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The Buzz: Mitt Big Digs a hole

The Kansas City Star

Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney has grabbed the reins in trying to fix Boston's Big Dig and has forced the turnpike authority chief to quit.

Does it help his presidential bid? NYU professor Mitchell Moss says the image is leadership: "He did what he had to do — he put a body on the tarmac, (held) somebody accountable."

But some predict a political cave-in: "He is now going to be held directly responsible for every delay, every cost overrun and every construction defeat," said pundit Dick Morris. "Some things are best kept at arm's length."

Hold 'im back, boys

Rep. Gene Taylor didn't much take to being called a "little twerp" by former FEMA head Michael Brown in a *Playboy* interview.

"Brown is an incompetent fool, and everyone in south Mississippi knows it," said the Democrat. "Brown should consider himself a lucky man. Had I known before the hearing that he was up in Baton Rouge ordering steaks on his government credit card at the same time the people of south Mississippi were resorting to police-sanctioned looting to feed themselves, I would have done more than just verbally kick his butt."

Grass grows in Wheeling!

How slow is it this summer in West Virginia? *The Charleston Gazette* has proved that President Bush really did take a sip of lemonade at a kid's stand.

But ... did he swallow?

Ankle biter bitten by blog

Ankle Biting Pundits' Patrick Hynes was zapped by other bloggers for not revealing ties to Sen. John McCain early and openly enough.

Daily Kos founder Markos Moulitsas' reaction: "Ha ha! Conservative blogger was a paid shill for John McCain and failed to disclose it. He was also one of the jokers who criticized me for working for Howard Dean in 2003 — even though I DID disclose the arrangement."

Hynes did a mea culpa.

Cute move

Roll Call notes how House Appropriations Committee Chairman Jerry Lewis dramatically slashed the salary of top aide Letitia White in 2002.

Did the top staffer mess up a defense spending earmark?

No, White's salary was lowered by \$11,000, apparently to help her slide by federal conflict-of-interest laws that would have kept her from immediately lobbying the California Republican and the panel she worked for.

When she joined a lobbying firm with ties to Lewis, she had a pair of defense contractor clients under her belt on her first day of work — and seven more signed within weeks.

The quiz

Who's the only sitting governor who has never been married?

- a) Jon Corzine, New Jersey.
- b) John Baldacci, Maine.
- c) Janet Napolitano, Arizona.

Quiz Answer: c: Napolitano

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