job. He said, "It's going to diminish your aura as a statesman. You're going to get hurt." I said, "Bob, that may be true, but I have to do this. It's not something I have any choice about, frankly." As it turned out—even if we'd lost, I'd believe this—that was a unique experience in American history. I got calls every other day from prime ministers and foreign ministers of foreign countries with whom I'd worked as Secretary of State, asking "What's the matter with you Americans? Can't you run an election?" I'd reply, "I'll tell you what's going on in America. We are dealing with an extraordinarily emotional issue. And both sides are conducting themselves with credibility and dignity, and this matter is going to be resolved on the basis of the rule of law. And I daresay, sir, if this were happening in your country, there might be tanks in

the streets." And occasionally I'd get an acknowledgment that that was true.

So what did I think about Florida? Florida proves that our system works and that we have a rule of law in this country. We won because we had more votes, but we won also because the law was on our side.

I was privileged last year to serve as co-chair with President Carter on a commission on federal election reform. We came up with a good report, and it is laid out in the book in some detail. Working with President Carter was a real pleasure for me. When I was Secretary of State, I called on President Carter to help us solve the knottiest domestic issue in U.S. politics: the wars in Central America. That was the Holy Grail of both the Left and the Right in America, what was happening in the Contra wars in Central America. My first negotiation was with the Congress. I went up there as a brand-new secretary of state and said, "We've got to take this out of domestic politics. If we can do that, it will be easy to solve the foreign policy part of it." And we were able to do it, with President Carter's help. We agreed that there would be an election, and that the parties would respect the results of it. A woman named Violeta Chamorro won. The Sandinista leader, Daniel Ortega, lost. But I'll bet you he would never have left office if it had not been for President Carter.

Last year I signed up for one of the most difficult public service projects since I left office: the

Iraq Study Group. This group is bipartisan and it is forward-looking. We have five Democrats and five Republicans. We have determined that we are not going to sit around and wring our hands about what mistakes might have been made in the past. We are going to look forward.

In describing his work on the Iraq Study Group, Secretary Baker said its only objective was to describe what path forward will best serve the interests of the United States and the Iraqi people, and can win bipartisan support from the American public. In order that domestic politics will have the least possible effect on the group, it will not report until after the 2006 fall elections.

Baker said that he found writing a book to be difficult because it involved looking back, and he is more used to looking forward. But he has discovered an interesting pattern in his own life while doing this one. For the first half of his life he followed the advice of his grandfather to avoid politics. It was the death of his first wife and his friendship with George Bush Senior that jolted him into an unexpectedly public life.

His public service, Baker asserted, taught him that we all have the capacity to make the world a better place. That is why he is continuing, well into his rocking-chair years, to participate in such ventures as the Iraq Study Group. He sat on the sidelines for the first half of his life and watched the world parade by. But he learned that it is a lot more meaningful and satisfying if you join the parade.

Wreath-Laying Ceremony Commemorating the 98th Birthday of President Lyndon Baines Johnson: The LBJ Ranch, Stonewall, Texas August 27, 2006

In addition to being one of Lady Bird Johnson's closest advisers—and closest friends—Nash Castro is the former Director of National Parks in Washington, D.C. On August 27, 2006, he came to deliver the address at the laying of the wreath at President Johnson's gravesite on the LBJ Ranch. Mr. Castro began by recalling a visit to the Ranch some years before.

The President took us on a ride. . . . Along the way he stopped at the home of one of his employees. "I want to check on the new refrigerator we installed a few days ago," he said. The lady of the house greeted us and the President

headed straight for the kitchen, with the rest of us following him. He opened the refrigerator door and asked the lady, "How do you like the new refrigerator?" She replied, "*Magnifico!*" A small child of the family followed us into the kitchen. The President picked him up and said, "Give me a kiss." The little boy happily obliged and the President rewarded him with some candy. Mrs. Johnson called this type of thing "Lyndon's private welfare program."

"In the summer of 1972," Castro continued, he and his wife Bette were visitors at the Ranch.

One morning, President Johnson asked us to join him for a ride to see some of his wildlife. . . . On our way back to the house, we stopped here, where we walked to the gate and looked at the graves. . . . The President pointed to a spot in the cemetery and said, "That is where I will rest one day." "Not for a very long time, Mr. President," I said. He did not respond. A few months later, he went home to God and His angels.

It [had been] my good fortune [years before] to be present in the White House for that momentous event when the Presi-



Mr. Castro and Col. David Allvin placed the wreath.



The live oak grove provides shade for the Johnson family cemetery.

Photo by Charles Bogel

dent outlined his vision for America's landscapes, rivers, air, parks, trails, townscapes, and highways. Even the demise of automobile junkyards was included. . . . In our Nation's . . . history, only three Presidents have immersed themselves in matters relating to the environment: Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Lyndon Baines Johnson. With congressional support, Theodore Roosevelt established the U. S. Forest Service and approved the Antiquities Act in 1905. The latter . . . authorized the President, by Executive Order, to preserve natural and historic resources as national monuments. In the Depression-era 1930s, Franklin Roosevelt

inspired the Congress to create the Civilian Conservation Corps, which hired countless thousands of unemployed young men on conservation-related projects in the national parks and forests and in state parks. These young men built roads, trails, museums, housing, and other amenities. The structures were built to last, for many are still in use. [And close to home, the WPA, another FDR work-oriented relief program, helped create San Antonio's famous River Walk and that city's world-class zoo. Ed. note.] In the last half of the twentieth century, President Johnson gave new life to the environment, for he thought of the land as more than an economic resource. This form of

thinking inspired Lady Bird's much-heralded, much-admired and still-embraced beautification program. One of my life's finest, most-uplifting privileges [has been] to work with Mrs. Johnson on that program, which [led to] her admirable Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in 1982, a triumph. Her inspired . . . contribution to our nation's landscapes has endured for more than four decades. Wherever you travel in our country, look about you and enjoy the profusion of flowers along highways, in shopping malls, service stations, parks, and countless other places. Among other things, [look for] better street graphics, now-hidden automobile junkyards, fewer billboards along the na-

tion's highways—these are all products of her devoted volunteer work as our First Lady. Mrs. Johnson, you have left a mark on the American landscape that is as indelible as it is timeless. Thank you for enhancing the beauty of our lives and for lifting the American spirit, a priceless legacy.

During the Johnson Administration, 3.6 million acres were added to the National Park System, [and] forty-seven national park sites were created, a record. As long as this nation endures, President Johnson's environmental ethic, leadership, and vision will endure. Truly, he was one of America's three "green" presidents, [and] an environmental giant by any measure. His years in the White House were unques-

tionably the best of times for the American environment. The day Abraham Lincoln died, his devoted Secretary of War, Edwin L. Stanton, said of him, "Now he belongs to the ages." Two years from today, we will observe the centennial of President Johnson's birth. That [will be] a time to celebrate his greatness, his towering patriotism, his abiding love of country and, more especially, the lasting good he achieved for it and its people.

On another personal note, I wish to thank President Bush for so kindly providing the beautiful wreath Colonel Allvin and I placed here this morning. And I wish to thank Shirley James, Mrs. Johnson's most competent Executive Assistant, for so graciously and

deftly shepherding me over the past several weeks to this event on this day.

Also speaking at the wreath-laying was Air Force Colonel David W. Allvin, Vice Commander of the 12th Flying Training Wing, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. Colonel Allvin recalled President Johnson's devotion to America's space program: "I think of our country's spectacular progress in space exploration . . . when it stretched one's imagination to even conceive of the possibilities of what space exploration could bring. The path to the moon was not always a smooth one, but amidst the doubt and uncertainty, President Johnson was unwavering in his commitment."

Hardeman Prize Committee Names Winner

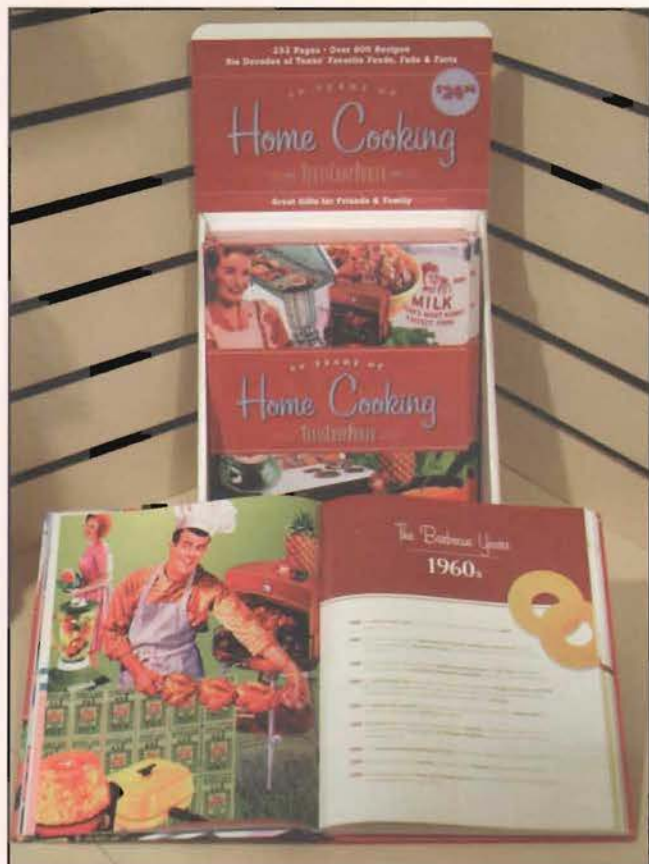
The D.B. Hardeman Prize for the best book on Congress published in the calendar year 2005 has been awarded to David M. Barrett, for his book *The CIA and Congress: The Untold Story from Truman to Kennedy* (University Press of Kansas). Don Bacon, former editor of the *Encyclopedia of the Congress* and a member of the award committee, had this to say of Barrett's book:

Professor Barrett has given us an engrossing account of the highly secret, often contentious relationship between Congress and its post-World War II creation, the Central Intelligence Agency. Thoroughly researched, rich in fascinating detail, *The CIA and Congress* focuses on the spy agency's early years, when the Cold War was at its peak. The author relies heavily on previously hidden official records and his own insightful interviews to show that our lawmakers worried more about the new agency's potential for mischief and kept it on a shorter leash than has been previously known.

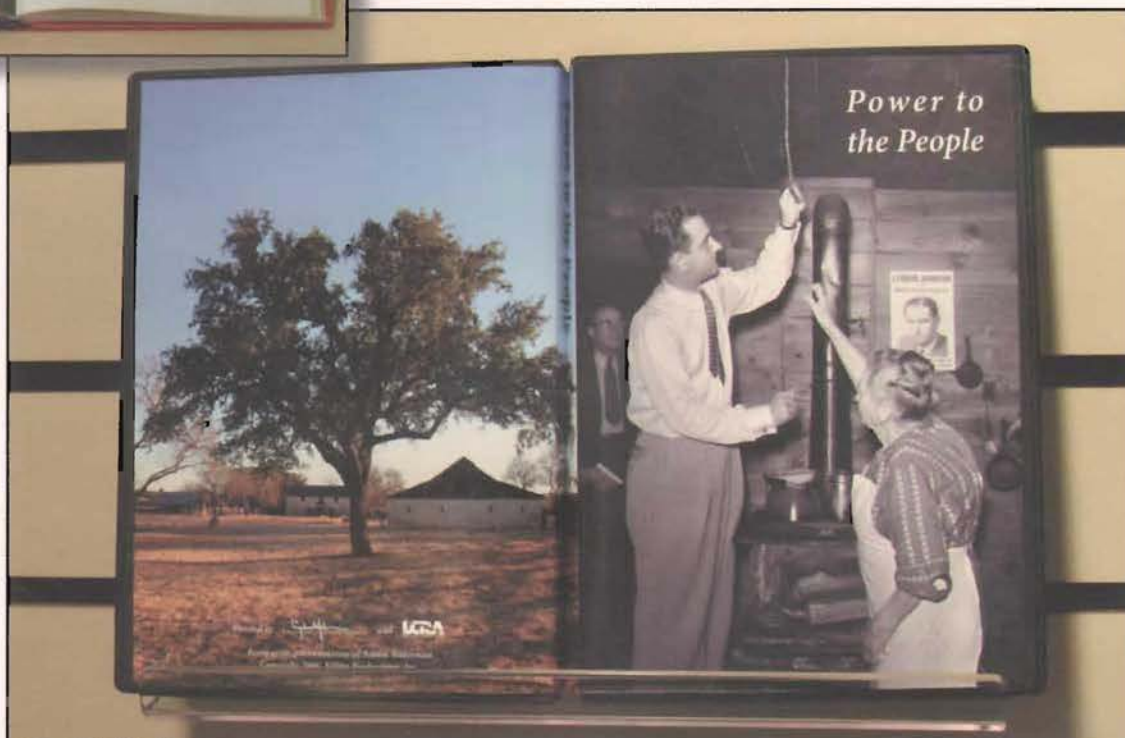
The Hardeman Prize includes a check for \$2,500, awarded by the Lyndon B. Johnson Foundation. Members of the D. B. Hardeman Committee are: Professor H. W. Brands, Richard Baker, Historian of the U. S. Senate; Don Bacon, former correspondent, *U. S. News and World Report*; Raymond Smock, former Historian of the U. S. House of Representatives and Director of the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies at Shepherd University, two members of the Department of Government at The University of Texas at Austin, Sean Theriault and Andrew Karch, and John Sides of the Political Science Department at George Washington University.

Around the Museum Store

Beginning with this issue, the Newsletter will showcase items that are available from our lobby store. A complete store inventory can be seen on line at www.lbjstore.com. There you can shop at leisure, and order things ranging from books, stamp collecting stuff, sculpture, White House telephone tapes, great LBJ memorabilia, and campaign buttons from past elections.



Texas Electric Cooperatives released their new cookbook, *60 Years of Home Cooking*, when the exhibit opened. Not only does it contain great recipes, but it is a cookbook that is a good read too. Lynn Boswell of Villita Productions produced the DVD specifically for the exhibit, to chronicle how electricity changed the Hill Country and LBJ's role in that transformation. We are proud that it features one of the LBJ Library volunteers.



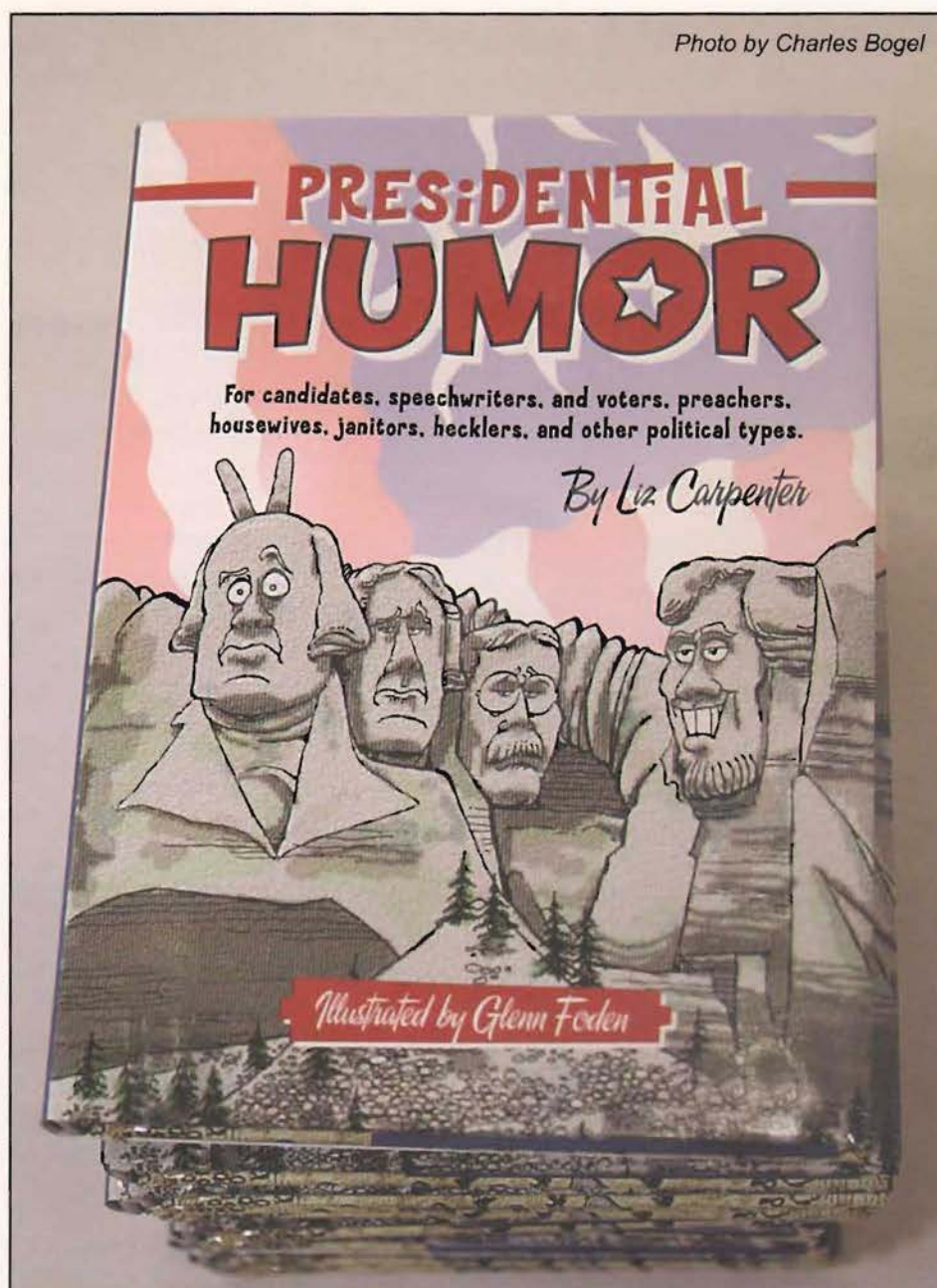
The products featured in the museum store this spring support our *Power to the People* exhibit.

An Evening with Liz Carpenter

On the evening of October 6, 2006, Elizabeth Carpenter came before a sellout crowd in the LBJ Auditorium to announce the publication of her latest book, *Presidential Humor: for Candidates, Speechwriters, and Voters, Preachers, Housewives, Janitors, Hecklers, and Other Political Types*. In introducing Liz, LBJ Library Director Betty Sue Flowers had this to say:

She began covering the White House and the Congress for the Austin *American-Statesman*. Later she became Executive Assistant to President Johnson and Press Secretary to Lady Bird Johnson. She helped found the National Women's Political Caucus; she fought for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, served on the International

Women's Year Commission, and the White House Conference on Aging. She was Assistant Secretary of Education for Public Affairs. In 1984 Erma Bombeck, Mark Russell, and others helped establish a lectureship in her honor at UT. While this endowment brings in many fine lecturers, few of them are as good as Liz herself, who has stayed incredibly active through her many speaking engagements and books. In fact, a Republican speech writer called her a triple threat of brains, bounce, and banter. That marvelous Shakespearean character Falstaff said, 'I am not only witty in myself, but the cause of wit in others.' This applies to Liz, but I'd like to add that Liz is not only courageous in herself, but the cause of courage in others. When have we ever noticed her holding back, too timid to make her case? That's one reason it's exciting to be with her: It's never going to be a tea party—well, maybe a Boston Tea Party. [Laughter]



Mount Rushmore, if Liz had done the carving.

At age 86, Liz maintains her long-time motto: "Getting better all the time." She told her audience this evening that "Aging is a pleasure if you don't lose your sense of humor, especially if you don't lose your memory at the same time." Liz' speaking style is perfect for the Evening With venue, aphorisms and wisecracks tumble out of her in an irreverent stream.

"I don't feel old, even though I can remember when the Dead Sea was only sick."

"I don't mind saying that I am a liberal, psalm-singing, foot-washing Democrat." [Prolonged applause.]

"I have been covering presidents from George the First to George the Worst."

Drawing on the barbed humor of H. L. Mencken, Liz recalled his writing "On some great and glorious day, the plain folks of the land will reach their hearts' desire at last, and the White House will

be adorned with a downright moron." Liz drew the curtain of charity across that one, saying "I won't even comment on that."

Liz admires the way Ronald Reagan used humor to deflect criticism of his administration. His self-deprecation was skillfully done, and the voters loved him for it. After reading some press references to his rather advanced age, he easily defused them by observing, "It was easier to

campaign for president when I was a boy. Back then there were only thirteen states." And when Democratic presidential hopeful Walter "Fritz" Mondale accused Reagan of "government by amnesia," Reagan replied with mock anger, "That was uncalled for. I wish I could remember who said it."

It was one more Evening With for Liz, who never disappoints.

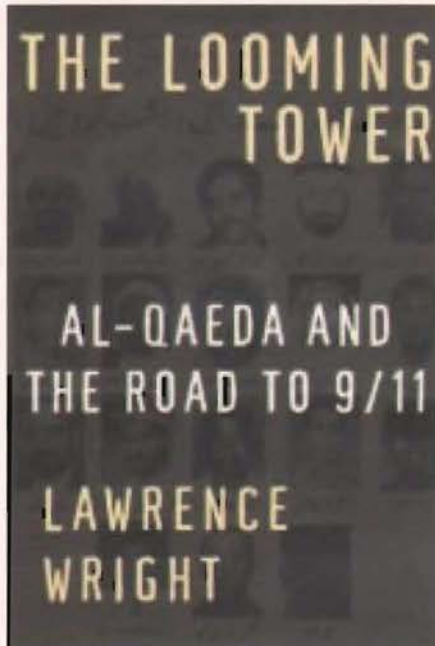


Giving a TV interview: As Lady Bird Johnson's Press Secretary, Liz put her newspaper experience to good use.

Photo by Charles Bogel

My Trip to Al-Qaeda: An Evening with Lawrence Wright, August 29, 2006

Parts of this article were excerpted from the LBJ Library web site, www.lbjlib.utexas.edu



"Perhaps al-Qaeda can best be understood as an engine that runs on the despair of the Arab world, especially its young men, whose lives are so futile and unexpressed. Al-Qaeda offers them the chance to make history. All they have to do is die."

Larry Wright's "Evening With" the Friends of the LBJ Library was a dramatic presentation, with video and audio clips, based on the recently published *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*. In its August cover story on the book, the *New York Times Book Review* said:

In its simplest terms, this is the story of how a small group of men, with a frightening mix of delusion and calculation, rose from a tormented civilization to mount a catastrophic assault on the world's mightiest power, and how another group of men and women, convinced that such an attack was on the way, tried desperately to stop it.

What a story it is, and what a riveting tale Lawrence Wright fashions in this marvelous book. It is not just a detailed, heart-stopping account of the events leading up to 9/11, written with style and verve, and carried along by villains and heroes that only a crime novelist could dream up. It's an education, too (although you'd never know it), and a thoughtful examination of the world that produced the men who brought us 9/11 and of their progeny who bedevil us today. The portrait of John O'Neill, the driven, demon-ridden F.B.I. agent who worked so frantically to stop Osama bin Laden, only to perish in the attack on the World Trade Center, is worth the price of the book alone. *The Looming Tower* is a thriller, and it's a tragedy, too.

In the nearly five years since the attacks, we've heard oceans of commentary on the whys and how-comes and what-it-means and what's-nexts. Wright, a staff writer for *The New Yorker*-where portions of this book have appeared-has put his boots on the ground in the hard places, conducted the interviews and done the sleuthing. Others talked, he listened.

Wright's on-stage set consisted of a desk with a reading lamp and a single stool, stage left. In the background there was a large screen with a photo of the World Trade Center in flames, just after the second plane hit.

His recital of the events of that terrible day was based upon the interviews he did while researching his remarkable book. But there is more, such as his depiction of Ayman al-Zawahiri, the Egyptian behind Osa-

ma bin Laden. Al-Zawahiri was involved in the assassination of Anwar Sadat, and he appeared in a cage at the trial, with hundreds of others, screaming for justice, telling of the mistreatment they suffered in the Egyptian jails.

"They put us in the dirty Egyptian jails. . .where we suffered the severest inhuman treatment. There they kicked us, they whipped us with electric cables, they shocked us with electricity! And they used the wild dogs! And they used the wild dogs!"

"Dogs," said Wright in his explanation, "occupy a lowly place in Islamic culture, next to pigs in their filthy natures."

Going back to the 1960s, we have stories of prisoners in Egyptian concentration camps being terrorized by wild, starving dogs. Imagine being confined in a cell, handcuffed, unable to defend yourself. . . ."

The Egyptian jailers trained the dogs to perform unspeakable acts upon the prisoners, said Wright, and "indeed, many of these prisoners were psychologically destroyed. But Zawahiri emerged from custody, in 1984, hardened, resolute, and bent on revenge. He had not been bloody minded until then. A swift military coup was his lifelong goal. He had no taste for revolution or for guerrilla warfare."

The dogs changed that.

He entered prison a surgeon. He came out of it a butcher.

When Wright first traveled to Afghanistan in his research, after going over “thousands and thousands of pages of internal al-Qaeda documents containing ethical debates, strategy sessions, military manuals.”

In all that mass, there is not a single page devoted to the politics of al-Qaeda. Suppose they succeeded in taking over Egypt or Saudi Arabia. What do they stand for? Do they want to redistribute the wealth? Educate women? Clean up the environment? Stimulate employment? There’s no answer.

“Al-Qaeda doesn’t believe in politics. Because it doesn’t believe in the future. It has no vision. It’s not a movement; it’s an instinct, a reaction, like a snake bite.”

“At the heart of al-Qaeda, there is rage. There is the longing for revenge, the desire to humiliate the West and reverse the cycle of history. But there is no plan for success. There is only destruction.”

“The truth is that al-Qaeda’s real objective is not terror but

suicide. “We love death” [was] the call that summoned the Arabs to Afghanistan in the first place. Perhaps al-Qaeda can best be understood as an engine that runs on the despair of the Arab world, especially its young men, whose lives are so futile and unexpressed. Al-Qaeda offers them the chance to make history. All they have to do is die.”

It is doubtful that any in his audience will soon forget Wright’s stark and stunning portrayal of the enemy that the West faces today.

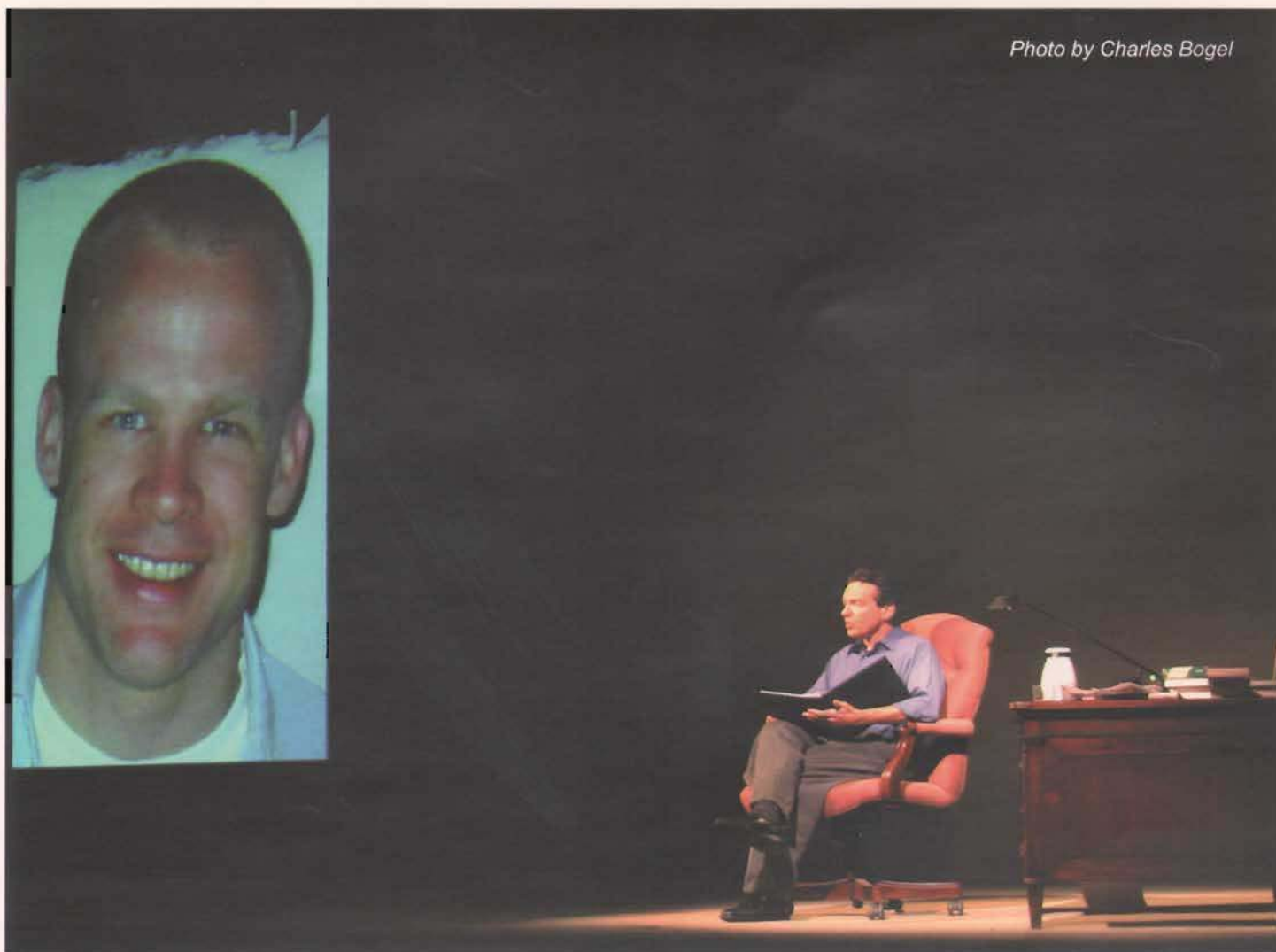


Photo by Charles Bogel

Author Wright’s presentation included photos of terrorists and victims alike.

Biographer Randall Woods Speaks to the Friends of the Library

On August 8, 2006, noted biographer and historian Randall Woods came to the LBJ Library Auditorium to talk about his latest work, the most recent biography of President Lyndon B. Johnson, *LBJ: Architect of American Ambition*.

Dr. Woods is John A. Cooper Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Arkansas, where he has taught since 1971. His *Fulbright: A Biography* won the 1996 Robert H. Ferrell Prize for the Best Book on American Foreign Relations and the Virginia Ledbetter Prize for the Best Book on Southern Studies.

Professor Woods began his address by wryly acknowledging that his most recent honor was to be inducted into his high school hall of fame, the Taylor (Texas) Fighting Ducks.

Woods estimated that in his twenty-eight research trips to Austin while writing his LBJ biography, he spent altogether an entire year in the LBJ Library Reading Room. It is the only biography written by one of LBJ's constituents (Woods grew up in Johnson's Tenth Congressional District).

Woods used the Johnson White House telephone tapes extensively, calling them "an unbelievable resource. The tapes are a biographer's dream. You see all the shades of Johnson's personality,

and the complexity of the legislative process." Woods spent ten years working on the book, which, he noted, means that his family spent ten years on it as well.

Woods sees Johnson as a political opportunist but insists that he was also an idealist with a well-defined philosophy. That much is clearly spelled out in Johnson's public papers, Woods believes. To back up that assertion, Woods estimated that at least thirty per cent of LBJ's speeches and his other public papers are pure Johnson, not just the creation of a stable of speech writers. (That opinion is seconded by former LBJ Library Director Harry Middleton, who sweated over many speech drafts for Johnson, only to see his work edited in extensive and sometimes excruciating detail by the President.)

Woods depicts LBJ as a classic New Dealer, trying to adapt Franklin Roosevelt's liberalism to a post-World War II world. Johnson agreed with John Kenneth Galbraith that the economic and class conflict of the 1930s had been rendered largely irrelevant, at least for white Americans, by the prosperity of the 1950s. Therefore a new liberalism, argued Johnson, should emphasize civil rights for minorities and a better quality of life for all members of society. "Johnson's Great Society," said Woods, "was an attempt to persuade, even [to] bribe

the middle class through things like Medicare and the Higher Education Act, into granting African Americans equality under the law, and provide the hard-core poor with the tools and incentives to pull themselves up by their bootstraps."

Fundamental to this new liberalism was a deep and passionate commitment to pluralist democracy. Like his uncle George Johnson, Woods said, LBJ was a fan of Andrew Jackson, the great champion of the common man. President Johnson told Roy Wilkins after the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights, "I will go to any meeting; I will issue any proclamation, I will go to Cleveland, I will go to Huntsville, I will go to Birmingham or Little Rock. And [I'll] just say, let every person in this state vote. I don't care if you're Mexican-American, Negro, Baptist, Catholic, Jew—just vote."

"Questions of race and religion," Johnson said, "would then disappear." With every person voting his best interest, social justice would inevitably follow.

If Johnson could be judged only on his efforts to build and perfect a just society at home, Woods observed, liberals at least would consider him a great president. But the Cold War has thus far trumped any such rating in their eyes. Vietnam was and likely will

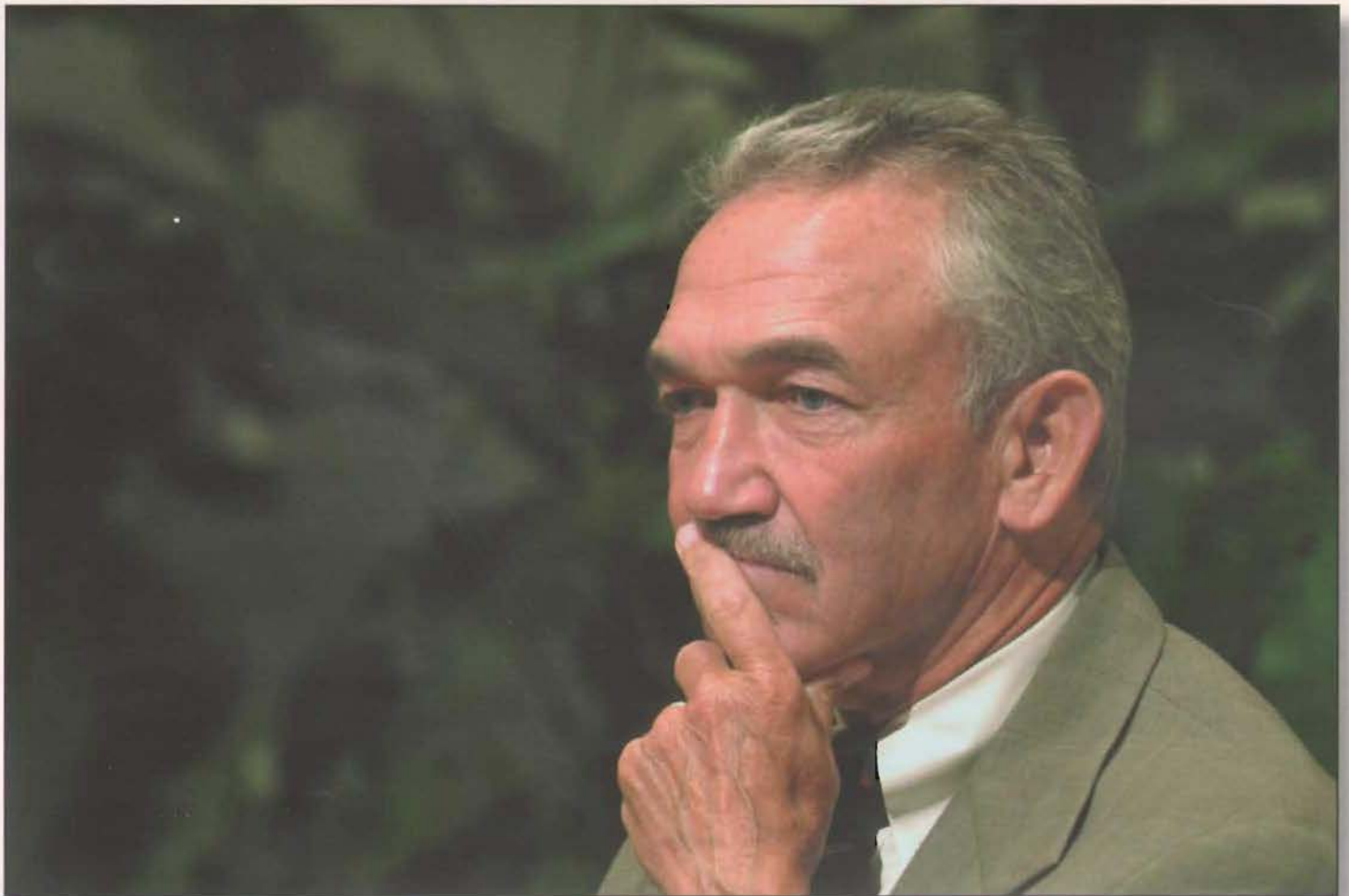
remain an albatross around LBJ's neck, even if he does not deserve a disproportionate share of the blame for it.

The Judeo-Christian ethic that supported LBJ's drive for a Great Society also drove his effort to prevent the spread of Communism in Asia. It was no less wrong, LBJ thought, to leave the brown- and yellow-skinned peoples of the world to communism, than it was to leave south-

ern blacks to the tender mercies of white segregationists. But by 1967 Martin Luther King had become disenchanted with the war, and King denied any connection between domestic reform and the struggle against communism in Southeast Asia. That, Woods believes, drove Johnson and King apart. It was a heavy blow for both men.

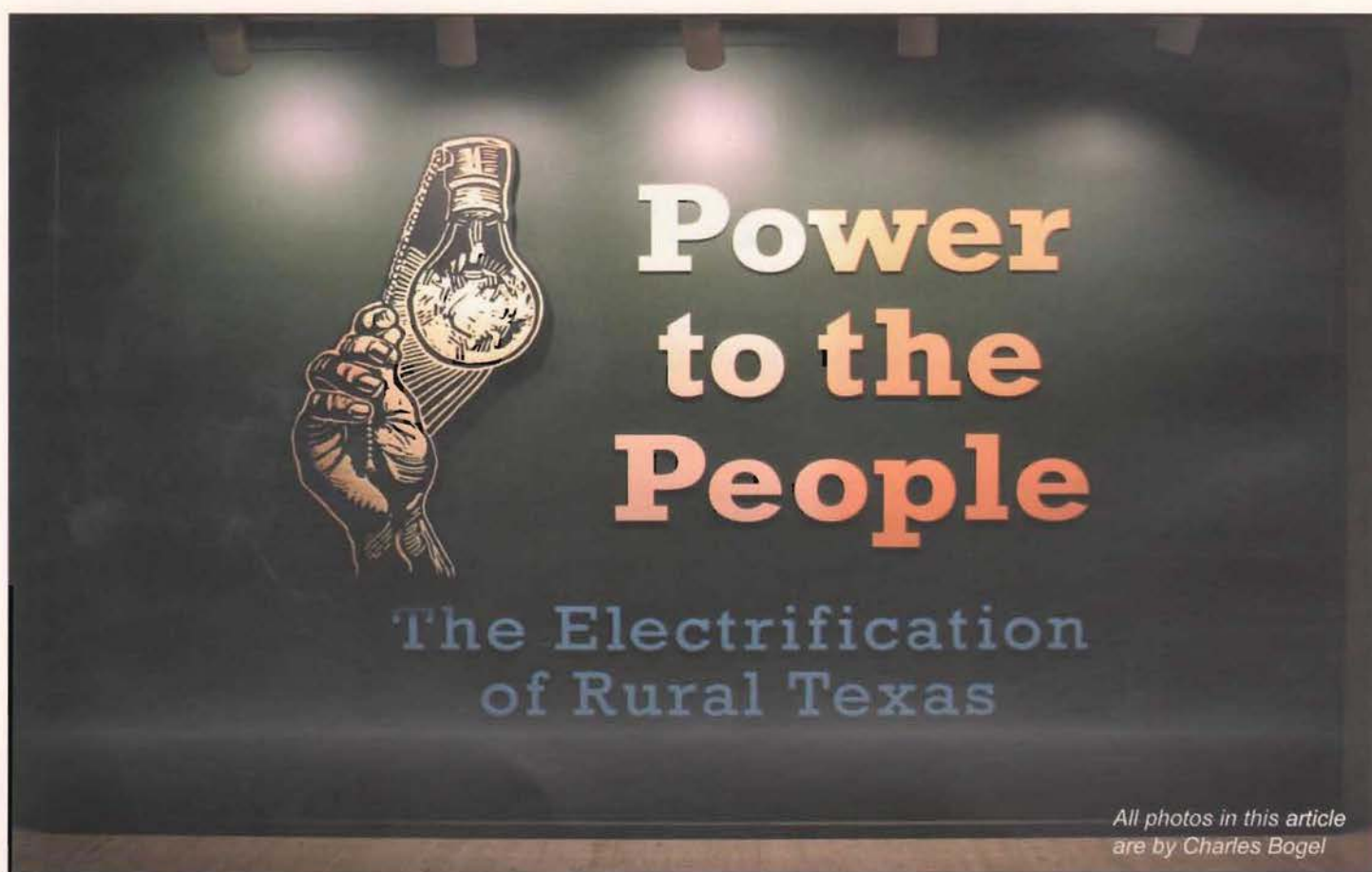
As president, Johnson was convinced that he had inherited a

commitment to South Vietnam from John Kennedy and Dwight Eisenhower. He would not betray it. Not only that: it was a matter of practical politics. The congressional coalition that supported the Great Society was the same one that backed the war in Vietnam. Woods points out that Johnson could not walk away from those facts. Together they formed the fundamental dilemma—and ultimately the tragedy—of his administration.



After his talk, Dr. Woods listens to a question from the audience.

Photo by Charles Bogel



On September 10, 2006, the LBJ Museum held the grand opening of an exhibit that would have made President Johnson proud. More than a year in the making, “Power to the People: The Electrification of Rural Texas,” recreates one of LBJ’s signal achievements. In many parts of the world, the slogan “power to the people” meant violent political revolution, but in rural Texas its meaning was far less sinister.

LBJ grew up in a Central Texas that, except for the larger towns, had no public electrical power. Most electrical utility companies, looking to their bottom line, served only the more densely-populated areas, believing that the poorer and more sparsely populated farm countryside posed risks to their profit-oriented organizations.

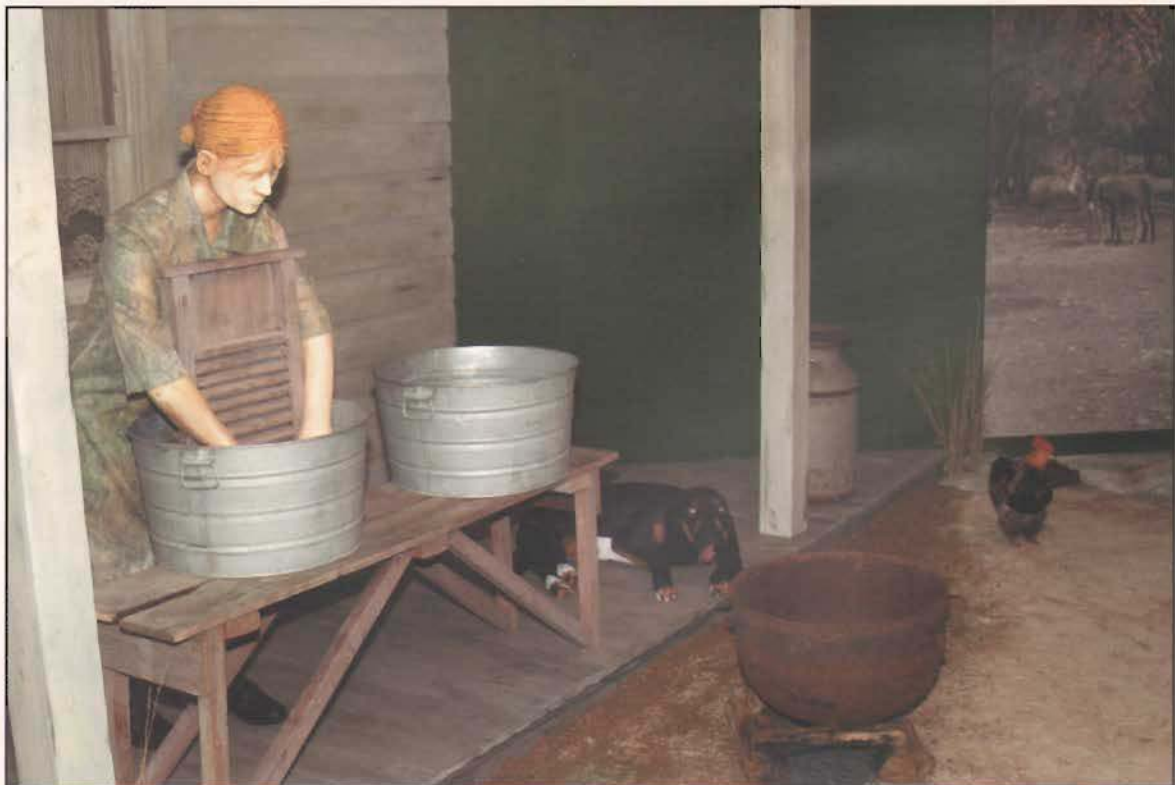
Franklin Roosevelt’s Rural Electrification Administration, begun in 1935, attempted to address this inequity, but only the more prosperous farmers benefited from it. When Lyndon Johnson went to Washington later in that decade, he made it a priority to relax the REA’s population density requirements. He succeeded in persuading President Roosevelt to agree. In 1939 the first loan made under the new density standards went into effect.

The exhibit will run until May 28, 2007. A highlight of the exhibit: home movies of the era narrated by Lady Bird Johnson.



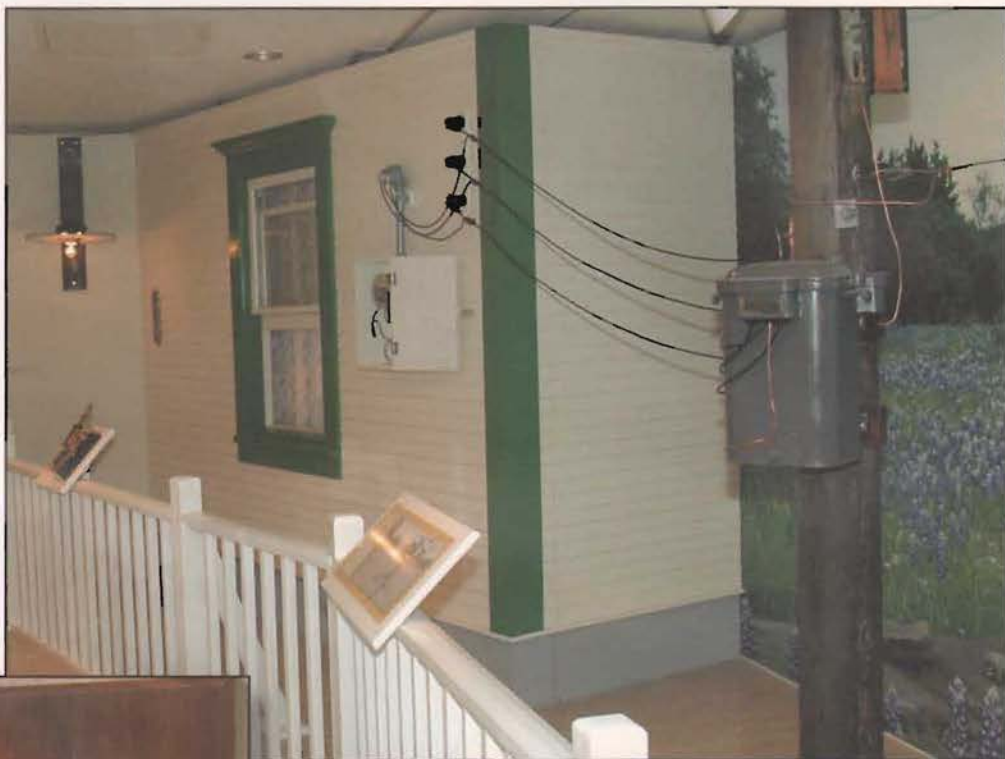
The woman on the right is “canning” fresh fruit, although the cans were usually glass mason jars. Note the small wooden “pie safe” behind her. Such a furnishing was common in many homes, where their owners sometimes protected their contents from ants by immersing the safe’s feet in containers of kerosene, or coal oil, as it was often called. The woman on the left is

using an iron to press newly-laundered clothes. The iron was heated on the black wood-burning cook stove behind her. Even the simplest daily necessities were labor-intensive.



Laundry day, before the electric co-op came. Those same galvanized tubs held water to heat for bathing. Hot bath water was a luxury and was seldom wasted on a single family member.

A typical farm house electrical hookup. The gray metal box on the right was a transformer that stepped down the very high voltage from the power provider to 110 volts, used by most household appliances. The white box on the house wall, next to the window, held the meter that measured how much electricity the household used. It also might have held the fuses, which were safeguards against a dangerous short circuit. When a fuse “blew,” which today would be the same as a circuit breaker flipping, a new fuse was indicated—but some economy-minded folks would use a penny instead, a dangerous practice that could and did sometimes cause fires.



The placard below the meter reads, “Pedernales Electric Cooperative, Inc. Meter No. 1. Energized October 31, 1939 at the Ranch Residence of E. Babe Smith, Jr. Oakalla, Texas. Retired January 31, 1969.” E. Babe Smith was an early supporter of then-Congressman Johnson and served with the Pedernales Electric Board from 1938 until 1975.



Some of the hardware of electrification. The strip of wood in the middle holds three insulators, which protected against short circuits in the high-voltage transmission wires. These devices came in many styles. Today they feed the appetite of collectors, who delight in finding one of the rare ones.

LBJ was especially proud of the Pedernales Electical Co-op, which harnessed hydroelectric power to serve his congressional constituents. The small sign on the left reads, "New member—new owner. REA Co-ops are member-owned and controlled." The neon sign was found in the PEC maintenance yard in Johnson City. It was refurbished by Big Dog Neon in Lockhart, Texas. The PEC paid to rehabilitate the sign, and it will go back to the PEC when the exhibit closes. The Pedernales River is a small stream that runs through Johnson City and by the LBJ Ranch. The river's name, according to Central Texas natives, is pronounced "Purd 'n Alice."





Small electric appliances such as coffee makers and toasters were nice to have, but it was the washing machine, on the right, that saved many a rural woman from the exhausting weekly grind of hand laundering, rinsing, and hanging clothes out to dry. And that refrigerator on the far right meant not having the milk and meat spoil, a wonderful saving of money and human energy.

But the old timers around Johnson City summed it all up more simply, and perhaps more poetically, by saying of LBJ, "He brought the lights."

"...of all the things
I have ever done,
nothing has ever given
me as much satisfaction
as bringing power to
the Hill Country
of Texas."

— Lyndon Baines Johnson



The first day of the exhibit featured a barbecue open to all comers. Nearly 1800 people came to the exhibit and feast. The food tent was set up on the Library and Museum grounds, between the building and the large water fountain in front. It was filled and emptied a number of times during the exhibit's opening.

The world-famous Salt Lick Restaurant, located on Farm Road 1826 at Driftwood, Texas, catered the event.

BBQ brisket, ribs, chicken, and sausage, with sides of potato salad, pinto beans, and coleslaw—plus raw onion, jalapeño peppers, and “light” bread—are *sine qua nons* in the Salt Lick's repertoire. Did we mention iced tea?



The Gimbles, featuring legendary fiddler and two-time Grammy winner Johnny Gimble, who once played with Bob Wills' Texas Playboys, delighted the opening day crowd.

A note on our museum staff: All the concepts in this exhibit were developed by our own people, notably Mike Flanagan, who made the figures—including the dog [he did not make the rooster, however; that is store-bought!],

Gary Phelps, who designed it all, with contractors Jim Thomas and Dan Kagay. Mike MacDonald and Renee Gravois found most of the artifacts on display. Our Archives Intern Cristina Rodriguez, from UNC Greensboro, assisted in constructing the scenarios.

March 31, 1968: The Speech Heard Around the World

This article should have appeared in a previous issue of the newsletter. Owing to its length and other technical considerations, its publication has been delayed until now.

When Lyndon Johnson faced the challenge of one of the most momentous speeches of his long career, one which would literally change the course of history, he called separately upon the services of the two men who had written for him the longest—Horace Busby, who had begun working for LBJ in the congressional days, and Harry McPherson, who had been with him in the Senate. Busby recorded his participation in a manuscript discovered after his death in 2000, and subsequently published under the title *The Thirty-First of March: An Intimate Portrait of Lyndon Johnson's Final Days in Office*.

On April 3, 2006, Scott Busby, Horace's son, who found his father's manuscript and brought it to publication, met with McPherson in the LBJ Auditorium to discuss the speech. Former LBJ Library Director Harry Middleton moderated the discussion.

Harry McPherson led the discussion by recalling that as 1968 opened, he was working on a speech about Vietnam, ostensibly for use in the 1968 presidential campaign. Noth-

ing in Johnson's demeanor or words at that time, said McPherson, suggested that he was not planning to run again.

Even after the Tet Offensive in January and February, 1968, McPherson continued his work. By the middle of March he was on the 12th draft.

Then at lunch one day with McPherson and domestic adviser Joseph Califano, LBJ casually announced that he might not run for reelection. The two aides sat stunned. Finally McPherson stammered, "You *have* to run." LBJ's eyes fixed upon him with laser-like intensity. "Why do I *have* to run," LBJ demanded? "Well," replied McPherson nervously, "there's still a lot to be done, and you are the only one of the candidates who can do it." Replied LBJ, "You're absolutely wrong.

Any of the others will get a honeymoon from Congress. Bobby [Kennedy] will get a honeymoon, and Gene McCarthy. Even Nixon. But Congress and I are not honeymooners. We are like an old man and woman who've lived together too long. We've asked too much of each other, and we don't want to hear from each other any more.

"Joe and I went back in to his office," McPherson recalled,

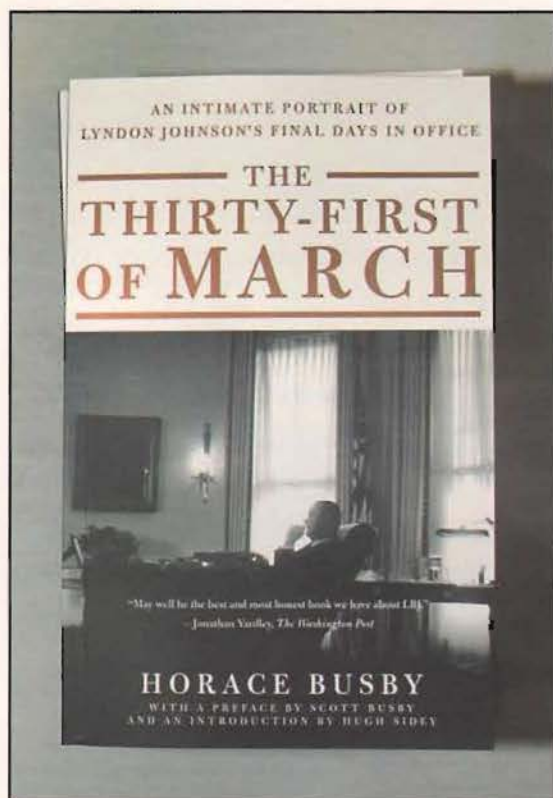
where we talked about what this would mean for Democratic politics, for the nation, for Lyndon Johnson—I forget in what order. We also wondered . . . was it only a cry of the heart from a man whose great promise and great achievements were being pounded by the antiwar drums across Pennsyl-



Scott Busby signed copies of his father's—and his—book, for Friends who brought them to him.

vania Avenue, and by the relentless crash of small arms fire in the fields and jungles of Vietnam?

There was a meeting in Secretary Rusk's office one day, which Califano and I both attended. Neither of us was a foreign policy advisor to the President, but Joe had worked with Secretary McNamara before coming over to the White House, and I, knowing that I would be writing speeches about Vietnam for the President, had persuaded him to let me spend a couple of weeks out there in 1967. The others in the room were McNamara, Bill Bundy, Walt Rostow, and Undersecretary of State Nick Katzenbach. McNamara, listening to proposals for increasing air strikes on the always-reinforcing North Vietnamese, became distraught. His voice broke with angry tears, and he condemned the idea. "We've dropped more bombs on North Vietnam than we



dropped on Occupied Europe,” he said. “It didn’t do much good then. Neither will dropping more on North Vietnam.” I expressed my own growing pessimism about the war. When I got back to the White House, Secretary Clifford called and said, “Old boy, we need to form a partnership. You be the partner in the White House, and I’ll be the partner in the Pentagon. We’ll work on getting our friend out of this mess. We must do that for him, and for our country.” I knew that Clifford had the President’s ear, that the two of them and their wives went back years, that Clifford’s counsel to Truman and John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson had been among the advice most valued by all of them, and I knew that I was being charmed to become a member of what must have been hundreds of ad hoc partnerships that people formed with Clark Clifford over the years.

Three days before the March 31 speech, there was another meeting in the State Department. McNamara wasn’t there this time. I think it was only Rusk, Bill Bundy, Walt Rostow, Clifford, and I. Clifford dominated the meeting. “The twelfth draft of [your] speech,” he said, “was no better than the first.” It was a war speech, and the country didn’t want to hear a war speech. He had spoken with a number of senior business executives who had once supported the war effort, and they had all abandoned it. Nobody in the room had anything like the connections with big business that Clark Clifford had. If he said the business establishment had rejected the war, that was almost certainly the case. It would be quite disturbing to President Johnson, who wanted business leaders on his side, along with labor leaders and civil rights leaders, and most any other kind of leader you could think of, who had voting troops behind him. Unknown to me, Secretary Rusk and Walt Rostow had been talking with the President about a more “peaceful overture” to North Vietnam. So neither of them spoke a word in defense of that twelfth draft. I

know that wherever he [Rusk] is, he would be okay with my saying this, it is just to give you an idea of the tension of those days, the poignant tension of those days. This was about ten till twelve in the morning, and I think Secretary Rusk probably had four scotches on the rocks in the morning, sitting there, three or four days before that meeting. Who could blame him? My God, who could blame him? I could have used a few myself. It was decided by the group that I should go back to the White House and write a different kind of speech, one that offered to quit bombing North Vietnam altogether, if the North Vietnamese would not take the occasion to launch new attacks on our forces. I wrote into the middle of the night, probably two o’clock in the morning, I guess; called the new draft “1a,” and had it and the old draft number twelve delivered to the President’s bedroom. I went home and went back about nine in the morning. Of course, the President had called several times, getting angrier with each call, as I had not showed up. But I finally called back. And he said, “I don’t want to say that on page six.” And I looked quickly to see which page six he was talking about, and he was talking about 1a, the peace speech, the more accommodating speech, in a way, toward the North Vietnamese.

On Saturday, March 30, the day before the speech, the President and maybe a dozen of us met all day in the Cabinet Room, going over the speech line by agonizing line. Just before we started that meeting, Clifford called me aside and said, “You know, the last two pages from the old speech, you know, fighting on the beaches and all like that—that doesn’t fit with the new speech.” I didn’t have time to write a new ending, so I just cut it off. And we worked all day long on the draft [version] 1a without any ending.

At the end of it, the President—tired out, you’ve seen those pictures; he looked like death warmed over. He said, “Where’s

the ending? I liked that ending.” I said, “Well, it doesn’t fit with the speech any more. I’ll go up and write another one. It won’t be long; the speech is already pretty long.” He said, “Oh, don’t worry about that. I don’t mind it being long. I might have a few things to say at the end myself.” And he walked out of the Cabinet Room, and I turned around, and Clark Clifford—who had been persuaded by President Johnson to become Secretary of Defense a month before—said, “Good God. Is he going to say sayonara?”

Let me leave it at that moment, because that’s the end of the speech that I had anything to do with, and you’re about to hear from Scott about yet another speech that was in the works.

Middleton: We’re about to see the heart of version 1a, which was that part of the speech that turned away from the war.

[From the movie screen, LBJ speaks as he did to a national TV audience on March 31:]

“We are prepared to move immediately toward peace through negotiations. So tonight, in the hope that this action will lead to early talks, I am taking the first step to de-escalate the conflict. We are reducing—substantially reducing—the present level of hostilities. And we are doing so unilaterally and at once. Tonight I have ordered our aircraft and our naval vessels to make no attacks on North Vietnam except in the area north of the demilitarized zone where the continuing enemy buildup directly threatens allied forward positions, and where the movement of their troops and supplies are clearly related to that threat. The area in which we are stopping our attacks includes almost 90 per cent of North Vietnam’s population, and most of its territory. Thus, there will be no attacks around the principal populated areas, or in the food-producing areas of North Vietnam. Even this very limited bombing of the North could come to an early end if our restraint is matched by restraint in Hanoi.

Middleton: Scott, the President told Harry McPherson not to bother going upstairs to write an ending, because he might have one of his own, and that's where you come into it. Pick it up here.

Scott Busby: Actually, it was fascinating to me to hear you describe the main course of events leading up to that day. The title of my father's book is *The Thirty-First of March*, and about half of the book is devoted to that one day in history.

I think it's typical of LBJ to have so many scenarios going on at once. While Harry McPherson and others were working on the cessation-of-the-bombing speech at midnight on Saturday, the 30th, my father got a call at our residence in Maryland that the President would like him to be in the White House at 9:00 am, Sunday. This story unfolds. He goes in; he is basically locked away in the Lincoln Bedroom upstairs, and he is asked by the President to write words that would, essentially, end his political career. He did not know if President Johnson would read those words; no one knew that. I'm not even sure that the President knew that, when he started your speech. He was finally discovered, at one point, upstairs, and I think there were a

number of staff—and I think family—confrontations with Dad over this. Not many people on the staff, I think, wanted him to withdraw. But my father finished that portion of the speech. Johnson tucked it into his coat, and at the end of this speech, he pulled it out and read it.

One of the interesting things about this book is how it's structured. It starts with that day, the 31st of March, but it flashes back through my father's extraordinary relationship with Lyndon Johnson, going back to when he was twenty-four years old, and fresh out of the University, and was recruited by LBJ after being editor of the *Daily Texan*. So it's a two-channel story, but it keeps coming back to this day, and it has great power. Actually, Lyndon Johnson had talked to my father three months before—this is in the book—very specifically about withdrawing, and they even discussed the language of it. But my father had not heard mention of it again until he got that midnight phone call on the 30th, and the President made it clear that that was what he wanted to talk about.

Middleton: And this is what the President called the peroration

of that speech.

[Movie, LBJ speaks:] Throughout my entire public career, I have followed the personal philosophy that I am a free man, an American, a public servant, and a member of my party, in that order, always and only, for thirty-seven years in the service of our nation, first as a congressman, as a senator, and as vice president, and now as your president. I have put the unity of the people first; I have put it ahead of any divisive partisanship. And in these times, as in times before, it is true that a house divided against itself, by the spirit of faction, of party, of region, of religion, of race, is a house that cannot stand. There is division in the American house now. There is divisiveness among us all tonight. And holding the trust that is mine as president of all the people, I cannot disregard the peril to the progress of the American people and the hope and the prospects of peace for all peoples. So I would ask all Americans, whatever their personal interests or concerns, to guard against divisiveness and all of its ugly consequences. Fifty-two months and ten days ago, in a moment of tragedy and trauma, the duties of this office fell upon me. I asked then for your help, and God's, that we might continue America on its course, binding up our wounds, healing our history, moving forward in new unity to clear the American agenda, and to keep the American commitment for all of our people. United we have kept that commitment, and united we have enlarged that commitment, and through all time to come, I think America will be a stronger nation, a more just society, a land of greater opportunity and fulfillment, because of what we have all done together in these years of unparalleled achievement. Our reward will come in the life of freedom and peace and hope that our children will enjoy through ages ahead. What we won when all our people united just must not now be lost in suspicion and distrust and selfishness and politics among any of our people. And believing this, as I do, I have concluded that I should not



LBJ went on national television to deliver the message that stunned the world.



permit the presidency to become involved in the partisan divisions that are developing in this political year, with America's sons in the field far away, with America's future under challenge right here at home. With our hopes and the world's hopes for peace in the balance every day, I do not believe that I should devote an hour or a day of my time to any personal partisan causes or to any duties other than the awesome duties of this office, the presidency of your country.

Accordingly, I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president.

But let men everywhere know, however, that a strong, and a confident, and a vigilant America stands ready tonight to seek an honorable peace, and stands ready tonight to defend an honored cause, whatever the price, whatever the burden, whatever the sacrifice that duty may require.

Thank you for listening. Good night, and God bless all of you.

Middleton: And there you have it, ladies and gentlemen, the speech that changed history. It changed history, and its reverberations we still hear today.

The President's daughter Luci rose at the end of the proceedings to tell the audience that her father had long agonized over what became the March 31 speech. She and her sister Lynda, and Mrs. Johnson, thought that the President might make his announcement at the 1968 State of the Union Speech, and they held their breath while he delivered that message. But of course he decided against mentioning the matter then. By March 31, Luci Johnson recalled, her father had firmly decided that many people saw him as the perpetrator of the problem, and as such could not resolve it. Therefore he determined to sacrifice his political life, to clear the air, as it were, by taking politics completely out of the picture, now that his own sons in law were risking their own lives in Vietnam, in the effort to conclude a painful chapter in the history of the country.

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In Memoriam

Leonard H. Marks

Director, United States
Information Agency, 1965-1968,
long-time adviser to Lyndon Johnson
on communication issues.

Nellie (Idanell Brill) Connally

Spouse of John Connally and
Former First Lady of Texas;
longtime family friend.

Warren Woodward

LBJ staffer for many years;
his herculean work helped save the
1948 election for Johnson.



Photo by Frank Wolfe



Photo by Cecil Stoughton



Photo from LBJ Library Archives

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