

Leach and Simpson End TV and Radio Ads

Written by Joe Collins

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Incumbent U.S. Representative Jim Leach, a Republican from Davenport, and Democratic challenger Bob Simpson of Iowa City have pledged to end all radio and television advertising. The recently agreed-to deal allows for promotional literature and newspaper advertising. Both candidates say the agreement will promote a cleaner campaign without the traditional money-driven approach to running for public office. Of the two candidates, Simpson has the most to gain, having only raised \$4,500 for his campaign by mid-May, compared to \$56,000 raised by Leach. Voters might also gain, because they will get to learn candidates' positions on issues without having to wade through spin-doctored attack ads.

Two new reports from the General Accounting Office and the Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General document the federal government's lack of oversight of dialysis facilities and have prompted an investigation by Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa). Because Medicare pays for kidney dialysis, the federal Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) is charged with ensuring dialysis patients receive good-quality care. Lapses in oversight include unannounced inspections at only 11 percent of dialysis facilities in 1999, even though 15 percent of the inspected facilities had problems severe enough to warrant termination from Medicare. Included in Grassley's plan is looking into whether HCFA has enough resources to fund adequate inspections of dialysis facilities.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has issued a public-service bulletin titled "Prize Offers: You don't have to Pay to Play." The publication details telltale signs of fraudulent price promotions and sweepstakes, including a notification telling you you've won a big prize, mailed to you at bulk rate; a requirement that you disclose your bank-account information so the promoter can either deposit your winnings directly into your account or charge your account for taxes or fees on your prize; a requirement that you buy something, attend a sales meeting, or pay a fee to enter or claim your prize. For a free copy of this publication, see the FTC Web site at (<http://www.ftc.gov>) or call the FTC's toll-free hotline at (877)382-4357.

Veterans make up nearly one-third of the U.S. adult homeless population, with an estimated 250,000 veterans homeless on any given night. In 1988, a group of Vietnam veterans held the first "Stand Down" in San Diego. Today, Stand Down 2000 is a nationwide partnership between the Department of Veterans Affairs and community-based service providers, homeless

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coalitions, veterans-service organizations, and other groups providing outreach services. "Stand down" is a military combat term describing times when front-line troops are removed to a place of relative safety for rest and needed assistance before returning to combat. Similarly, homeless stand downs give homeless veterans one to three days of safety and security during which they can obtain food, shelter, clothing, and a range of other services. The first Quad City Stand Down will be held at John O'Donnell Stadium and on Levy Commission property west of the stadium beginning at 5 p.m. Friday, September 22, and running through Sunday, September 24th. Volunteers will be needed for everything, including fundraising, security, entertainment, and homeless-participant assistance. To learn how you can help, contact Nickie Butler, logistics director at the Vet Center, at (309)762-6954, or by fax at (309)762-8298.

The Iowa Donor Network reports organ donation in Iowa during the first half of 2000 is more than 43 percent higher than the same period last year. With 110 donated organs provided for transplantation, the Iowa Donor Network – the federally designated agency responsible for the state's organ-donation program – helped 30 more patients receive the gift of life this year than last. Something to be proud of is that nationally, only half of surviving families consent to organ and tissue donation, but 60 percent of Iowa families consent to donating their loved one's organs, allowing those in need to receive life-saving transplants. If you aren't an organ donor, becoming one is as easy as checking the appropriate box when you get your driver's license renewed and informing your loved ones of your decision.

Habitat for Humanity-Quad Cities' 18th home at 806 Pershing in Davenport is nearly complete and might even have been dedicated by the time you read this. The next two houses to be built will be at 800 Blythewood in Davenport, and Habitat also owns additional lots on 15th Street in Davenport and 9th Avenue and 7th Street in Rock Island. The organization is also trying to acquire four more lots in Rock Island. One lot each in Moline and East Moline is also expected to be acquired, allowing for 10 new home sites. For information on how you can help turn those empty lots into dreams and homes, contact Habitat for Humanity-Quad Cities at (319)359-9066. Contributions are tax deductible.

The heated race for the seat of U.S. Representative Lane Evans (D-Illinois) looks to be an expensive one. As of June 30, Mark Baker, Evan's challenger, had \$279,394 in cash on hand compared to \$390,636 held by Evans. These figures come from mandatory fundraising and spending reports filed with the Federal Election Commission. By the way, the best way to find out who is donating money to candidates and how much is to check the statistics kept on the Federal Election Commission's Web site at (<http://www.fec.gov>).

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is funding research into potential "vaccines" to stop use of cocaine, PCP, methamphetamine, other illegal drugs, and tobacco. One approach called peripheral blockers would bind drugs to antibodies, creating a drug-antibody complex too large to move through blood-vessel walls and into the brain, thus trapping the drug within the bloodstream until it could be eliminated from the body through normal kidney activity. Another approach would be to enhance the rate at which naturally occurring enzymes break down drug molecules into inactive byproducts. A third method under investigation would employ an engineered antibody that both binds to and breaks down drugs. The social and ethical implications of such research have yet to be explored. For more information on this research,

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look at the NIDA Web site (<http://www.nida.nih.gov/NIDAHome2.html>). Use its search engine for articles on "vaccine."

The Glynn Fellowship Foundation for Minorities is now accepting applications for the fall semester. Applicants must include a resume of school and work experience, three references, a transcript of degrees received, and proof of acceptance into a graduate program. Students can receive up to \$3,000, and the application deadline is August 15. Scott County residents will be given preference. For more information, contact Louise Schmidt at (319)323-7364, or write to 2235 Marquette Street; Davenport, Iowa 52804.