

far, the results have been mixed. While papers such as Texas' *Austin American-Statesman* are using blogs to give readers a news voice they never had before, other papers such as the *Washington Post* are struggling with everything from charges of plagiarism in their blogs to being labelled with the word every editor dreads: "boring."

THE ENCROACHING pressure of blogs is unnerving mainstream journalists, as evidenced by such farces as a "Pulitzer prize-winning" reporter and columnist at the *Los Angeles Times*, Michael Hiltzik, resorting to anonymous blogging as a way of smiting his conservative critics and touting his own work. Mortified by Hiltzik's juvenile conduct — he would sneak on to conservative blogging sites under an assumed name to lash out at critics such as radio host Hugh Hewitt — the *Times* cashiered him from his job as a columnist and took away his *latimes.com* blog.

It is not surprising, after all, that reporters, chafing

under the pretence of impartiality, would resort to anonymous blogging as a weapon against gadflies. Hiltzik is not alone; several reporters across the country have been fired or punished in the last year for similar incidents.

The *Times* now has to take fire from all directions: from the Robert Scheer left to the Ann Coulter right, from bloggers to the president of the United States. In May, President Bush used a speech at George Washington University to criticize obliquely an unnamed newspaper for helping the enemy in Iraq.

"Earlier this year, a newspaper published details of a new anti-IED technology [designed to counter roadside bombs] that was being developed. Within five days of the publication — using details from that article — the enemy had posted instructions for defeating this new technology on the Internet. We cannot let the enemy know how we're working to defeat him," he said.

White House aides leaked to the press that Bush was taking a swipe at the *Times*. CPR

WHAT YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD ABOUT GUN CONTROL

By SAM PAREDES

Dueling, once acceptable as a way to uphold one's honor, involved mutual agreement as to weapons and rules. An impartial third party insured fairness. The outcome, ahem, was final.

Alas, we live in lapsed times. Ardent anti-gun Assemblyman Paul Koretz, who presumably wants to be thought a man of honor, last June issued a dueling challenge to Assemblyman Jay La Suer over proposed microstamp etching on semi-automatic handgun firing pins:

"... I'm willing," Koretz said, "to put this bill (AB 352) to a challenge if it passes off the floor today ... to challenge Mr. La Suer to take a gun with this technology and a file: if he is able to remove the print on it and then still fire the gun, I will withdraw this bill"

Sam Paredes is executive director of Gun Owners of California. For more information go to www.gunownersca.com.

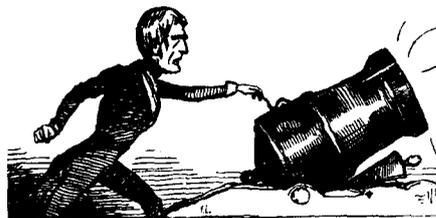
La Suer, of course, accepted the challenge. The weapons were to be firing pins and files. The impartial third parties would be the gunsmiths at the California Highway Patrol Academy. Time and date were agreed upon for the showdown at the CHP Corral.

Oh, but wait! AB 352's sponsors freaked out when they heard of the *affaire d'honneur*. First, they refused to provide a firing pin, so the gallant La Suer told Koretz he would purchase a brand-new handgun for the test. He also forwarded a newly-published report by nationally-renowned firearms forensics special-

ists who held scientific third party tests on the technology's reliability and feasibility, and found it easily defeated and unreliable at best.

Then Koretz wanted the rules of engagement altered: La Suer would receive only household files, a handgun, and 30 minutes to disassemble it, file the firing pin, reassemble the gun, and return it to the CHP for firing. Average criminals, Koretz argued, would lack gunsmith training and sophisticated tools to defeat the technology. Also, La Suer would not be told the type, make, or model of handgun to be used.

Koretz did *not* point out that thus rigging the test was the only way he could win, but La Suer got the message and told Koretz he would give his farce a pass. But Koretz, now hot to go, duelled all alone at the CHP Corral, later announcing that — surprise!! — he won. An affair of honor, liberal-style. CPR





Those in power over us

Rare species, you say? Try politicians in the Pombo mode.

Rare, yes, but not endangered. An honest, courageous congressman stares down the thugs of the enviro-left.

M. DAVID STIRLING

LARGE ENVIRONMENTALIST organizations like the Sierra Club and the Center for Biological Diversity – to name two of many – comprise one of the nation’s most powerful political forces. Through their websites, blogs, press statements, and multi-million-piece mailings, these ecological organizations utilize impassioned depictions of charismatic species like the gray wolf, the grizzly bear, and the bald eagle to garner influence and raise millions of dollars in pursuit of a “species-first/people-last” vision of environmentalism. And they are able and astute at using their formidable clout in support of political candidates who share their vision.

On the other hand, they reserve their most ferocious assaults for those few intrepid politicians who not only recognize the environmentalists’ agenda for what it is but are willing to challenge it publicly, to point out that the objective is not merely “pro-species,” but harshly “anti-people,” and who dare to give voice and redress to those whose lives, livelihoods, and property have been seriously harmed — even devastated — by the heavy-handed implementation of such laws as the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA). Congressman Richard Pombo is one of those intrepid politicians.

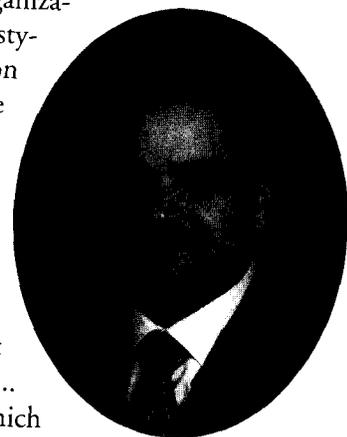
Before being elected to Congress from the Central Valley town of Tracy, Pombo formed a coalition of farmers and other property owners to promote the principle of individual ownership and reasonable use of property against government’s attempts to dimin-

M. David Stirling is vice president of the public interest legal organization Pacific Legal Foundation, the nation’s premier defender of private property rights in the courts since 1973. (E-mail him at: www.pacificlegal.org.) (Congressman Pombo’s H.R. 3824 can be found at http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/ESA_Homepage.htm).

ish that right. Pombo’s *This Land is Our Land*, a book championing private property that he wrote upon his election to Congress in 1993, staked out his area of emphasis. Pombo demonstrated that he knew the threat to private property rights is nowhere more serious than in the environmentalists’ use and control of the ESA.

Consider President Bush’s nomination of William Myers to the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Myers believes that when a property owner is prohibited by the federal government from using his land because it is habitat for a plant or wildlife species, the government effectively has taken his land for a “public use,” *i.e.*, species protection which presumably benefits the public, and in that case he is entitled to “just compensation” under the Fifth Amendment.*

This eminently fair, reasonable interpretation of the “takings” clause is anathema to Environmentalist organizations, and so they have stymied Myers’ nomination in the Senate for three years. The Sierra Club vigorously opposes the judge, forthrightly stating its opposition to constitutionally-protected property rights: “(Myers) argues ... that property rights are ... ‘fundamental,’ ... in which case the government may not intrude upon them, ex-



RICHARD POMBO

* The relevant part of the amendment reads: “nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.”