

from our viewpoint...

Time for reasonable immigration reform

It's time for President George W. Bush to step forward and take a strong, sensible and moral stand on immigration reform.

The president has done more to bring the Republican party into the forefront of race and immigration than anyone since Abraham Lincoln. He has appointed more minorities, especially Hispanics, and women to top posts than any recent president.

Now is the time for him to secure a reasonable and fair outcome on immigration.

There can be no doubt we need to change our immigration system. We post unreasonable restrictions, then allow millions to slip across the border undocumented.

It's a stupid system, made worse by the fact that any attempt to make it work only seems to make it worse.

What should the president do?

- Amnesty for millions of people who are here, working and supporting their families, paying taxes and supporting our economy.

These people should not be made citizens — they should earn that — but they need to be part of our system, carry legal Mexican or U.S. identification and licenses, pay taxes, follow the rules, have insurance and generally adapt to our society.

We need to make that possible.

- A working registration system for guest workers who want to come here. The demand is huge, with 4 million to 5 million people believed to cross the border every year.

The registration system has to work. It can't be too restrictive, or people will avoid it and continue to swim the river and scurry under the fence.

Legal workers should not automatically become citizens. They, too, would have to work for that status.

- Beefed-up border security along the Rio Grande and the thousand miles of desert from El Paso to California to catch drug smugglers and the coyotes bringing in illegal aliens.

It ought to be easier to come across the border legally, by registering as a visitor or guest worker, than to sneak across.

The smugglers are no friends of ours, of the immigrants they prey on or of the Mexican people. They belong in jail.

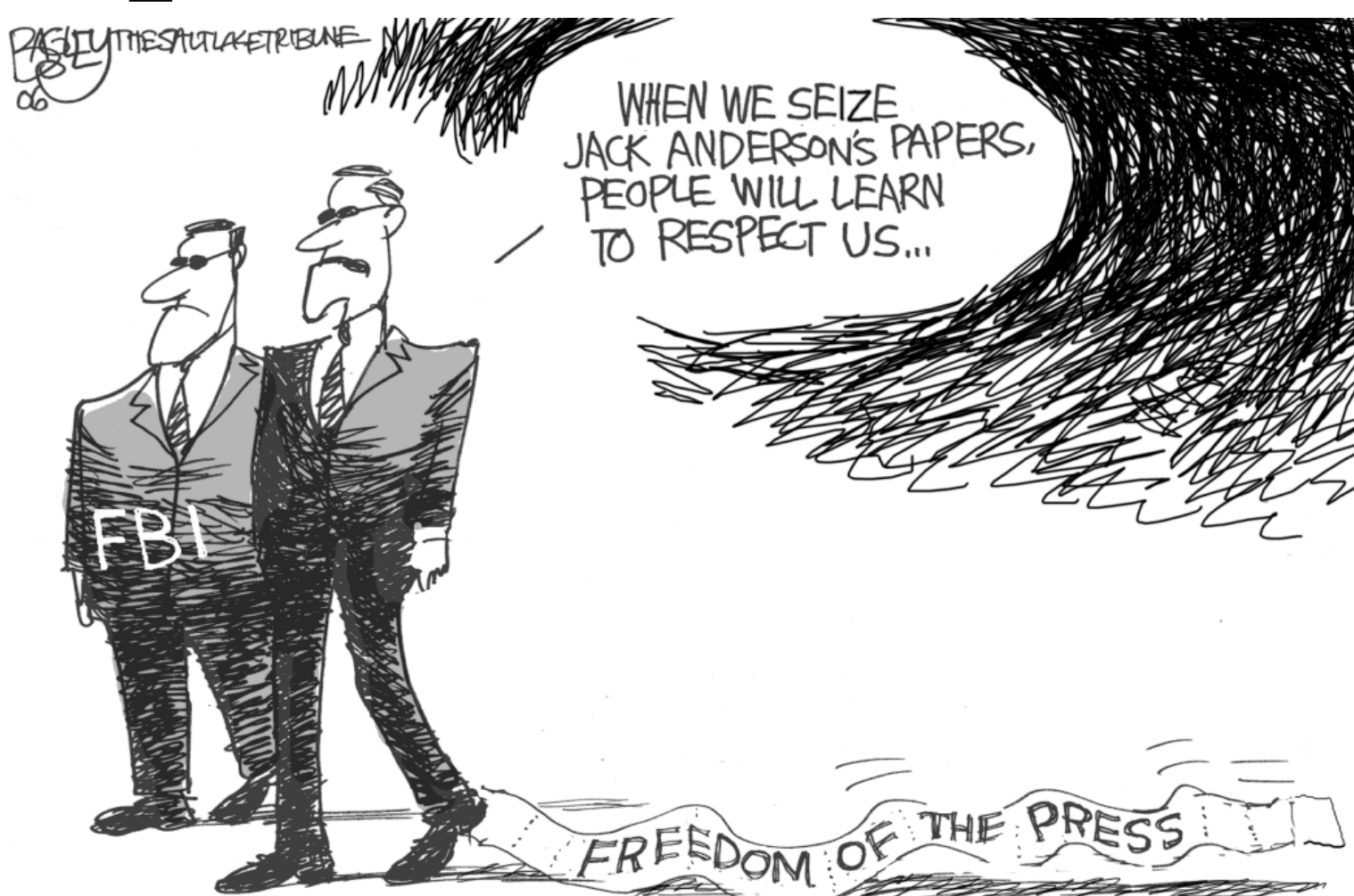
- And finally, once the system works, and not a day before, we should make it a felony to enter this country by-passing the immigration system for any criminal purpose.

Notice, we didn't say it should be a felony just to be here, but it should be a serious crime to sneak around the registration system.

And we should enforce that law.

Until we have a working registration system, though, criminal penalties would add just another joke to our current stack.

OK, Mr. President. It's up to you. — *Steve Haynes*



Life falls into a rare routine in China

Darin and Kati (Amos) Curts are WorldTeach volunteers in the People's Republic of China. The group, affiliated with Harvard University, places volunteer English teachers with the Hunan Department of Education and Foreign Affairs. Darin and Kati are teaching at Yueyang Ba Zhong (Yueyang No. 8 Middle School) for a year.

April, 2006

Hello again,

During the passing of our eighth month in the People's Republic of China, we were surprised by a welcomed change of pace. We found ourselves falling into a routine, a rare occurrence in a country characterized by seemingly unending "gaibian," the Chinese word for change. March proved to follow an informal schedule.

We typically travel on the weekends, but the weekdays are focused within the academic realm. Monday mornings, we put the finishing touches on our lesson plans and spend time in the copy room attempting to converse with the amiable ladies who work the ancient machines that churn out the 800 worksheets for our junior classes. Our first classes of the week begin Monday afternoons, and we spend much of the remaining days in the teaching building.

Lately, the majority of our focus has been on improving our role in the classroom. We attended a WorldTeach Mid-Service Conference early this month, where we learned new teaching techniques, did case studies on classroom discipline, and exchanged ideas about lessons and activities with fellow volunteers. In our junior classes, we've implemented a positive reinforcement system that rewards good classroom behavior, and have been concentrating largely on vocabulary building and listening comprehension. With our senior students, we've been using group-work to practice speaking and build confidence.

As foreign English teachers, our role typically extends far beyond the classroom. On Wednesdays, we've tried to continue the English Club we founded last term for Senior 2 students, and a large percentage of our weekdays are spent teaching in more informal ven-



Kati (Amos) Curts had lunch with some students from the Middle School. The students help Kati and her husband, Darin, work on their Chinese language skills on Tuesday evenings.

ues. We often have lunch with students and have gone on outings with various groups, including one particularly memorable trip to a nearby skating rink. As the weather improved, we spent one afternoon tossing an American football around with some students.

We maintain regular office hours, during which time we grade and answer questions about students' class work. However, the majority of our time in the office is spent chatting with students. Students regularly come to us to talk about their everyday life. Sometimes they ask questions about America or about our lives here, but usually they just want to talk about their family, their interests, and their concerns. Daisy, one such student, invited us to lunch at her family's home out in the countryside, and Laurence, another of our student-friends, visits us regularly and calls us in the evenings to discuss his especially busy day.

Not all students are brave enough to enter the office of two foreigners and engage in a conversation. It is for these students that we set up a "Reading Corner," our version of a private

library. We keep various English reading materials in our office for students to browse and check out for a week at a time. Pro Basketball and Teen People draw them into our office, where we use the time to strike up a conversation. We hope that this brief, but casual, interaction will help build their confidence and interest.

Though our office conversation is primarily English, Tuesday evenings fill it with Chinese language class. With the guidance of energetic students, we attempt to learn practical vocabulary and work on our pronunciation.

With the welcomed comfort of a routine, we've been fortunate to have the time to really focus on our work here. With the chance to affect the lives of over 1,000 students, it's been a relief to be able to concentrate on enhancing our effectiveness. However, no matter how much we focus on teaching, we usually end up learning more about ourselves.

Keep learning!

Darin and Kati Curts

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