OPINION

Guest Editorial

Don't Mess With American Ingenuity
By Douglas E. Schoen

What if I told you that labor unions, small-business associations, drug companies, physicians' groups, prominent academics, and the Bush administration were all lined up against a major piece of federal legislation currently winding its way through congress?

Would the convergence of these normally disparate interests make you suspicious of the legislation, sight unseen?

It should. All these groups have publicly opposed the Patent Reform Act, a bill that's supposedly aimed at modernizing America's patent system. Backed by several large technology companies, the measure passed the House last September and is currently under consideration in the Senate.

To be sure, the U.S. patent system is in need of change; it's costly, complicated and litigious. But the Patent Reform Act goes overboard with its overhauls, drastically weakening intellectual property protections and jeopardizing future innovation.

Take, for instance, a provision in the bill reworking the way that patent-infringement damages are calculated.

Currently, damages are based on the market value of the product as a whole, factoring in the patented innovation. Generally speaking, courts have asked how much money the patent holder would have made if the infringement hadn't occurred. The dollar answer is roughly equivalent to how much the infringer owes the innovator.

The bill would narrow that calculation to consider only the economic value of the patented innovation itself, not the value of the product on the whole.

That switch might make sense for, say, patented parts in mechanical products. It's relatively easy to appraise a particular kind of rudder, for instance, outside the total value of the airplane it's used in.

After all, a Boeing 747 with a different rudder is still a Boeing 747.

But the switch is illogical when it comes to other products, like pharmaceuticals. Active drug ingredients normally aren't worth a dime outside the context of the drugs they're in. What's more, it's effectively impossible to parse out the benefits of a particular patented portion of a drug.

Thus, the new standard would both drastically decrease the monetary value of a slew of U.S. pharmaceutical patents and reduce the damages for infringing on those patents.

Consequently, a chilling question arises: Would you invest nearly a billion dollars -- the average cost to bring a new drug to market -- on a new medication if a counterfeiter could copy it the second it went on sale and pay you only a small fraction of his profits as penalty?

If you wouldn't, do you think America's pharmaceutical companies would?

The benefits of medical innovation cut across party lines. Undermining the patent protections that drive that innovation is bad news for everyone. No wonder the Patent Reform Act is finding opposition across the political spectrum.

Douglas Schoen was a campaign consultant for more than 30 years and is the author of Declaring Independence: The Beginning of the End of the Two-Party System.

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Bond's Broadcast

Bond's Broadcast
By Hank Bond

It was an amazing weekend around the Bond house

Since we have last visited I have been to the Louisville airport at 1 a.m. to bring Amy, Ben, Analise and Antonio home to Carlisle.

It was a great ride. Beth went with me to keep me at least half awake and we made it from the blue shudders on West Main Street to Louisville International Airport in just at two hours.

The fact that on Wednesday night there is no traffic makes a great deal of difference in the amount of time it takes to get there.

We got there in enough time to find a spot in the garage and walk to the gate. Within 10 minutes there came Ben carrying two car seats and Amy Jo pushing those growing twins in a car seat.

Papaw and Aunt Beth got a couple smiles, but it takes a while for them to warm up to us since we don't get to see them all that often.

We left the airport in near record time, as they only checked one bag apiece so we were back to the parking garage in just a few minutes.

We always stop at Waffle House and that was when I came to the understanding of just how much those hungry little twins could eat.

We were back in Carlisle by 5 a.m., and although I was pretty well shot it was almost time to get up and go to work.

Of course once the clock had ticked pass midnight I had turned 57 and so it was truly a double celebration.

We have had a booming house full since they have been here.

The children, including Sadie Bug and Evan, have all been swimming and they're having a great time.

As many of your know, having all of my children and grandchildren in one place, at one time, is the only real present I ever ask for.

So on Thursday night we had dinner at my house and there at one table was everyone I really have any ties to in my life, with the exception of Matt, Carol's husband, who has had to work nearly every day since the gang has been gathered.

Friday and Saturday flew by and then we came to Sunday.

I would be remiss if I didn't report that I went to Pendleton County on Saturday to bring my mother-in-law to my house to spend the night.

On Saturday night we all traveled to Blue Licks for a visit to the buffet and had a great evening at the Lodge. We always have an enjoyable time there, as there are very few times we have gone there and not seen many people that we know.

Sunday, July 13, 2008 will be a special day for me and I am sure for all of our family for the rest of our days – be they few or many.

We got up Sunday morning and we went to church. While we were there my three smallest grand babies were all baptized. Analise, Antonio and Sadie Jo were all there.

It was a moving moment as Rev. Carpintero moved down the altar speaking to each and baptizing them. When that was finished, Mike, Beth, Marilyn and I all joined the church by transferring our membership.

It was a large crowd and when church was over many came forward to greet us and talk to the twins, along with all the rest.

Sunday afternoon we had scheduled a birthday party for Sadie Jo who, on July 11, turned 1-year-old. When we left to go to church it was raining and we were scrambling to figure out how we were going to move the entire event to the church's fellowship hall.

Well . . . just as Brother Carpintero (known to us as Jason) called the children to the front for the baptism the sun broke through the beautiful stained glass windows.

The weather forecast had been calling for eight days for up to 80 percent rain and lo and behold except for the early morning shower there was no rain.

We set up tables and chairs – a thanks to Mark Hughes and the county fire department – and began making ready for the party. After church Carol and I went and picked up some more chairs and Ben helped me get a table and we were ready.

Marilyn and Carol had spent a good deal of time Saturday cooking with a list too long to mention of dishes for the get together. Grandma took a large head of cabbage and made cole slaw and Beth did a fruit bowl and mac and cheese.

I had allowed an hour to cook the burgers, dogs and chicken – wrong! I should have started much sooner. When hungry masses arrived for the event I was still toiling at the grill.

When I looked around I

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Veloz Viewpoints

Veloz Viewpoints
By Amy Bond Veloz

Greetings from...Kentucky! I hope everyone is having a great week!

Well, we've been in Kentucky since last Thursday and I can definitely say that I'm enjoying myself.

We left Pahrump on Wednesday and by the time our plane landed in Louisville it was Thursday.

The kids did so great on the plane. The plane wasn't full, so we decided to carry on the car seats with us. The car seats have to go in a seat next to the window on the plane, so if there is an emergency everyone can get out without something blocking their way. Anyway, so we set up the seats in two window seats, one in front of the other. Then, Ben and I each sat in the aisle seats. If someone had wanted to sit in our rows, we would have moved to the middle, but since there were enough open seats, no one did.

We each had our own row, and it was great! We strapped the kids into their seats before take off and they both fell asleep during take off. They slept nearly the entire way. Antonio woke up about 20 minutes before we landed and Analise woke up as we were landing. I could hardly believe that I had been worried about the flight. They did so well.

We met Papaw and Aunt Beth past the security point, got our bags and were on our way. We stopped for a little Waffle House and my kids ate up their waffle as fast as they could. They were pretty hungry!

We've done a lot since we got here. We have been to the pool at Blue Licks, taken two trips to Flemingsburg, taken a trip to Maysville, had a birthday party for Sadie Jo and then the most special of all, we had the kids baptized.

Pastor Jasón Carpintero, at the Methodist Church baptized my babies on Sunday. It was so special to me that my parents and my grandma were there for the occasion, as well as my sisters, Carol and Beth and my brother, Michael and nephew Evan. It was truly a family function and it was great.

Since the kids were born it has seemed like all the big things for them have been done in Pahrump, without my family. This was so important to me and I'm so glad so many of my family could be a part of it.

It also felt great to hear how many people at the church read my column. When the congregation greeted us after the service, so many told us they read this column. It really felt good to hear. Sometimes I feel like I'm writing this and not even sure if anyone is reading it, or wonder how many people I'm boring with my little stories about my family. I'm glad to hear that people are enjoying it.

I hope the rest of this week goes by slowly, as we are headed back to Nevada next Sunday. I will fill you in on how the rest of the trip went then.

Until next week, make it a great one!

Amy

Talkin' From The Mountains

Talkin' From The Mountains
By Dale Greer

Soap Star Dies

I recently lost another good friend from my television days. Beverlee McKinsey died due to complications after a kidney transplant.

Beverlee gained fame on Broadway in the 1960s in Barefoot In The Park. She was also well known for her many television and movie roles.

Bev became hugely famous in the 70s as the scheming villain Iris Carrington on the NBC daytime drama Another World. For many years, Bev was the "evil queen of the soaps"---perhaps the meanest woman on television. She also played Alex Spaulding on Guiding Light from 1984 to 1992. She retired in 1992.

Bev may have been the meanest person on television but in real life she was a sweetheart. She left her villain persona in the studio at the end of the day.

She asked me to do her a favor one time, a favor I was unable to accomplish. I called her to give her the bad news forgetting that she went to bed very early because she had to be on the set of Another World early in the morning.

When she answered I could tell I had awakened her. "I'm so sorry, Bev," I said. "I forgot how early you have to get up."

"That's okay, sweetie," she said.

"Bev, I couldn't get it done," I informed her of the favor she had asked.

"That's okay, sweetie, I know you tried."

"Gee, Bev," I said, "you are nothing like Iris."

"Darn good thing," she answered, "calling me in the middle of the night and giving me bad news."

She visited with my family in Louisville several times. My wife and children liked her too. She was always pleasant and easy to be around. We teased her that we would have to keep her out of the public eye when she came to Louisville because she was ruining Iris Carrington's reputation by being so nice to everybody.

Unfortunately, some people were mean to Bev, treating her as if she really was Iris Carrington---saying mean things to her on the street or in restaurants. It was incredible how many people could not distinguish between fantasy and reality. Downright Scary!

Vicky Windham, who played Bev's arch enemy on the show, was Bev's good friend in real life. They told me that people gave them funny looks and made remarks when they were hanging out together on days off from the show. "Some people thought we were really enemies, or should be enemies," Bev told me.

Bev used an upper class Boston accent in her role as Iris. In real life, she grew up very poor in Oklahoma and slipped back into her Oklahoma accent when she was relaxed.

The friends she made in Kentucky were amazed to discover that the talented actor who played the sophisticated rich villain Iris Carrington on television had an accent not far from their Kentucky accents.

I was honored when she had the writers change her birthplace on the show from Boston to Louisville because we were good buddies. When she was off the show on vacation or on tour, the writers had a character say she was visiting family in Louisville. Sometimes she was indeed in Louisville, visiting my family.

I spent some time on the set with her when I was working in New York and once played a role on Another World (only because Bev wanted me on the show). I played a bartender in the Tall Boy Restaurant and had great lines like "hello," and "two beers coming up." I was so unimportant I didn't have a name. I was just "the bartender."

Bev burst out of the studio during rehearsal one day and ran to me in tears. One of the big heartthrob leading men had said something very mean to her and hurt her feelings. His name will be withheld to keep me from being sued.

Iris would have found a way to get even with him. Bev just cried.

"I told him that I didn't deserve to be treated badly by him. I've loaned him some of my best dresses and my best shoes," Bev told me, "and I have always treated him nice."

I had to chuckle a little to learn that this "hunk" who was a heartthrob for women all over the world was a crossdresser. In Louisville that would have been scandalous. In New York it got a shrug.

Bev and her fellow actors on Another World, like the fans, sometimes confused real life and the roles they played. The talk around the lunch table often went something like this:

"Vicky is real sick."

"On the show or in real life?"

"Barbara is getting a divorce."

"On the show or in real life."

There was no confusion for me about Beverlee. I am saddened by the loss of my friend. She was a wonderful lady.

Gee, Bev, you were nothing like Iris.

Dale Greer is a member of the faculty at Morehead State University. He has an expansive background in media including award winning reporting and stints as a major television anchor and talk show host. He can be reached via email at, ddgreer@roadrunner.com

OPINION

Steve's Report

Steve's Report
By Steve Scalf

Lately, my days have been filled with preparations for retiring from the military – which involves going to one agency after another getting paperwork signed. The process would probably go a lot faster, except those signatures come at a price: I have to tell them about my plans for the future. The conversation always starts something like this:

"So, I see you're retiring. Congratulations! How many years does this make for you?"

"25."

"That's incredible... really. Thank you so much for your service. Are you staying here in Hawaii, or are you going back to the Mainland?"

"We're moving to Carlisle, Kentucky – a small town about 40 miles northeast of Lexington. We own about 91 acres there and are having our house built, as we speak."

At this point there is always a brief break in the conversation and I get the same puzzled looks we see whenever we tell people from Nicholas County that we've decided to move there. Even though no one ever asks the question, it's plain to read in their expressions: "Why Carlisle?" Instead, they try to answer their own question with the most likely reason: "Do you have family there?"

For the longest time, I didn't know how I should answer that question. My apologies to those of you who have received the following explanation:

"Actually, my dad's side of the family live in southern Indiana, but both his parents came from Kentucky..."

Although what I said is true, it's not the real answer. My family roots really had very little to do with our decision to settle in Kentucky. I didn't even consider that until after we had bought our property. I had only gave that answer because the real story is a little hard for some people to believe:

One evening while I was still in Iraq, I suddenly received a strong impression that it was time to decide where we wanted to retire. I got on the Internet and started looking for real estate, beginning my search near Fort Wayne, Indiana, where I grew up. I sent an E-mail to Cindy, showing her some of the places I had found but when she saw how expensive land was around there she sent back, "Does it have to be Indiana? Maybe we should widen our search to include surrounding states, like Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, and Kentucky."

The next evening, we sent each other a couple of messages to share what we had found, but both of us knew we hadn't found the place yet. Nothing felt right. The following night, however, I found some land just off of Stoney Creek Road and got excited. I sent an E-mail to Cindy with the subject: "Take a look at this!"

Right after I hit the "send" button, an e-mail appeared in my inbox with the subject: "Take a look at this!" Confused, I thought, "Did I accidently send myself e-mail?" So I checked – No, it had come from Cindy. Half a world away from each other we had found the exact same property and at the exact same time sent almost identical e-mails to describe it.

As if that wasn't remarkable enough, we continued to receive strong hints that we had found the right place. The next day, the Army started blocking access to most commercial websites, including real estate. If I hadn't started looking when I had, I wouldn't have had a chance – and as soon as I found our property, the opportunity went away.

Then Cindy found the Internet "walking tour" of Carlisle, with pictures of downtown. This is EXACTLY the kind of town I was looking for!" she told me.

We decided to buy the property without ever seeing it in person. But we worried about explaining our decision to others. It sounded a little crazy even to us. I have a nephew who lives in South Bend, Ind. We hadn't been able to attend his wedding, so for their first anniversary, we treated them to a weekend at Blue Licks – and had them meet with the realtor to check out the property. We closed the deal that same week.

To learn more about Nicholas County, I started reading the county newspaper on the Internet. The first week I read Amy Veloz's column about running crosscountry in high school. Not only were her experiences similar to my own, her writing style and her humor felt familiar. I wrote her a letter, which became the start of an immediate friendship. Although we still haven't met in person, our families still write and exchange pictures regularly.

The next week on April 3, for the first time since my arrival in Iraq six months earlier, the sky turned black with heavy raincloads. Gale force winds drove torrential rainfall, causing significant flooding. It reminded me of the horrible tornado outbreak on that same day in 1974 that had taken the life of my sister, Elizabeth.

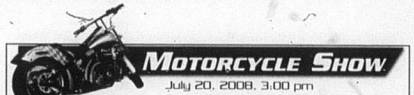
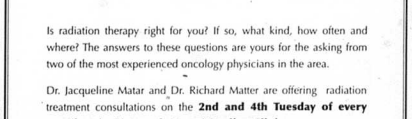
Hank Bond's editorial that week was about those same tornados. Amazed by the coincidence, I sent him an E-mail, sharing my own experiences. He printed it as a letter to the editor and invited me to write a column for the paper. I've been writing ever since.

Now, when people ask me "Do you have family there?" I still may not include all the details, but at least now I let them know that God is taking care of us. And not a single person has acted like I'm crazy. As a matter of fact, most have reacted very positively, thanking me for sharing such a faith-promoting story.

So as incredible as it sounds, that's our story. I'm sure I'll get to tell it a few more times after we finally get to Carlisle on August 7, but seriously I don't mind.

As a matter of fact, I'm looking forward to it.

Signing out from Honolulu

Steve Scalf

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