

Among **FRIENDS**
of LBJ

January 2009



This is NOT a TV screen. It is a painting done by Alan Bean, third man to walk on the moon. Story inside.

Remarks of Luci Baines Johnson at the 100th Anniversary of Her Father's Birth.

“Good morning. I am Luci Baines Johnson, Lady Bird and Lyndon Johnson’s younger daughter. On behalf of my sister Lynda—who our father always called Daddy’s Darling Daughter—we want to welcome you to this Centennial Celebration of Lyndon Baines Johnson’s birth.

A century ago, on this very day, across the road in a humble farm house, our Grandmother Rebekah Baines Johnson wrote: “And then there came a sharp

compelling cry—the most awesome, happiest sound known to human ears, the cry of a newborn baby—the first child of Sam Ealy and Rebekah Johnson was discovering America.”

From the beginning Lyndon Baines Johnson was BIG, estimated at about ten pounds.

Our grandmother was one of two women in Blanco County with a university degree.

An elocution teacher, and a journalist with a sense of history, “Miss Rebekah,” as she was known to friends, felt the need to record this most momentous moment in her family’s life.

Her husband, “Mr. Sam,” a member of the Texas legislature, got on his horse to ride to tell his father that a “United States Senator” had been born. What an insightful proclamation! It was a father’s dream for his son, a dream he never lived to see come



Johnson daughters Luci, on the left, and Lynda, are assisted by Air Force Colonel Jacqueline Van Ovost of Randolph Air Force Base.

true. And this was just one of many titles his son would have in his far too short 64 years of life.

Over the years the old timers of the Hill Country would speak of Lyndon Johnson, saying "Yeah, I knew him well. He went a long way in the world, didn't he? He moved a whole mile up the road."

Sixty-four and a half years later Lyndon Baines Johnson died "a mile up the road" in an 80 year-old homestead that had belonged to the most affluent member of his family, his Aunt Frank.

Purchasing Aunt Frank's house was one of Daddy's many BIG dreams. Remodeling it for modern occupation was one of the many seemingly impossible jobs he gave to Mother—who handled it as she did all things, with grace and beauty.

Son, brother, husband, father, uncle, grandfather, teacher, secretary, National Youth Agency director, congressman, senator, minority leader, majority leader, vice president, president—Lyndon Johnson was a man with many titles and many roles, for many people.

But in all of them, as for his Mother on that day he "discovered America," he was BIG!

Over the years my Mother asked loved ones, who'd helped Daddy execute his BIG ideas, to come to his graveside on the anniversary

of his birth to assist the military designee of the President of the United States in laying a wreath on Daddy's grave. These loved ones have been family members, cabinet members, White House Staff and ranch staff, all important to his family.

This is the first wreath laying service for which Mother wasn't able to choose the person to lay the wreath. Lynda and I agonized over who should have the honor for this most sentimental moment honoring this most sentimental man.

Then Mother's assistant of many years, Shirley James said, "I think your Mother would want for the two of you, his children, to lay the wreath. After all, birthdays are family affairs, and this is such a BIG birthday."

And so Lynda and I have come here to do the honors. But we come knowing that family for Lyndon Johnson was always BIGGER than just Mamma, Sis-sy and me.

Lyndon Johnson's extended family included the entire Congress and its staffers, the White House and its staffers, the Democratic Party, the Citizens of Texas, and every man, woman, and child who hadn't yet realized their dreams for a decent education, a decent home, a decent job, and decent health care, who Daddy thought he might be able to help. They were all family to Daddy.

Looking backwards, there were very few moments in Daddy's life for just the four of us. But Lynda and I understood that time was precious and there was a BIG family to help.

Tomorrow Daddy's political party and ours, the Democrats, will formally choose Barack Obama as their presidential candidate.

Senator Obama is a man of rare talent, eloquence, education, and commitment to public service. He also happens to be black. The Democratic Party will nominate him on the day another man of rare talent, education, eloquence and commitment to public service, Martin Luther King Jr., delivered his famous "I have a dream" speech.

Much will be made, as it should be, that Barrack Obama is indeed fulfilling Martin Luther King's dream.

But he is also fulfilling Lyndon Johnson's dream, a dream of opportunity for all in a "Great Society" fulfilled in the thousand laws of Lyndon Johnson's five years and two months administration.

This GREAT SOCIETY legislation made it possible for children of color and of humble origins, like Senator Obama, to fulfill their dreams—dreams to get the best education, dreams for the chance to vote and be voted for, dreams to be able to buy the best home you can afford in a neighborhood

of your choice, dreams to breathe clean air, drink pure water, to use public accommodations, and to have decent health care; dreams that the color of your skin or the poverty of your birth would no longer keep you from becoming the best you could be.

So many dreams, that you and America could truly “overcome” ancient prejudices in a better America.

I was there in front of Daddy’s first school, a one-room school house down the road, when my father signed one of his great education dreams into law, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

I was there in the Rotunda of the nation’s Capitol, when he signed one of his three great dreams for civil rights into law: the Voting Rights Act.

The only handwritten letter I have from my father was written on the day the great civil rights Public Accommodations Act was signed on my 17th birthday.

I was there in Independence, Missouri when Daddy signed Medicare, his dream to deliver decent health care to America’s elderly into law. And it is hard for me to believe that in just four years I will be one of those elderly Americans.

At each of these momentous occasions Daddy made sure the world knew that there was still more to do, but at least we had



begun to build a Great Society.

And at each of these occasions he praised the loyal opposition and the countless Americans from public and private life that it had taken to make these dreams come true.

He knew there is no single hero that makes a dream a law. There are many.

Daddy loved birthdays—especially his. He wasn’t particularly concerned with material gifts. But he loved to celebrate life.

After having a nearly fatal heart attack on my ninth birthday he looked at every birthday as a gift, not a right!

There will be many celebrations

of Daddy’s Centennial—at the LBJ National Historical Site, the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Texas State University, our father’s alma mater, and the LBJ Grove in Washington, D.C.

And for each of them our family is grateful. But the greatest birthday present Daddy could ever receive is that millions of Americans have been able to fulfill their BIG dreams, regardless of the color of their skins or the quantity of their parent’s pocket-book, in part because of the day Lyndon Johnson “discovered America.”

LBJ Birthday Celebration— Family, admirers wreath LBJ with memories

Event at ranch near Stonewall commemorates 100th anniversary of Johnson's birth.

By Asher Price
AMERICAN-STATESMAN
STAFF
Thursday, August 28, 2008

STONEWALL — Under blue skies, members of the late President Johnson's family marked the 100th anniversary of his birth Wednesday with a wreath-laying and the opening of his Texas White House.

"From the beginning, Lyndon Baines Johnson was big," said his

daughter Luci Baines Johnson, who told an audience of about 1,000 well-wishers gathered at the LBJ National Historical Park that his weight at birth was estimated to be about 10 pounds.

She continued: "The fact is, whether you knew him or not, we are all Lyndon Baines Johnson's immediate family because we were all important to him."

It was in Stonewall that Johnson forged the modern version of the

remote White House, spending roughly a quarter of his presidency plotting his Great Society legislation and America's involvement in the Vietnam War from an office there filled with phones and decorated with paintings of his favorite dogs.

The office, converted into a living room after the president died in 1973 at the age of 64, has finally been restored, complete with a lounge chair emblazoned with the presidential seal. It is now open to



At the LBJ Library, Rudy's famous BBQ served over four thousand visitors with their wonderful brisket, poultry, pinto beans and all the trimmings.

the public.

More than anything else, the birthday celebration had the feeling of a reunion. At least a half-dozen former Secret Service agents, as well as old park service employees and former staffers at the ranch, traded stories.

Eighty-eight-year-old James Davis, who was hired in 1959 by the Johnsons as a cook and served the family as a kind of butler until his widow, Lady Bird Johnson, died last year, remembered cooking ribs for President Johnson — the President's favorite — and talking about the coming appointment of Thurgood Marshall to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"No matter who you were, he'd talk to you like you were a college professor," Davis said. "He figured everybody was intelligent unless they proved otherwise."

Luci Baines Johnson drew a connection between her father's legacy and the events playing out at the Democratic National Convention this week in Denver, where Wednesday Senator Barack Obama was nominated as the party's presidential candidate.

"Much will be made, as it should be, that he is fulfilling Martin Luther King's dream. But he is also fulfilling Lyndon Baines Johnson's dream, a dream of opportunity in a great society,"

she said.

To round out a busy day, members of the Johnson family also appeared in Austin on Wednesday afternoon at the LBJ Library to celebrate the opening of a new exhibit, "To the Moon," which celebrates the nascent space program in the 1960s.

President Johnson "saw the bigger picture" of space exploration, said Ellen Ochoa, the first Hispanic woman in space and the deputy director of the Johnson Space Center in Houston. "He saw that it should be devoted to the peaceful purposes for all mankind."

From the Mailbox

Dear Museum Curator,

Thank you for continuing to open the LBJ Museum to the public for free. I work for a charity helping underprivileged children in Ft. Worth. We provide a hand up in life, not just a hand out. We took 7 children, ages 10-14, on a 3-day trip to San Antonio & Austin over the Christmas break this year.

These students had worked all semester to make the best grades and have the best behavior in our 4 centers made up of 65 students. They all live in the poverty level and rarely see life beyond the doors of their home or apartment. It was great to provide this opportunity for them to see life beyond their four walls.

The LBJ Museum was one of their favorite sights on the trip. They loved the stretch limo and the Oval Office. They learned things about President Johnson they just don't learn in school. The visual displays and auditory videos and acting were great for them, as well as some chaperones who did not know much about President Johnson.

I am sending you a picture of the kids who attended. This is just a thank you for the education you are providing for the children of the State of Texas. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Klein

Love Never Fails—Ed. Director



And on a lighter note.

From President Johnson's Mailbox: A Young Fan Writes

February 2, 1967

Dear President,

I and my friends Bob and David would like to go up into a space a week from next Monday. We always wanted to go up into space. Do you have space suits that would fit us? We would fit into size eight. We would be great to explore the moon. We wouldn't be afraid if there are Monsters. If we had laser guns we could shoot them. And when we come down, we would know what to do. We would get the raft onto the water, then paddle until we get right under the helicopter. Then they would pull us up into it. Please write back to me.

/s/

Tescott, Kansas

67484

[Ed. Note: Name withheld.]

A Birthday Greeting, From Our Mailbox

Ms. Wheeler [Anne Wheeler, LBJ Library Communications Director—Ed. Note], I hope you receive this message in a semi-timely manner. I live in Houston and we accessed this Web site to at least make an attempt to wish all you folks a warm greeting, with the best intentions and prayers for President Johnson on his 100th birthday.

I am an African American who was raised in the 18th Congressional District (created in no small part by LBJ) that the late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan once represented.

I was talking with my mother, who worked for Rep. Jordan and was a long-standing precinct judge (202 5th Ward, Houston, Texas), and she told me that even though she had her misgivings about LBJ in '60—specifically that he was "Just Another Redneck Who Could Care Less About Us"—that she would find a way to support him.

That having been said, I would like to extend my family's best to the Johnson Family. What LBJ did is in my mind astounding, given the circumstances that he had to deal with, and also his own feelings that he had to negotiate through. Absolutely astounding, to have him think thru these things and act as he did.

He is and always will be an American Hero in the best way we can think of!!! Tell Lynda Bird and Luci that we wish them well, and God Bless.

Sincerely,

Sidney L Balthazar

8/28/2008 1:02 AM

(By permission)

Cokie Roberts Continues Her Series On American Women In History

Newswoman Roberts Follows Her NYT Bestseller, *Founding Mothers*.

There must be some connection between first-class journalism and writing good history. The talents for discovering important facts and stringing them together into readable prose are often found in the same person. Newswoman Cokie Roberts is an eminent example of one of them. Roberts is a political analyst for ABC News and National Public Radio. From 1996 to 2002, she and Sam Don-

aldson co-anchored the TV news program, *This Week*.

She has several best-sellers on the *New York Times* list, including *We Are Our Mothers' Daughters*; *Founding Mothers*, and a memoir of her marriage with Steve Roberts, *From This Day Forward*.

The inspiration for Robert's latest book, *Ladies of Liberty*, came in part from watching her mother, Ms. Lindy Boggs, and Lady Bird Johnson, who together at one time ran the town of Washington—not

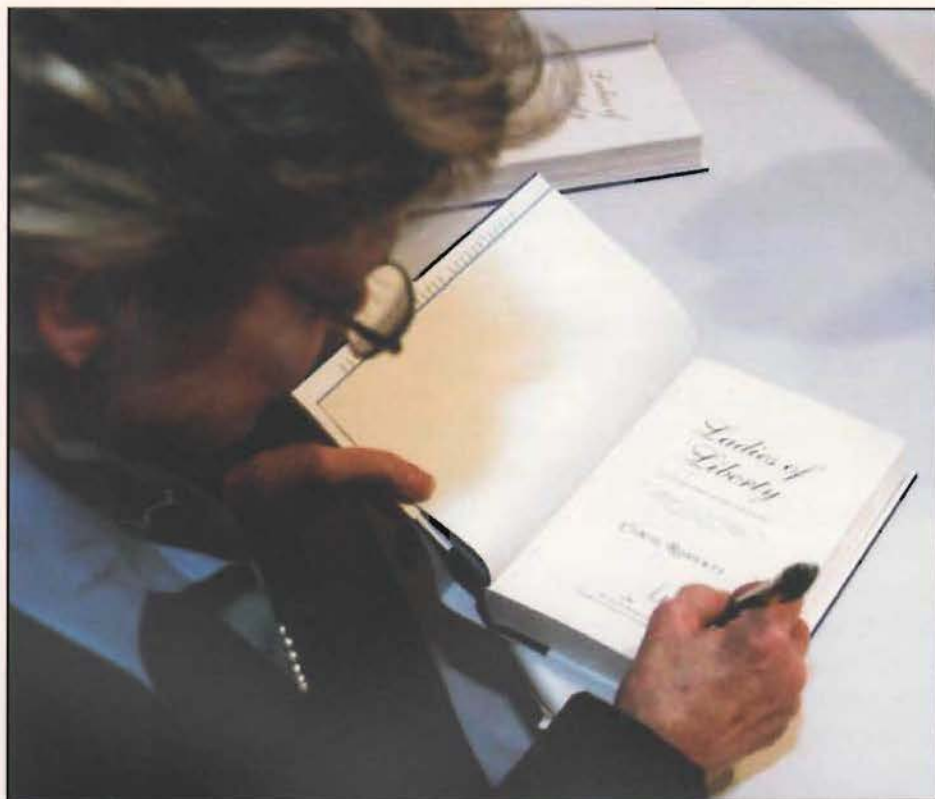
just the social side of the place, but their husbands' offices, and their campaigns, together with any number of charitable and semi-official organizations that held the place together and gave to it the not only its charm but its cachet, the glue as it were, that kept it for so long a southern town.

A telling comment on their role, in fact, came from Lady Bird at the time when Ms. Roberts' mother succeeded her husband Hale as congressman from Louisiana. Mrs. Johnson congratulated her by re-

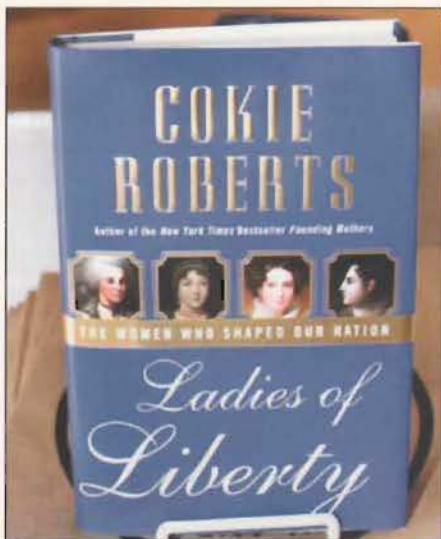


marking that she was glad for her, but “Well, Lindy, that’s fine, but how are you going to do it without a wife?” Imagine it, Roberts said, just think of her mother as ambassador to the Vatican, representing President Clinton to the Pope! Was there a tougher assignment in the diplomatic corps? (At least the costumes didn’t change from what she was used to around her old neighborhood on New Orleans’ Bourbon Street, mused daughter Roberts; “It was still guys in dresses.”)

One thing Ms. Roberts discovered while writing her latest book was that while we have always more or less thought of the Founding Fathers as deities, their wives didn’t view them that way—quite the contrary. The Founder’s letters to their wives were often quite serious, filled with the realization that they were doing something mo-



The large crowd of Friends of the LBJ Library kept Ms. Roberts busy signing her latest book.



Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton, Louise Davezac, Rebecca Gratz, Theodosia Burr

mentous. But their letters were often filled with other elements: love, fear, longing. This husband-

wife correspondence reveals the Founders as icons with feet of clay, and much more sympathetic than their public papers have made them to appear.

John Marshall, for example, the Supreme Court jurist, wrote his wife that while he was riding the circuit, he discovered that he had no breeches packed and had to wait on some North Carolina tailors to make some. But what in the meantime, Ms. Roberts had to wonder, did he wear? Why, his judicial robes, of course. And under them? *Nothing!* From then on Ms. Roberts said, she has had to avert her gaze when she comes across a portrait of Marshall, such is her embarrassment for him. Without the letter to his spouse, we

would not have that sympathetic sidelight. His wife has made him more human for us, if a bit less distinguished.

In those early days in Washington, the atmosphere was absolutely poisoned by partisanship. The men all lived in boarding houses, where they reinforced each other’s murderous passions. It wasn’t until the women began to assert themselves, led by the example of Dolley Madison, that they began to behave themselves, to sit down together over a glass of Madeira, and stopped killing one another—literally, in the case of Hamilton and Burr.

TERROR AND CONSENT: The Wars for the Twenty-First Century.

An Evening With Philip Bobbitt

H. G. Wells once commented that throughout human history there have been two kinds of communities, those of will, and those of obedience. Today most nation-states, including the democracies of the developed nations, are counted among the communities of will. They have more or less grouped themselves behind leaders and systems that have gained the consent of the governed.

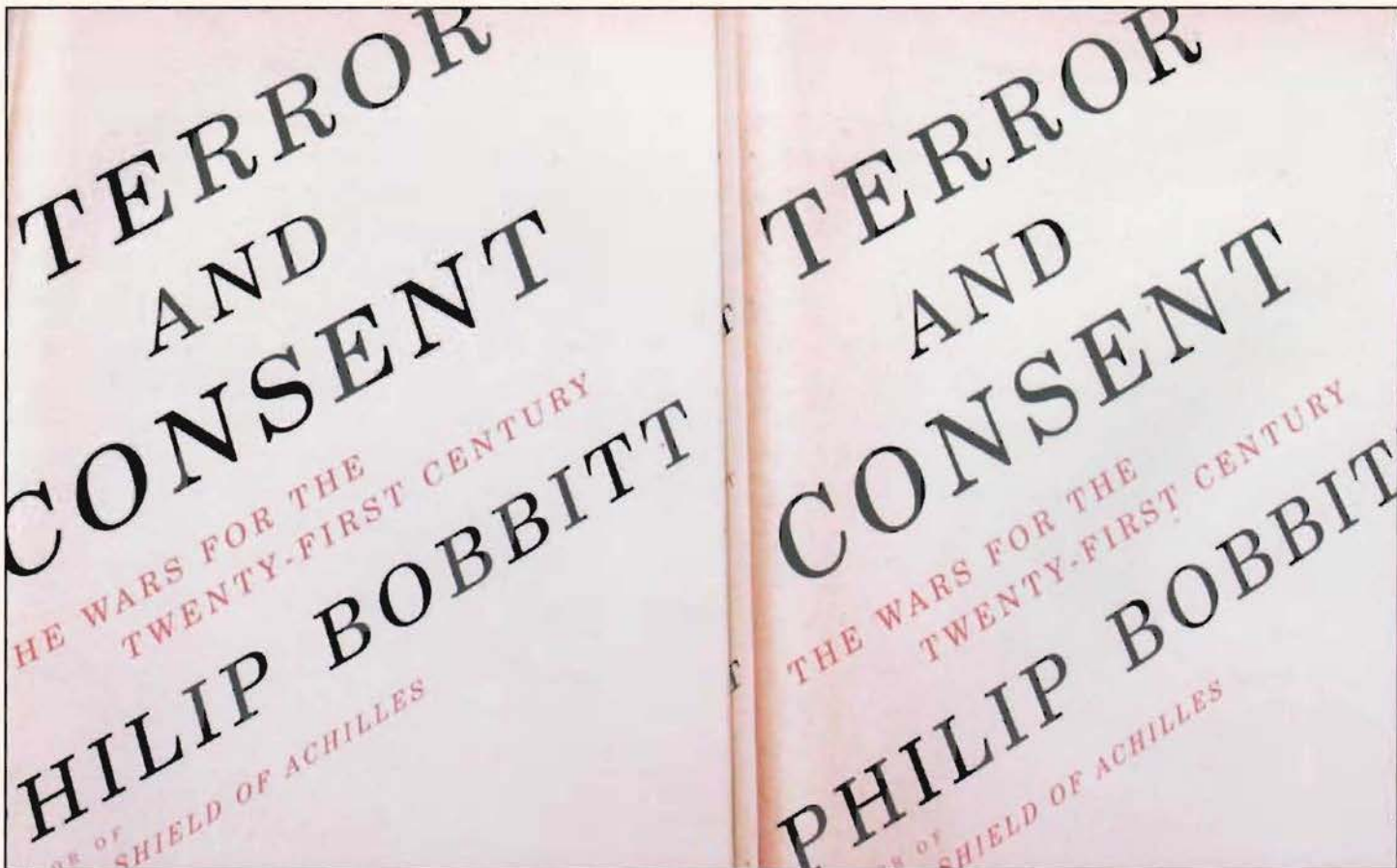
The world leadership of those nations is being challenged by shadowy communities of obedience. It is a contest that Philip Bobbitt has directed his attention to, most recently in his just-published book, *Terror and Consent*. He sees this struggle between states of consent and states of terror,

like al-Qaeda, in much the way Wells stated the case. Modern democracies exist more or less to uphold individual liberty and rights, while al-Qaeda aims to replace them with a state of terror, in which individuals submit to the arbitrary rule of clerics and/or reactionary ideologies of past centuries, such as *sharia*, the rule of the Koran as enforced by Muslim clerics.

Bobbitt's focus is the struggle in Iraq, where he believes that the U.S. strategy was originally on the mark. But things then went awry. President Bush looked for a triumph with parades, in which the mass of the Iraqi people became our allies in fighting the new terror led by al-Qaeda. Instead we

have found ourselves embroiled with ancient tribal feuds, Sunnis vs. Shiites, sharia vs. republicanism, and a nearly complete lack of societal bases on which to build a democracy.

To make matters worse—far worse—the Bush regime has flaunted its contempt for the very rule of law which it should have been championing. Washington should have been exporting democracy. Instead we have been cursing the deficiencies of the Patriot Act, the “prison colony” at Guantánamo Bay, the use of torture and the willful evasion of existing law that has accompanied it.” (*From a *New York Times* review of Bobbitt's book.)



Yet many of his fellow Democrats (not to mention many libertarians on the right) will be stopped short by what Bobbitt says next. His training in constitutional law leads him to fault the Bush regime on several crucial counts.

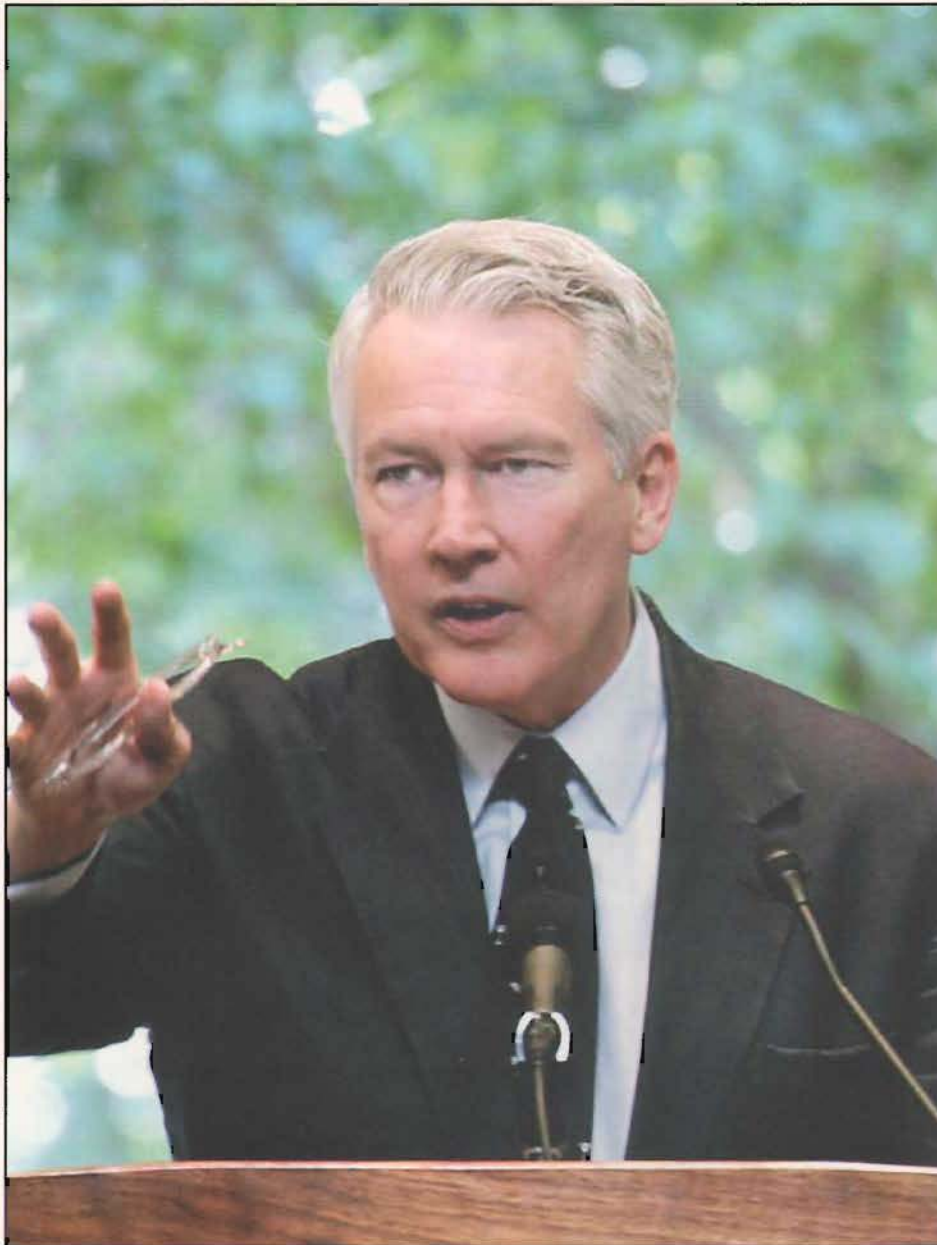
First, Bobbitt says, Bush's instinct was not wrong in forming the Pa-

triot Act. In this war, we do need pre-emptive detention of suspected terrorists. We do need a significant increase of surveillance, particularly of electronic communications; we do need, in some circumstances, to use coercive techniques (short of torture) to elicit information from terrorists. The administration's fatal mistake was

its failure to understand that these things could be achieved by appropriate modifications of the law. By doing what indeed was needed, but doing it outside the law, the administration undermined the legitimacy of American policy at home as well as abroad. Bobbitt is emphatic: all branches of government must act in conformity with the Constitution and the law.

With lawyerly precision, Bobbitt explores the classic conundrum of the "ticking bomb." When a suspected terrorist has knowledge of a concealed explosive device that, if detonated, will kill thousands, do the authorities have the right to torture him? In such a case, do the ends justify the means? Bobbitt argues that torture can never be legal. The torturer would have to stand trial for his actions. Bobbitt suggests that it should be possible for government agents to use coercive methods short of torture (sleep deprivation, truth drugs), but only with the prior approval of a judicial authorities.

Nor is this all that we must do if we are to preserve security without sacrificing legality. Bobbitt argues for a radical overhaul of our intelligence system, insisting that traditional antinomies (United States citizen/foreigner, gathering/analysis, private/public) are now an obstacle to effective action. Yes, we really do need something like the abortive Total Information Awareness program, which pools every available piece of data and mines it for clues about the next 9/11. We also must take stringent, large-scale precautions to ensure that constitutional and legal order



The Western democracies may have bitter pills to swallow, Bobbitt believes.

do not break down in the event of a terrorist attack or natural disaster.

But above all, we need a new foreign policy doctrine. Old doctrines like deterrence and containment are obsolete. We must have new strategies of “preclusion” (a word that distinguishes it from the term “pre-emption” in the National Security Strategy of 2002, though the sense seems to be the same). Unilateralism must certainly be abandoned. The United States and its allies must recognize their common fate as the natural defenders of the society of states of consent. The U.S. and the European Union should form a new G2, as it were, committed to a post-Westphalian notion of sovereignty, yet assuring that their extra-national interven-

tions are governed by a new instrument of international law.

Bobbitt concedes that his vision will not be easy to realize. There is what he calls a “triage of terror,” because pre-emptive action against one threat may exacerbate another (for example, an attack on a state sponsor of terror may encourage other states to seek weapons of mass destruction as insurance, undermining the already frail system of nonproliferation). There is the danger, too, that a far worse war than the war on terror could occur if the newly emergent market-states of the East come into conflict with those in the West.

One problem seems to be the great defect of any pre-emptive action by a democratic regime: the elec-

toral rewards for success are slight because the public finds it hard to be grateful for a nonevent. Retaliation, by contrast, is a surefire vote-winner.

To summarize: Bobbitt believes that there is a real war against terror; that civil liberties as previously understood may need to be curtailed to win it; that we must nevertheless fight it without violating our commitment to the rule of law; and that the United States cannot win it alone. This is certainly not a combination of positions calculated to endear Bobbitt either to the left or the right in the United States today.

Presidential Transitions: An Evening With Jim Steinberg

March 24, 2008, at the Erwin Center.

James Steinberg has been Dean of the LBJ School for the last two years. Before that he had a distinguished career in government and was deeply involved with four presidential changeovers, beginning with the one from Ford to Carter. On March 24, Dean Steinberg spoke about the next changing of the presidential guard, scheduled for January 2009. His experience in that field gives him unique perspectives to speak about presidential transitions.

Steinberg believes that the next presidential changeover will be an extraordinarily important one. Even without the present domes-

tic economic crisis, foreign policy will present a number of potent challenges to the next administration.

First, there seems little doubt that we will remain heavily engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan. There will be few good options as to how to manage those very delicate situations. Our armed forces will remain stretched close to their limits.

Next, there are active nuclear issues in the world that need extraordinarily skillful handling, especially but not limited to India/Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea.

The dangers posed by terrorism will still be with us. Pakistan may

further inflame that issue and could well contribute to the threat of a political meltdown, made especially dangerous if terrorists gain access to its nuclear weaponry.

Fifth, Russia is newly resurgent. Even if communism has lost its fangs, Moscow’s traditional territorial interests on its borderlands have not disappeared.

Sixth, China presents significant economic and political challenges on a number of fronts.

Then there are the ubiquitous global problems of climate change and potential pandemic diseases.

These are the unique challenges that will face the new administra-

tion when it takes office in January. But there are three sets of problems that are common to any fresh administration, that always face the new incumbents. First, there will be the legacy of the recent campaign. During the run-up to the election, the candidates' rhetoric tended to sharpen their differences and eliminate the more nuanced and subtler differences between them. An example: during the 1992 campaign, then-governor Clinton excoriated the incumbent President Bush for coddling "the butchers of Beijing" and for failing to arm the Bosnians. In 2000 Bush blasted the Clintons for their policy of nation-building and adventuresome foreign policy in general. There was nothing new about such rhetoric. In general, new regimes seldom have had access to all the intelligence that the incumbents have had. Their world picture changes when the new players come into office.

China has been complicating things for new incumbents for at least sixty years. But recently that factor has sharpened considerably. The new economic power of the Chinese, coupled with their ability to challenge the U.S. and our contentious policy toward Taiwan, has made our China policy a ripe ground for incendiary rhetoric between and among our national politicians. Consider: after criticizing his predecessor's friendly views of China, President Clinton found it expedient to spend eight days in Beijing making friends with the Communists. Another example: During the 2000 campaign, Governor Bush sharply criticized Vice President Gore for Clinton's efforts at "nation build-



Dean James Steinberg: Will the November winners implement their campaign rhetoric?

ing," instead advocating a less ambitious foreign policy. But when Bush took office we got the war in Iraq, which has included some pretty ambitious nation building in its own right, vastly more so than what the Clinton regime did in the Balkans. There is no shortage of examples of such switches: Eisenhower on Korea; Kennedy and the "missile gap;" Nixon and Vietnam. New incumbents often see reasons to change their minds once in office. Dean Steinberg quoted a previous boss of his as justifying changes in his views over time this way: "Things do not appear to me today, as they appear to have appeared to me then."

Now we have a new President. Will Barak Obama and his advisers discover that the real world options are rather different than those he and they outlined during the campaign? Or will a slavish devotion to rash campaign promises lead the new political leader and his advisers to reconsider Emerson's famous dictum about a foolish consistency being the hobgoblin of little minds?

It will be interesting to reflect on Dean Steinberg's remarks at that time.

Noted Playwright David Mamet Gives Middleton Lecture

Lady Bird Johnson established the annual Harry Middleton Lectures in honor of long-time LBJ Library and Museum Director Harry Middleton. Among the distinguished speakers who have delivered the Lectures have been Jimmy Carter, Brian Williams, Bill Moyers, and Michael York. Politicians, distinguished actors, media gurus—in all, ten luminaries have given the lectures, including the latest, David Mamet.

In addition to his numerous hit plays, Mamet is the writer-director of ten noted films, and has been twice been nominated for an Oscar. His interviewer on this occasion was Robert Faires, arts editor for the *Austin Chronicle*. Tom Staley, Director

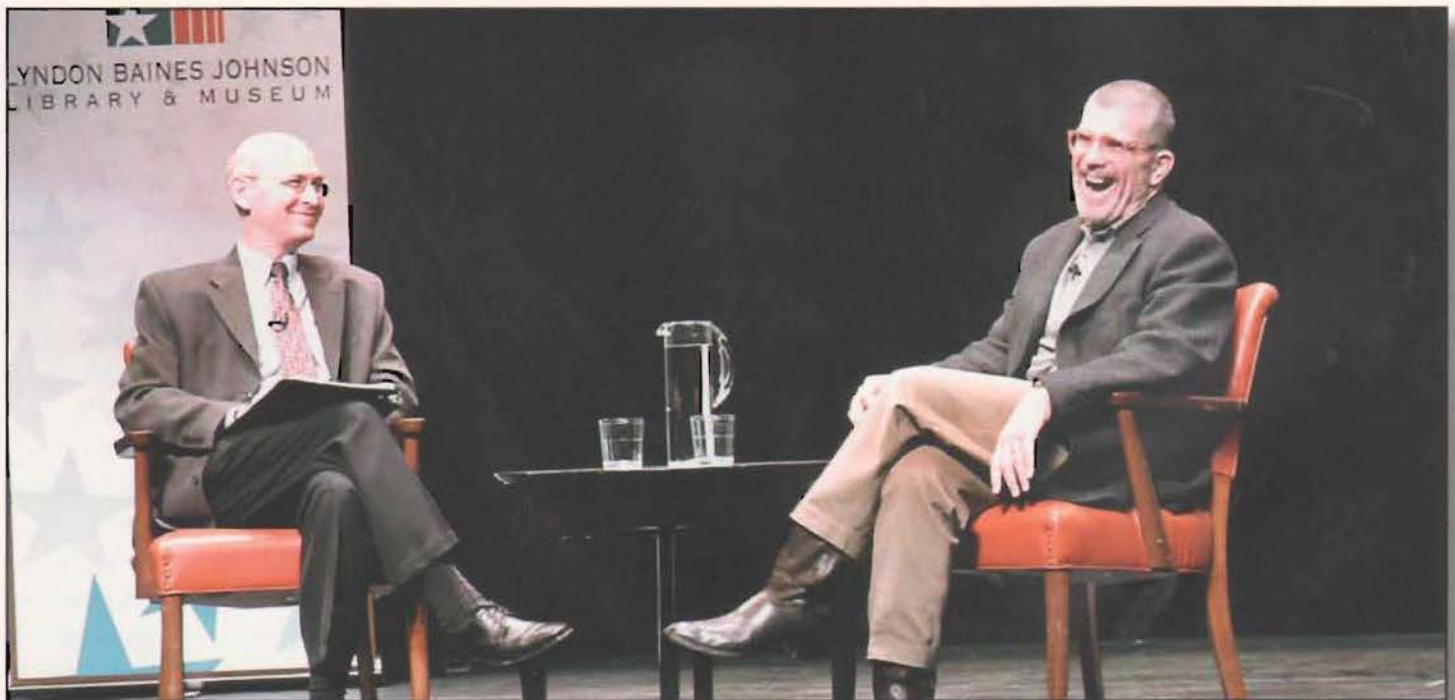
of the Harry Ransom Center at The University of Texas at Austin, introduced Mamet and Faires.

To begin, Faires asked Mamet to explain how he came to be a story teller, rather than a consumer of stories, as most people are. Mamet explained, “It got started six thousand years ago. Everybody in my family told stories. That’s what Jews do, is tell stories.” Mamet clarified; “The first stories the Jews set down became known as the Torah.”

More seriously, Mamet explained that as a boy he read everything. Further, he was of the first television generation, which meant that he spent a lot of time

watching all those old movies that the first TV programming—or rather the lack of it—inflicted on its audiences. That was his start. He had begun simply by imbibing the culture. Another key ingredient in his early makeup was the theater; another was stand-up comedy. (That latter element flashed early and often in this interview, and the audience ate it up.)

The theater was very much a part of his growing up in Chicago, Mamet said, much like live music is part of Austin, or “as tenors are part of Naples, and existentialist filth is part of Paris.” Part of that scene was a night club called The Second City. Mamet got a job there as a busboy, just so he could watch the players do their



David Mamet, on the right, shares a light moment with interviewer Robert Faires. There were many such moments, to the delight of the audience.

thing every night. "So you really started out to be an actor. What changed that?" Faires asked.

"Well, I couldn't act," Mamet mused. "I wasn't any good." But he was determined to be in the theater in some capacity. "That's where all the fun was."

His most valuable discovery was that if you want to learn how to write plays, you need an audience. It's like doing surgery. "You can cut up cadavers all you want, but the meter doesn't really start running until you have a live patient lying there on the table." And Chicago was a great place to learn that lesson, much better than New York. Mamet's father used to say that New York was the biggest hick town in the world. Chicago was different, possibly because, in Mamet's opinion, people there are somehow more real; it is a working person's city. And because of that, a Chicago audience is very hard to fool. When you see Chicagoans react badly to some bit you have written, it's a hard but invaluable lesson: "I'm never going to do that again!"

Mamet's next career stop was a stint at *Playboy* magazine. He met all sorts of people there, did some editing, and by his account, wrote most of the letters to the editor—all of them made up, Mamet said. He spent a lot of his time noticing the beautiful women whose photos adorned his office walls, while trying to work up copy for his column. "It was agony," Mamet murmured.

Then came the movies, beginning with his screenplay of his book *House of Games*, which he also directed. He loves doing movies. The best lesson he brought away from them is, "If there is *any* doubt, there is *no* doubt. If a scene is the best scene in the movie, but there is something wrong with it, throw it out. Get rid of it. And the time to do that is before you take the script onto the set."

On critics: "Successes and failures fall off me like water off a duck's back. Except for the failures."

Mamet is a writer in residence at UT for a year. Faires asked him what he liked most about working with students. Mamet didn't hesitate: "They're so polite," he said.

During the question and answer period after the interview, Mamet observed that it's an illusion to believe that the playwright and the audience have much of anything to say to each other. Any interface between them stops at the footlights. The writer has already said his piece: it is the play. Likewise, the audience has already said its piece—hopefully—with laughter and applause. Because of that, Mamet said, he spent ten years without giving interviews to the press, because they are a waste of time. Once he fell off the wagon and granted an interview. The reporter asked him why he had avoided interviews. "Because they always make me feel

stupid," Mamet said. And when the reporter protested: "But that's ridiculous!" Mamet responded, "You see?"

About screenwriting technique, Mamet reflected, Aristotle wrote the book: the *Poetics*. It's a very simple thing, and it'll take you a lifetime to master it. "All I know about a movie is, it's all structure. It's all story telling." One of the first lessons you must learn about acting is, "Nobody ever did anything for a bad reason." The same thing has been said about any biography. It will fail if it doesn't show that there is a positive side even to the most despicable subject.

About Stanislavski's method acting, Mamet reflected that it's like psychotherapy: the only thing wrong with it is that it doesn't work. "Nobody ever got any better. After fifteen years in analysis, you discover that you didn't like your mother. I'll save you a million dollars and tell you that right now. . . . [Acting classes promise] that if you can discover that little nugget that keeps you from being a good actor, you'll get over your reluctance about acting. But real actors don't have that reluctance about acting. They love it."

When asked whether it is necessary to be more able to write dialogue or construct a plot, Mamet said that of course both are necessary to some extent. But some ancient plays, when they are translated, come across as incredibly clunky. Yet

everyone agrees that they are great. Mamet paused a second and allowed, to the amusement of the audience: “Well—it helps to have talent.” As for writing plots, Mamet said, “Chekhov couldn’t write a plot to save his soul, and yet we like Chekhov.” It’s all very well to go to school about all this, Mamet said, but “You don’t learn the real lessons until it’s for keeps. Either you fail and go away with your tail between your legs, or you learn

the lessons. Otherwise you get out of the business.”

On the subject of acting schools, Mamet reiterated that classes are pretty much useless. In front of an audience the actor learns the real lessons immediately. Schools can help you to develop a few attributes, such as physical strength and how to project your voice; those are vital to any actor. But in school you learn very few things that you will have to go

on the stage to really learn in any event.

Mamet said that his favorite motto was for many years engraved on the back of his watch. It is a saying from an ancient Stoic: “What hinders you?” On this occasion he did not say so, but at least one member of the audience put it in the words of a television sponsor of sports gear: “Just do it!”

Newsman Tim Russert Dies

It was a memorable “Evening With,” on April 13, 2000, when Tim Russert, the man who personified *Meet the Press*, came to the LBJ Library to conduct a double-barreled interview with former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford.

We of the LBJ Library and Museum staff were deeply touched when we learned of Mr. Russert’s untimely death on June 13, 2008.

**Tim Russert on the left,
with then-Library Director
Harry Middleton.**



Russert, with former Presidents Ford and Carter, in the LBJ Auditorium.

Billy Graham in the White House: Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy

If there has been one constant in the modern White House, from every president from Truman to George W. Bush, it has been Billy Graham. During her introduction on this evening, LBJ Library and Museum Director Betty Sue Flowers recalled that she had won a bet by predicting the timing of the first Iraqi war. She had based her guess strictly on the timing of a Graham visit to the Bush White House.

Nancy Gibbs is editor at large at *Time* magazine, and Michael Duffy has been at the center of *Time's* political coverage for the past twenty years. He is a two-time winner of the Gerald R. Ford Award for Distinguished Reporting. Both have taught at Princeton.

Ms. Gibbs led off by remarking that no one in their experience—not members of Congress, not ambassadors nor foreign policy experts, neither politicians nor party advi-

sors—has had the access and the consistent impact on the presidents from Truman to Bush, that the Reverend Graham has had. Gibbs and Duffy set out to explore this phenomenon. Was Graham simply a sort of White House chaplain that every president inherited? Or was there another explanation?

They found that something much more private and personal was involved. It went deeper than personal ambition on Graham's part. Nor was it mere grandstanding by presidents who valued photo opportunities with a national iconic religious symbol. Graham was unique. Only he has had that sort of back-stage pass to the White House over such a long span.

In a way, the First Families were Graham's special congregations. Other pastors might prefer the familiar faces and voices that a regular congregation could provide ev-

ery Sunday. No football stadium crowd could provide that kind of comfortable feedback.

Even so, the LBJ-Graham relationship was somewhat offbeat. The two men had personal styles that differed considerably. LBJ was at his best with small audiences, while Graham liked crowds, the bigger, the better. And the sources of their faith differed considerably. Both men were ecumenical by instinct, but Johnson had always belonged to the Disciples of Christ, something of a splinter group among the Protestant denominations. On the other hand, Graham was a Southern Baptist, one of the largest churches in the United States.

Or it might have been simpler than that. Graham told Gibbs that LBJ was a very complex man—"and I loved him very much." (Many who worked on LBJ's staff might have nodded silently in agreement.)



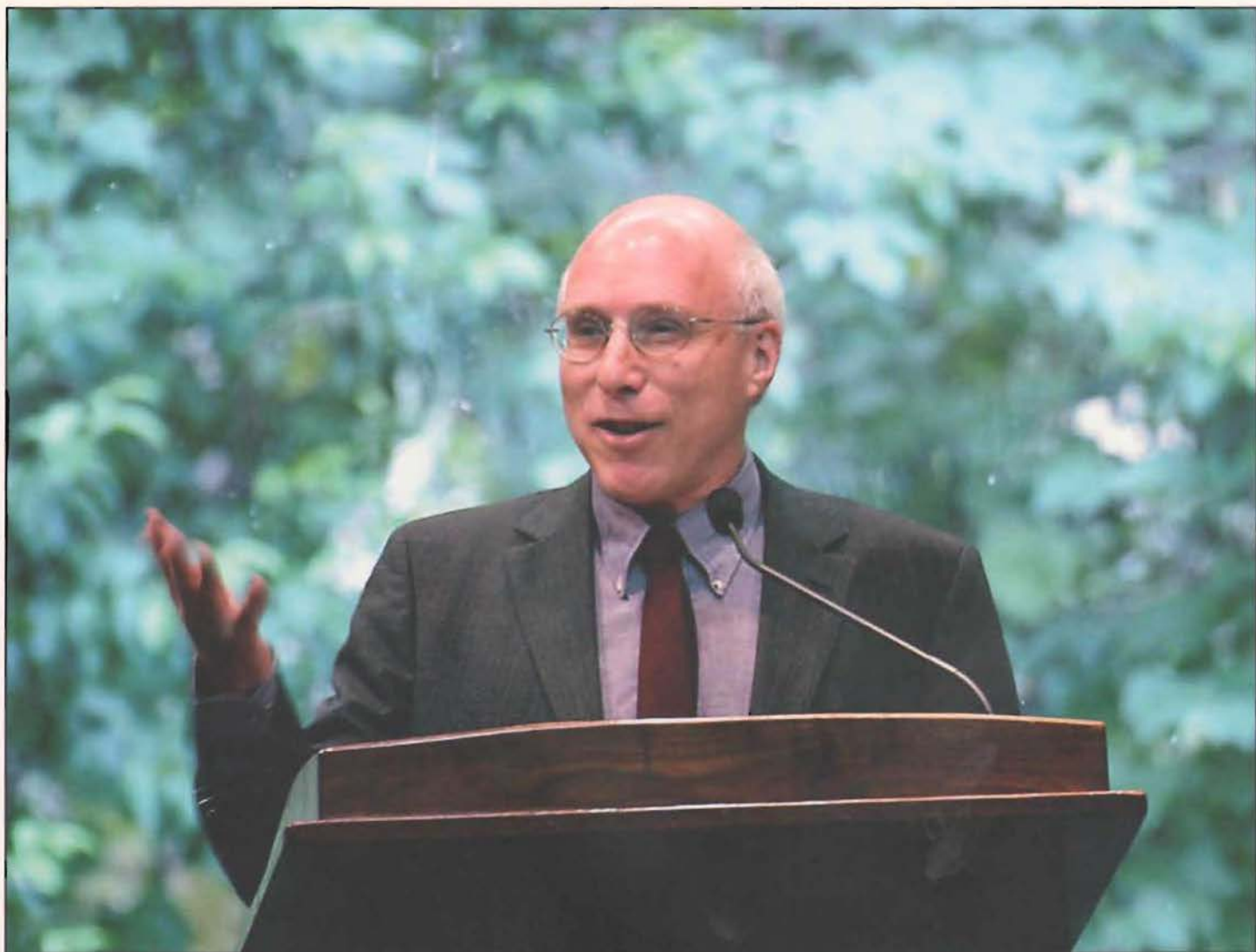
LBJ, According to Documentarian David Grubin

David Grubin has produced over sixty films on subjects ranging from art to history, from poetry to science. He has won every major award in his field, including eight Emmys, two Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Prizes, and the George Foster Peabody award. His four-hour documentary, *LBJ, a Biography of Lyndon Johnson* produced for the *The American Experience*, was chosen as one of the best documentaries of 1992. Other award-winning productions include *FDR* and *Healing and the Mind*, with Bill Moyers.

On October 16, Mr. Grubin came to the Library to kick off this year's series of Evenings With. He began by reflecting that Americans mostly learn their history, these days, from television documentaries. The most popular best sellers on history, by authors such as David McCullough, are read by at most two million people. The documentaries in *The American Experience*, by comparison, reach 25 million viewers.

Grubin was a child of the sixties when he began his research

on his LBJ project. That meant that he was prepared not to like LBJ. But he was able to interview many of Johnson's contemporaries, and that brought some balance to his perspective. Many of the documents in the LBJ Library were being opened; that also helped. But it was the recollections of those Grubin talked to that carried the most weight. Johnson left strong impressions on just about everybody he met. And it seemed that they all had a story to tell. Over two hundred stories, as it developed.



As Grubin immersed himself in the hundreds of hours of tapes, speeches, and film clips, together with the testimony of the oral histories he gathered, a different LBJ began to take form in his mind. This new Johnson was the last New Dealer, determined to see Franklin Roosevelt's program through to its proper fruition. LBJ wanted to fight the War on Poverty. Johnson was not interested in that other war, the one in Vietnam. He inherited it. He was determined not to escalate the war there, but by early 1965 his advisers were telling him that the only way we could continue supporting the anti-communist South Vietnamese was to bomb the northern aggressors. And when that didn't do the job, the advisers said, we would have to send combat formations of ground troops. Johnson hated all of it. He saw in it the death of his beloved domestic program.

The first combat units entered South Vietnam on March 8, 1965. Army Chief of Staff

General Harold K. Johnson predicted that the war could take five years and five hundred thousand men to achieve victory. Most of Johnson's advisers were incredulous at the General's estimate. How could a tinpot regime like Hanoi—it was Dean Rusk's phrase, the Secretary of State, a man who LBJ admired—how could the communists resist the force that Washington could bring to bear? But the General's gloomy vision proved to be more accurate than most.

Meanwhile, at home, the civil rights movement was gaining strength. With LBJ's backing, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 became law, and in 1965 the violence at Selma, Alabama shocked the nation into calling for a Voting Rights Act. LBJ seized the moment. He had not believed that he could get such a bill at the time, but Selma provided him the ammunition he needed in the Congress. Those two acts were the jewels in LBJ's crown, so to speak, that gave

permanent luster to his achievements in bringing justice to the African Americans in the United States.

Still, Vietnam overshadowed all. The speakers at the Democratic Convention of 2008 extolled the historic achievements of the heroes of their party—FDR, Truman, Kennedy—but Johnson's name was not mentioned—or if it was, your editor failed to find it.

It was not until Barack Obama won the election of 2008 that the media began to recall, and remind its audiences, that Lyndon Johnson stood behind that signal event. A black man had taken the first office of this country. Could it have happened without LBJ's fight for civil rights? Historians do not like that sort of "what-if" questions, as a rule. But in this case the answer seems clear enough, even for the most hesitant interpreters of our past.

An Evening with Barry Goldwater, Redux

Sarah Gross, staff writer, contributed to this article.

Barry Goldwater's granddaughter doesn't think the Republican Party of today bears much resemblance to the one her grandfather belonged to. "CC" Goldwater—it is her legal name—is the author and producer of the film *Goldwater on Goldwater*, the documentary of her grandfather's life. On December 19, 2007, she brought her film for a special screening for the Friends of the LBJ Library at the UT Alumni Center.

The film opens with the depiction of perhaps the most famous television political campaign spot ever made, the little girl picking petals from a daisy flower, with a songbird giving vocal background. Then the film segues into the countdown of a nuclear detonation. (The man generally credited with creating the ad, Tony Schwartz, died in June, 2008.) The film only ran once on national television, before it was pulled from the nation's TV screens. Ms. Goldwater says Senator Goldwater threatened to sue Lyndon Johnson for running the ad.

Whether that is so or not, the documentary got enthusiastic applause from the large audience, which one *Dallas Morning News* reporter described as "decidedly

Democrat[ic] and salted with more than a smattering of white hair. Many had worked for Johnson in the 1964 campaign."

As the granddaughter of former Senator and presidential candidate Barry Goldwater, CC Goldwater



"CC" Goldwater on the left, with Cathy Robb, LBJ's granddaughter.

should know the subject of her first film well. Ms. Goldwater has served as a television entertainment correspondent in New York and Los Angeles and has most recently produced *Mr. Conservative: Goldwater on Goldwater*, a

90-minute documentary detailing Barry Goldwater's rise in politics and his unsuccessful bid for the presidency in 1964. The film includes interviews with Senators Edward Kennedy, Hillary Clinton, and John McCain, with journalists Walter Cronkite, Ben Bradlee, George Will, Bob Schieffer, Helen Thomas, Andy Rooney, George Carville, and members of the Goldwater family. She introduced the film, which was shown in its entirety.

"In this biographical documentary, illuminated by interviews with major public figures and never-before-seen home movies and photos, CC looks back on the man, his morals, his missteps, and his enduring legacy as 'Mr. Conservative.'" - HBO Documentary Films

Ms. Goldwater signed copies of *The Conscience of a Conservative*, written by her grandfather in 1960 and re-released last year with a new foreword by George Will and afterword by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. The book was available for purchase at

the event. The public may place orders with the LBJ Museum Store. For details, please call the Store at (512) 232-2396.

After 37 Years, Lady Bird Johnson's *A White House Diary* is Reprinted by UT Press.

During President Johnson's tenure in the White House, First Lady Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson worked hard to preserve her memories of those tumultuous years. Dictating into a tape recorder, she captured her thoughts about each day with disciplined regularity. In the years immediately after the Johnson's retirement to their Texas Ranch, she had her notes transcribed and saw them published as *A White House Diary* in 1970.

The *New York Times* had this to say of the book, and its author:

[*A White House Diary*] is an intensely personal document that reveals a woman who describes herself as "terribly average—something like litmus paper," but who, in fact, is not average at all. Lady Bird is remarkable for the range and depths of her loves—fierce loyalties as well as small delights—and for a physical and spiritual stamina which bore her through ordeals which would have drained lesser humans. . . . History and a great many people will remember her as a valuable woman, largely immune from the antagonisms her husband aroused, who gave the best of herself to her family and her country. Towards the end, Lady Bird writes about her diary that "Lyndon is curiously proud

of it and I am touched by that. He talks more about it than I ever would." She does not need to. It speaks, most eloquently, for itself.

The book has been out of print, despite considerable demand for it. But now the University of Texas Press has brought out a second edition; it is Book Seventeen in the *Louann Atkins Temple Women & Culture Series*.

Former LBJ Library and Museum Director Harry Middleton moderated an evening's event to mark the new edition of the diary. The readings were necessarily brief, owing to constraints of time, but what was lacking in length was more than made up by the depth of feeling and the striking eloquence that Lady Bird Johnson had brought to her task.

Among the incidents recounted by this evening's participants was one from presidential daughter Luci Baines Johnson. She read her mother's version of the story of Luci's first night in the White House, December 7, 1963. Sixteen-year-old Luci and her overnight guest Beth Jenkins decided to have a fire in the inviting fireplace in her bedroom. They thought that the flue was open. It wasn't. There was smoke, and excitement.

The damage to the bedroom was

minor, and Luci was "allowed" to help with the patching up.

Daughter Lynda Robb recalled a memorable meeting with Alice Roosevelt Longworth in the White House—as many could testify, any meeting with the free-spirited Ms. Longworth was likely to be memorable. One of her stock sayings was, allegedly, "If you have nothing good to say about someone, come and sit by me." Elspeth Rostow recalled that Ms. Longworth's father Teddy Roosevelt remarked that he could be president of the United States, or he could see that Alice behaved herself. But he couldn't possibly do both. On this occasion Ms. Robb remarked favorably on a portrait of the wife of William Howard Taft, with her classic Gibson Girl's tucked waist and abundant bosom. Ms. Longworth countered that it was Ms. Taft's face in the portrait all right, but the artist had put it on someone else's body.

Bess Abell and James Ketcham told a story about selecting the White House china for the Johnson's tenure. Naturally they had decided on a theme of wildflowers, and each state was to have its own special flower on one setting of four plates. That worked fine until the last ones, the dessert plates, arrived. They were dreadful, Lady Bird said, looking like the worst effort by, say, a chintzy five-

and-dime store. Luckily, when it came time for the president of Tiffany's to view the final product, he immediately agreed that they were awful. A potential embarrassment was avoided.

Mr. Ketcham recalled Mrs. Johnson's love of art. She added the first Winslow Homer piece to the White House collection, and was determined to do more. Ketcham estimated that Lady Bird increased the collection of paintings by about sixty per cent—including works by Thomas Sully and Charles Russell.

Ms. Robb recounted her constant struggle to preserve her privacy in the White House, while the ever-present Secret Service was determined to make sure that there was no privacy—not even for a courting couple, which USMC Captain Charles Robb and Lynda were at the time. Lynda solved the dilemma by declaring a truce with the agents assigned to her, if she caught them goofing off on the job: “I won't tell on you, if you don't tell on me.”

September, 1964: Lady Bird

recorded some of her favorite moments of the 1964 campaign, the Whistlestop train campaign through the Old South, or as Mrs. Johnson wrote in the diary, “Here we go, marching through Georgia!” The Democratic National Committee had misgivings about her trip, fearing hostile reactions from the anti-civil rights crowds she was sure to encounter. But Mrs. Johnson was adamant. She was a child of the South, she said, and was not about to write off the Confederate states where she was raised.

Bess Abell remembered that Mrs. Johnson's southern accent got deeper and thicker with every mile the train descended into the Old South. To the amusement of the audience, Lynda noted that it was the last time the Democrats carried Virginia. (Not, at least, until Nov. 4, 2008! Ed. Note)

It was a huge success. The campaign reached its climax in New Orleans, where President Johnson met the First Lady and delivered a dramatic speech to a potentially hostile crowd. Instead LBJ's speech roused his audience, which awarded him with sustained applause.

If 1964 had its joyous moments and triumphs, there were perhaps fewer of them by 1968. Lady Bird's diary recalled how the March 31 speech affected Lynda Robb, now a newly-wed who had just gotten back on the early bird flight from California, where she had seen her husband off to Vietnam. She was tired and possibly overwrought, and perhaps could be forgiven for reproaching her father/president for leaving office. Who, she scolded, would be left to watch over her marine?

And there were the 1968 assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy; the riots in Detroit and Washington, D.C., the riots at the Democratic convention in Chicago—that last year saw dark moments indeed, that darkened the White House with the miasma that Lady Bird called “the valley of the black pig.”

All the gloomy spots, and the light ones, appear in the Lady Bird diary, which is once again available in the Library Museum Store.

To the Moon: The American Space Program Is Featured In A New Exhibit

By Anne Wheeler, Communications Director

August 27, 2008 would have been the 100th birthday of President Lyndon Baines Johnson. In honor of President Johnson's Centennial, the LBJ Library & Museum is presenting *To the Moon: The American Space Program in the 1960s*, a major exhibit celebrating man's venture into space. The exhibit opened on President Johnson's 100th birthday, August 27, 2008, and will close on the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing, July 20, 2009. The exhibit also coincides with the 50th anniversary of the creation of NASA.

From the time he was Senate Majority Leader in the 1950s, Lyndon

Johnson did more to facilitate the rapid progress of the space program than any other American leader. Johnson co-sponsored legislation for the creation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 1958, and as Vice-President, was appointed Chairman of the National Space Council by President John F. Kennedy. Kennedy asked the Space Council to examine America's space program and the feasibility of a lunar landing. In a memo to Kennedy, Johnson stated that "with a strong effort the United States could conceivably be first" to achieve Kennedy's goal of "landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth" by the end

of the decade. Later, in one of the most awe-inspiring and dramatic stories of our time, President Johnson ensured that this goal remained on track, was funded, and that the mission was accomplished.

The primary focus of the exhibit covers the period of "Sputnik" (late 1950s) through the first moon landing of Apollo 11 in 1969. Each step of the space programs Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo are featured, as well as the milestone flights of astronauts Alan Shepard, John Glenn, and Ed White.

"To the Moon" features eye-catching, visually attractive state-of-the-art elements to match the ambitious scope of the subject.

The LBJ Library's space exhibit coincides with a space exhibit featuring Skylab, the Shuttle Missions, and the International Space Station at the George H. W. Bush Library at Texas A&M University at College Station. The two presidential libraries are collaborating in creating promotional materials, advertising, and pursuing news media coverage.

"To The Moon" Exhibit highlights:

From the earliest days of civilization, man has been fascinated with the mysteries and wonder of outer space. The exhibit covers the ancient world's study of the celestial bodies, and showcases the revolutionary work of Copernicus, Galileo, and Albert Einstein. Visitors have the rare opportunity to see the original publication of *On the Revolutions of Celestial Spheres* by



Astronaut Alan Bean explains one of his paintings to a visitor. More of his superb art work is featured in the space exhibit.



Painting with Moondust

"One of the things that I want to achieve with my paintings is to give people a connection with the otherworldly feelings that I had on the moon.

I begin with a sheet of aircraft plywood and thick acrylic modeling medium. At just the right time I work on the surface, using some of the tools I had on the moon.

I use my metal geology hammer to dig and scrape into the surface. I use a sharp-edged bit from the cutting edge of one of the core tubes to make round indentions on the painting surface. I use a replica of my lunar boots soles to make "footprints" like the ones left in the moon dust. I also mix tiny portions of a charred Apollo heat shield, and some gold foil used to cover the spacecraft's sides and hatch into the modeling medium.

Lastly, NASA gave us the American flags, NASA insignias, and Apollo mission patches we wore on our space suits. I cut off a portion of each, chopped them into small bits, and put a few of the bits into the modeling medium. I found a way of putting a little bit of the Ocean of Storms into each of my paintings."



Copernicus, the handwritten manuscript of Einstein's *The Foundation of the General Theory of Relativity*, as well as a working replica of Galileo's telescope.

The early section explores the emerging literary genre of science fiction, which gained enormous popularity during the mid-nineteenth century. Visitors can enjoy a blast from the past—black and white science fiction films, vintage video posters, and audio from "The War of the Worlds." A timeline discussing the history of aviation—from the Wright brothers through the test pilots who broke the sound barrier—is featured, including the role of aviation in military history. There is a special display on Dr. Robert Goddard, the father of American rocketry, including a replica of Goddard's laboratory. Another highlight is a replica of Chuck Yeager's X-1 cockpit that visitors can sit in and experience what it may have been like to break the sound barrier.

The exhibit focuses on the Johnson era, starting with the 1957 launch of the world's first satellite, Sputnik, in 1957. In a quest to catch up with the Soviets, Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson initiated hearings to determine how the U.S. could forge ahead in the "space race," ultimately culminating in Johnson co-sponsoring legislation creating NASA. Several years later, President Kennedy appointed Vice President Johnson to head the development of the space program. A montage of film and media clippings illustrates the response of the American public and government to the Soviet launches.

Large displays comparing the Rus-

sian and American space capsules represent the first phase in the quest to reach the moon, Project Mercury. Profiles of the Mercury 7 astronauts and memorabilia from John Glenn's pivotal flight orbiting Earth (flight helmet, rocket fragment, heat shield from "Friendship 7") are also featured prominently.

Project Gemini represented the second phase in the "moon quest," bridging Mercury and Apollo. This section of the exhibit includes a simulator that reenacts the feel of a real spacewalk. The exhibit also

displays extensive resources from the Apollo Missions—including an array of original memorabilia (flight suits, Mission Control consoles, the Engine Thrust Control Panel – Lunar Landing Research Vehicle, a portable life support system) along with vintage photography and film footage. In particular, the Apollo 11 moon mission is dramatized via a life-like scene of Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin planting the American flag on the moon.

The grand finale of *To The Moon:*

The American Space Program in the 1960s is a visually stunning presentation inspired by the dramatic story of America's quest to land a man on the moon. Using state-of-the-art media equipment, this eight-minute show features swirling picture and film images, actual audio clips of Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, and music in a planetarium-designed theater. The presentation is intended to underscore the exhibit by chronicling the highlights of the space program in the 1960s.

Hardeman Prize-Winning Book Examines the History of the War Powers Act

Each year the Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation awards the D. B. Hardeman Prize to the author of the most important book on a congressional topic. For the year 2007, the cash prize of \$5000 will be awarded to William G. Howell and Jon C. Pevehouse for *While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers*.

H. W. Brands, the Dickson Allen Anderson Centennial Professor of History at The University of Texas at Austin, had this to say about the prize-winning book:

In their compelling study, *While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers*, William G. Howell and Jon C. Pevehouse address a topic at once perennial and timely: how a democracy goes to war. The

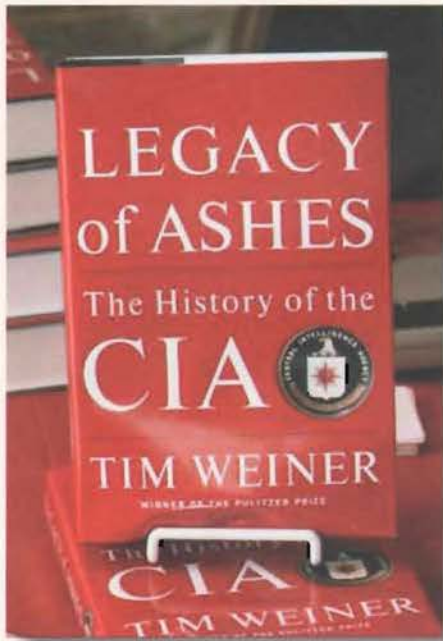
Constitution grants Congress the power to declare war, but during the last half-century the war power has been seized by presidents, albeit with Congressional complicity. Howell and Pevehouse examine this development and challenge the conventional wisdom that presidents act and Congress simply reacts in matters involving the use of military force. They adduce an impressive array of empirical evidence to show that while Congress rarely challenges presidents directly, its members employ the media, lobbyists, and grass-roots groups to shape the context in which presidents resort to force. The decision by the Bush administration to invade Iraq in 2003 forms the centerpiece

of Howell and Pevehouse's study, but their conclusions have broad implications for American foreign policy generally. The book has already sparked vigorous debate, and it doubtless will continue to do so.

Sitting with Dr. Brands on the Hardeman Prize Committee are two political scientists at The University of Texas at Austin, Sean Theriault and Andrew Karch; also Don Bacon, former editor of the *Encyclopedia of the Congress*; Dr. Betty Koed, Assistant Historian to the U.S. Senate; Raymond Smock, former Historian of the U. S. House of Representatives and now Director of the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies at Shepherd University; and John Sides of the Political Science Department at George Washington University.

An Evening With Tim Weiner and the CIA

On November 14, 2007, Tim Weiner learned that his book on the history of the CIA had just won the National Book Award. So he was understandably ebullient when he took the podium the next evening to talk about his latest work, *Legacy of Ashes*, which covers the first sixty years of the agency's history.



Although Weiner used the resources of all the presidential libraries in his research, he stated that he found the LBJ Library's archives were the most fruitful. He noted in passing that all of the quotes in the book are on the record; there are no anonymous sources.

Weiner was critical, even caustic, in recounting the CIA's role in the country's history. For example, in investigating the JFK assassination, he found serious faults in CIA's failure to advise the Warren Commission of what it knew.

In the question-and-answer peri-

od that followed his presentation, Weiner fielded some penetrating queries from his audience.

One asked how we can do better in the field of foreign intelligence, where the agency seems to have failed so often in its task. Simple, answered Weiner: "Learn something about the country we are interested in." Weiner added that our current performance in the Middle East does not signal any newfound improvement in the CIA's record.

Weren't there any great CIA leaders? Yes, Weiner answered, but only two: Bedell Smith, and Richard Helms. Nobody else.

How do you run a secret intelligence service in an open democracy? So far it is an unsolved riddle, Weiner believes.

Did Lee Harvey Oswald act alone in the assassination of JFK? There is no good evidence otherwise, Weiner thinks. Richard Helms died without resolving this question in his own mind.

Has there ever been a good working relationship between a director of central intelligence and a president? Yes. As result of Helms' absolutely dead-on call as to the Six-Day War in 1967, LBJ and Helms had an excellent relationship. During the days just before that conflict, LBJ queried Helms as to which side would win if the shooting began. Israel, answered Helms, in less than two weeks. It was an inspired prediction and LBJ never forgot it.

What about torture in the CIA's past? When the Korean War broke out, the CIA put suspected double agents in jail, in Japan, Germany, and Panama—it sounds like today's "rendition"—and questioned them "harshly," probably in contravention of the Geneva Convention.

What about Iraq and Iran? In September 2002 the CIA was asked, what threat does Iraq pose? The answer was that the place was virtually bristling with WMD. Colin Powell went before the UN with that evaluation, with DCI George Tenet looking over his shoulder, and told the world that these were



hard facts. And so we went to war. This was the most catastrophic failure of intelligence in the entire history of the CIA, Weiner insisted. "You simply can't conjure up existential threats to this country that don't exist." How did it happen? It happened, Weiner believes, because the CIA was rely-

ing on intelligence that was years old and because we had no spies on the ground.

How was it that a man like an "alcoholic malingerer," Aldrich Ames, became chief of counter-intelligence for the Soviet Union, only to sell every name of our agents to the KGB? Weiner quoted James Woolsey, President Clinton's chief of Central Intelligence: "One could almost conclude that no one was watching, or that no one cared."

"How effective is congressional oversight of the CIA? In the "good old days, in the fifties, there was only one effective overseer in the Senate, Richard Russell. But

he was very effective. Anyone who diddled with Russell did so at their peril."

"There are two meanings to the word 'oversight,'" said Weiner, "to oversee, and to overlook." During William Casey's tenure at CIA, he lied to Congress for sport. "If you want real oversight of intelligence in an open democracy, don't hire Bill Casey to run the agency. He lies."

Weiner explained the problem of congressional oversight this way: There is little in it for a member of Congress to build up a reputation, no pork-barrel for the home district. During the recent dominance of Republicans in Congress,

oversight simply did not exist. In effect the CIA said to Congress, "Trust us. We know what we are doing." And the Congress came aboard.

Our current and perhaps the most serious problem in the gathering of intelligence is the tension between technical gadgetry and human sources. We have the most advanced satellites and super-computers in existence. But, said Weiner, "At the end of the day, the job is *to know the enemy*. And that is the business of spies."



