

Heroes Of History (830)833-0809 E-mail: Bob.Heinonen@HeroesOfHistory.net



What are we?

Autobiographical actors?
Impersonators?
Re-enactors?
First person interpreters?
Storytellers?
Actors?

The answer is "Yes!"

We teach accurate history while we entertain people of all ages.

Now booking for

**Charles
Dickens
Reads
A
Christmas
Carol**

(November-December)

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History Is A Mystery

The current debate about the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico reminds me of our debates about history. We are coming to conclusions and assigning meanings and responsibility before all the facts are gathered and analyzed. In fact, we are doing all of this before the event is even over.

Solving riddles (or disasters) takes time, patience and careful unbiased thought. Jumping to emotional conclusions leads to wrong answers and really bad solutions to problems.

We have seen legends built and perpetuated based on some off-hand statement made by uninformed people. Examples include George Washington chopping down the cherry tree and Davy Crockett dying swinging Old Betsy at the Alamo.

Here is how much of our history is

written: Many years (or months or days or hours or even minutes) after an event, people who weren't at the event interview people who just happened to be there. Memories, physical position, prejudices and need for notoriety of the person being interviewed are influenced by the prejudices, preconceived ideas and deadlines of the reporter. In today's "now" reporting environment there is pressure to report something ...anything... as long as it is now. They interview people who cite "facts" as if they were experts just because they were in the area...facts later found in error but perpetuated because they were reported.

How can you and I be sure that what we hear about an event is true? Sorry, there is no way to guarantee "what is true." You have to decide for yourself what is reasonable.

First, has enough time lapsed for most of the facts to be obtained and analysis completed?

Second, does the writer/reporter have a reputation for unbiased reporting or do they have an agenda plus a conclusion deadline?

Third, does more than one reputable writer/reporter report the same thing based on their own independent research?

You have to draw your own conclusions about news history.

Miscellaneous Stuff

MADAM POWELL'S TAVERN

Three days after the Battle of San Jacinto, Mexican General Vicente Filisola, second in command and defeated General Santa Anna, met with his fellow generals at Madam Powell's Tavern to discuss strategy. On April 21, 1836, the Texians under Sam Houston had severely defeated their army under their supreme leader General Santa Anna. A decision had to be made about if, when and how to defeat the Texian army.

The Mexican generals and their staffs arrived at Madam Powell's Tavern on April 24 and adjourned on April 26. The decision: pull back and await orders from the government in Mexico City.

Orders did not arrive from Mexico City for another month. By then, General Filisola had started marching his Mexican army back into Mexico.

Madam Powell's Tavern was about 45 miles southwest of downtown Houston. On May 1, the Sons Of The Republic Of Texas re-dedicated a historical marker at the site.

TEXAS PESTS

It is time for my annual rant about Texas pests: cockroaches, deer, armadillos, Johnson Grass and crazy cardinals.

Enough said about cockroaches.

How many times a day does a car or truck hit a deer in the United States? 4,000. If you only figure \$2,000 damage to a vehicle per accident, that is \$8 million damage per day; this does not include the damage deer do to yards and gardens. 100+ people are killed per year in these accidents. How much do deer-proof fences cost?

How many times does it take to teach an armadillo not to enter your garden? Infinite. On the plus side they do help cultivate the soil. On the negative side, armadillos don't care if you have vegetables or flowers already planted where they are digging.

How many times will a cardinal attack your home/office window before it figures out that the reflection in the window is not another bird encroaching on its territory? Infinite.

How many times do you have to spray Johnson Grass to totally eradicate it in your area? Infinite. And Rooseveltweed is joining Johnson Grass as a pest.



"The Constitution only gives people the right to pursue happiness. You have to catch it yourself."

Benjamin Franklin
(Date and source unknown)

LEGENDS OF HISTORY

Legends are topics we love and hate. Legends are those parts of history that may not be proven, but people want to believe they are true. Here is one you will want to remember:

Legend: Income tax money is used to pay all the bills of the Federal government.

What We Know Now:

No, not all of the bills. The Federal personal income tax will only account for 43.7% of the total federal income in 2011. That does not include the amounts collected from individuals for Social Security and Medicare; it is difficult to calculate those because part of the tax is paid by the individual and part by the employer. If you include the personal income tax plus all the Social Security and Medicare income, the sum represents about 77% of the total federal income for 2011. Corporate taxes will amount to about 11%.

Theoretically, Congress authorizes all expenditures of our money. However, in practice, Congress and the President decide how money is spent and it is not just based on their budget. The President and Congress spend unbudgeted dollars in what they determine is a time of national need. This last year is a prime example with the passage of the TARP law. Or before that with the recovery funding after Hurricane Katrina. Or before that for the Iraq War. Or before that for self-defense actions after 9-11. I could go back further, but you get the idea. Depending on your political leanings, the unbudgeted "national need" spending may or may not be justified. The Fiscal Year 2011 Budget does include a \$3 billion contingency for disaster relief.

In the 2011 Budget, **the government is planning to spend almost 50% more than it receives** - total income is planned as \$2,567 billion and total outgo is planned as \$3,834 billion. The 2011 Budget suggests that within ten years, that gap will drop to about 20% more outgo than income...but never less outgo than income.

The outgo in the 2011 budget represents about 25.1% of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Here are GDP comparisons I calculated from government reports:

Spending as % of GDP	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2011
Total Federal spending	14.5%	17.5%	18.8%	21.2%	21.6%	18.0%	25.1%
Social Security/Medicare	0.3%	2.2%	3.5%	5.4%	6.0%	6.1%	8.3%
Defense (military/Homeland Security)	4.7%	9.1%	7.9%	4.8%	5.2%	3.0%	5.8%
Interest on debt	1.6%	1.3%	1.4%	1.9%	3.2%	2.2%	1.6%

Trying to compare information among the government reports to which I have access was difficult because the items listed on various reports are not always listed in the same way. For instance, is "Health" on one report the same as "Medicaid" on another? That is why you don't see Medicaid listed in the above chart...I wasn't sure so I didn't include it.

Why did I go through this exercise? After writing about the history of the income tax last month, a friend thought it only fair I also write about our government's spending habits. It was depressing. How can anyone sane spend 50% more than they earn? It isn't just the current administration... spending beyond our means has been going on for decades.



Most of this information was taken either directly from or calculated from documents issued by the U. S. Office Of Management And Budget. The 2011 information is from the *Budget of the U. S. Government – Fiscal Year 2011*.

Heroes Of History

574 Altwein Road, Blanco, TX 78606

www.HeroesOfHistory.net

June Performances

Day Organization

2	The Continental, Austin
2	The Renaissance, Austin
3	Patriot Heights, San Antonio
3	The Meadows Retirement Community, San Antonio
4	Independence Hill, San Antonio
4	Querencia at Barton Creek, Austin
7	Sun City, Georgetown
7	The Solana at Cinco Ranch, Katy
9	Parkway Place, Houston
10	The Terrace at Clear Lake, Webster
20	Morningside Ministries at Menger Springs, Boerne
22	Irving Public Library Southwest Branch, Irving
23	Franklin Park Hometown, Southlake
29	Forum at Memorial Woods, Houston
30	Camden Royal Oaks, Houston

*Independence
Day is coming!*

This is the reservation list as of the issuance of this newsletter.
For an up-to-date list, check our website calendar at

http://www.TexasHeroes.net/Texas_Heroes_calendar.htm