

Bush Passes Buck On Energy

By MARTIN SCHRAM
Scripps Howard News Service

With the energy crisis fueling the economic crisis — with prices soaring, growth stalling and Americans desperate for a leader with a plan — President Bush exhibited the sort of leadership and intellect last week that has made his presidency what it is today.

Like an NFL quarterback being blitzed, the president stood tall in a Rose Garden news conference and forthrightly passed the buck to Congress. As passes go, it was a mission accomplished. As presidential leadership goes, it was a pass.

He has but one answer for all of the crises that have erupted during his term to torment Americans who twice chose him as their president. The problem, said the president, was that the Congress has failed to solve these crises. Bush declared that Americans are "looking to their elected

leaders in Congress for action. Unfortunately, on many of these issues, all they're getting is delay."

Missing in action in his every response was even a glimmer of the sort of creative conceptualizing, innovative analysis and constructive approaches that must be the essence of presidential leadership in America's form of government in which, we are told in textbooks, a president proposes and a Congress disposes.

What is especially unfortunate for Americans is that we are not getting anything much better from the three surviving candidates who are campaigning to become our next president. We'll get to them — and propose some solutions for them. But first we must dispose of our present buck-pass-in-chief.

Nowhere was it more apparent than in his tired, tame sense of what is needed to solve today's energy crisis. The one in

which you've seen gasoline prices shoot up by another \$1.40 a gallon in just the last 18 months, which has forced prices up in all things that get trucked to reach us.

Bush blamed Congress for the fact that there have been no oil refineries built in the United States in 30 years — do you recall him leading a national effort to get this done? Bush also blamed Congress for not approving oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. And when a reporter noted that experts call this merely a long-term solution, Bush bristled: "Opening up ANWR is not long term; it's intermediate term." Say what?

Out on the campaign trails, John McCain and Hillary Clinton are supporting an old idea — a summertime tax holiday for gasoline taxes. Scrap the 18.4 cents a gallon federal gas tax for the summer. Barack Obama opposes it, scoffing that it is minuscule in its relief to motorists — maybe

worth a half a tank of free gas in your car over a summer — while siphoning money from highway repairs. Also it won't curb consumption and won't increase supply. Obama says, it is being championed not to cure our energy needs but McCain's and Clinton's election needs.

But there is one common-sense solution that would help prime our economic pump even as it saves fuel at our gas pumps — but it is not being mentioned by any of the above. Not by Bush nor McCain nor Clinton nor Obama. And what is especially dumb-founding is that it is one of the most mindless provisions in our present energy tax break policy — because it was written to stop working the moment it is proven to be working most successfully.

Congress enacted a tax credit for all people who buy hybrid cars — of some \$3,000-plus, originally. But because Toyota had developed its full-hybrid vehicles

when America's then-myopic car makers scoffed at such investments, the U.S. car makers convinced Congress to phase out the credits once a car company sold 60,000 hybrid vehicles.

The tax credits drove motorists to buy Toyota's hybrids early — and when it was working most excellently is when, in the wisdom of the members of Congress and the lobbyists who fuel them, Toyota's credits were cut off.

Result: Today, you can buy a Toyota Prius that gets almost 50 miles per gallon or a Camry that gets 35 miles per gallon — but get zero tax credit from the federal government. But you can buy a Chevrolet Malibu mild-hybrid that gets only 24 miles per gallon — just two miles better than a non-hybrid Malibu — and get a tax credit of \$1,300.

A real presidential leader would demand that these tax credits be kept permanent.

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Thought for
Today

"But unto every one of us is given grace according
to the measure of the gift of Jesus Christ." Ephesians 4:7

Toxaphene, Ballot Issues Settled In Charlton, Ware

Toxaphene is not being dumped into the Chesser Island Landfill near Folkston, according to a Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) spokesman in Brunswick, and the Ware Board of Registrars voted Monday to sanction a non-binding referendum among Ware County's Republican voters concerning a controversial industrial waste dumping agreement with the North American Metals Co., Jacksonville, Fla.

Jim Harris of the Georgia EPD at Brunswick said he checked with the operators of the Chesser Island Landfill and learned that a large quantity of toxaphene-contaminated earth from the Hercules Corporation's plant at Brunswick has been shipped to a hazardous waste landfill at Barnwell, S.C. The contaminated earth had bordered a plant that had once manufactured "Hercules 3956," a brand name for the banned insecticide, Harris said.

Harris said soil that had bordered the contaminated earth — but did not "register positive" for toxaphene — has been excavated from the Brunswick plant site and shipped to the Charlton County landfill for disposal.

Toxaphene is a dangerous chemical that was banned for all uses in the United States in 1990. "It belongs to the so-called 'Dirty Dozen,' a list of very toxic substances which were outlawed by the Stockholm Convention in April 2001," according to Wikipedia, the Web-based encyclopedia.

Short-term exposure may cause restlessness, hyperexcitability, tremors, spasms or convulsions. Long-term exposure may result in liver and kidney degeneration, central nervous system effects, possible immune system suppression and cancer.

The Chesser Island Landfill is operated by Waste Management Corp., an NYSE-listed (stock symbol WMI) company which routinely ships its collected wastewater to the Waycross Sewage Treatment plant for treatment and release into the Satilla River.

If Ware County's Tri-County Landfill is opened to the

dumping of industrial wastes, its collected wastewater will presumably be hauled to the Waycross sewage treatment plant for treatment and release into the Satilla River, also.

Meanwhile, Newton Bates of the Ware Board of Registrars reports that the five-member Board voted unanimously Monday to rescind a motion made by Board member Harold Smith on Thursday of last week to deny the placement of a landfill-related question on the Ware Republican ballot for July 15.

That motion was mistakenly voted down by a 3-2 vote when Democrats Smith, Dick Minchew and Frank Barrett became confused and denied their colleague's (Smith's) motion. Republicans Bates and Bill Day had voted "yes."

According to Bates, the Board voted unanimously Monday to approve the placement of this "yes" or "no" question on the Ware Republican ballot:

"Shall the lease agreement between Ware County, Ga., through the Ware County Board of Commissioners and North American Metals Co., LLC, a Florida limited liability company, allowing the disposal of 3 million tons per year of C&D wastes, ash from incinerated municipal solid waste, auto fluff, coal ash, contaminated soils and industrial waste be cancelled?"

Ware's Democratic voters will not have the opportunity to vote in this non-binding referendum. Registrar Betty Gillis said the Executive Committee of the Ware Democratic Party voted to keep the issue off their ballot in the July 15 primary. The Executive Committee is chaired by Jaki Johnson of Waycross, a candidate for the 177th District House seat now held by incumbent State Rep. Mark Hatfield, R-Waycross.

This is unfortunate and inexplicable. Since when did such an important question become a partisan issue? We suspect many Democrats would like a say on this question. It's too bad that Democratic leaders don't have the same opinion.

McCain Looks Like Winner

By ANN McFEATTERS
Scripps Howard News Service

If the election were today, Democrats would sweep local, state and national offices — and John McCain would be the nation's 44th president.

Polls are showing a remarkable state of affairs. There is strong alarm about what is going on in Washington, and Republicans get the blame. According to a *Wall Street Journal*/NBC poll by Republican pollster Neil Newhouse and Democratic pollster Peter Hart, voters favor Democrats by a 44 percent to 32 percent margin. But there is strong and growing admiration for McCain; a majority of voters identify with his "values."

Yes, four out of ten voters are distressed that Republican McCain's views are too much like those of President Bush, whom eight out of ten voters think has handled the economy poorly. A majority doesn't like McCain's position that the war in Iraq must continue.

But voters also question Hillary Clinton's honesty and say they are

if Barack Obama is "out of touch" with Americans and are vastly aghast at his long ties with the outspoken Rev. Jeremiah Wright.

One of my brothers said to me the other day while I was in Ohio, "You people in Washington have no idea how much this thing with Wright is resonating out in the rest of the country."

Yet, back in Washington, that's just about all I hear people talking about when they talk politics (which is most of the time).

Did Obama's new denunciation of Wright's "rants" stop the candidate's decline in the polls?

Did he wait too long after his speech on racial healing to make clear to a majority of Americans that he finds his former pastor's remarks out of line? Obama clearly is angry with Wright now, but is it too late?

When Obama originally said he could not disown the preacher who married him to Michelle and baptized his children, did that blur the lines of his disagreements with Wright?

Will voters still be angry over this in the autumn, if Obama were to win the nomination? Will voters accept Obama's dismissal of Wright as over the top because of his diatribes making such charges as insisting AIDS is a government plot?

The 300 undecided Democratic concerned she seems to have changed her mind often. Many others wonder

will decide the nomination, are closely watching Obama's handling of the Wright issue and also how he responds to charges he is too "elitist" before they decide.

Clearly, the bloom is off all three roses at the moment. But McCain is holding his own, despite the clear anger against Republicans nationwide, for three reasons. He is a true war hero; a prisoner in Vietnam for five years, his patriotism is not in question. His long experience in Washington, especially his reputation as a "maverick," makes him a known quantity. The two Democrats are so wrapped up in attacking each other that he is skipping around the country without getting the scrutiny he'll definitely get in the fall.

McCain must tell his personal story to voters, convince them he's not too old or too conservative to be president, has solutions for a bad economy and distance himself from Bush. Right now, by a margin of 54 percent to 35 percent, voters say they identify with McCain's values and background, according to the Newhouse/Hart poll.

Only November will tell if McCain's task is easier than for Clinton to convince voters she's honest and steadfast and that her husband won't hog the limelight or for Obama to convince voters his past association with Wright doesn't matter, that he is experienced enough for the White House and that he is not "out of touch."



Our Readers Say

City's Population Drops

EDITOR, Journal-Herald:
In 1980 the population of Waycross was 19,371. In 2006 (the most recent figure available) the population was 14,805. That is a 25 percent population loss in 25 years!

I would add that the total population of Ware County has dropped from 37,180 in 1980 to 35,748 in 2006, a decline of approximately 4 percent.

These figures are from the Georgia County Guide and Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

When are our elected leaders going to:

- 1) Acknowledge these figures?
- 2) Work toward consolidation of Ware County and Waycross to bring this community into the 21st century?

Anyone who knows me, in my 20 years as a resident here, knows that I have always been a positive, community-minded person. Additionally, I am not blaming any particular leaders of officials, but these figures cannot be ignored!

I would strongly encourage all citizens to ask these tough questions of all candidates, Republican and Democrat, running for office this November.

We owe it to our children!

Charles Eames
Waycross

Neighbors Thank Police

EDITOR, Journal-Herald:
Thank you for allowing us to publicly express our appreciation to the Waycross Police Department for the work they do to help make Waycross a better community.

Our thanks to Chief Tony Tanner, officers Kathy Durrence, Chris Tatum, Detective Duane Caswell and the undercover agent whose identity we never knew, for helping us cleanup our neighborhood of lawbreakers and helping us to establish a neighborhood association.

We've recently gotten out-of-town families to purchase homes in our neighborhood. Their comments were, "Because of the nice, quiet neighborhood." Even Butler Street!

To all of you, our undying gratitude for this and your continued and constant vigilance. Thank you, Chief Tanner. God bless and keep you all safe.

Grove Avenue Neighborhood Association
Waycross

Satilla's ER Wins Praise

EDITOR, Journal-Herald:
I recently experienced a pretty bad fall while taking my morning walk. My injuries required a trip to Satilla Regional Medical Center's Emergency Room.

I felt the need to acknowledge the very efficient and professional care I received from Dr. Jose Gumarin, his nurses and the lab technicians who attended me.

Fortunately, I was discharged and returned home where a band of angels were waiting to help me recover.

Incidentally, my home is at Baptist Village where utmost care is given.

Jack, thank you for carrying on the tradition of your father and grandfather. I knew your father and Eva (Williams) Jemison with whom I graduated from Waycross High School in 1942.

Again, thank you Satilla Emergency Room and staff.

Myrtice Zimmaro
Waycross

Crowley Is Paid \$54,000

EDITOR, Journal-Herald:
I noticed in your editorial of Wednesday, April 30, that you published incorrect information regarding City Attorney Scott Crowley's salary and litigation costs if he was to represent us.

This year's budgeted (salary) amount for the city attorney is \$54,000.

If and when we need litigation outside of normal services, rates will be negotiated then with the commission based off the estimated time and situation. This is not a monthly stipend.

If the situation was specific in nature, we would turn to specialists in the area of legal defense and do the same with negotiated amounts with those attorneys accordingly.

I think it would be fair for the community to know exactly his earnings so there is no erroneous information circulating. I hope you will agree.

Thanks for your time and we wish both candidates the best of luck in their quest to serve the 177th District at the state level.

Pete Pyrzenski
City Manager
Waycross

Reach Us

Letters policy: We often condense letters; most, as published, won't exceed 400 words. A letter must include the writer's name (including signature), which will be published, and an address and phone number for verification, which will not be published. Writers may be limited to one letter every 30 days. Open letters and poetry are not accepted.

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