

a.m. to 6 p.m. with the battle re-enactment at 3:30 p.m.

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POMEROY CONTRASTS REALITY, HOLLYWOOD  
(By Gloria Walker Smith)

Using the latest movie of The Alamo as a backdrop, Texas history expert and Pasadena native, David Pomeroy, brought an educational and entertaining program to the Bay Area A&M Club luncheon.

Focusing primarily on Texas history between 1820 and 1845, Pomeroy surprised the audience with a history pop quiz, where the winners received Alamo movie posters. Since Sam Houston is so much a part of any mention of Texas history, it was noted that Sam Houston IV is from Galena Park, which spawned a comment that Constable Bill Bailey was also from Galena Park and 'does that have any significance?'

Since Pomeroy has been involved in the making of this Alamo movie from its inception, (even back when Ron Howard visited and originally planned to make the film), he had many insider comments about the preparations, the actual filming, the actors involved and the differences in their personalities. One amusing story contrasted the behavior of Dennis Quaid (Sam Houston) and Billy Bob Thornton (David Crockett). At the end of each filming sequence, Thornton was most definitely "one of the easy-going run-of-the-mill" cast members, so he was very popular. On the other hand, Quaid dismounted his horse and headed for his tent, without any interaction. Consequently, the group almost 'hated' him for being so conceited. When filming was finally over, the cast saw a totally different Quaid, who was well aware of their previous feelings toward him. He explained that he found it necessary to remain completely immersed in his character throughout production.

One glaring omission to a historian was the lack of mention of the earlier battles at Gonzales, Goliad and Zacatecas, significant in their own right.

"It has been suggested that it would take a mini-series to adequately tell the story of the Texas war for independence," said Pomeroy. "Had there not been the battle at San Jacinto, much of the Alamo story would have been forgotten." The fact that so many made a conscious decision to stay and die, if necessary, for what they believed, makes the defenders stand out. And die, they did. Sam Houston had advised the leaders to abandon the Alamo, but Bowie, Fannin and Travis said no.

Going back centuries in history, Pomeroy traced the conquests in the area to the Spanish, who came first, then the French and then the English, each of whom took the land from the Indians and each other. Along came the American Revolution and later, the French Revolution—struggles to free citizens from the tyranny of rulers across the ocean.

In Mexico and the Spanish southwest, the people were determined to overthrow the foreign emperor, and Santa Ana headed this movement. After driving out the Spanish emperor and establishing a constitution, Santa Ana then installed himself as emperor and threw out the constitution. Originally, the Texans did not seek to leave Mexican authority, but wanted to be a separate state, instead of being part of the state of Coahuila. Santa Ana refused in the strongest terms and so began the Texas War for Independence.

Much like the American Revolution, the "colonists" in Tejas were facing a military trained in European-style. The Texans were a rag tag bunch, out-numbered, out-trained and out-gunned. However, they had the home-court advantage and used methods

far more suited to the territory than the more formal strategies employed by the Mexican generals.

Also attending the luncheon was Stan Wojcik, a fellow San Jacinto battle re-enactor. Wojcik was wearing an outfit that he sewed himself—deerskin britches, coarse vest and calico shirt. He has even made his wife a period costume for re-enactment programs. Although a very recent "Texan," Wojcik has become fascinated and knowledgeable about the San Jacinto battle.

During his appearance, Pomeroy was completely in character with his "almost stove-pipe" beaver hat, calico shirt and powder horn.

Responding to questions about the changes to be made to the San Jacinto Monument area, Pomeroy gave a brief overview of the plans to return the area to a more historically-correct look, with an emphasis on the educational value. Adjacent industries have donated land to affect many of the changes, which will eventually double the size.

On April 24, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., the San Jacinto Day Festival and Battle Reenactment will feature all-day exhibits, hand-on history activities for children, including an archaeological dig, as well as celebrity historians and authors. The admission is free and food booths will be available. For more information, call (281) 479-2421 or visit [www.sanjacinto-museum.org](http://www.sanjacinto-museum.org).

Mr. Speaker, God bless Texas and these United States.

#### WE MUST NOT ABANDON THE KURDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the casualties in Iraq are a bitter reminder of the truth and consequences of war whether you oppose it, as I do, or wage it, as the President has.

As America grieves over our losses, we should also grieve over the losses suffered by the Iraqi Kurds in a war that went largely unnoticed in this country. In fact, this is not the second Gulf War, but the third in our memory.

After the first Gulf War, America pulled out of Iraq, leaving Saddam to reorganize his henchmen. They did more than take names; they took hostages, and they took lives, thousands of lives. It can happen again.

After the first Gulf War, we established a no-fly zone, but we did not disarm Saddam's Republican Guard, and we did not destroy his lethal helicopter gunships, killing machines used not against Americans, but against Iraqis. The outcome was a blood-drenched record of atrocities. At least 8,000 Kurds were massacred by Saddam and his henchmen after the United States withdrew from Iraq, having urged them to rise up. The Kurds cried out for help, but no one listened, and no one saw.

The war was over, then-President Bush number one declared. Victory was at hand. We marvelled at the stories told, many untrue, of how U.S. technology had spared lives, reduced casualties, and proved America's warmaking superiority. The satellite

images showed everything except the coming slaughter of these peace-loving people.

The Kurds represent about 20 percent of the Iraqi population. They have their own language and culture. Although Muslim, they are not Arab. Historically they have lived in the mountainous regions of northern Iraq in an area around Kirkuk. This region holds about 7 percent of the world's known oil reserves. The vast oil wealth represented around Kirkuk has always been a motive for Saddam and other ethnic Iraq groups to act. Remove the oil by removing the Kurds. Saddam used every opportunity to hunt them down and eliminate them. But America is barely aware of the suffering Saddam inflicted on these people.

While the President never found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, Kurds would tell you that the President would have found evidence of mass murder. Kurds fear, and we should, too, that it could happen again. Kurds fear, and we should, too, that if the U.S. pulls out on the 30th of June, it will not take long before the killing begins again.

We should never have left the Kurds alone after the first Gulf War, and we must not leave them alone after June 30. The date is meaningful only for the President's political ambitions. We know what happened the last time we pulled out of Iraq. We cannot do it again and silently sanction a new outbreak of unspeakable crimes against the Kurds.

The Kurds deserve liberation. The Kurds deserve protection. The bloodshed we see daily in Iraq reminds us of the country's instability. It should be a warning of the bloodshed that will come if America forsakes its responsibility to Iraq and all the Iraqi people, all the Iraqi people.

We must stay the course. Stay past June 30. Stay until the Kurds are safe, until Iraq itself is a safe place. We owe Iraq and the world nothing less. By declaring war we took responsibility for the future of Iraq. We cannot walk away and throw it open to the chaos that we have created.

It was our warning to the President when we started, winning the war, the military part, that will be pretty easy because we have a tremendous fighting force. But as for establishing the peace, that is where the trouble is. The President never planned for it.

He ignored the State Department's efforts to do that. He ignored everybody's warnings. General Shinseki said it will take 300,000 troops. They said, shut up, and they fired him because he told truth. Anybody who tried to tell him the truth coming into this was discarded or shuffled off or put somewhere else.

We are about to do it again because the President wants to have another sign that says "Mission Accomplished, Democracy Delivered." You could have a little ceremony somewhere and hand some paper around, I guess. It reminds

me of a scene in Vietnam when the United States declared victory and left off the roof of the embassy. We must not let that happen again.

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#### WAR ON SAVINGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GINGREY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, just a few minutes ago before the House finished its legislative business, we passed legislation that would allow National Guard members and Reserve members to take money out of their IRA accounts and not have a penalty on those individuals. When they do that under current law, if you invade your retirement account, you pay a penalty if you do that because we are trying to encourage people to keep their savings intact so they can build a retirement fund.

It is outrageous that the best we can do for these National Guard and Reserve families that are under incredible economic strain because members of their family are serving longer tours in Iraq than they had planned to, that those who are scheduled to get out of the Reserves in the Army cannot get out because of the stop order.

So those people have been without those incomes for many months now, they have not been able to meet the obligations of their families. Their home mortgages are threatened. Their car payments are threatened. Loan payments are threatened. And we are telling them that they must invade their retirement savings in order to continue to subsidize the war in Iraq. It is unbelievable that we would do this.

So the Reserves and the National Guard members from my area, from the San Francisco Bay area, are being told that after we invaded Iraq they must invade their savings because we need them to continue to serve in Iraq. So the penalty they pay is that they are going to lose their retirement benefits down the road. Many of those people in the Reserves, many of these people in the National Guard do not have the kind of incomes that will let them then replace the 5, 10, 15, \$20,000 that they wanted to borrow from their IRAs. So for the sacrifice they have made to defend this country in Iraq, they have to lose retirement benefits in the future years. It is unbelievable that we would think that this is an answer to their problem.

This government could extend them interest-free loans. This government could give them additional pay if they are kept in the service beyond their contract date. If they are kept in Iraq beyond the original time frame, we could provide them additional pay.

At the same time we are giving tax cuts to the wealthiest people in this country, we are asking our service peo-

ple who are in harm's way, who are getting killed, who are getting maimed, who are getting injured in so many ways that they have to invade their savings so that they can keep their families together while they are protecting this country.

I cannot believe that that is the response of the Republican Party in this Congress, that that is the benefit that we are going to provide these families and these soldiers who are making this sacrifice on our behalf. Now, mind you, all of the advice that these soldiers had when they started their IRA accounts from their employment, from Goldman Sachs, from Merrill Lynch, from Charles Schwab is do not ever touch your retirement savings because the sooner you start and the longer you do it, the better chance you have at retirement where you will be secure. But because, unfortunately, they have joined the armed services or because, unfortunately, they cannot get out of the armed services because of the war on Iraq or because they have been sent to Iraq to fight the war for longer than they have anticipated or they were told was going to happen, they must now take their savings and try to support their families with that.

I cannot believe that is what a grateful Nation would do to these individuals; but that is the bill that just passed. We all voted for it. We want to do whatever we can to help them, but that cannot be the response of this Nation to these military families that find themselves in this kind of economic stress. How cynical of an approach that somehow we cannot help these families out beyond saying they will not have to pay the penalty for destroying their savings. Well, the minute they touch those savings, they are being penalized because they are giving up retirement benefits in the future.

This Congress owes our National Guard members, our Reserve members better than that, and we owe their families better than that. And we ought to correct this and correct it immediately because these families, the financial stress is continuing because of this war on Iraq. And we ought not to have them go into financial ruin because they have defended this country, because they have served this country, because they answered the call of this President.

#### HONORING VALLEY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to have four students in attendance here from Valley Community School in Merced, California. Valley Community School, led by its principal, Jill Macha, is an alternative education program that serves at-risk youth throughout Merced County. I

had the privilege of visiting Valley Community School in October during Red Ribbon Week festivities, and it left an impression with me and had a positive impact on alternative education and the impacts it was having on the students there.

However, I also had a very moving experience while I was visiting. I see school groups in my district frequently, but nothing compares with the interaction I had with the students at Valley Community School that day. After the Red Ribbon Week assembly was over, a group of children, young people, came and met with me. Many of them were products of the foster care system, just like those who are fortunate enough to be here in Washington today.

During our 90 minutes together, I heard many of their personal stories from the students that would shock anyone who cares. They told me about some of the horrible conditions that they had encountered as they moved from placement to placement in foster care. They told me about situations that have gotten them in trouble. They told me about a lot of things that I thought I would never hear or even have to hear from young people: abuse, neglect, domestic violence, sexual assault. These kids have been through more unfortunate events at a younger ages than most of us will ever go through in a lifetime. Many of them had begun to get tougher than they ever should have to become just to survive. But, ladies and gentlemen, in all their eyes, I saw a glimmer, a glimmer of hope, the glimmer of hope that I see, frankly, in all young people's eyes. But it was one that moved me even stronger than normally because these kids had had such a tough life.

They wanted to talk about and overcome their problems. They wanted people to become aware of the flaws in our foster care system, and they wanted people to understand how important it is for them just to have a stable home. I want the students of Valley Community School who are watching back in Merced to know that people really do care about them and the problems they are going through. Their principal, Jill Macha, is one of those people. They lead an alternative education program at the school that is one of the sources of stability for those kids in that situation, and stability is what they desperately need.

But, ladies and gentlemen, there is much work to be done. I am committed to working on improving our foster care system and the support network for children who are left behind. I hope my colleagues will take the time to learn more about the kids like those who are at Valley Community School and join me in the effort. I know that if they do, we can have a better understanding of the enormous challenges that at-risk kids face and that we can actually do something to improve their situation.