

September 6, 2004

Predator or pet?



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Top Story

Animal rights advocates say keeping wild animals as pets is dangerous to humans and cruel to the animals. Exotic pet owners disagree on both counts, leaving lawmakers to decide the issue.

SNCJ Spotlight

States struggle to rein in exotic wildlife

Most of us have dealt with a neighbor's dog or cat paying an uninvited visit to our yard. But imagine that instead of a 40-pound dog or a 5-pound cat, your neighbor's wandering "pet" is a 400-pound Burmese tiger, or perhaps a 3-foot long Caiman alligator, such as those that residents of a Harlem housing project discovered living next door to them last October. As the number

of such wild pets increases in the United States, so has the number of fatal or near-fatal incidents involving these animals, leading lawmakers in 21 states to ban or severely limit exotic pet ownership.

It is believed private individuals in the U.S. possess as many as 20,000 large cats, thousands of apes and other primates and millions of reptiles and birds. Other wild animals now commonly held as pets include wolves, bears and large venomous snakes. And although nobody can give exact numbers, most experts estimate that private owners hold between 5,000 and 10,000 tigers in the U.S., a figure that exceeds the number of tigers believed to be living wild in Asia.

While most of these animals are undoubtedly treated well, there have been numerous cases in recent years of horrific abuse of wild pets, including severe beatings, woefully inadequate nutrition and even starvation. Many are also painfully declawed or defanged in an effort to make them safer to handle. One particularly graphic case occurred last year in CALIFORNIA, where a private sanctuary was found to have 90 dead adult tigers and another 58 dead tiger cubs stored in a freezer. Thirty-nine tigers that survived had to be placed into another sanctuary. Although this was an extreme case, experts estimate that 90 percent of all wild animals die in captivity within two years.

What is known for sure is that since April of 2003, at least four people in the U.S. have been killed and numerous others injured just by big cats, perhaps none more well publicized than the attack suffered by entertainer Roy Horn during the Siegfried and Roy act at the Mirage Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. Among the 2003 fatalities was a 10-year-old NORTH CAROLINA boy who was mauled to death by his aunt's 400-pound tiger; others included a 3-year-old boy and a 9-year-old girl in separate attacks in TEXAS. There have also been numerous other, non-fatal incidents involving both big cats and other wild animal pets in OHIO, OKLAHOMA, MISSOURI, WASHINGTON, FLORIDA and NEW YORK.

Kim Haddad, a veterinarian and spokesperson for the Captive Wild Animal Protection Coalition (CWAPC) in California, a consortium of zoo professionals, sanctuary operators and animal rights groups, says banning private exotic pet ownership is the only realistic way to prevent these kinds of tragic events from happening.

"Tigers, bears and monkeys have very specific and unique needs that cannot be met by the average person," Haddad says. "These are unpredictable wild

*State Recaps
available this
week on the
State Net Web site*

AK, AL, CA, CO, CT, FL,
GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS,
KY, LA, MD, ME, MN, MO,
MS, NC, NE, NH, NM, OK,
RI, SC, SD, TN, UT, VA, VT,
WA, WI, WV, WY

2003-04 State Session
Recaps showcase legislative
statistics for each state.

animals and they present a danger not only to the people who own them, but also others in the community. The owner may be willing to take that risk, but it is rarely that person who is attacked. It is usually a relative, most often a child, or some other person who works with them.”

Haddad says there are public health concerns as well. Many wild animals, particularly primates, carry zoonotic diseases that do not affect them negatively, but which can be lethal to their human handlers. It is estimated that between 80 and 90 percent of all macaque monkeys, one of the most popular primates among exotic pet owners, carry either the Herpes B or Simian B virus, which can be fatal to humans. CWAPC says that 90 percent of reptiles like iguanas, lizards

and turtles carry and shed salmonella in their feces, most with no outward signs of the disease. The Centers for Disease Control note that more than 90,000 human salmonella cases every year are a direct result of exposure to reptiles.

Statistics like these have inspired lawmakers across the nation to take legislative action. This year MINNESOTA became the latest state to limit exotic pet ownership, passing Senate File 1530 in May. (See Bird’s eye view) That bill, authored by Sen. Don Betzold (D) and signed into law by Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R), prohibits private ownership of virtually all big cats — lions, servals, ocelots, tigers, cougars, leopards, jaguars and cheetahs — as well as bears and non-human primates. NEW YORK could soon follow suit, as Senate Bill 7616 has made it through the Legislature and is currently under review by Gov. George Pataki (R). If so, the Empire State would ban ownership of all the animals named in the Minnesota bill while also adding venomous reptiles and crocodiles

Bird’s eye view



The trade in lives

Laws regulating ownership or possession of exotic animals vary greatly from state to state. This year, MINNESOTA became the 21st state to establish a full or partial ban on private ownership of most exotic animals (see SNCJ Spotlight in this issue). The map above shows the 13 states which ban at least large cats, wolves, bears, non-human primates and dangerous reptiles, and the eight which ban some but not all of those animals.





to their prohibited list. ILLINOIS Gov. Rod Blagojevich (D) also just signed SB 3111, which requires organizers of exotic animal swap meets to keep records of transactions to make it easier for health officials to trace diseased or illegal animals. The WASHINGTON House passed House Bill 1151 this spring, which would have barred private possession of big cats, primates, bears and wolves, but it failed to get a vote in the full Senate after clearing the Rules Committee. Overall, 21 states ban or limit exotic pets, 14 states require a permit or license and 15 have no restrictions.

There are also federal laws that seek to at least partially manage exotic animal ownership. The Lacey Act, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Public Health Service Act all regulate traffic of exotic animals into the U.S. or between states, and the Captive Wildlife Safety Act bars the interstate commerce of most big cats. Many local municipalities also have their own laws addressing exotic pet ownership. Most of these laws, however, do not regulate animals bred in the United States. Even with federal laws in place, enforcement remains difficult.

“Enforcement is always an issue of having an adequate number of officers,” says Sandra Clevey of the U.S. Dept of Fish and Wildlife. “There are only 263 (federal) officers to cover the entire country. That’s to enforce all animal laws, the ESA, everything. That’s pretty tough.”

But not everyone thinks more laws are the answer to exotic pet problems. Jeanne Hall, president of the Phoenix Exotic Wildlife Association in Chehalis, Washington, a non-profit group that advocates for education and self-regulation among exotic pet owners, says laws that ban exotic pets are a violation of the constitutional rights of animal owners.

The Week in Session

States in Special Session: IA “b”

States in Recess:
CA “d”, CA “e”, DE “c”, IL, MA, MI, NJ, NY,
OK “a”, PA, US

States in Skeleton Session: OH

Currently Prefiling:
FL(Drafts for 2005)
IN(Drafts for 2005)
KY(Drafts for 2005)
MT(Drafts for 2005)
NV(Drafts for 2005)
VA(Drafts for 2005)

States Adjourned:
AK, AL, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, HI,
IA, ID, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD “2003 session”,
MD, ME, MN, MO, MS, NC, NE, NH, NM,
OK, RI, SC, SD, TN, UT, VA, VT, WA, WI,
WV, WY

States in Special Session
Adjourned:
AK “a”, AR “b”, CA “a”, CA “b”, CA “c”, CT
“a”, CT “b”, CT “c”, CT “d”, DE “a”, GA “a”,
IL “a-q”, LA “a”, ME “a”, ME “b”, MS “a”,
MS “b”, NY “a”, OR “a”, TX “d”, UT “a”, UT
“c”, VA “a”, VA “b”, WA “a”, WA “b”, WA
“c”, WI “d”, WI “e”, WI “f”, WI “g”, WV “a”,
WV “b”, WY “a”

Letters indicate special/extraordinary sessions
Source: State Net, 9/3/04

“This is an issue of property rights,” Hall says. “There is a constitutional right for citizens of this country to own property.”

Nicole Paquette, Director of Legal and Government Affairs for the Animal Protection Institute in Sacramento, which helped to write Washington’s HB 1151, agrees that some states have been hesitant to ban exotic pets because they view animals as personal property. But Paquette says such an interpretation is inherently flawed.

“I’ve read the constitution several times,” Paquette says, “And I’ve never seen where it says anyone has the right to own a lion or a primate.”

Hall says the real answer to exotic pet incidents is to address the specific problem in each attack rather than throwing down a blanket of legislation that affects every pet owner, and to require more education for owners before they are allowed to obtain an exotic pet.

“Take the man in Harlem,” she says. “That guy was illegal, illegal, illegal. You could have passed a billion laws and that particular situation would not have been changed. Using that occurrence to pass, say, a law banning bunnies from South Africa is absurd.”

“Exotic pets are a lot like guns,” Hall adds. “Guns don’t kill people; people kill people.”

Hall says the majority of escapes and incidents also do not come from illegal ownership, but from legal sites approved and licensed by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. Such was the case in July of this year when a 600-pound Siberian tiger escaped from its owner in Florida. The tiger was eventually destroyed by authorities after it lunged at an officer who had cornered it. It was the third incident for the tiger’s owner, who has a USDA permit for six large cats.

But Hall also concedes it is impossible to truly tame a wild animal. “By definition and biology, your regular house cat is not tame either,” Hall says.

Michael Markarian, president of the national campaign office of The Fund for Animals in MARYLAND, which helped to place the 39 abused California tigers, acknowledges that while the ratio of attacks to the overall number of exotic animals in captivity is small, the fact that they are inherently wild makes owning such pets dangerous.

“These animals are all time bombs just waiting to explode,” says Markarian. “You never know if your 8-year-old daughter or 6-year-old grandson is going to be the one statistic out of 10,000.”

die each day because organs aren't available. That has the author of Wisconsin's organ donor law, Rep. Steve Wieckert (R), working hard to convince other states to follow his state's lead. Wieckert said he and his staff have pled their case to the health committee chairs of every state, with some success. "The more states that introduce this, the more helpful that it'll be...Every state that does this is saving more lives," Wieckert said. (STATELINE.ORG)

FEDS RESHUFFLE HOUSING AID: In what constitutes one of the most sweeping changes in housing policy in three decades, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is adopting a new formula for funding public housing projects, which will redirect billions of dollars from major urban areas in the Northeast and Midwest to smaller, rural locations in the South. The new formula, which will take effect in 2006, stems from the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 and, more specifically, a study conducted by Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, which mandated a new method of calculating HUD's \$3.6 billion annual budget for housing operations. Under the current formula, established in 1975, housing agencies received lump-sum payments to run their housing projects and submitted minimal documentation about their operations. The new formula is based on agencies' actual expenses and requires them to meet new performance standards. While the New York City Housing Authority says that as a result of the new formula it may lose \$35 million, or about 5 percent, of its current \$759 subsidy, and some cities in upstate NEW YORK, like Syracuse and Rochester, could lose more than a third of theirs, about four-fifths of the nation's roughly 3,100 public housing agencies will likely see increases in the next two years. Some agencies in FLORIDA and TEXAS could gain at least 50 percent, with Dallas expecting a 70 percent boost. (NEW YORK TIMES)

BUDGETS IN BRIEF: A MONTANA district judge ruled last Tuesday that an initiative seeking to raise the state's tobacco taxes by \$45 million to fund health care programs is not unconstitutional and can remain on the November ballot. The judge stated that the measure did not appropriate money improperly or include multiple subjects, as its opponents — mostly tobacco manufacturers and wholesalers, convenience store operators and veterans organizations — had alleged (ASSOCIATED PRESS, MISSOULIAN). • The VERMONT Supreme Court rejected a legal challenge to Act 60 — the property tax equalization law passed in 1997. The challenge sought to grant unmarried co-owners of property the same status as married couples (RUTLAND HERALD).

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*



Politics & leadership

SOLDIER-LEGISLATORS IN CONFLICT: More than a dozen state legislators from across the country have been called up for active duty since Sept. 11, 2001, and some of them have run up against a U.S. Defense Department policy barring military personnel from holding political office. MISSOURI Sen. Jon Dolan (R) did just that when he flew home last September from his post in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to cast a pivotal vote overriding Gov. Bob Holden's (D) veto of a controversial concealed-weapons bill. After returning to base, he received an official reprimand from his commanding officers and was told he had to choose between his military service and his legislative service. He resigned from the Army National Guard last month. The Pentagon's policy only applies to soldier-legislators who are called to active duty for nine months or more. But that is not uncommon with a U.S. military that is stretched thin and increasingly forced to rely on guardsmen and reservists to relieve full-time military personnel. According to a defense department spokeswoman, the policy is intended to keep partisan politics out of the military. "When you exercise the duties of an elected office, you are no longer apolitical, even if your actions are not directly related to the military," she said. Several states, including INDIANA, IOWA, SOUTH CAROLINA, SOUTH DAKOTA, TENNESSEE and TEXAS, have acted to address the problem, passing legislation allowing elected officials called to active service to delegate their duties to a temporary replacement. Many states, however, including Missouri, have no such provision. Consequently, Sen. Dolan intends to see that the Defense Department changes, or at least clarifies, its policy. "We must have our mayors and our state legislators serving with our citizen soldiers.... You have to have your community going to war together," Dolan said. (STATELINE.ORG)

CA MOVES PRIMARY — BACK: A little over a decade ago, CALIFORNIA lawmakers voted to move the state's primary election from June to March, seeking to exert greater influence over the presidential nomination process. But a bill has just sailed through the CALIFORNIA Legislature that would shift the primary back to June. And although Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) has not taken an official position on the measure, he is not expected to stand in its way. While some can't understand why the nation's most delegate-rich state would take such a major step backwards while other states — including ALABAMA,

LOUISIANA, MICHIGAN and PENNSYLVANIA — are jockeying to get out in front of the pack, backers of the change say the March primary has simply been a failure. They point out that in the last two presidential races, as well as in the current one, the parties settled on a nominee well before March and focused their efforts on other states that had early primaries — and were easier and less expensive to campaign in. Supporters also say the March elections have not been a big hit with voters; the turnout this last March was the lowest for any presidential primary in California's history. But Bruce E. Cain, director of the Institute of Governmental Studies at U.C. Berkeley contends the change is more about making things easier on the state's elected officials. "The March primary made the cycle for raising money very short. Also, the long interlude between the primary and the general election bothered a lot of people. People would get sick of the election," Cain said. The Legislature actually considered an alternate solution in 2002: creating separate state and presidential primaries. But that solution was considered too costly and ended up being vetoed by then-Gov. Gray Davis (D). (LOS ANGELES TIMES)

AT THE POLLS: Although all 120 of FLORIDA's House seats are up for re-election this year, there were only primaries for 35 last Tuesday. But seventeen of those races actually determined who will take the seat, because the opposing party didn't field a candidate. Only one Senate primary provided the same degree of finality, the race involving incumbent Sen. Steve Wise (R), who easily defeated his GOP challenger to

Upcoming Elections

(09/01/2004 - 09/15/2004)

09/07/2004 Arizona Primary Election
House (All)
Senate (All)
US House (All)
US Senate (McCain)

09/07/2004 Nevada Primary Election
Assembly (All)
Senate Clark: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 (5 & 7 are 2 member districts); Northern NV; Central NV; Washoe 3
US House (All)
US Senate (Reid)

09/11/2004 Delaware Primary Election
House (All)
Senate 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 21
Constitutional Officers: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Insurance Commissioner
US House (All)

09/14/2004 Massachusetts Primary Election
House (All)
Senate (All)
US House (All)

09/14/2004 Minnesota Primary Election
House (All)
US House (All)

09/14/2004 New Hampshire Primary Election
House (All)
Senate (All)
Constitutional Officers: Governor
US House (All)
US Senate (Gregg)

09/14/2004 New York Primary Election
House (All)
Senate (All)
US House (All)
US Senate (Schumer)

09/14/2004 Rhode Island Primary Election
House (All)
Senate (All)
US House (All)

09/14/2004 Vermont Primary Election
House (All)
Senate (All)
Constitutional Officers: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor
US House (All)
US Senate (Leahy)

09/14/2004 Washington Primary Election
House (All)
Senate 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 39, 40, 41, 49
Constitutional Officers: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Attorney General, Auditor, Insurance Commissioner, Superintendent of Public Instruction
US House (All)
US Senate (Murray)

09/14/2004 Wisconsin Primary Election
Assembly (All)
Senate (Even)
US House (All)
US Senate (Feingold)

Governors

C A DEMS PLAY WHILE THE CAT'S AWAY: While CALIFORNIA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger

(R) was looking to make a big splash at the Republican National Convention last week, one of his most vocal critics back home was making news of a different kind. Sen. Gil Cedillo (D) has been at odds with Schwarzenegger for months over Cedillo's bill that would allow the state's 2 million illegal immigrants to obtain driver's licenses, a bill the governor once promised to support but now opposes. At issue is Schwarzenegger's desire to have licenses for illegals "look different" than regular licenses, an element Cedillo says would be discriminatory. Both sides have so far refused to yield, perhaps for good reason. Schwarzenegger entered office in Nov. 2003 promising to work to repeal similar legislation — also authored by Cedillo — his predecessor, recalled Gov. Gray Davis (D), had just signed. Schwarzenegger's enormous popularity and poll numbers that showed a huge percentage of Californians not only opposed the measure, but that Davis' signature had been a crucial factor in their support of the recall, convinced Democratic lawmakers to repeal the bill before the new governor could act. Alas, they did so with Schwarzenegger's promise to work with them on a new, more acceptable version. The governor's proposed amendment, which came much later, infuriated Cedillo, who said

... unquote

"Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger should sign this bill — not look for an out. I'm not particularly interested in Cruz Bustamante signing it."

— **Cedillo again, backtracking after his initial call for Bustamante to sign the bill became a hot topic on radio talk shows.** (SAN DIEGO UNION TRIBUNE)

Quote...

"Our position is that the policy merits the support of the governor -- whoever that is -- once the bill gets to his desk."
— **CALIFORNIA Sen. Gil Cedillo (D) advocating for Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante (D) to sign controversial legislation that would allow illegal immigrants the right to obtain driver's licenses.** (SACRAMENTO BEE)

Schwarzenegger has reneged on his promise.

Given that Schwarzenegger has already vowed he will veto the bill this week unless his amendment is added, Cedillo last week publicly called on Lt. Gov. and jilted gubernatorial candidate Cruz Bustamante to sign it before Schwarzenegger returned from NEW YORK. But after a flurry of bad publicity fanned by talk-radio — and a less-than-cool reaction from Party leaders — Cedillo changed course and stated his desire to see Schwarzenegger address the bill himself.

Bustamante had no comment himself, but a spokesperson said he had no plans to sign the bill. (SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, SACRAMENTO BEE, SAN DIEGO UNION TRIBUNE).

MCGREEVEY WANTS NEEDLE

EXCHANGE: Saying it will reduce the state's number of AIDS and HIV cases, NEW JERSEY Gov. James E. McGreevey (D) has proposed to legalize a hypodermic needle-exchange program for Garden State drug addicts. Although New Jersey ranks fifth in the nation with more than 33,000 AIDS and HIV cases that have been linked to drug use, some lawmakers instantly rejected the idea. Republican Assemblyman Kevin O'Toole openly questioned whether the Legislature would support the proposal, saying he doubted even moderate Democrats would get behind the idea. He also chided McGreevey for his stance, saying, "I guess he is just coming to terms with himself and

embracing a more liberal wing of his party." The idea also took a blow when a state court invalidated an Atlantic City ordinance that allowed the city's health department to distribute needles to drug addicts. As a gubernatorial candidate in 2002, McGreevey said he would support a hospital-linked pilot syringe-exchange program, but the idea never came to fruition. But with his legacy very much in mind as he prepares to leave office on Nov. 15, McGreevey says the program will now be a priority. DELAWARE is the only other state that also bars both needle-exchange programs and the nonprescription sale of syringes. (NEWARK STAR-LEDGER)

MCGREEVEY, PART II: The man with whom McGreevey allegedly had an affair has decided not to file a sexual harassment suit against the governor. Golan Cipel said he never asked McGreevey for money and that he only wanted to clear his name. Cipel denies he is gay or that he had a sexual relationship with McGreevey. In a prepared statement from his home in Israel, Cipel said "I see the resignation as an important victory and feel great relief in light of the fact that McGreevey cannot do to others what he has done to me."(NEWARK STAR-LEDGER)

In the Hopper

State Net's database tracks tens of thousands of bills in all 50 states at any given time. Here's a snapshot of what's in the legislative works:

- **Number of prefiles/intros this week:** 74
- **Number of prefiles/intros overall in 2004:** 118,299
- **Number of bills enacted/adopted this week:** 173
- **Number enacted/adopted overall in 2004:** 24,404
- **Total number of measures in State Net database:** 187,278

— Compiled By GINA HUMMELL
(2003-04 data current as of 9/3/04
Source: State Net)

man will now have to serve a nine-year prison sentence (SAN DIEGO UNION TRIBUNE). • **CALIFORNIA** Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) vetoes SB 1151, legislation that sought to clarify for judges how to evaluate the gravity of crimes committed by juvenile offenders when considering trying them as adults (LOS ANGELES TIMES).

EDUCATION: Education officials in **MASSACHUSETTS** announce that two more state colleges will require incoming freshman to own laptop computers as a condition of admittance this fall. The decision, which brings to three the number of state schools with the laptop requirement, is part of a plan to mandate the portable computers for 30,000 students by 2009. The schools have arranged with Dell Inc. to offer their laptops to students for \$1,200, a discounted price. State community colleges and the University of Massachusetts are exempt (BOSTON GLOBE). • The **UTAH** Supreme Court agrees to decide if the state university has a right to ban firearms on campus. The Beehive State Legislature recently passed a bill that would force the campus to allow permitted firearms on school grounds, but the school rejected the law as unconstitutional (DAILY HERALD [PROVO]).

ENVIRONMENTAL: Wildlife officials in **ALASKA** say they will expand the state's aerial wolf control program this winter. Officials say they want to kill as many as 500 of the *Canis Lupus* across the state as part of an ongoing program to protect declining moose populations from the predators. The program resulted in 144 wolf kills last year (ANCHORAGE DALY NEWS). • **CALIFORNIA** wildlife officials announce plans to revive a program to create a series of marine reserves with restricted fishing zones along the 1,100-mile Golden State coast. The reserves would protect only state waters, which extend three miles from the coastline (SAN DIEGO UNION TRIBUNE). • Also in **CALIFORNIA**, the Legislature approves a bill that would allow the state to require tugboat escorts for ships carrying dangerous chemicals in state harbors. It heads to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) (SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS).

HEALTH: A **NEW HAMPSHIRE** joint legislative committee rejects proposed rule changes that would have allowed the state's health insurance program for children to be competitively bid and to charge Medicaid patients for misusing hospital emergency rooms. The committee plans to study the issue again in the next session (UNION LEADER [MANCHESTER]). • **CALIFORNIA** Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) vetoes SB 1336, a measure that would have allowed oral surgeons to perform cosmetic procedures like Botox injections and nose jobs.

Schwarzenegger said the concept behind the bill needs to be more carefully evaluated (SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE).

SOCIAL POLICY: The **TEXAS** Supreme Court rules that parents of stillborn babies cannot sue medical practitioners for negligence because a fetus is not a person under Lone Star State law. Texas is one of 10 states that do not recognize wrongful-death claims for stillborn children (HOUSTON CHRONICLE). • A **LOUISIANA** appeals court reinstates the Sept. 18 election date on a proposal to amend the Pelican State constitution to ban same-sex marriages. The decision overturns a lower court ruling that said the ballot measure is unconstitutional. Opponents of the measure immediately launched an appeal to the state Supreme Court (NEW ORLEANS TIMES PICAYUNE).

POTPOURRI: A **MARYLAND** court rejects a challenge to the Old Line State's new electronic voting system, saying election officials have taken sufficient care to ensure each vote is properly counted. Challengers had wanted the court to allow voters to have the option of using paper ballots instead of the electronic version, but the court decided that would cause too much confusion and not be in the public interest. The challengers plan to file an appeal (BALTIMORE SUN).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

Once around the statehouse lightly

RETURN OF THE KINGFISH. Huey Long hasn't been heard in the LOUISIANA state house for nearly 70 years. But a \$250,000 permanent exhibit has brought the once-unruly governor back to life, reports the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*. Called "Huey Long Live! The Kingfish Speaks," the exhibit features a life-size mechanized character who talks, gestures and even sings. Long, part of a family political dynasty that provided the Bayou State with governors and U. S. senators for decades, served as governor from 1928 to 1935 when his tenure was abruptly ended by an assassination. During that time, the highly ambitious Long became a national political figure as a self-styled champion of the poor. His life was dramatized in a novel, "All the Kings Men," by Robert Penn Warren and later made into a movie starring Broderick Crawford. Crawford won an Acad-

emy Award for best actor for his portrayal of “Willie Stark,” the character based on Long.

THE SHIRT ON THEIR BACKS. Delegates from CALIFORNIA had a nice surprise waiting for them when they arrived in NEW YORK for the Republican National Convention. As the *San Diego Union-Tribune* reports, Golden State delegates received a complimentary tote bag that included two short-sleeved shirts. Given that New York summers can be hot and humid, it was a nice gesture toward folks accustomed to more temperate weather. But like a lot of things political, this gift came with fine print — a message stitched onto one of the shirts. It urged everyone to vote “yes” on California’s Proposition 70, an initiative that would allow unlimited expansion of gambling at casinos located on Indian land. The measure is sponsored by the wealthy and powerful Agua Caliente band of Palm Springs — a tribe that just happens to be at odds with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who opposes Prop. 70 and signed the official ballot argument against it. More to the point, the California Republican Party also officially opposes Prop. 70.

DOGGED BY CONTROVERSY. State Sen. Edith Prague didn’t need this kind of controversy in an election year. The 78-year-old Democrat, facing a tough battle with Republican Catherine Marx, received some unflattering publicity recently when another CONNECTICUT state senator — a Republican, of course — accused Prague’s Shih Tzu of doing its duty on a committee room carpet. According to the *New York Times*, the Republican — Louis DeLuca — then told reporters that Prague tried to blame the accident on a guide dog. Prague at first denied that her dog was responsible for the mess but fessed up when confronted with a video tape showing her pooch in the act. She vehemently denied blaming a guide dog. Meanwhile, the entire fracas appeared — tongue in cheek — on the front page of *The Hartford Courant*. Prague’s Republican opponent chimed in that she owned no pets. “I have three kids, and they are very well trained,” Marx said. “I would keep an eye on them if they were in the Capitol.”

FAMILY TOGETHERNESS. The governor of SOUTH CAROLINA has been living in the pool house at the Governor’s Mansion since June. That’s when toxic mold was discovered in the main mansion, and Gov. Mark Sanford’s family had to abandon the building while the house was detoxified. Sanford’s family retreated to their home on the coast, but the governor moved into the one-room pool house rather than spend state funds to rent another house or apartment. Now, reports *The Charleston Post and Courier*, school is starting and Sanford’s family is back in the

capital. So, for the next month, Sanford, his wife and their four boys will *all* inhabit the pool house. Fortunately, the one-room pool house has two bathrooms. Cozy quarters are nothing new for Sanford. As a congressman for six years, he slept on a futon-sofa in his Capitol office rather than spend his housing allowance on an apartment.

— *By A.G. BLOCK*

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