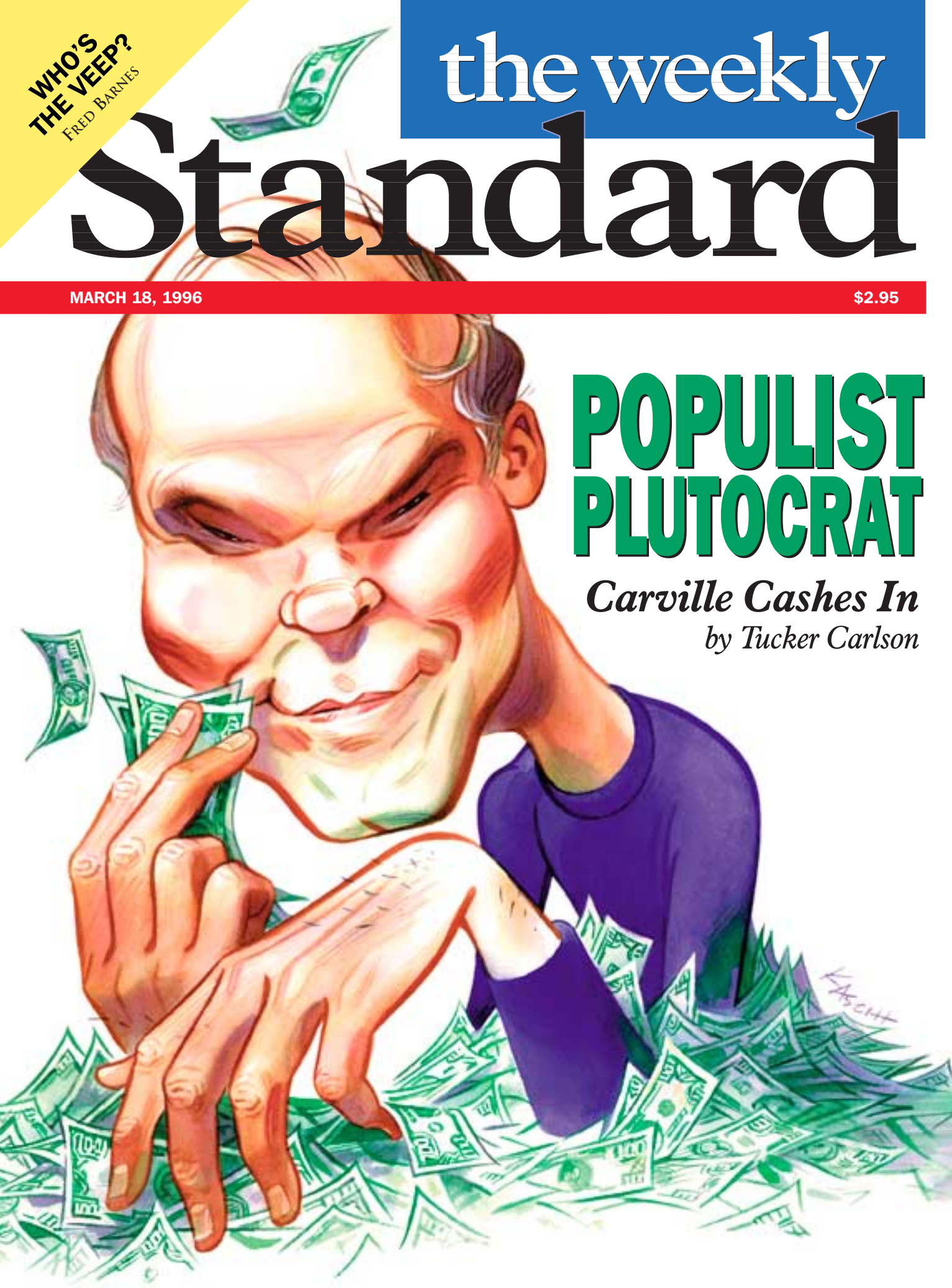
the weekly
Standard
MARCH 18, 1996
$2.95

WHO'S THE VEEP?
Fred Barnes

POPULIST PLUTOCRAT

Carville Cashes In

by Tucker Carlson



the weekly Standard

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 26 • MARCH 18, 1996

Cover art
by John Kascht

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), Vol. 1, Number 26, March 18, 1996. Published 50 times annually by News America Publishing Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY, 10036. Application to mail at Second-class postage is pending at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Send subscription orders to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153. Yearly subscriptions, $79.96; Canadian, $99.96; foreign postage extra. Cover price, $2.95 ($3.50 Canadian). Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage and handling). Subscribers: Please send all remittances, address changes, and subscription inquiries to: The Weekly Standard, Customer Service, P.O. Box 710, Radnor, PA 19088-0710. If possible include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. For subscription customer service, call 1-800-983-7600. Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The Weekly Standard Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is (202) 293-4900. Advertising Production: call Natalie Harwood, (610) 293-8540. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 930, Radnor, PA 19088-0930.

Trying, As Ever, to Understand Jack Kemp

Give Jack Kemp credit. He spurned Bob Dole and endorsed Steve Forbes for the Republican presidential nomination on a matter of principle. But the way he delivered his endorsement—well, that's another story.

Kemp fumed over attacks by Dole partisans in New York on Forbes's proposal for a 17 percent flat tax. On March 3, he bawled out Buffalo congressman Bill Paxon, a Kemp protégé, in the green room at CNN's Washington bureau, threatening to stump for Forbes in New York before the March 7 primary. Two days later, he read that Dole himself had said the flat tax would ruin New York's economy.

That was it for Kemp; he was ready to back Forbes. But he was supposed to meet the next morning with big contributors ($25,000 minimum) to Empower America, the think tank where Kemp has a perch. He sent word he was sick with the flu. Bill Bennett, also at Empower America, thought Kemp was giving a speech in Missouri. Kemp's press guy, Christian Pinkston, also didn't know of Kemp's plan. When he arrived at the airport to fly with Kemp to Missouri, the pilot told him they were going to Albany instead.

Bottom line: Forbes was happy, the contributors furious, Bennett miffed. Maddest of all was Newt Gingrich, who's trying to unify the party behind Dole. He told friends he won't meet with Kemp anymore. Oddly, the Dole forces weren't too upset. "At least," a senior adviser said, "we won't have to put Kemp in the cabinet now."

Setting Aside the Facts

The Clinton administration's endless internal review of federal affirmative action programs won another headline trophy the other day. "White House to Suspend a Program for Minorities," announced the *New York Times* on page 1 last week. And not just one program, "officials said," but *all* federal procurement programs that set aside business contracts exclusively for minority and woman-owned companies. The moratorium will last at least three years. "As a practical matter, set-asides are gone," says one senior administration official, "speaking only after being promised anonymity."

You'd be shy, too, if you were offering news this dishonest. The *Times* story itself reports that the White House believes there is only *one* federal set-aside program worthy of the name—a Defense Department contracting formula the administration stopped using last October. So, in fact, the president has actually now decided to suspend . . . nothing. Quite the contrary: He has begun an elaborate and expensive effort to create bogus legal justifications—federally commissioned statistical "disparity studies"—for all the myriad other programs that look and smell like set-asides. Joe Lelyveld, call your headline writers.

Obviously, They Are for Dukakis

The Republican party continues to be attacked for its use of the Willie Horton case in 1988, but the issue of granting furloughs to convicted killers will not go away. Now terrorists are getting the Horton treatment. In 1985, a group of Palestinian gunmen hijacked the cruise ship *Achille Lauro*. Thanks to smart American action, the terrorists were apprehended trying to flee. The Italian government, however, demanded that they be handed over to Italy, on grounds that the ship was Italian. The Italians promptly released the mastermind, Abu Abbas, but did prosecute and jail four others. Only one remains in prison; the other three escaped—while on furlough.

The latest disappearance occurred at the end of last month. The escapee? The very man who dumped Leon Klinghoffer, a wheelchair-bound American, into the sea. This killer, serving a 30-year term, was out on a 12-day pass for "good conduct." Like his two partners, he decided not to return to prison.

Some speculate that the Italian government was happy to see the terrorists walk—in effect, that it freed them—so as to curry favor with Arab states. But authorities in Rome patiently explained that most prisoners on holiday return faithfully to their cells.

Scrapbook

Years ago, Mrs. Klinghoffer confided to President Reagan that, when she faced the convicted men in Italy, she spat in their faces. Reading about these latest outrages makes one want to follow her example with all who furlough murderers.

Sweeney Agonistes

Each year the AFL-CIO releases ratings of the voting records of senators and House members that purport to show how friendly each is to union interests. A member's rating (from 0 to a perfect 100) is based on the dozen or so votes the AFL-CIO considers most important to unions. The 1995 ratings, released a couple of weeks ago, have some "union-friendly" GOP members upset at what they believe is the federation's deliberate attempt to pick votes that have almost nothing to do with traditional labor issues, as part of new president John Sweeney's emphasis on defeating as many Republicans as possible in November.

Congressional Quarterly reported that 7 of the 12 votes used in the 1995 rating involved issues such as tax cuts, the balanced budget amendment, and Medicare. With such votes included, several Republicans who had career scores of over 50 saw their 1995 ratings tumble from the year before. In the House, Lincoln Diaz-Balart of Florida fell from 78 to 8, and Sherwood Boehlert of New York from 67 to 33. In the Senate, Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado fell from 88 to 22, Richard Shelby of Alabama from 83 to 0, and Oregon's Mark Hatfield from 63 to 17.

If this trend continues, next year's ratings may be based on the traditional labor issues of capital gains indexation, welfare reform, and abortion.

The Reading List

Inge Kummant of Sewickley, Pa., has offered up a timely and valuable Reading List dedicated to the state and fate of Russia:

Leaves from a Russian Diary, by Pitirim A. Sorokin. A minor democratic political figure describes the first few years of the revolution in a 1924 volume. It depicts the self-defeat of the Kerensky government, the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by the Bolsheviks, and hair-raising famine and terror.

Russia Leaves the War, by George F. Kennan. A classic case study of American diplomacy from 1956, written before Kennan disavowed everything he ever stood for.

Testimony, by Dmitri Shostakovich. Artists and intellectuals, the sycophantish and the incautious, are swallowed by Stalinism, their stories told by the composer in this posthumous 1974 memoir. In 1936, after he was the subject of two articles by Stalin himself attacking him, Shostakovich waited each night with his wife and infant daughter for the executioners to collect him. And when he went to an opera and criticized the tenor, he received a flood of threatening letters from the tenor's fans, telling him Stalin would soon take care of him.

Life and Fate, by Vassily Grossman. This 1960 tome, published here in the mid-1980s, is arguably the greatest Russian novel of the century. It is the tale of the betrayal of the Russian people by the party as they rise to the heights of sacrifice during World War II. (Grossman is the subject of a new biography from the Free Press, ***The Bones of Berdichev***, by John and Carol Garrard.)

Casual

Hunting, Dirty Harry Style

It was the sort of thing that really doesn't make you angry unless you see it for yourself. Well, I've seen it, and now I'm angry. I was half paying attention to some nature program on TV when I looked up to see a pickup truck full of grown men with guns. They were part of a larger hunting party that was "on the trail" of some poor animal. It quickly became clear to me not only that whatever they were tracking—which turned out to be a cougar—was not going to live, but that an Army Ranger couldn't have escaped these boys.

I'm sure they envisioned themselves as Apaches on horseback out in the Old West, using their finely honed skills to track some creature of the wild. Man against nature and all that. The truth was that there was no more sport in what they were about to do than there is in getting in your car and going to McDonald's for a bacon double-cheeseburger.

Some New Yorker had gotten himself a hankering to get out in the woods and kill something. So he'd paid a group of good old boys several thousand dollars to find him something to shoot. They'd guaranteed him a kill in seven days or less. Their idea of tracking—driving around in backwoods so criss-crossed with roads an animal couldn't go half a mile without crossing one and leaving tracks *in the snow*—had set them on the trail of a big cat. Roads dissected all portions of the forest, so upon determining the general location of the cougar, they decided to fence him in. Staying in constant contact with each other using walkie-talkies, they decided it was time to let the dogs loose. Then they stood around. And waited. They didn't follow the dogs. They tracked them. Using radio telemetry.

The radio started beeping and off they went. A majestic 120-pound cougar was crouched on an upper limb of a 35-foot tree. Shooting fish in a barrel? They might as well have stapled a mackerel to a bullseye. At least the fish can swim around. The "designated killer" walked over, careful not to get *too* close. He pulled out a .357 Magnum and shot the cougar once: It faltered. Twice: It fell off the limb and hung there. The third shot loosed the cougar from its perch and it fell to a lower limb—then into the water of the shallow creek below. No more a hunter than a chihuahua is, the gunsel waded over to the animal and plugged it one last time.

Hunting implies sport, chance—as in giving the animal one. Where was the appeal in what they'd done?

The thrill of the chase? What chase? *Matching wits with an animal of the wild?* These boys had used technologies they no more understood than a TV remote control to locate this animal. *Communing with Mother Nature?* They only got out of the trucks when they absolutely had to.

The thrill of the kill? Ah, yeah.

This has got me thinking. In this age of technological wonder, why should people have to go out into the woods to kill something? If people *need* the thrill of the kill, let's bring it to them. We'll raise game animals in captivity. At birth, the animals will be implanted with a small explosive device attached to a radio transmitter. Customers will be given a cellular-technology device, which will look much like a television remote control. Without leaving the comfort of his—or her—own home, the customer can *kill*…bears, deer, cougars—eventually we'll expand into exotic game, such as lions, tigers, elephants, rhinoceroses. One press of a button and they're a hunter among men.

We'll raise the animals in stalls like milk cows to save time and money. We'll grain-feed them and pump them full of antibiotics. Or, if the customer simply has to kill a "wild" animal, we'll have "free-range" deer, too. They'll be raised in a natural setting much as their wild counterparts are.

To enhance the experience, customers will get a free video. If they choose to kill a deer, they'll fast forward to the "Dying Deer" portion of the tape while pressing the "Bye-Bye-Bambi" button on their remote—and they'll see a real deer being killed in the wild—by real hunters using real guns. . . . *What a realistic experience!*

We'll accept Mastercard or VISA right over the phone. We'll have a webpage—we'll even put video footage on CD-ROM. Consumers can subscribe to our service—"twice the kills, double the thrills." Or, if someone simply develops a sudden uncontrollable urge to kill something, he can call our First-timers' Hunter Hotline—"One call, one kill."

I suppose we could arrange to have customers watch live via satellite on direct-feed television as their deer shuddered violently and then dropped dead in its stall—or in its "native habitat"—though the logistics would likely prove this concept infeasible. But, hey, demand may prove otherwise.

And if you're redefining the term "hunter," why not go all the way to a drunk guy on a barstool?

Kent Bain

Pat, Conservative of the Heart

I would like to comment on your editorial "The Buchanan Challenge" (Mar. 4). I completely agree that Buchanan's bizarre mix of social conservatism and Gephardtian protectionist economics can only lead the GOP back into the minority status its adherence to Dole-style pragmatism locked Republicans into for 40 years.

What I found rather odd was your use of the words "dissed" and "*outré*" in the same sentence. This is an achievement of unique, if dubious, distinction. Is it indicative of our inclusiveness now that we are the majority party? The spirit of Lee Atwater lives as the GOP's big tent stretches to accommodate many dialects and languages.

I will be looking forward to coming issues to see further imaginative couplings of ghetto slang with foreign words. May I suggest def and *ergo*, or homey and *Zeitgeist*. I will rely on you to continue to keep me politically and linguistically up to date.

Gregg M. Turner
Keene, NH

The attempts of neoconservatives to pretend to be conservative while seeking to remain "respectable" in the eyes of liberals leave such a bad taste in my mouth that I am forced to come to the defense of Patrick Buchanan.

Your editorial states that Buchanan is "so easy to dismiss . . . in part because almost all his policy proposals deserve to be dismissed." According to you, we do not need to be protected from "Spanish-speaking hordes." As a Cuban who grew up in Miami, I have to wonder whether anyone at The Weekly Standard has ever visited the southern United States. Florida is being devastated by the costs of providing welfare and schooling for refugees from Nicaragua and Cuba. Miami still has not recovered from the jump in the crime rate from the Mariel exodus.

Our country in effect pays people to break the immigration laws by providing welfare, medical payments, and costly bilingual education: In California, for example, one third of all public assistance goes to immigrant-headed households.

As to Buchanan's so-called isolationism, it is, rightly understood, very similar to the conservatism of the orthodox Jew, Christian, or Muslim. Unwilling to give up the rich faith which has formed his people over the ages, Buchanan forgoes being liked and respected by the world in order to remain what he is.

One might think that the country begun by the Puritans is a little closer to satisfying the deepest longings of many Americans than the European common market of the Rockefeller Republicans. If it is not, then maybe the whole show from 1776, or 1688, needs to be reexamined, something one can be sure The Weekly Standard won't do.

Manuel Antonio Lopez
Keene, NH

Your savage challenge to Patrick Buchanan leaves fellow conservatives wondering how the Republican tent could fill with such unqualified actors. Buchanan's populism symbolizes what America wants—strict conservatism, not the conservative/liberal views espoused by Dole and company. Buchanan has a simple philosophy: Abortion is wrong; we should halt illegal immigration; and jobs are the number one priority of the president.

In the past, Dole has voiced conservative views and then forgotten them on Capitol Hill. Buchanan's hostility to this Washington forgetfulness and his forthright attitude toward Americans add an honest person to the presidential race, one whom the Republican party and The Weekly Standard should recognize.

By the way, I thought voters determined whom the party nominates, not Washington insiders. From the tone of your editorial, it seems you're miffed that you've been left by the wayside from the Buchanan landslide.

Chris Brahmstedt
Arlington, VA

Your Buchanan editorial was probably the worst to date. Let me get it straight: Buchanan is a leftist and a voice of anti-Americanism; he is analogous to George McGovern and peddles a hidden Marxist subtext in his economic message.

What is to be done about Pat? His economic ideas are, frankly, childish, and we can probably leave it at that—after acknowledging that even childish ideas have an attraction, especially when delivered with Buchanan's enthusiasm and conviction.

Buchanan's "conservatism of the heart," on the other hand, is not an idle slogan. He is the opposite of the fiscally conservative, socially liberal Republicans: those soulless calculators who want their tax cut as well as the license to "take care" of their girlfriends. Buchanan's fusion of ideas is hardly new. Indeed, his style is most like that of an old-line Catholic priest. His rhetoric is like a boiled-down version of C.S. Lewis's *The Abolition of Man*.

But the editorial's greatest shortcoming was not the incoherent characterization of Buchanan (Pat's a big boy and can defend himself). It was your suggestion that candidates like Dole or Alexander are capable of picking up the rhetorical gauntlet Buchanan has thrown down. Let's face it: They both stink. (Along these lines, your continuing dismissal of Steve Forbes's candidacy is a mystery to me.) The advice you give them on what they need to say against Buchanan can be understood only as a joke.

The general press, the Republican party, and Buchanan's penchant for combativeness have succeeded in making him a pariah candidate (a designation that one imagines is not unattractive to Buchanan).

He might be the only Republican candidate who could lose to Clinton. But we should show a little more

Correspondence

integrity and dignity when we attempt to bring order to our house.

CHRISTOPHER H. ZAKIAN
NEW YORK, NY

PAT'S DIVERSE PEASANTRY

Tucker Carlson completely distorts his conversation with me ("Jews for Buchanan," Mar. 4). I was not "strangely uncomfortable" when he asked me for a list of Jewish supporters. I thought it was an offensive and thoughtless request.

I responded, not in "debatespeak," but with a touch of humor. We did not have a list; we did not break down our supporters; and we do not support quotas around here. Trying to assist Carlson, from the top of my head I threw out two names: Rabbi Yahuda Levin [sic] and Rabbi Aryeh Spero. Near the end of our conversation, I remembered that the movie critic Michael Medved had spoken at one of Buchanan's American Cause dinners. I never suggested that "anyone looking to understand the depth of Buchanan's appeal" should call Medved. I thought it could be a good lead, but never suggested he was a "Buchanan booster."

Sincerely doing my best to help Carlson, as a deputy press secretary should, I was used. Carlson proved that he will do anything, write anything, and even make insidious requests to reach his ultimate goal: stop Buchanan.

K.B. FORBES
MCLEAN, VA

TUCKER CARLSON RESPONDS: ***To refresh Forbes's memory, here's how our conversation went. When I asked if Orthodox Jews support Buchanan, Forbes said, "There's a good amount of support. You know who you should speak to? Michael Medved." "Medved's a Buchanan supporter?" I asked. "Oh yeah," replied Forbes.***

INMATES SHOULD WORK

Andrew Peyton Thomas's "Jailhouse Work" (Mar. 4) correctly echoes Jeremy Bentham's sentiment when Bentham urged replacement of the jails of his day by "mills for grinding rogues honest and idle men industrious." Yet state, local, and federal lockups today control a huge asset, convict labor, and largely waste its productive potential.

The solution is competitive enterprise. Repeal of the Ashurst-Sumners restrictions on interstate commerce in prison-made goods is a vital beginning. But bureaucratic resistance must be overcome. This means measures like an enterprise-recruiting office in the prison system and modest prison bonuses for progress toward financial self-sufficiency. It also means allowing private-prison operators to "profit" from the employment of convict labor, repealing the state-use system that grants a captive market for the shoddy products of prison industries, and implementing an English rule in which prisoners can lose as well as gain in prisoner litigation against work.

Many for-profit enterprises would love to hire convict labor and most convicts want to work. Government should step aside. Its first responsibility is to citizens, not the protectionist unions.

MORGAN REYNOLDS
BRYAN, TX

FIXING OUR OWN HOUSE

As Larry Arnn notes, Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech was indeed great ("How Winston Churchill Can Save Us—Again," Mar. 4). Perhaps the most important quote was "I come to you at a time when the United States stands at the highest point of majesty and power ever attained by any community since the fall of the Roman Empire."

Churchill, looking at America today, might make a different speech. He might remind us that in the 1930s his speeches advised Britons to repair their own house first.

D. MUIR HUTTON
ORLEANS, MA

JUDE, MODERN INTELLECTUAL

Contrary to the caricature by Andrew Ferguson ("The Way the Jude Works," Mar. 4), Jude Wanniski, like Irving Kristol and George Gilder, is one of the most important public-policy figures of modern times. Not since the Scottish Enlightenment have we witnessed such men whose insights have enhanced our understanding of ethics, economics, psychology, and sociology. As a decade-and-a-half client of Wanniski, I can readily attest to the substantive quality of his work conveniently ignored by Ferguson.

First, Jude has consistently provided extraordinarily accurate advice and observations about the markets and the economy. Second, in the tradition of intellectually honest policy-makers, Wanniski constantly calibrates his insights and understandings. Not satisfied to accept supply-side policy solely in terms of recent popular nostrums, Wanniski alone has sought to incorporate the behavioral insights of Reuven Brenner and the social maxims of Abraham Lincoln. It is these addenda to the nature of risk and societal flux that so threaten the established order in Washington.

Perhaps his tweaking your publication as "The Beltway Standard" has provoked more anxiety than your editors can bear.

STEPHEN W. SHIPMAN
LOS ANGELES, CA

AMBASSADOR OF FINLAND

I have enjoyed reading your magazine as it finds its stride. Yet there was a factual error in Tucker Carlson's "The Hidden Politics of 'Personality Parade'" (Mar. 4).

In the second half of the article, Carlson writes that Derek Shearer's ambassadorial nomination was stopped in the Senate. A quick check of the State Department's list of ambassadors shows the nominee is now Hon. Derek Shearer, U.S. Ambassador to Finland.

GREGORY STANKO
SILVER SPRING, MD

THE WEEKLY STANDARD
welcomes letters to the editor. Letters will be edited for length and clarity and must include the writer's name, address, and phone number. All letters should be addressed:
Correspondence Editor
THE WEEKLY STANDARD
1150 17th St., NW
Washington, DC 20036.
You may also fax letters: (202) 293-4901.

the weekly Standard

It's Foreign Policy, Stupid

"Your planet seems to be in good condition," Secretary of State John Hay once serenely reported to Theodore Roosevelt. One wonders whether Warren Christopher can say the same to Bill Clinton about his planet these days. Let's sum up the past few weeks: Fidel Castro shot two unarmed planes out of the sky, killing three U.S. citizens; China began firing missiles around the edges of Taiwan like a knife-thrower at the circus; Russia moved a step closer to an election that may put a Communist back in the Kremlin; the IRA ended a U.S.-backed truce by setting bombs off in London; and, perhaps worst of all, Christopher's beloved Middle East "peace process" collapsed and now lies motionless at the bottom of the charred bomb craters left by Iranian-backed Hamas terrorists.

This ought to be about the time Bill Clinton sheds his "foreign policy president" outfit and starts telling us how well the economy is doing, stupid. But it probably won't wash. With all the bombs and missiles going off around the world, there's a good chance foreign policy is going to be a big part of the 1996 campaign. The events of recent weeks and the problems that inevitably lie ahead—with Cuba, the Middle East, and China—should remind voters that the conduct of foreign policy is a uniquely large element of a president's job description. And that's good news for Bob Dole, if he seizes the opportunity to remind the voters of what they already know: that Republicans have proved more reliable custodians of the nation's foreign policy these past 20 years than the current generation of post-Vietnam Democrats.

> BOB DOLE HAS A GOOD CHANCE TO REMIND VOTERS THAT REPUBLICANS HAVE BEEN MORE RELIABLE CUSTODIANS OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY THESE PAST DECADES THAN DEMOCRATS.

The truth is, Republicans have allowed their natural advantage in the area of foreign policy to atrophy since 1992, when Bill Clinton managed to convince everybody that foreign policy was a political loser in the post-Cold War era. He had to make that case, of course, because if foreign policy mattered, then George Bush was obviously the better candidate. And Clinton did such a good job convincing himself of the irrelevance of foreign policy that, as president, he passed the job to his subordinates. The result was two years of vacillation and incompetence in the management of foreign affairs before the world intruded itself upon Clinton's consciousness and forced him to grab the wheel now and then.

Clinton also did a good job convincing the Republicans, and the result was the GOP's dangerous three-year flirtation with neo-isolationism and the near abandonment of its successful Reagan-era internationalism. With his mishap in Somalia, his intervention in Haiti, and his on again, off again approach to Bosnia, Clinton managed to maneuver many Republicans into the corner once occupied by the McGovernite wing of the Democratic party. Before every intervention, leading figures in the party cried "quagmire," warned of "another Vietnam," predicted disaster, and then waited for the "body bags" to start coming home. The result, ironically, was to give Clinton a free ride on policies of questionable merit. When disasters failed to materialize, both in Haiti and (so far) Bosnia, Clinton could declare victory and leave Republicans grumbling.

But worse than that, this attitude threatened to make the GOP the party of pessimism. Where once Ronald Reagan offered a vision of optimism and confidence about America's leading role in the world, Republicans talked about the limits of our power and the difficulties of using it to accomplish anything worthwhile. Clinton couldn't have planned a better dirty trick, for the Republicans came close to squandering one of their most important electoral advantages: the American people's confidence in their abili-

ty to lead America forcefully and effectively through just the kind of international thickets that have recently sprouted up around us.

Thanks to some gutsy decisions last year, however, Sen. Dole is well positioned to pick up the Reagan standard in foreign policy and bring it to bear against Clinton's anemic internationalism lite. Last December Dole single-handedly saved the party from driving over a cliff on the issue of supporting the deployment of troops in Bosnia. In doing so he defied the common wisdom, slavishly followed by ex-candidates Gramm and Alexander and by Steve Forbes, and proved that supporting an activist policy overseas does a candidate no harm. Now he can move on to define the Republican internationalist agenda and thereby capitalize on the party's longtime strength in foreign affairs.

In 1996 Dole needs to set forth the broad principles of Republican internationalism that made Ronald Reagan such an effective foreign policy president and such a strong candidate. Instead of criticizing each Clinton policy as it comes up—today Cuba, tomorrow the Middle East, the next day China—Dole should use the whole panoply of foreign policy issues to spell out clearly the large doctrinal differences between the party of Reagan-Bush and the party of Carter-Clinton. At least three broad themes stand out.

Standing by our allies. There is always one fundamental test for American foreign policy: Is it safer to be our friend or our enemy? The bedrock principle of Republican foreign policy in the Reagan-Bush years was that our staunch allies in the world come first, but the Clinton administration, like the Carter administration, has been more interested in accommodating old enemies than protecting old friends. Clinton's proudest accomplishment was bringing Yasser Arafat to the White House lawn; Warren Christopher has spent more time with Syria's Hafez el-Assad than with most of our European allies.

One of Clinton's top priorities was normalization of relations with Vietnam; in a second term, it will be normalization of relations with Castro. When added to the administration's accommodating approach to China, the Clinton administration's policies have sent a clear message to the world: If you're a Communist dictatorship, if you've got a long record of anti-Americanism, then you're just the kind of friend we've been looking for.

Standing by our ideals. Dole should borrow a page

Michael Ramirez

from the Reagan foreign policy handbook and speak out about the American-led democratic revolution that has been sweeping across the globe since the 1980s. The word "democracy" fell out of the Republican party's vocabulary when Clinton sent troops to restore Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the presidency in Haiti. But it was a mistake to cede this ground to the Democrats.

If there are democratic governments in almost every country in this hemisphere today, if there are democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, this is the direct consequence of the Reagan Doctrine. Clinton has actually done comparatively little to spread democracy around the world. And in Cuba and China, his accommodating policies are more likely to perpetuate dictatorship than to foster democratic reform. Dole should take back the ideological issues that Reagan employed so successfully but that Republicans have ignored for three years.

Expressing confidence in American power. In the coming months, Clinton is likely to look more and more helpless to solve the world's problems. The Middle East "peace process" will be stalled as the Israelis see to their security and then go to elections. There probably won't be any breakthroughs in Northern Ireland. China's ominous behavior around Taiwan will continue. Castro just might decide to let loose another exodus of rafters—if only to remind the occupant of the Oval Office, whether Dole or Clinton, that he still holds this weapon. And, worst of all, Russia may elect the Communist leader, Gennadi Zyuganov, president in June. It might not be long before the foreign policy pundits start talking about a dangerous world that is out of control and about a declining America that can no longer shape the course of events.

Sound familiar? That was the mood in the country in 1980 when Ronald Reagan ran against Jimmy Carter. Reagan responded not by carping about the failures but by expressing confidence in American power and promising to shore up American strength. Dole should do the same. That means abandoning the Republican party's anti-foreign policy stance of the past three years and arguing that our country has an active, and vital, global responsibility. ♦

Who's the Veep?

by Fred Barnes

John McLaughlin, the TV talk show host, cornered Colin Powell at a wedding reception in Washington in February and asked the obvious question: Can you envision a Bob Dole-Colin Powell ticket this fall? "I answered that last November," Powell said, referring to his statement that he wouldn't run for the Republican presidential nomination and didn't have any interest in the vice presidency either. But that was more than three months ago, McLaughlin protested. "It's worked so far, hasn't it?" Powell shot back. Then he smiled and slipped away. Oh, yes, Powell also told McLaughlin that he speaks to Dole quite a bit.

> ALL DOLE HAS SAID PUBLICLY IS THAT HE'D CONSIDER COLIN POWELL AND WON'T CHOOSE ANYONE WITH "INHERITED WEALTH."

Powell's answer—not a flat no—is bound to encourage the surprising number of Dole advisers who want the all but certain GOP nominee to tap Powell as his running mate. Vin Weber, a Dole campaign co-chair, favors a run at Powell. He thinks the retired general will sign on if Dole has a solid chance of winning and if Dole "puts it to him pretty hard" that his country needs him. Sen. Robert Bennett of Utah, an influential colleague of Dole's, says a Dole-Powell ticket "is certainly something that could happen." According to Bennett, Dole has suggested, in another context, a way to deal with conservatives who oppose Powell. Dole told him of a meeting with women who belong to Republicans for Choice, followed by a session with supporters eager for him to toughen his anti-abortion stance. "Do you want me to stand up and say I don't want any of those [pro-choice] women to vote for me?" The pro-lifers said they didn't. "You handle the vice presidency the same way," insists Bennett.

Maybe, but Dole hasn't said so explicitly. In fact, no one has talked to him about the vice presidency. Dole's campaign manager, Scott Reed, says he has a half-dozen things on his agenda over the next month, and deciding on a running mate isn't one of them. All Dole has said publicly is that he'd consider Powell and won't choose anyone with "inherited wealth," meaning Steve Forbes. But Powellmania is growing among Dole strategists who are impressed by Powell's awesome poll numbers. In the *Wall Street*

Journal/NBC poll conducted in early March, Powell led President Clinton by 9 points, while Dole trailed Clinton by 19. Better still, Powell jacks up Dole. In another poll, a Dole-Powell ticket beats Clinton and Al Gore by 47 percent to 45 percent.

Matchup polls are hardly conclusive, but no potential running mate has ever added as much to the ticket in matchups as Powell. There's a reason for this, argues William J. Bennett, the former drug czar who urged Powell to run for president. "He's the most respected guy in the country," Bennett says. With him as Dole's veep, "it changes the identity, the complexion, the feel, the meaning of the Dole campaign. It's really a new day. It puts the Democrats on the defensive." But it also puts Dole on the defensive with conservatives. Powell turned many of them off last October when he unveiled his political leanings: pro-choice, pro-gun control, pro-affirmative action, critical of welfare reform and the Contract with America. He's softened those views a bit since then—he's against taxpayer-funded abortions—but he hasn't changed them. That means choosing him would be extraordinarily risky. Picking a Midwestern governor like John Engler of Michigan would involve less risk.


John Kascht

Ralph Reed, the boss of the Christian Coalition, says three things could happen if Dole picks Powell, all bad. The best is that the nomination would be merely "problematic." Worse, it might prompt Patrick Buchanan to bolt from the Republican party and run against Dole as an independent. A Dole-Powell ticket, Buchanan said on March 3, "will split the party asunder and many of my people will walk out no matter what I do." Worst of all, according to Reed, the entire social conservative wing of the Republican party might abandon Dole. "Even if we escaped a blowup at the convention, the stress on the Republican coalition would be horrendous," warns Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council. And Carroll Campbell, the former South Carolina governor and Dole campaign co-chair, says Powell "could raise red flags among some people, and there're going to be a lot of them."

Reed doesn't believe Powell will be asked or would accept if he were. (Reed says he's talked to Powell confidants.) "The most important thing in choosing a vice president is to select someone who will unite the party around the themes of the 1994 landslide," Reed adds. The veep should be an economic conservative who wants a balanced budget and a tax cut, a backer of term limits, and a pro-lifer, Reed says. That's not quite a description of Powell. Reed, by the way, has influence with the Dole camp.

There is a scenario, however, for Dole to mollify conservatives should he name Powell. He could pledge to stick with strong anti-abortion language in the 1996 GOP platform, including the promise to name pro-life judges, then have Powell say he'd abide by the platform. This wouldn't be unprecedented. George Bush transformed himself from pro-choice to pro-life the instant he became Ronald Reagan's running mate in 1980. But some senior Dole advisers fear this wouldn't work. Ideology is what matters with a running mate, says a key campaign official, and Powell fails the test. "Everybody's interested in Powell, but it's a pretty big mountain to climb," the official says. After mishandling relations with Buchanan, Dole has little flexibility on a veep. "That makes the bank shot with Powell that much more tricky," another Dole adviser says.

Choosing Engler wouldn't be tricky at all. He's conservative, he's pro-life, and he comes from an important industrial-belt state that Dole might lose without Engler on the ticket. And Engler is Catholic, which could be a factor in a close election. Republicans lost the Catholic vote in 1992 and 1988 after winning it in 1984 and 1980. Several other Republican governors have some of these attributes. Dole likes George Voinovich of Ohio personally, but he's not as conservative as Engler. Tommy Thompson comes from a smaller state, Wisconsin. So Engler makes more sense. Besides, "John is widely acceptable across the spectrum," says Michigan senator Spencer Abraham. "Engler would be satisfactory," says Bauer. He's "a very viable possibility," echoes Reed.

Dole aides have also discussed a California ploy. Dole is ready to run all-out in California (Bush gave up there early in the 1992 campaign) to deny Clinton the state he must win for reelection. The problem is there's no obvious California running mate since Governor Pete Wilson is unpopular and Attorney General

Dan Lungren, a conservative and a Catholic, is not a national figure.

Chances are, Dole's decision on a vice president will hinge on how much he trails Clinton this summer. If he's still 10 to 15 points behind, he'll be more inclined to make a pitch for Powell, despite the risk of alienating conservatives. If the gap has narrowed, Dole is likely to play it safe and go with Engler or an Engler clone. Of course, no one knows for sure how Dole will size up the situation. For now, he's not talking. ♦

What Arafat Is Up To

by David Bar-Illan

Jerusalem

When Saddam Hussein's sons-in-law returned to Baghdad from their haven in Amman only to be murdered promptly by the grandfather of their children, Israelis were flabbergasted. What they could not fathom was not the routine Iraqi atrocity, but how men born and bred in the Middle East could be gullible enough to trust the blandishments of a murderous dictator like Saddam. It was an awesome triumph of wishful thinking over the most basic of all instincts: the will to survive.

It took the sight of 60 funerals in nine days here to make Israelis wonder if they too were not behaving like the hapless Iraqis. Suddenly, they realized that utopia—the happy, prosperous, and peaceful era Prime Minister Shimon Peres has dubbed "The New Middle East"—may not be around the corner; that trusting Yasser Arafat to be a partner in peace and a collaborator in the fight against terrorism may be a sucker's gamble.

TRUSTING YASSER ARAFAT TO BE A PARTNER IN PEACE AND A COLLABORATOR IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM MAY BE A SUCKER'S GAMBLE.

This is not the way it appeared only two days before the first of the recent bus bombings. In an interview, Peres viewed the future with heady optimism bordering on arrogance. In the polls he was 10 to 15 points ahead of his rival, Likud chairman Benjamin Netanyahu. Israel, he said, was enjoying unprecedented popularity in the world. The economy was flourishing. And, above all, there had been no terrorist activity for seven months! Arafat was curbing the Islamic and radical movements in his own unique way and doing a wonderful job of it.

On first glance, these were indisputable assertions. Yet only a man committed to self-deception could make them. The facts, known not only to Peres but to anyone who bothered to study the news, pointed in a different direction. True, there had been a lull in terrorist activities. But the lull was neither as extensive nor as complete as Peres described it. Nor did it signal a real change.

Four months ago, immediately before the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, there had been a coordinated attack on buses in the Gush Katif area near the Gaza strip by two suicide bombers driving explosives-laden cars. Peres chose to ignore it, even though the incident could have been as lethal as the recent attacks. Only a combination of sheer luck and quick thinking by the soldiers who were escorting the buses led to the happy result: Both car bombs exploded without causing deaths.

Nor did the Israeli army's evacuation of several West Bank Arab towns in December proceed as smoothly as advertised. Soldiers were ambushed, kidnapped, stabbed, and shot. But the number of fatalities was relatively small, and the stories hardly made the news. Even in Israel, these incidents—and the almost daily acts of terror, like tossing gas bombs and sporadically firing on Israeli vehicles—were considered the sputterings of a dying radical fringe opposed to the peace craved by the vast majority of Israelis and Palestinians.

The first major warning signal came after the killing of Yihye Ayyash—the notorious terrorist known as the Engineer. He had caused the death of at least 50 Israelis in suicide bombings he had planned and supervised. For more than a year he topped Israel's wanted list. Yet he lived freely and openly in Gaza, under the rule of the Palestinian Authority. In an outright violation of the Oslo agreements, neither he nor any of the other dozen top terrorists living in Gaza and Jericho was extradited to Israel.

When a booby-trapped cellular phone killed the Engineer, the mourning among Palestinians recalled the grief in Iran at the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini. The largest Arab gathering in the country's history,

some 300,000, accompanied his casket. Arafat himself paid a condolence call to Hamas leaders. The Palestinian Authority's "Police"—a euphemism for the Palestinian army—fired a 21-gun salute at his grave. And in a rally on the West Bank near Hebron a few days later, Arafat called the Engineer a *shaheed*—a martyr of Islam and the Palestinian revolution.

Throughout the West Bank and Gaza, commemorations for Ayyash were held under the sponsorship of the Palestinian Authority, attended by tens of thousands. In each, Israeli flags were burned in full sight of Palestinian officers, if not with their active participation. At a gathering on the very day Peres gave his ecstatic interview, an effigy of a bus marked "Dizengoff Number 5" was set on fire. Three high-ranking PLO officers joined in the ritual.

Nor was this conduct an expression of rage triggered by the Engineer's killing. It was wholly consistent with Palestinian conduct in the past two years. From the very day he signed the Oslo agreement on the White House lawn in September 1993, Arafat has been consistently selling war, not peace, to his people. In a speech on Jordanian television that day, he mentioned neither Israel nor peace. Instead, he referred to the 1974 "PLO plan of stages" for Israel's destruction. The plan envisions acquiring as much land as possible from Israel by peaceful means, establishing a Palestinian state on it, then using it as a springboard for an armed struggle that would draw in the Arab world for the final war against the Jewish state.

Ever since, Arafat has consistently called for holy war, jihad, against Israel, and reminded his listeners that Muhammad, too, had to make treaties with enemies at times of weakness only to break them when he became stronger. He has lionized the "martyrs" of the Palestinian revolution, glorifying not only those who died in the struggle before he signed the Oslo agreement but all those who have died or been imprisoned since.

He has never criticized Hamas. To the contrary: In all public addresses, Arafat sends his blessings to Hamas chief Sheik Ahmad Yassin and vows to have the organization's prisoners released from Israeli jails. Nor has he condemned Hamas after the recent spate of suicide bombings. The reports of such condemnations are false. He has referred only to Hamas's *military* wing, and even then the censure is vague.

Arafat has been forced to moderate some of his more offensive behavior, mostly due to American pressure. The graduating classes of his police force in Jericho no longer make the Nazi salute, and he now routinely condemns acts of terrorism in unequivocal terms. Only a year ago, following the Beit Lid massacre in which 22 West Bank civilians died, he flippantly dismissed questions about condemnation with a derisive chuckle.

What Arafat has come to realize is that terrorism is a useful weapon if he uses it cunningly and retains "deniability." Like most Palestinians, he believes, not unreasonably, that Israel's willingness to recognize the PLO and sign a document that would inevitably lead to the creation of a Palestinian state was not an expression of noble generosity but a retreat before terrorism.

Like all dictators, Arafat believes in shooting while negotiating. But he also understands that there is a limit to what Israel will take before a backlash sets in. That is why he negotiated an agreement with Hamas in Cairo, which stipulated that terrorist activity would be confined to areas not under the control of the Palestinian Authority under Arafat's command.

> HAMAS VIEWS ITS MILITARY ACTIVITIES AS "A FACTOR DESIGNED TO HELP THE PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATOR—THE PLO," SAID A HAMAS REPRESENTATIVE.

Emerging from these negotiations, Hamas representative Khaled Mashaal said that Hamas views its military activities as "a factor designed to help the Palestinian negotiator—the PLO." To claim, then, that Hamas is opposed to the Oslo process while the PLO is in favor of it is to misunderstand the dynamics of the Middle East.

The bus bombers and their dispatchers are not out to undermine Arafat and his regime, nor are they opposed to a process that includes Israeli withdrawal. Had they really wanted to end the process, they would have blown themselves up near Arafat and his entourage, not in downtown Tel Aviv.

What the terrorists want is painfully obvious. They want Israel to withdraw *more quickly* from all the territories, and ultimately from the region. But above all, the terrorists want the credit for this withdrawal, and they have good reason to believe they can achieve their aim.

Over and over again, they have been assured by the Israeli government, the Clinton administration, and the European Union that no matter what they do, no matter how many Israelis they slaughter, Israel will continue the process and its withdrawal. It is a terrorist's dream come true.

Now, however, it is entirely possible that things have gotten out of hand. With the number of terrorism fatalities since the Oslo agreement at over 200 (a larger

number than in any 30-month period since the establishment of the state), the backlash against the recent bombings may be stronger than Hamas and the PLO expected.

But there is little doubt that the Clinton administration, out to save the "process" and its reputation as peacemaker, will do whatever it can to counter this backlash, whether by calling pious and useless international conferences on terrorism or pressing Arafat to keep a few Hamas operatives in prison longer than a week. The Israeli government, too, will now display hawkish activism, taking some truly tough measures against the Hamas operatives it can lay its hands on. Otherwise, as it well knows, Labor may lose the May election.

But the fundamental facts will stay the same. Arafat remains a terrorist who wants to destroy Israel. Hamas and other Islamic groups will continue their jihad with his tacit approval. And Israel will sooner or later have to reach the conclusion that the new Middle East bears a striking resemblance to the old, and act accordingly.

David Bar-Illan is the editor of the **Jerusalem Post.**

Elite Men of the People

by Norman Ornstein

Here's a little test for all you political junkies. What presidential candidate said each of the following?

1. "The facts are . . . the American people are hurting. These people are hurting in the inner cities. We're shipping the, quote, 'low paying jobs' overseas."

2. "Washington is a federal forum whose operating slogan has been 'billions for corporations, bills for the people.'"

3. "Members of Congress should generate some leadership by example. They should stop sponging off the taxpayers."

4. "If you want to serve the people, you've got to listen to real people. If you stay inside the Beltway, the special interests become the real people."

5. "Why are our people not realizing the fruits of their labor? I will tell you. Because we have a government that is frozen in the ice of its own indifference, a government that does not listen anymore to the forgotten men and women who work in the forges and factories and plants and businesses of this country. We have instead a government that is too busy taking the phone calls from lobbyists for foreign countries and the corporate contributors of the Fortune 500."

6. "Now all those fellows with thousand-dollar suits and alligator shoes running up and down the halls of Congress that make policy now—the lobbyists, the PAC guys, the foreign lobbyists . . . we're going to get rid of them, and the Congress will be listening to the people."

7. "Today our birthright of sovereignty, purchased with the blood of patriots, is being traded away for foreign money, handed over to faceless foreign bureaucrats at places like the IMF, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization. . . . What is the matter with our leaders?"

8. GATT and the World Trade Organization mean "replacing democratic powers residing in the U.S. government with the autocratic authority of a world government."

Pat Buchanan, you say? They all could easily have come from the mouth or pen of the controversial Republican candidate. But only numbers 1, 5, and 7 are his. Numbers 2, 3, and 8 belong to . . . Ralph Nader, numbers 4 and 6 to Ross Perot.

Buchanan, Perot, Nader—the Three Amigos of contemporary American populism. Perot, of course, was a presidential candidate in 1992 and is poised to run again on his Reform party ticket this year. Nader will be on the ballot in California and other states as the presidential nominee of the Green party—and polls show him doing quite well. And Buchanan's rise to prominence speaks for itself.

That these eight statements could have been said interchangeably by Buchanan, Perot, or Nader—the three strangest bedfellows in modern American political history—speaks volumes about the state of play in politics today and about the populist challenge facing our leaders tomorrow. This populism is different in one key respect from its predecessors: It has a strong base on the left, with Nader joined by prominent congressional liberals like David Bonior and top labor officials; in the center, with Perot; and on the bedrock right, with Buchanan. Of course, there are still sharp political differences between these camps, on issues from abortion to national health reform to tort reform to budget deficits. But it is striking how much more the three groups are in sync than they are at odds.

Populism is nothing new in America. As the late historian Richard Hofstadter reminded us in a

series of books, it has more than once been a prominent force, including in the 1820s, under Andrew Jackson, in the 1890s, in a movement led by William Jennings Bryan, and in the 1930s, led by America Firster Father Coughlin.

All these waves of populism had elements in common, including a visceral distrust of all elites, starting with the moneyed interests but including the political leadership in Washington; staunch protectionism; a sizable dollop of isolationism; and a touch of nativism. From Jackson on, American populism sought to unleash the popular will by undermining or bypassing representative democratic institutions like Congress. Consider one more quote, this one from Andrew Jackson:

"Could it really be urged that the framers of the Constitution intended that our government should become a government of brokers? If so, then the profits of this national brokers' shop must inure to the benefit of the whole and not to a few privileged monied capitalists to the utter rejection of the many." Change a few words to contemporary idioms, and this too could come from Buchanan, Perot, or Nader.

John Kascht

Populism has thrived whenever American workers felt embattled or in trouble, which usually has meant in the middle of economic turmoil, like the panic of 1819, the depression of 1894-'96, and the Great Depression in the 1930s. The 1990s would seem to be a curious time for ascendant populism. After all, the economy continues to grow, if at a slower rate than before, with low unemployment and low inflation.

Why then is populism showing such strength now, and showing it across the ideological board? There is a real driving cause: the uncertainty generated by the global economy. If most Americans have jobs, and believe they will have jobs next year, they still do not feel safe. Mergers, bankruptcies, buyouts, layoffs—all have become regular facts of life to workers, who have lost any sense that there is loyalty up and loyalty down in today's workplace, or any likelihood that their children will be better off than they are.

That unease has been heightened by the voters' continuing deep hostility toward politicians and other elites. Combine the two with a corrosive cynicism toward the political process, and *voilà*—all the ingredients needed for populism to thrive.

The press's unremitting hostility toward business leaders and politicians, especially Congress, and obsessive coverage of scandal, real, alleged, and imagined, over the past decade and a half have turned a nascent problem into a combustible one, which Buchanan, Perot, and Nader threaten to ignite.

To be sure, Pat Buchanan is unlikely to turn his crusade into a Republican nomination for the White House. His support in GOP primaries and caucuses probably has a ceiling of 30-35 percent of voters—not enough to win, but enough to be a major factor at the Republican convention in San Diego in August.

More significantly, what happens to his supporters and to the broader share of the electorate that resonates to the populist message?

There is a large market for that message—and in America, where there is a market, there is a product. Buchanan's message paves the way for an even more significant Perot candidacy in '96. That is good news for Bill Clinton. But Buchanan also fuels Nader's left-wing populist crusade, which really could threaten Clinton in California, a must-win state for him.

More broadly, the Buchanan movement means even more populist candidates for Congress, joining the bulk of 1994's GOP freshman class and a substantial share of the congressional classes of 1990 and 1992. In the Democratic party, it means the continuing ascendancy of David Bonior as a congressional leader and the sharpening of the populist side of Dick Gephardt's message, begun on the presidential campaign trail in 1988, developed in his anti-NAFTA rhetoric in 1995, and honed in his 1996 attacks on the GOP's Medicare proposal.

The American political and business establishment is broadly internationalist, free-trade oriented, and anti-nativist. Buchanan's rise will jolt them enough to prevent his success this year. But it would be foolhardy to ignore the broader political trend in the country. No political force in America is more

vibrant or resonant right now than populism. If political and business leaders in both parties don't move quickly to address in a constructive—meaning non-isolationist, non-protectionist, and non-nativist—fashion the issues Buchanan, Nader, and Perot are raising, the movement will only get stronger, especially if the economy falters.

In that case, Pat Buchanan will be back in 2000, with more credibility, a broader base, and even more momentum—and a second Buchanan in the White House, with a Congress more sympathetic to this one's isolationist and protectionist siren song, will no longer be a farfetched joke.

Norman Ornstein is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

The Return of Newt

by Matthew Rees

House speaker Newt Gingrich now relies on what staffers call "the Jupiter graph." In meetings, Gingrich refers to the planet Jupiter and the attention devoted to the "spot" marring its appearance even though this "spot" is unimportant to understanding the planet. Gingrich sees Washington as the "spot" on America and warns his colleagues against getting bogged down in the mechanics of Washington politics, which he says is a minor concern for most Americans. House majority leader Dick Armey agrees: "We need to get outside our little universe and be able to relate to America on this broader basis."

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE WANTS HIS COLLEAGUES TO AVOID GETTING BOGGED DOWN IN THE MECHANICS OF WASHINGTON POLITICS—AND HE HAS BEEN FOLLOWING HIS OWN ADVICE.

That has been easier to do in recent weeks owing to Gingrich's uncharacteristic reticence. Until March 4, the day he appeared on *Murphy Brown* and endorsed Bob Dole for president, he had been mostly absent from discussion of the presidential campaign. The press, not surprisingly, took notice: Syndicated columnist Robert Novak wrote that Gingrich's position seemed "sadly diminished" from a year ago, while *U.S. News* called him "subdued" and "strangely silent." On February 28, *The Hill*, a Capitol Hill weekly, trumpeted Gingrich's "redefined role" among House Republicans, and a few days earlier Charles Krauthammer asked in a column, "Where's Newt?"

It's a fair question. Since mid-January, when congressional Republicans cut their losses and agreed to reopen the government, Gingrich has spent a good chunk of time pondering what went wrong in last year's budget negotiations. At recent meetings in Tampa and Atlanta, Gingrich labored with House aides and informal advisers to apply the lessons of 1995 to 1996. Among those called in was Owen Roberts, a management expert who advises Gingrich on long-term planning. These meetings were followed by strategy sessions in Washington with Gingrich's inner circle of Armey, House majority whip Tom DeLay, and House Conference chairman John Boehner, as well as Gingrich pals Bill Paxon, Denny Hastert, and Bob Walker.

A taste of what came out of these meetings was on display at a February 24 town meeting in Canton, Georgia. Gingrich candidly told the audience, "I want to take the primary responsibility for maybe having just been wrong [on the balanced budget]. . . . I couldn't imagine the president vetoing the bill." But don't expect many more introspective comments. The recent meetings were aimed at outlining a Gingrich message for 1996. One of the likely themes was tried out in a March 2 speech to wildly enthusiastic Republican students at Washington & Lee University in Virginia. Amid talk of technological development, smaller government, and individual responsibility, Gingrich said: "America is a great country with good people. We can create a tremendous future." Says Rep. David McIntosh, freshman of Indiana, "Newt is shifting gears to go on offense for the election."

The question, though, is whether Gingrich's plans are threatened by his somewhat weakened position. The House was successful in passing almost all of its enormously ambitious legislative agenda last year in large part because of the speaker's skill. But with his stature diminished, Gingrich and the House GOP leadership could find 1996 a tough slog. "The aura of

infallibility [surrounding Gingrich] is gone," says a House leadership aide.

Some of this was self-inflicted, some not. After leading Republicans to their first House majority in four decades and masterfully navigating the Contract legislation through the House, Gingrich was bound to lose some of his standing. It didn't help that he and his program were the targets of negative ad campaigns. After being attacked for a year by unions and other Democratic groups, Gingrich must contend with the political consequences of unpopularity ratings nearly as high as Richard Nixon's were on the eve of his resignation.

The implications of that are unclear, but one House Republican says some of his colleagues face "a political incentive to distance, if not disassociate" themselves from the speaker; "the more vulnerable the person, the more you hear them say, 'We've got to do something'" to get out from under him. Another House Republican echoes this comment, saying there's "a little bit of a feeling that we're out there on our own and better start looking after ourselves."

That sentiment is an outgrowth of Gingrich's failure in the budget battle. It was abetted by Gingrich's cooperation with the *Washington Post*, in a four-part, 15,000-word series in mid-January on the internal politics of the budget negotiations. The series portrayed Gingrich as inept. It opened with him "sobbing uncontrollably" over the appointment of a special counsel to investigate the financing of his college lectures and later quoted him as telling White House aides, "I melt when I'm around [Clinton]." Some House Republicans were appalled when Gingrich touted the series for its accuracy and depth. "Newt liked it more than a lot of members did," concedes the speaker's press secretary, Tony Blankley.

For all of his problems, though, Gingrich still holds a cherished position. "There is no one who could fill his place in our leadership," beams Paxon. He should know: As head of the House GOP campaign committee, Paxon has seen firsthand that Gingrich is still the number-one drawing card for Republican audiences: "Every event he's done has been a sellout." Gingrich raised $3.2 million in January, and Paxon predicts he'll raise $10 million by November, campaigning in 175 congressional districts.

Fund-raising prowess is a useful reminder that Gingrich, though unlikely ever to recapture the clout he held last year, will rebound from his end-of-the-year slump. With the presidential campaign shifting attention away from Congress, congressional Republicans will be able to work in a less pressured environment, freeing Gingrich from legislative mechanics. And Gingrich learns from his mistakes; colleagues say he is unlikely to repeat his stumbles of last year. Moreover, all signs point to a modest legislative agenda—crime, immigration, health care, campaign finance reform—designed to curtail the infighting.

Gingrich plans to spend the vast majority of his time this year doing what he does best: formulating and communicating the Republican agenda. Armey will resume the day-to-day management of the House he relinquished when Gingrich took charge in the budget endgame. "Newt will get engaged when there are issues that can't be resolved below his level," says Blankley. And clearer lines of authority will be established so members no longer besiege Gingrich with their problems.

One recent episode showed the speaker's new caution. On March 5, House Republicans were deeply divided over a scaled-back regulatory reform bill scheduled for debate that day. Rep. Sherwood Boehlert refused to sign off on a specific provision, because, he said, it would devastate the environment. But House conservatives, led by McIntosh, felt it would be better to kill the bill than move ahead without this provision.

When the two sides squared off, Gingrich remained neutral, admitting he wasn't conversant with the specifics but wanted a deal. Boehlert repeatedly baited him with a front-page story from that day's *Wall Street Journal* about Republican voters' unease with the party's perceived anti-environment positions. In the end, Gingrich opted to keep the bill from coming up for floor debate until Boehlert and McIntosh ironed out their differences. The decision reflected the belief of Gingrich and other Republicans that the party has failed to define itself adequately on the environment. The larger goal is to keep the spotlight on the substance of the issues—Jupiter—and not on fleeting Republican squabbles.

The backdrop, of course, is the 1996 presidential election, which the speaker sees as similar to the 1896 election. That contest pitted William Jennings Bryan, a young Democrat (whom Gingrich once described as "a remarkably shallow but emotionally effective demagogue"), against a more seasoned Republican, William McKinley. One of the parallels between the two campaigns is that Republicans had wrested control of the House from the Democrats in 1894, and Gingrich is hoping a Republican victory in 1996 will yield the same realignment that occurred after McKinley's victory. Republicans occupied the White House for 28 of the next 36 years and controlled the House until 1910. There's one fact, however, that Gingrich the historian shouldn't overlook: Though they captured the White House, Republicans suffered a net loss of 40 seats in the House in 1896—and two years later they replaced their speaker. ♦

James Carville, Populist Plutocrat

By Tucker Carlson

It is the afternoon of the Arizona primary, and James Carville is talking on the phone in his office on Capitol Hill. Dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, his belt unbuckled, Carville is leaning back in his chair with his running shoes on the desk while a friend brings him up to date on the latest exit poll numbers from Phoenix. As Carville listens to the news, grinning and grunting into the receiver, his two dogs, Cavalier King Charles spaniels, explore the corner of the room. The dogs find an unidentified piece of paper—a memo from the president? a tax return?—and quickly reduce it to confetti. Carville looks up calmly. "Stop that," he says, but it's obvious he doesn't really mean it, and the dogs chew happily on. Their owner smiles and goes back to his conversation. James Carville is contented.

John Kascht

And why shouldn't he be? Ten years ago, Carville was 41 and nearly broke, the veteran of a string of losing political races. Hardly anybody outside of a small group of campaign junkies in a few states knew his name. Today he is famous as the architect of the 1992 Clinton victory. His reptilian features are known to millions from television appearances and countless speeches. His second book in two years, *We're Right, They're Wrong*, has just been released by a major publishing house and already is climbing up the bestseller list. Along the way, the man who in 1985 was taking out loans against his life insurance has become a millionaire several times over.

So much success has left little time for old-fashioned political work, but that doesn't appear to bother Carville. Actually, he seems to delight in it. "I'm kind of like Nixon when they asked him why he didn't go to church on Sunday," Carville explains. "Nixon said, 'I've already done *that*.' Well, I've already run campaigns. I hope I don't have to do it again. But, hey, sometime I might have to. If that's what it takes to earn a living, then I'll do it." In the meantime, though he may advise the upcoming Clinton campaign in some as-yet undetermined capacity, there will be no more living in motels, no more all-night strategy sessions, no more War Rooms. Not if James Carville can help it. America's best-known political operative has joined the plutocracy.

It's probably just as well. With some spectacular exceptions, Carville's relatively brief career as a political consultant (he didn't begin serious campaigning until 1982) has been decidedly spotty. His political work since Bill Clinton's election has yielded some especially choice disasters. In 1993 alone, Carville ran Governor James Florio's nasty but ultimately unsuccessful campaign against Christine Todd Whitman in New Jersey; signed on to help the administration win public approval for the doomed Clinton health-care plan; and advised Greece's New Democracy party candidate Constantine Mitsotakis in what turned out to be his upset defeat in that country's national elections. As if that weren't

enough, that same year Carville also embarrassed the White House by criticizing NAFTA in a *Washington Post* op-ed and worked for California assemblyman Richard Katz in the Los Angeles mayor's race. Katz came in fourth with 10 percent of the vote.

Even losing campaign consultants make money, and for Carville the defeats weren't entirely wasted time. In 1994, Sen. Harris Wofford hired him as a $25,000-a-month consultant in his ill-fated Pennsylvania reelection effort. And Carville and partner Paul Begala still received $300,000 a year for peddling their talents to the Democratic National Committee. Nonetheless, at some point Carville realized that his future lay in hiring himself out not to campaigns, but to audiences.

He started giving speeches. Lots of them.

It was the money bet. It's arguable that Carville's most marketable asset has always been his eccentric personality. Manic and witty, Carville became legendary among coworkers for his unpredictable, superstitious behavior during campaigns, most famously for refusing to change his undershorts during the final week before an election. During the Lautenberg Senate race in New Jersey, one friend told the *Washingtonian*, Carville was known "to lie on the couch in the fetal position wearing brown gardening gloves. No one knows why."

> THERE WILL BE NO MORE MOTELS, NO MORE ALL-NIGHT STRATEGY SESSIONS, NO MORE WAR ROOMS. NOT IF CARVILLE CAN HELP IT.

It's hard to tell to what degree Carville's odd behavior is a part of a sales shtick, but it is clear he cultivates his public image as an unusual and folksy guy. During the 1980s, Carville tells reporters, he helped to found the Washington chapter of the Andy Griffith Rerun Fan Club. Along with the usual polemics, his new book contains recipes for barbecue and "Carville's Top Five Potato Salad Tips." And though he is now a burgher in good standing, Carville plays up his small-town roots, often making surprisingly self-aware and at times nauseatingly cute references to the Louisiana hamlet where he was raised (Carville, La., home of a federally funded leper colony), his mother "Miss Nippy," and the country store "my daddy had." The facts may be true, but like everything Carville says, they've been spun. "It's a great hook," he once explained, "this crazy Cajun guy, just in from the swamps, who probably bites the heads off moccasins. If my name were Bunky Auchincloss or Sam Greenfield, I'd be just another guy in Washington."

As it is, Carville is a novelty act to his audiences, like a circus performer with political insight. Or, as a close friend suggests, a comedian: "He knows people want to hear a little bit about politics, but basically they want to hear jokes about politics. And that's what he's good at telling. He is an entertainer. That's what he's making money on."

A ton of it. Carville has boasted to acquaintances that he has given 200 speeches over the past three years. The appearances add up fast. Carville won't specify how much he has made from the lecture circuit— "I can't *imagine* why it would be anybody's business," harrumphs the man who once made a living digging into his opponents' personal lives—but it's apparent Carville isn't kidding when he says he's been fortunate. A couple of years ago, Carville's booker, the Washington Speaker's Bureau, accidentally sent his annual earnings form to another speech-giver with a similar last name. The form, the recipient was shocked to discover, indicated Carville had made more than $900,000 in speaking fees in a single year. If Carville had had his way, it would have been more. According to his agent, Carville receives $15,000 a speech, plus first-class airfare and hotel accommodations. "He's consistently trying to raise it," says the agent, "but we say, 'No, keep it where it is.' "

By all accounts an unusually skilled speaker, Carville jets around the country nearly every week to meet new audiences. "I give a lot of speeches," he admits. "Last night I gave a speech to [corporate executives, hosted by] the *Forbes* magazine people. Sunday it was—what?—Orlando for the National Grocers [Association]. And I'm the commencement speaker at the University of Virginia this year." Other paying customers include Aetna insurance, Seagrams, Citibank, Prudential, and the National Organization of Investment Professionals. Asked if there are any groups he wouldn't speak to, Carville pauses, evidently confused by the question. "I don't know, give me an example," he says. How about International Paper, or some other corporation reviled by liberals for pulping old-growth forests or otherwise despoiling the environment? A grin spreads across his face: "I've probably spoken to them."

If Carville affects nonchalance about his efforts to make money, he is equally direct about how he spends and manages it. As he explained to *Vanity Fair* a couple of years ago, "My populism doesn't extend to my choice of hotels." And indeed it doesn't. Carville is a

bon vivant of the 1940s variety. A wine aficionado (northern Rhônes are his favorite), Carville once consumed no fewer than 11 drinks in the company of a reporter on a flight to Los Angeles. He and his wife (former Bush partisan and talk-show host Mary Matalin) have what he calls a "country house" in rural Virginia. He enjoys quality room service, plush bath towels, and cars that come with drivers. He's a frequent patron of The Palm, one of Washington's most expensive restaurants. And, as if to make the caricature complete, he loves to play the stock market.

FOR AN UNABASHED POPULIST, CARVILLE CAN SEEM A LITTLE TOUCHY WHEN QUESTIONS ARISE ABOUT HIS OWN FINANCES.

In 1994, Carville gave an enthusiastic interview to *Smart Money* magazine in which he outlined his investment strategies. He begins by following the market closely. "You're not supposed to look at the stock tables every day," Carville said. "Not only do I look at the tables, I look for the symbols of the stocks I own running across the screen all day long." That is, when he's not ringing up his stockbroker, something he does "an average of three times a week."

None of this should come as any surprise. Eating big lunches and chatting with the broker is, after all, what wealthy people do, at least in the movies. Still, such admissions do seem odd coming from Carville, who made his reputation—and, ironically, his fortune—by attacking the very people he now brushes elbows with at The Palm. Never comfortable with social issues (a Catholic, he seems squeamish about the liberal positions on abortion and homosexuality), Carville has instead made soaking the rich the guiding theme of the notoriously hardball campaigns he has run. As he put it in a particularly restrained moment to *Campaign* magazine, "Most people don't think the rich pay enough."

Carville has been an especially energetic mouthpiece for liberal populism, particularly the idea that in the American economy the cards are stacked against the Little Guy and it's high time government did something about it. For Carville, the graduated income tax is at the core of what makes America great, the tax rate on capital gains non-negotiable (though privately he admits indexing them for inflation seems like a pretty good idea). In his latest book, Carville the stock market junkie goes on at some length about how the country is in trouble because "almost all the productivity gains are going into corporate profits" rather than workers' paychecks. "This is not a good sign, to say the least."

For an unabashed populist, however, Carville can seem a little touchy when questions arise about his own financial circumstances. Take for instance the case of Rep. Fred Heineman of North Carolina. Heineman, a former police chief from Raleigh, has come in for repeated abuse from Carville, both on television and in print. In his latest book, Carville gives Heineman the first spot on his list of the "Top Five Ridiculous and Pathetic Republicans." Heineman's crime? He once described himself as "lower middle class." And this from a man, scolded Carville, whose "annual income is round about, oh, say, $180,000."

Statements like this beg the question: Of what class does Carville consider himself a member? For once, Carville is at a loss for a snappy answer. "Me?" he asks, stalling for time. "I wouldn't describe myself as upper class." Then, gathering his wits and putting on his thickest Bayou accent, Carville does what he does best—go on the offensive. "I would describe myself as having a healthy income," he says, his voice rising, "but I sure wouldn't describe the son of a postmaster and an encyclopedia saleswoman as upper class, by any stretch of the imagination. I would describe myself as decidedly middle class. I think I'm extremely fortunate."

That seems to settle the matter, and Carville quickly changes the subject, but the exchange clearly has bothered him. A few days later he calls back to clarify his position on which class he belongs to. He may make a lot of money, he explains in an agitated voice, but that doesn't mean anything. "Larry Flynt is hardly upper class," he says, referring to the pornography publisher, "but he's certainly upper income, and that is the distinction that I make." He then launches into a disjointed accounting of his humble origins, his working-class relatives, his brother-in-law who runs a bowling alley. "My brother-in-law and I are of the same class," he says. Plus, he's really not that well-off. After all, he explains, "My wife works."

To be fair, Carville isn't the first person to insist there's a difference between *living* like a rich guy and actually *being* one. Most senators do it every day. Just the same, even a man used to the relentless doublespeak of political life is bound to have difficulty balancing economy-class rhetoric with an Admiral's Club lifestyle for long, and Carville is no exception. But give him points for effort. When members of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union went on strike at The Palm last fall, Carville took pains to show his solidarity. "I never crossed any picket lines," he says with

apparent pride. Of course, that didn't mean he skipped lunch. Carville simply called ahead. When the picketers left, he showed up for steak.

Even a would-be Louisiana populist has his limits, however. Carville apparently reached his the day Paula Corbin Jones held a press conference to announce her sexual harassment suit against President Clinton. Asked for comment, Carville immediately assumed his nastiest campaign persona. "You drag $100 bills through trailer parks, there's no telling what you'll find," he said, sounding more like a snobbish old woman by a country club pool than a defender of the exploited classes. "I know these people. I went to school with them. I necked with them in back seats. I spent nights with them." But apparently he does not identify with them. Not anymore. Carville came close to admitting as much to the *Chicago Tribune* earlier this month. "I may have lost a bit of contact with the rest of the country," he explained with his characteristic mixture of bluntness and spin, "but compared to others who came before me, it's not so bad."

Certainly it's not so bad for Carville, whose latest project—again following the lead of so many others who came before him—is turning his celebrity into a lucrative career as an author. It worked before. His first book, a gossipy semi-autobiography he wrote with his wife, earned the couple a $950,000 advance and became a bestseller. His new volume, an extended paperback screed Carville calls "pamphleteering," brought him a much smaller advance, which he describes derisively as in "the low six figures." Still, the pay's not bad for 160 pages of aggressive opinions in big type. Plus, being an author again gave Carville cause to indulge one of his favorite pastimes: heading to The Palm for lunch, this time with famous people like Norman Mailer to discuss which policies best help the poor.

Carville began *We're Right, They're Wrong* with low hopes—"If you can't read this thing on a moderately long airline flight, I'll be pretty disappointed," he told the *Washington Post* before starting out—and there are few surprises within. The alert consumer opens the covers, pen in hand, ready to catch misstatements, exaggerations, and falsehoods as they may appear. The task quickly proves impossible, simply too enormous to undertake. Before long, the reader feels like an English teacher grading a paper turned in by a dyslexic—the margins fill with exclamation points, corrections, dozens of bewildered question marks. Better to ignore the details, one soon realizes. This thing clearly wasn't meant to be taken literally.

But it is not the errors in the book that stick in the mind, it's the tone. *We're Right, They're Wrong* is so partisan and cant-filled that months before it was published it reportedly caused a feud between Carville and Clinton adviser Dick Morris, who considered it too polemical and therefore bad for the president. (Clinton, for his part, likes the book so much he's taken to citing it in speeches.) It starts right at the beginning, when readers learn that, "It's them [Republicans] versus us [Democrats]. Ours is the morally superior position. We're right, they're wrong."

Very wrong, it soon becomes clear. According to the book, Republicans aren't merely "greedy," "inexcusably hypocritical," "unpatriotic," "malicious," "criminally stupid" "terrorists" who would sell poison hamburgers to children in order to pay "off their own campaign IOUs to the meat industry." No, they're worse even than that. Republicans, according to Carville, are monsters who actually *enjoy* hurting the weak and poor. And, like all truly evil people, they achieve their wicked ends not through democratic means, but by conspiracies.

For example, Carville writes that during the Reagan years (a period described as "a god-awful disaster that we're not going to recover from anytime soon"), a "powerful minority got richer. The rest sat there waiting for trickles of prosperity that never came." So far, so ordinary. Here's the twist: According to Carville, "that result was no accident. It was the game plan all along!" "The truth is," Carville says, that Republicans "believe in comforting the comfortable and afflicting the afflicted." With this in mind, it's not surprising, as Carville asserts, that "right-wingers don't want public education to succeed." Or that the "Contract with America is a direct assault on black people. Period." Or that Republicans "are washing their hands of all responsibility for anybody but well-to-do white folks."

> CARVILLE DIDN'T ACTUALLY WRITE HIS BOOK. THEN AGAIN, TO HIS CONSIDERABLE CREDIT, HE DOESN'T CLAIM HE DID.

Heavy stuff. It's one thing to accuse a political opponent of neglect or wrong-headedness, quite another to charge the other side with actively seeking to injure the downtrodden. This doesn't sound like the generally measured rhetoric of the schmoozing, socially bipartisan Washington insider James Carville has become.

And, as it turns out, it's not. James Carville didn't actually write the book. Then again, to his considerable credit, he doesn't claim he did.

When it comes to ghostwriters, Carville is no Hillary Clinton. He offers no stories about nights spent writing out chapters in longhand on legal pads or the pain of the "editing process." If Carville does not display an intimate familiarity with his own work that's because, as he puts it, "Lowell's the one who really put the book together. He really did the book."

That would be Lowell Weiss, a 28-year-old staffer at the *Atlantic Monthly* who, along with at least four other researchers and two editors, assembled *We're Right, They're Wrong*. It took the group about seven months to accomplish the task. Like a campaign, the process of transforming tape recordings of bull sessions with Carville into a readable manuscript required more than a few all-nighters. "Believe me, I did a little bit of everything," says Weiss. "Definitely, when you're with James, you have a full-life commitment to him. It's a lot of work. He's a demanding guy. Most of all, he demands loyalty."

CLARENCE DARROW IS THE PERFECT CARVILLE HERO: FLAMBOYANT, NASTY, FRIEND TO ROGUES, HIMSELF ONCE TRIED FOR BRIBERY.

And apparently returns loyalty, as well. Carville is a hero to the many people, most of them young, who work for him. "He's a cult figure," Weiss says. And no wonder. When Carville appeared on the *Tonight Show* to flog his book, he flew his stable of research assistants, including Weiss, out to Los Angeles, put them up in a hotel, got them backstage passes, and took them out to dinner afterwards.

What he didn't give them was cover billing. Carville "took a very large risk on hiring me," Weiss says, sounding grateful. "I know he interviewed a number of very, very quality people, probably a number of people who are brighter than I am, better writers and have a lot more experience. And a number of them just insisted in the first couple minutes of their interview, 'I'd like my name on the cover.'" That, apparently, was it for them. As usual, it is Carville himself who says it best: "If I were the kind of person who put justice before ego," he writes in the book's acknowledgments, "Lowell's name would be on the cover of this book with mine."

But it's not, which is too bad for Carville, since the ostensible author might want to share the blame with someone else for some of the whoppers that made it into *We're Right, They're Wrong*. In one of the book's most memorable vignettes, for instance, Carville describes the time he gave the commencement address at Louisiana State University. Carville, according to the book, arrived at the podium to speak, only to realize he had left his speech in the hotel room. True to form, however, he winged it, firing off some of his trademark self-deprecating one-liners even as he laid down some serious profundities.

Great story. But is it true? Well, says Carville sheepishly, "No, it's kind of . . ." He trails off, then quickly changes the subject to a story about Clarence Darrow.

It is in many ways the perfect Carville comeback, if only because Clarence Darrow is the perfect Carville hero: flamboyant, nasty, friend to rogues and underdogs, a man who was himself once tried for bribery. This is the kind of person Carville admires. Spend an hour with James Carville and you're not likely to hear much mushy liberal blather about Shining Tomorrows or why-can't-we-all-just-get-along platitudes. Nor is he likely to bring up his favorite federal programs, a topic explored at eye-glazing length in *We're Right, They're Wrong*. Instead, he is apt to recount anecdotes about some of America's most controversial, and sometimes repugnant, political figures. George Wallace. Ronald Reagan. Earl Long. Pat Buchanan. The only politician to be honored with a photograph in Carville's office is a mustachioed man in a hat and dark glasses named A.O. Rappelet, an old-time Louisiana politician who was eventually booted out of office and ended up, briefly, in jail. Carville may not like them all, but that hardly seems the point. He respects them for their political ability, as one professional to another. And that most definitely is the point. With Carville, you can get the feeling it's the *only* point.

Which is part of what made Carville a successful campaigner—and what makes him such a wonderful plutocrat. As Carville once said, ideology is "wherever my clients are."

This principle was on full display one night late last month when Carville made an appearance on *Larry King Live*. Dressed in a Yale-cut navy blazer, a blue button-down oxford, and a red and gold rep striped tie from Brooks Brothers, Carville didn't really look himself, but in this environment that hardly mattered. King loved him anyway, proclaiming the author "one of my favorite people." Carville did his usual routine, firing off a few zingers about Republicans, throwing out some pointed statistics about the federal government, taking the requisite call from Cedar Rapids. Before long the show was over, and King turned to his guest to send him off.

"See you at The Palm," said Larry. "Thank you, sir," replied James. ♦

To Boldly Go Where No Conservative Has Gone Before

By Matt Labash

It takes a beating nearly every day, this "Washington culture" of ours. Mostly, it is thrashed by aspiring practitioners, like Steve Forbes. "The culture of Washington is not the culture of America," Forbes intoned at the recent Conservative Political Action Conference (known as CPAC). Not true, Steve-o. Not only does the culture of Washington bear more than passing resemblance to that of America, it is America in miniature, in that it is the sum of its subcultures. America is nothing if not its Elks Lodgers and Barbecue Pitsters, its Holy Rollers and Tupperware Ladies, exploring every glorious nook and crevice.

No one has more effectively documented modern subcultures than Tom Wolfe in the 60s. Trolling high and low society across the country, he met up with muscle-car enthusiasts, the Hair Boys, and Pump House gangs, who developed their own leisure classes or "statuspheres," enabling them to unplug from traditional institutions (family, religion) and create tailor-made universes where the new rules were their own.

> A CPAC CROWD, SOMEONE ONCE SAID, IS THE CLOSEST THING YOU'LL FIND IN THE POLITICAL GAME TO A *STAR TREK* CONVENTION.

It is the same in the political class—not just those who are members by vocation, but those who are so consumed by all things political that they might as well be. Take CPAC, the three-day highlight of the conservative calendar, which recently held its 23rd annual conference in Washington. There, ruling-class elites mixed it up with hoi-polloi activists and various rubberneckers who lend the scene a certain grit.

Someone once said—no one knows who it was—that covering a CPAC crowd is the closest thing you'll find in the political game to a *Star Trek* convention. A ratings flop in its network run from 1966-1968, *Star Trek* has spawned something unique: a mass-market cult. The mass-market followers are sufficiently numerous to support three spin-off series and seven movies, while its cult followers can and do descend into radical sectarianism bordering on religious fanaticism. Trekkies can gather weekly at one or another convention somewhere in North America—according to one estimate, *Star Trek* generates a billion dollars a year in income for the convention industry—where they can sit catatonically enraptured through endless blooper reels and perform in sound-alike contests. On any given weekend, workadaddies and hausfraus sporting acetate Vulcan ears spend half their paychecks cleaning out stacked-to-the-rafters merchandise.

In short, Trekkies are to average television fans what Iranian Shiites are to average Muslims—or what CPAC attendees are to average Republicans. In that spirit, we attempted to boldly cover CPAC as no one has ever covered it before, by attending both a CPAC and a *Star Trek* convention for a straight-up comparison.

In 1992, W. Hampton Sides wrote a book called *Stomping Grounds*, a study of subcultures featuring everyone from aging hippies in the Rainbow Gathering to geriatric caravans cruising the country in Airstream trailers. "We've become a land of refined fanaticism," Sides wrote. "We choose our flavor of lifestyle and go deep in."

It's hard to imagine anyone as deep-fried as CPACers, many paying thousands of dollars and travelling hundreds of miles to sit through panel discussions such as "Restoring American Citizenship," "Whither Whitewater?" and "Agenda '97: Holding Government Accountable." Of course, there is the additional puppy treat of meeting the rock stars of the conservative movement, like Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform, Floyd Brown of Citizens United, and Howard Phillips of the Conservative Caucus.

While interviewing subjects, I made no bones about the analogy I was exploring. I quickly became known as "the *Star Trek* guy." Said one former conference organizer: "Good, you'll be doing all normal people who attend a valuable service." But Catherine Dawson, who was manning a vending station in Wash-

ington's Omni Shoreham Hotel, cautioned me: "I've been to *Star Trek* conventions," she said. "Sure, at both conferences you get a lot of people that think they *are* a Klingon or they *are* Buchanan—but it's not like CPACers are going around wearing uniforms or anything."

Maybe not to the untrained eye. But as in any burgeoning subculture, dress is a primary characteristic. In the wider world, CPACers dress to profess individuality—their elephant ties mark them on campus or in carpools. But amongst the brethren, it is all about conformity—and the whole place becomes a poly-blend mass, with nuanced types emerging only upon closer inspection.

First the ladies: There is a strong blue-hair contingent, as well as some surprisingly attractive talent for an event with the same stud quotient as a chess tournament—although they often look like rhinestone beauty queens, oversprayed and sporting George Hamil-tans and clingy skirts usually done in some Stars'n'Stripes motif as a curvaceous display of patriotic bona fides. The idea, it seems, is to get Jack Kemp to notice you from the dais.

MANY CPAC MALES PREFER DIGITAL CALCULATOR WATCHES, ENSURING PROMPTNESS FOR THE "GOVERNMENT IS NOT GOD" TEX-MEX BUFFET.

The males are a little more complicated. Like Trekkies sporting I.D. bracelets made of neon, many CPACers prefer clunky black digital/calculator watches, presumably ensuring promptness for the "Government Is Not God" Tex-Mex buffet. Their uniform is your basic College Republican rig: white oxford button-down, blue blazer, rep tie, and go-to-hell khakis, often worn with Blackwellian no-nos like Timberland boots. Also, many of the more aggressive populists have what Paul Fussell calls "Prole jacket-gape"—the 1 to 2 inch spread between jacket collar and shirt collar that results from trying to sheath ill-fitting synthetics over Cro-Magnon frames.

Since the uniform is widely adhered to, the haircuts are the giveaway, with three primary types. First, there is the Bill Weld Shag, preferred by establishment elites that have prepped on the Eastern seaboard and feel it is crucial to maintain their thick coats through beer-drinking season. Also popular is the Chia Pet look—buzzcuts for ROTC types or (and you don't meet as many of these now as at CPACs of old) those who prefer to bypass our armed services and freelance their killing skills (honed in off-campus bars and Steak and Ales) alongside Jonas Savimbi.

Third, and most widely worn, is the Aqua Net Hair Helmet, variously modeled by Ralph Reed, Trent Lott, and a large swath of the Texas delegation.

The ardent cultist Trekkies I met in Greenville, South Carolina, the next weekend weren't nearly as well travelled as the CPACers. Most came from no farther than 70 miles away, despite the fact that this was the show's 30th anniversary and that the featured speaker was the captain himself, James T. Kirk (William Shatner).

Unlike the CPACers who at the very least had "Go Pat Go" buttons or GOP braces, very few Trekkies came in uniform. Most just sported their all-season patio wear, with only about half wearing *Star Trek* T-shirts and maybe one tenth in actual gear. But the ones who dressed *really* dressed. There were young children in prosthetic foreheads to simulate their inclusion in the hostile Klingon Empire, complete with bad skin and funky receding hairlines. This was a fate suffered by many of their non-costumed elders, who looked very much the same, no doubt from excess pot-smoking and lack of sunlight. There were grown men in New Balance running shoes and flood-panted Next Generation jumpsuits, skintight around the Goober water pouches developing beneath their mid-20s beer paunches.

I met two of them, Terry and Tony. Both Hardees cashiers in their 20s who say their only interests are "*Star Trek* and pro wrestling." Cross-eyed Tony was the leader, commander to Terry's captain. (There are very few ensigns at *Star Trek* conventions, since ranks are sold by vendors, and you can pretty much buy your way to the top—"just like Steve Forbes," as one captain put it.)

"I'm his first officer," Terry said.

"On what?" I asked.

"On the USS Leviathan NCC-1095," said Tony. "We just moved our ship down from Franklin."

Note the word "ship." Trekkies in uniform are never part of a "fan club" or "support group," but a ship. Just as at CPAC, where attendees are cogs not in the party, but in the "movement."

Language, of course, is the essential cryptography subcultures use to further cordon themselves off from dominant culture or to serve as a kind of verbal secret handshake for those who find themselves immersed in the dominant culture.

Though many of the terms are now standardized politicalese, CPACer good words are: Revolution, Devolution, The Cause, The Fourth Great Awakening, The Eleventh Commandment, and Con-Cons (or

Michael Ramirez

those favoring a constitutional convention for a balanced-budget amendment). Bad words include: Rockefeller Republican, the even worse McGovern Republican, the downright libelous Neoconservative, the Potentates of Pork (favored by Ollie North in rousing speeches or in radio shows he broadcasts from the exhibition hall), and the Imperial Congress (archaic since the '94 election, even in term-limit debates).

Trekkies have their own vernacular as well, one with some amazing pseudo-scholarship behind it. *The Klingon Dictionary* and *Conversational Klingon*, for example, document the fictional language of a fictional species. It's all highly systematic and taken very seriously, as any language with its own syntax and useful expressions should be. (Sample: *qaStaHvlS wa' ram loS SaD Hugh SljlaH QaQqu' nay'* means "Four thousand throats may be cut in one night by a running man." There are also phonetic translations for "Surrender or die!" and "Revenge is a dish which is best served cold.")

Tony didn't lay any Klingon on me but did share: "We're locating crew members interested in discussing *Next Gen* (that's spinoff series No. 1, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*), watchin' videos, that sort of thing." It seems a lot of Trekkies are also interested "in the commands and engineering aspects of the ships, how the physics, per se, of runnin' a ship relates to what we're doin' now." Of course, since none of the *Star Trek* ships has ever actually achieved space travel, Tony has a color-penciled cardboard console based on the ship Voyager (that's the craft in spinoff No. 3, *Star Trek Voyager*) so he and crew can replicate flight right there in his mother's living room.

And that's not all they have. They've got the seven movies, 120 *Next Gen* videos, 30 more of the originals, at least eight or nine games. They have everything—except girls. "That's one I talk to and used to go to school with," Tony said pointing.

"You're not going out with her?" I asked.

"Shoot, I wish."

Their prized possession: the *Next Gen* crew action figures. "We collect 'em," says Tony.

"And we play with 'em," adds Terry, somewhat sheepishly.

"A little bit of both," Tony says.

"You're grown men," I pointed out. "What do your parents say?"

"My stepdad came in the other day and caught me playin' with my stuff, and he said somethin'," Tony admits. "But I said, 'I'll tell you what: I'll sell all my

Star Trek stuff and go out and spend it on dope and come home stoned.' He said, 'Keep it.'"

Scoff if you must, it may sound a bit nutty—but no nuttier than sister subculture CPAC.

The best thing about the conservative summit is its inclusiveness. All factions are represented. The worst thing is its inclusiveness. No factions are excluded (save dread Rockefeller Repubs and neocons). I sat with a Buchanan supporter in a ruffled tourister shirt and baseball hat, wearing sneakers purchased at Piggly Wiggly's and eating Toblerone. He never looked at me but sat there sipping gratis icewater, taking scrupulous notes on a Media Research Center luncheon leaflet ("If you believe the Liberal Media—Don't Come," it read) during the "Truth about Ruby Ridge" panel as if he were going to be tested.

IT SEEMS A COMMON TRAIT IN BOTH CPAC AND *STAR TREK* SUBCULTURES IS THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES DISDAIN MANY LEADERS HAVE FOR THE RANK AND FILE.

They're all over the place, these guys, hitting even true believers like me with hot blasts of earnestness that can open the pores on the back of your neck. They stand at attention, screaming for the Forbes gold standard like their uvulas are going to burst, banging their mitts together till their hands turn crimson from their class rings. There are young men with prominent Adam's apples basking in the glow of Sen. Fred Thompson's perpetual tan or trying to touch the hem of Jeane Kirkpatrick's garment.

There were young honeys with thick foundations being held at bay by well-mannered uniformed Citadel volunteers. "I *love* Arlen Specter—because I love the way he worked his Judiciary Committee during the Anita Hill hearings!" one told me. (Even an Arlen Specter speech at CPAC draws 6 laughs and 14 applause lines.) They carry around programs signed by Rep. Bob Barr and Joe Sobran as if they were trophies. They shout "I love you, Ollie!" as North takes the stage. They are pushed back from the speaker's holding pen so as not to put a crease in Kemp's suit.

"I'm excited about listening to Kemp speak about the flat tax," said an Ohio College Republican. As one who sat through many of the panels, I can affirm that this is nothing to sniggle about. It's infinitely preferable to, say, listening to Larry Horist from the Illinois Public Policy Caucuses talk about "Communicating with the Grassroots."

Kemp, like many others, is in no hurry to stick around. "We were staking out the back, and his little aides or whatever said he had to go," said one flushed co-ed from Liberty University. "We almost got close enough to touch him, but he said, 'I have a plane to catch,' and walked off."

"I love to go to CPAC," one panelist told me. "I get up, I do my panel, I fix my eyes on the exit, and get there in a hurry." Most of the prominent speakers follow suit—except for Steve Forbes, who elected to meet his public. This, as can be imagined, caused great titters and an imposing mob, which pushed me right into Forbes's pinstriped chest, where we were locked, breastplate to breastplate.

As we did a slow, sweaty tango, unable to shake each other in a hallway that let him pass about as fast as a kidney stone, I was the envy of all the young co-eds who dreamed of the flat tax delivering 4.5 percent 30-year fixed-rate mortgages. "So Steve, do you like *Star Trek*?" I asked, resigned to not going anywhere.

"No, but I like *Star Wars*, i.e., the anti-ballistic missile system," he said, flashing his malocclusive grin.

At least Forbes went out like a man, through the lobby. It seems a common trait in both CPAC and *Star Trek* subcultures is the behind-the-scenes disdain many leaders have for the rank and file. Such was the case with William Shatner, who identifies himself as "your captain" but is notoriously bad about actually *meeting* his crew.

He arrives just before he's to speak, always under tight security. His toupee is intact, he's got the relaxed unbuttoned shirt layered over another shirt. He's quite the magnanimous guy onstage, bragging about birthing horses, about 120-degree shoots in Bakersfield, about his bow-hunting prowess.

His anecdotes are orotund, meandering, and pointless (perfect for a CPAC panel), and they always wind up plugging one of his multimedia ventures. "Make sure you check out my—" and he mentions his line of (ghostwritten) novels, CD-ROMs, comic books, phone cards.

During Q&A, a young lass said, "I would like to shake your hand and ask you a question."

"Let's save the handshaking for later," Shatner said.

Of course, he didn't shake hands, rarely does. He got there a second before speaking and left immediately after. Didn't want any dust-ups with pot-bellied, brylcreemed versions of himself. Otherwise, he was generous with a compliment or a constructive criticism, as with one interrogator who popped up in a uniform shirt.

"Oh yeah, looks good! Stick out the chest!" Shatner said, leaning into the microphone "But I got a

piece of advice—suck in the gut. It really looks bad."

Of course, one can hardly blame Shatner for being a bit skittish. It's like what Smilin' Dave, a longtime *Star Trek* vendor, said: "The nicest people I know are at these shows. There are also a lot of goofs. Anywhere I go in the country, they'll give me a meal. Of course, a lot of 'em live in their mommas' basements. One guy I knew was 45 years old and he celebrated when his parents died because he could move his collection upstairs."

Vendors like Smilin' Dave are a feature of both subcultures—they peddle the artifacts and paraphernalia that are vital to both the "movement" and the world of *Trek*. CPACers have their elephant brooches, their "Feed the Homeless to the Hungry" bumper stickers, their "Wee-Publican" bibs and Gordon Liddy boardgame, "Hardball Politics '96," with 54 Dirty Tricks cards. No playing ages are listed, but a Buchanan supporter told me, "If they're going to public school, they should be playing by at least 5 or 6." At the *Star Trek* convention, they save the choice items for auction: versions of the crew in porcelain or DeForest (Dr. McCoy) Kelly's autograph, very rare because of his arthritis.

However extreme the Trekkies are in their obsession with a fictional future, they're not much more so than many of the fringe organizations relegated to the kook corners of the CPAC exhibit hall. There's the Bircher table selling the latest in U.N. and Oklahoma-bombing conspiracy theories. Or you could meet Officer Larry Powell over a cash bar at his legal defense fund-raiser (he was Rodney King's chief tormentor during the beating, although I met him and he's a real pussycat without a nightstick).

Then there are the Tenth Amendment absolutists (usually their own best arguments against devolution), like Gordon Lee Baum of the Council of Conservative Citizens, a St. Louis personal-injury lawyer chain-smoking offbrand cigarettes and chewing my ear beneath a sprawling display of the Stars'n'Bars. His gripe? International job flight: "I know a guy, laid off, McDonnell Douglas, master's degree—he's workin' as a condo janitor in a *colored* neighborhood—and glad to get it. Where does a 57-year-old man go?"

To CPAC, if he can afford it, where people aren't treated differently because of their occupation. Dolphin Schreiber, who had a gold tooth, a USA hat, dirty fingernails, and jheri-curl locks, told me: "I am a candidate for president under the United States Century World Political First party." Unconcerned that he was missing vital pre-Super Tuesday primaries, he added that he and his running mate, "the honorable George Bush, Jr. of Texas, will have universal victory for everybody," noting also, "I am the President of Peru." Schreiber walked the halls unmolested, although he could become the first person to hold the Peruvian and U.S. presidencies concurrently.

Which is not to paint CPAC with a broad brush. These are just a few fringe elements. The real meat'n'potatoes guys are there too, like Jim Martin of "60 Plus." Though he stands about 5′7″, Martin looks like he could take you out with a piece of discarded chaw, which is why he's the right guy to bang under the boards with the AARP, fighting for Social Security privatization and against the inheritance tax.

Trench warfare isn't for weak sisters and is often won on sheer determination rather than style. Unlike the Trekkie subculture, which is all about withdrawal from the world, CPACers are interested in expanding theirs beyond the hotel lobby. And many of the old gut-fighters are now enjoying the fruits of their success. Sometimes they're crotchety, maybe unpalatable, but where would the movement's followers be without the Reed Irvines, the Morton Blackwells, the David Keenes?

At a *Star Trek* convention, no doubt. Most of the Trekkies I spoke with have little interest in politics. When I asked two of them if they were concerned about missing that day's action in the South Carolina primary, one replied, "To be honest with you, I couldn't give a rat's ass."

"Yeah," agreed the other. "I'm afraid if this was a plumber's convention, I'd still be more interested."

VENDORS PEDDLE THE ARTIFACTS THAT ARE VITAL TO BOTH SUBCULTURES. CPACERS HAVE THEIR ELEPHANT BROOCHES AND WEE-PUBLICAN BIBS.

But there *was* a disproportionate number of Trekkies at CPAC. One was Grant Greffey, a systems engineer for Lockheed Martin, who attends both conventions.

"A lot of *Star Trek* people have an idealistic sense of the universe, which I do, and I believe in a future," he said. "Plus, manned space flight tends to be a Republican trait."

Then in a strict political deconstruction, would the Democrats be Klingons? "No," Grant said defiantly. "Klingons are a fierce warrior people, pro-military guys. Democrats don't have the 'nads to be Klingons." ♦

The Defense Deficit

By Gary Schmitt

After one veto, President Clinton signed the 1996 defense bill—while complaining about the constitutionality of a provision forcing HIV-positive personnel out of the armed services. Clinton didn't complain about much else in the Republican legislation because he had little to complain about once Congress agreed to drop its insistence on a national ballistic-missile defense by the year 2003. Instead, Clinton found himself with a bill that does little to challenge his defense program.

To understand how this unexpected consensus between the administration and Republicans has come about, and what's wrong with it, one has to begin with the Clinton administration's 1993 review of military strategy, known as the Bottom-Up Review. A watered-down version of the Bush administration's strategy, the Bottom-Up Review calls for an active-duty force of nearly 1.5 million and a 900,000-strong reserve, with 10 active army divisions, 5 Marine corps brigades, 11 aircraft carriers, and 13 active air wings.

All in all, a slimmed-down version of the Cold War military establishment, though hardly a return to America's lean military condition between the First and Second World Wars. The United States is still spending at least four times what any other nation spends on defense.

But it's not enough. In an effort to solve the budget deficit, Clinton and the Republicans are together creating a "defense deficit," with long-range consequences as significant as the effects of the national debt. There exists a substantial mismatch between the size and composition of the armed forces Clinton is planning for and the funding he has requested to support them. And certainly nothing in the administration's 1997 Defense Authorization submitted to Congress last week even hints at an attempt to tackle this problem.

To modernize and keep the planned forces combat-ready, 4.25 percent of the gross domestic product will have to be spent for defense every year for the foreseeable future. Yet by the turn of the century, Clinton's plans call for military spending to drop to 2.9 percent a year.

Though the depth of the chasm between Clinton's strategy and Clinton's spending is a matter of debate—depending mostly on how much it will cost to develop, build, and maintain new weapons systems—its gravity is not in dispute. And the severity of the problem is likely to grow in the years ahead as the need to replace aging military equipment becomes more urgent. Right now we are living off the weapons and equipment bought during the Reagan buildup of the 1980s (when defense spending made up 6.5 percent of our gross domestic product). But this "procurement holiday" will end soon enough, as these systems begin to break down through normal use.

> IN AN EFFORT TO SOLVE THE BUDGET DEFICIT, CLINTON AND THE REPUBLICANS ARE DIGGING A CHASM BETWEEN STRATEGY AND SPENDING

The necessity of replacing those systems will hit in 2000, 2001, and 2002. And these will be precisely the years in which Washington will be making the most severe spending cuts in our national history. The seven-year GOP plan to balance the budget actually calls for *lower* defense spending over this period than the administration's seven-year plan. Adding a few billion to the defense budget in the near term, as Republicans have done, just lessens the immediate strain. Over the long haul, however, such increases are mere palliatives.

The central flaw in Clinton's defense strategy is the classic one of setting ends beyond the means available to obtain them. And if Congress is ever to get on top of this problem, its first step has to be an examination of two key requirements set out by the Bottom-Up Review. The first is the need to maintain a global military presence with troops or carrier task forces. The second, and more significant, requirement is having the capability to wage and win two major regional conflicts nearly simultaneously. The Bottom-Up Review calls for an American military that can win another war with Iraq while defeating a North Korean invasion of the South.

Now, obviously no serious person wants the mili-

Gary Schmitt is a consultant in national security affairs and, most recently, co-editor of U.S. Intelligence at the Crossroads.

tary to be unprepared for two wars at once. And admittedly, if the United States were engaged in one regional war, it would be tempting for a second adversary to take advantage of that circumstance. Yet the fact is that North Korea did not go on the offensive when we were tied up in Kuwait in 1990-1991, and it seems unlikely that Iraq or Iran will soon risk the kind of hammering Iraq has already received. In short, the likelihood that we will have to fight two such wars at the same time and with the same intensity is extremely low.

Yet the Bottom-Up Review has the U.S. military preparing to fight the last war, twice over—and without allied support. But it seems unlikely that an adversary would ignore the lessons of Iraq's defeat by engaging the United States in a World War II-style conventional conflict. It's far more likely that the military will continue to find itself involved in what it calls "operations-other-than-war" (Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia), with an outside chance of a war with a country that believes it has solved the problem of American military superiority with a strategy of unconventional measures—nuclear weapons, biological warfare, terrorist actions.

Kevin Chadwick

There is no question that, by challenging the Clinton assumptions, we risk leaving the country unprepared for waging two wars simultaneously. But that risk has to be measured against the more likely prospect that, if current defense plans are not scaled back to fit fiscal realities, the country's armed forces will become increasingly "hollow" in capabilities.

Given the Republican party's well-deserved reputation in recent years as the party of national defense, one might have expected this prospect to generate more criticism inside its ranks. But with the exception of the dispute over ballistic-missile defense, the only complaint that has consistently been sounded in Republican circles about the Clinton defense strategy has to do with the administration's problems in maintaining a high level of combat-readiness.

Concern about readiness is understandable, especially for those worried about the health and safety of American troops. And doubtless, making an issue about combat-readiness may help remind the public of the sad state of the military the last time a Democrat was commander in chief. Yet the focus on current readiness has the unintended effect of pushing aside the more fundamental question of whether our armed forces are the right size in the first place.

Congress has also largely bought into the administration's decisions on weapons systems and the development of the next generation of fighters, submarines, and the like. The changes Republicans have pushed in Congress mainly involve adding funds here and there to speed up the purchase of new weapons or continue existing programs.

Now, an argument can be made in support of nearly every one of the administration's development and acquisition decisions—whether it be a stealth fighter, a new attack submarine, an advanced communications satellite. What can't be reasonably defended, in a time of tight budgets, is the case for *all* of them. Yet this is precisely what the Republicans in Congress have accepted. If anything, they have made matters worse from the perspective of the budget by pushing two additional programs—the B-2 stealth bomber and national ballistic-missile defense.

And that has given the administration an unfair, but politically shrewd, opening. Having created the funding crisis in the first place, the administration is now (in the person of Defense Secretary William J. Perry) willing to use Republican support for the B-2 and ballistic-missile defenses to start blaming the coming "defense deficit" on the GOP. And because there is a grain of truth in the accusation, the GOP might well find itself on the losing side of this issue—politically as well as substantively.

What, then, should the Republican Congress do? It can start by cutting the planned number of forces,

both active-duty and reserve (especially reserve). There should also be a reduction in the use of carrier task forces to maintain a forward military presence. Although carriers are not "the dinosaurs of the sea," as some analysts suggest, they are not the only means the United States has to project power on a global scale.

Next, Congress should pull the Pentagon back from its plans to replace a number of weapons with a new generation of systems. Absent a superpower competitor, the military can afford to skip a generation of modernization in many big-ticket items and restock its inventory with upgraded but existing systems.

For example, consider the Air Force's F-22, in the planning since 1981. No doubt the stealthy jet fighter would provide the Air Force with unmatched capability. But the fighter is no longer the necessity it seemed when we thought it would be needed to counter a Soviet Union filling the skies of Europe and Asia with advanced jets. In truth, enhanced F-15s in sufficient numbers will remain more than capable of dominating Iraq's (or Korea's, or Iran's, or China's) air space for years to come.

But these proposed cuts in planned forces and systems are not solely designed to meet budget constraints; they are also required if the American military is to retain its global superiority over the longer term. As we saw with U.S. forces in the Gulf War, modern armies are entering a period of transition in which changes of technology—stealth, sensors, computers—could result in a profound increase in conventional military capability. But this revolution will not happen on its own. The military will have to experiment with these new technologies, and explore the most effective organizational and operational arrangements for employing them.

The Pentagon will also have to do more testing of weapon prototypes (many of which may never see full production). There will have to be healthy competition within and between the services, and a good deal of flexibility and redundancy in Pentagon programs in order to shake out viable alternatives from dead ends. Such efforts are impossible if the administration's strategy remains unchanged. A Pentagon stretched to maintain the military in its current form will hardly tolerate the use of scarce resources to fund competition and new ideas when many of them will not pan out.

Reordering the country's defense program does have its risks. Yet perhaps the greatest risk is not found abroad but here at home. Cutting force structure and procurement can become a bad habit, especially if it is licensed by an undercurrent of isolationism. A large, hollow force is a problem; a small, unprepared force, a disaster.

To prevent a military free-fall, Congress should set for itself some percentage of the gross domestic product as a floor below which defense spending must not go. It's conceivable that such a spending floor could be sold to the public as a kind of insurance against the unknown but inevitable rise of more serious security threats in the future. So far, though, the Republican majority in Congress has shown little interest in challenging Clinton's defense program over basics. Senior Republicans, in general, have focused their attention on keeping today's military prepared, fed, and paid.

As for the newer Republican members, two problems present themselves. The first arises from the party's animus against "big government" and bureaucracy. Should the newcomers' attention turn to defense, it is almost inevitable that the Pentagon—a very big and very bureaucratic part of government—will become a target. And, frankly, hardly anybody could argue that the Pentagon doesn't need some reform.

But what will those reforms be? If reformers focus only on saving money, not on enhancing the military's ability to do its job, then the Pentagon will become paradoxically even more tightly centralized, hierarchical, and homogeneous in its thinking and management. *More* bureaucratic, in sum.

This is precisely the wrong approach in an era of technological and international uncertainty. To get the job done, defense officials and defense contractors must be given sufficient discretion and incentives to pursue new approaches to old issues. When it comes to innovation, "waste" is simply inevitable.

The second and more pressing problem is that Republicans elected in 1992 and 1994 see themselves as having been sent to Congress with a mandate to reform the federal government's fiscal and domestic policies. Having fulfilled the minimal requirements concerned with national security under the Contract with America, most have shown little interest in expanding their agenda to defense. Since they see themselves as "outsiders," with a passion for term limits, it is extremely difficult for most new Republicans to throw themselves into a policy area that takes time to address and a more old-fashioned congressional ambition to master.

The irony is that even as Republicans may be on the verge, this year or next, of a genuine solution to the budget deficit, they are consenting to the creation of the new "defense deficit." And as with all deficits, the price the country will eventually have to pay to close it will be high—higher than it would have been had we avoided incurring that deficit in the first place. ♦

The Puzzle of W.H. Auden

By J. Bottum

W.H. Auden was a self-destructive chain-smoker, an amphetamine addict, an alcoholic of titanic proportions, an unhappy homosexual, a man who fled embattled England just as the Second World War began, and, for a time at least, an active proselytizer for the Communist party. But to say that he was also the greatest poet of his generation is not to create a puzzle. Though, as Auden himself once wrote, on Judgment Day God may shame poets, "reciting by heart the poems you would/have written, had your life been good," the truth is poets have rarely been models for the good life. "Pray for me and for all writers, living or dead," Auden begged in a poem for Henry James, "Because there are many whose works/Are in better taste than their lives."

The puzzle of Auden is rather that—despite the life he chose to lead, despite the cruel and obscene poetry he sometimes wrote, despite the glib schoolboy irony he frequently used to obscure the fact that he hadn't thought his way through his poems—there often sounds in his writing an utterly convincing voice of orthodox Christianity, serious conservatism, and enormous good sense.

Richard Davenport-Hines's new biography, *Auden* (Pantheon, 406 pages, $30), contains much of the information necessary for making sense of the poet. Auden despised literary biography, the sniffing through writers' lives, the pawing through their papers. "When we were young," he began a review of Oscar Wilde's correspondence, "most of us were taught that it is dishonorable to read other people's letters." If there is an excuse for writing an author's life, it can only be that afterwards we understand a writer's work in a way we could not without understanding his life.

Davenport-Hines has rightly seen that Auden's sometimes obscure writing requires knowledge of the poet's history. In *Auden*, he justifies his literary biography, producing a well-written, fast-reading life that deserves serious attention. And yet, determined to show both that Auden's homosexual life was perfectly normal and that the root of his unique poetic gift was his homosexuality, Davenport-Hines devotes much of his biography to what he thinks is a central dilemma in Auden's life. He presents the poet as a man of pain—a man naturally detached from emotions, who sought in the self-caused suffering of unhappy sexual affairs the sorrowful wellsprings of the human condition.

DESPITE THE LIFE AUDEN CHOSE TO LEAD, THERE OFTEN SOUNDS IN HIS WRITING AN UTTERLY CONVINCING VOICE OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY.

Is the biographer correct? "In Memory of W.B. Yeats" (1939), deservedly one of Auden's most famous poems, ends with the remarkable quatrains:

With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse,
Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress;

In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.

Such lines, Auden's sympathetic friend Hannah Arendt declared, pitch themselves "against all that is most unsatisfactory in man's condition," convinced "that the gods spin unhappiness and evil things to mortals so that they may be able to tell the tales and sing the songs."

That Auden suffered, and sought his own suffering, is certainly true. "God knows," Arendt cried at his death, "the price is too high and no one in his right mind could be willing to pay it knowingly." But the puzzle of Auden, a puzzle Davenport-Hines finds no answer to, is that the truths to which he gives brilliant and unique expression seem to have no connection to the suffering he cultivated, the life he led, and even the talent for ironic light verse that was his strongest poetic gift.

The solution to this puzzle is found, I think, in another famous line from the elegy for Yeats: "Poetry makes nothing happen." To be any kind of poet is to see that language has a structure, that there is an order built into words. But to be a great poet is to see that the structure of language is at last a moral structure and presumes certain claims, whether we like it or not: that God exists, that human suffering cries out for redemption, that the universe exists under a moral law. Such claims may not be true, in the sense that they may not cor-

J. Bottum is associate editor of First Things.

respond to the real world outside of words. But Auden is a great enough poet to recognize that they are necessarily true of *language*. Somewhere inside language is the place of meaning, like a clearing upon which poetry stumbles from time to time. And that clear place makes nothing happen; it simply is:

The Hidden Law does not deny
Our laws of probability,
But takes the atom and the star
And human beings as they are,
And answers nothing when we lie.

Throughout his life, Auden maintained his sense of the essential frivolity of art. Not merely in his humorous poems—the wickedly funny "Letter to Lord Byron" (1936), the droll "Under Which Lyre" (1945), the clerihews and limericks he wrote throughout his career—but in all his serious work as well, the poet denigrates the power of poetry to do more than record the fact of truth: "When two lovers meet, then / There's an end of writing." Auden often succeeded in finding the moral order that governs language. But that is exactly what points out his failure to find the parallel moral order that governs the world outside of language. And his knowledge of the law built into language could only seem to him without influence upon the world, or even upon his own life: "Poetry makes nothing happen."

Perhaps a better way to come at this same point is to take seriously Auden's constant use of metaphors drawn from architecture and geography:

Yet maps and languages and names
Have meaning and their proper claims.
There are two atlases: the one
The public space where acts are done,
In theory, common to us all . . .
The other is the inner space
Of private ownership, the place
That each of us is forced to own.

In the early 1940s, the young American poet Randall Jarrell mocked Auden for describing men topologically. "His gift knew what he was—a dark disordered city," Auden wrote of Matthew Arnold. "The squares of his mind were empty, / Silence invaded the suburbs," he wrote of the dying Yeats. "No one, not even Cambridge, was to blame," he wrote of A.E. Housman.

But such descriptions—each used to explain another poet—may in fact represent Auden's sense of his own inner life. Auden once divided writers into Utopianists and Edenists—into those who demand the creation of a general Utopia and those who hope only to find an individual Eden. The description is finally a psychological one. For Auden, Happiness was a location, a serendipitous Eden in the mind. It is the Great Good Place—as Henry James called it, in a phrase which haunted Auden—that we can neither earn nor make any significant moral reform to bring about, but that seemed to Auden in his maturity best described in the precepts of Christian faith:

AUDEN DIVIDED WRITERS INTO UTOPIANISTS AND EDENISTS—THOSE WHO DEMAND A GENERAL UTOPIA AND THOSE WHO HOPE TO FIND AN INDIVIDUAL EDEN.

I know nothing of
Either, but when I try to imagine a
faultless love
Or the life to come, what I hear is the
murmur
Of underground streams, what I see is
a limestone landscape.

At last, however, he only found it best *described* in Christianity. The quality of Auden's faith—the sincerity of his return to the Anglican church in the late 1930s—is impossible to gauge. But the Christianity in Auden's poems seems strangely incomplete when set beside Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, Charles Williams, and the early Protestant mystics—the religious authors Auden especially admired. The weakest moments of Davenport-Hines's *Auden* come when he discusses theology. Perhaps his worst mistake comes when he translates the Latin tag *Felix Culpa*, traditionally rendered as the "Fortunate Fall," as "Happy to Err"—thereby turning the recognition that Adam's Fall opens the way for Christ into a bizarre apology for sin. ("Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid," Auden himself quotes from St. Paul in his 1942 Christmas oratorio *For the Time Being*.)

And yet there *is* more than a touch of "Happy to Err" in the poet's Christianity. Devoid of good works, and devoid of faith as well, Auden's inner Great Good Place is simply a world of grace and language—a world of graceful language—and offers us no help in our real struggles to live a moral life. Davenport-Hines is almost certainly correct to take as Auden's own experience of conversion the third-person description the poet put in an essay on Christianity. But the experience came before Auden found "Christianity" as the rubric with which to name it. The earlier poetic account of the conversion, "Out on the Lawn I Lie in Bed" (1933), remains resolutely secular.

Part of this early resistance to religion may simply be a function of his times. Born in 1907, Auden emerged in his early twenties as the leader of a group of poets—Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice, and Cecil Day Lewis—who found in Eliot's jazzy voice in "The Waste Land" and in the ironic resurrection of unpopular verse-forms the solution to the poetic problems of their age. Of them all, Auden had the greatest gift: the jazziest voice,

the largest talent for difficult forms, the surest touch with irony.

Now the leaves are falling fast,
Nurses' flowers will not last:
Nurses to the graves are gone,
But the prams go rolling on.

"To Throw Away the Key," a poem excerpted from the 1928 play *Paid on Both Sides* (his first published collaboration with Christopher Isherwood), and the 1929 sonnet "Sir, No Man's Enemy, Forgiving All" (with its concluding demand for "New styles of architecture, a change of heart") stand as Auden's most successful early poems. Learning to begin a sonnet in the middle of a story, doling out small clues along the way, he developed by 1930 a voice capable of inserting significant lines into his ironic verse—and seemed to find a way past that escalating self-consciousness that often makes the British such bright boys and such dull men, that makes them shoot to such green heights and go to seed.

"Good poets have a weakness for bad puns," Auden once declared. Editing the 1938 *Oxford Book of Light Verse*, he retained throughout his life a love of deliberately simple—and often obscene—verse. As late as 1948, he composed an (at the time) unprintable poem, "The Platonic Blow, by Miss Oral." But through the 1930s, his verse kept breaking through its jazzy irony into poetry. "Stop All the Clocks," from the 1936 play *The Ascent of F6* (another collaboration with Isherwood), begins as mockery of Victorian mourning verse and ends in a pair of genuinely moving stanzas. (This is the poem that got quite a run when it was recited in the movie *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.) "As I Walked Out One Evening" (1937) opens as a ballad-parody and becomes a serious vehicle for poetic thought:

The glacier knocks in the cupboard
The desert sighs in the bed,
And the crack in the tea-cup opens
A lane to the land of the dead.

Even in his early verse, Auden would sometimes find he had "Adopted what I would disown/The preacher's loose immodest tone," and the stern inflections of his later poems have their foreshadowing in his first volumes, *Poems* (1930) and *The Orators* (1932). Through a year in Berlin with Isherwood, a term of schoolteaching, a journey to Iceland that produced his "Letter to Lord Byron," and success in the British literary world, Auden gradually found the moral seriousness he desired in the Marxism that swayed much of his generation, making in 1937 his virtually mandatory tour of duty in the Spanish Civil War.

W. H. Auden

Chas Fagan

George Orwell said of the poetry that issued from his Spanish sojourn—such verse as "History to the defeated/May say Alas but cannot help or pardon"—that it combined "the gangster and the pansy." Added Orwell: "Mr. Auden's brand of moralism is only possible if you are the kind of person who is always somewhere else when the trigger is pulled. So much of left-wing thought is a kind of playing with fire by people who don't even know that fire is hot."

Davenport-Hines tends to attribute any criticism of the poet to a hatred of homosexuals. The critic F.R. Leavis's distaste for Auden Davenport-Hines dismisses as providing "the highbrow counterpart to police bullying," and Orwell's devastating comments on Auden's Marxism he attributes to Orwell's repressed homosexual crushes on poets at Eton.

But Auden himself quickly came to regret poems like "Spain 1937." "The interest in Marx taken by myself and friends was more psychological than political," he admitted in 1955; "we were interested in Marx in the same way we were interested in Freud." By the late 30s, Auden had already left his brief Marxist phase behind and was writing the best poetry of his life. After an extended tour of China, he moved with Isherwood to New York in 1939, hoping to settle down

away from the politics of British literary life: "England to me is my own tongue,/And what I did when I was young."

His strong voice emerging toward the decade's end did not prevent occasional ventures in his old style of verse. In 1937, he produced a brilliant and utterly heartless ballad-parody, "Miss Gee," that mocks a spinster's painful death from cancer. Shortly after his arrival in New York, he wrote a weak political satire, "The Unknown Citizen," that unfortunately became his most anthologized poem. But he wrote as well "September 1, 1939"—the poem that expressed for his entire generation the disillusioned end of the 30s:

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-Second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade.

Unhappy with the implications of the line "We must love one another or die"—the line misquoted in Lyndon Johnson's 1964 anti-Goldwater ad of a petal-plucking girl obliterated by an atom bomb—Auden later suppressed the poem. "If by memorability, you mean a poem like 'Sept. 1st 1939,'" he wrote one reviewer, "I pray to God that I shall never be memorable again." In the anonymity of neighborhoods in New York, he decided to make his stand:

Across East River in the night
Manhattan is ablaze with light . . .
More even than in Europe, here
The choice of patterns is made clear,
. . . what
Is possible and what is not,
To what conditions we must bow
In building the Just City now.

In New York as well he met Chester Kallman, a young American with whom he formed an unhappy liaison that lasted the rest of his life. Despite his constant praise of love, Auden before 1939 seemed to pride himself on his romantic inconstancy—writing in 1937 the extraordinary poem declaring the faithfulness of a one-night stand: "Lay your sleeping head, my love/Human on my faithless arm." Lasting relations came to mean more to him, however, as he reached his thirties. In 1935 he married the German novelist Thomas Mann's daughter Erika to provide her with a British passport. Devoting his next book to her, he never renounced the unconsummated marriage or sought a divorce.

EVENTUALLY, THE LIFE HE LED GOT TO HIM: THE 15,000 UNFILTERED CIGARETTES A YEAR, THE DAILY DOSES OF BENZEDRINE, THE HOMOSEXUAL AFFAIRS, THE BOOZE.

Unhappy as his affair with Kallman remained, it provided at least the stability Auden seemed to need—though it does not seem to have stopped him from indulging in casual encounters whenever he desired. Davenport-Hines is sometimes led astray by imprecise knowledge of America: "Auden's experiments in neighborhood and sexuality and his submission to the duty of happiness were occurring in a puritan environment," he writes in an aside at exactly the point Auden buys a shack for his liaisons on Fire Island.

Auden's Anglican Christianity seemed to provide some stability as well. The demolished churches he saw in China, the priests he knew the Republican forces had murdered in Spain, gave him a name to apply to his emerging sense of the "Law Like Love." For the rest of his life, he never hesitated to be identified as a Christian, and—though he never gave up his mastery of light and ironic verse—he mostly sought in remaining books an explication of his interior Great Good Place: *The Age of Anxiety* (1947), *Nones* (1951), *The Rake's Progress* (a 1951 libretto he wrote with Kallman for Igor Stravinsky), *The Shield of Achilles* (1955), *About the House* (1965), and the posthumous *Thank You, Fog* (1974).

Eventually, though, the life he led got to him: the 15,000 unfiltered cigarettes a year, the daily doses of benzedrine, the homosexual affairs, and the booze—especially the booze. It came at last to wreck him.

Developing what Davenport-Hines identifies as "Touraine-Solente-Gole syndrome," in which the skin on the face and hands thickens and droops, Auden seemed ready to collapse long before the end. "My face," he declared, "looks likes a wedding cake left out in the rain." After a turn as poetry professor at Oxford, he died in Austria on September 29, 1973.

To the problems of English poetry after Yeats and T.S. Eliot, Auden's first solution was his schoolboy irony. His second and more profound solution, however, was to aim his poems at the Great Good Place—the place of truth and Edenic happiness inside language. And that "poetry makes nothing happen" is the unfortunate but inescapable consequence of his aim.

In the prayer beginning "O Unicorn among the cedars" that ends the 1941 *New Year Letter* in which he acknowledged his return to the church, Auden proved that he could forge rich Christian images in the style developed by Eliot. In poems like "The Shield of Achilles," he even proved that he could imagine what difference Christianity might make:

That girls are raped, that two boys knife a third,
Were axioms to him, who'd never heard
Of any world where promises were kept,
Or one could weep because another wept.

But faith is for Auden finally a picture rather than a life. The constant reality of sin and human failure not only confirmed the poet in his belief of the truth of Christianity, but confirmed him as well in the notion that such a truth is merely true and makes nothing happen—even in the believer's own life. Auden was a perpetual visitor who accidentally stumbled upon the land of faith; he never heard the invitation to stay. ♦

Books

Mythology as History

By Joel Schwartz

It is a sign of the times that Mary Lefkowitz deserves great credit for writing *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History* (Basic Books, 222 pages, $24.00) even though it is a book that, as she herself recognizes, should not have needed to be written. Lefkowitz is a distinguished classicist who teaches at Wellesley; she has written *Not Out of Africa* to challenge a series of claims (most prominently advanced in Martin Bernal's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Black Athena*) about the African (specifically Egyptian) provenance of Greek civilization.

These claims have been made to further an obvious political agenda: to instill pride in African Americans and to denounce Western civilization (whose origin supposedly lay in the plunder of a superior African civilization's cultural riches). But as Lefkowitz reminds us, the motives behind an assertion are ultimately less important than the evidence supporting it: And the problem with the Afrocentrists' claims about the origins of Greek civilization is that they are buttressed by wishes rather than facts. Lefkowitz's book should not be necessary because the historical arguments of the Afrocentrists can be refuted simply by repeating "what has long been known and established"; but it proved necessary because classical scholars (fearful of the charge of racism) have generally been reluctant to criticize them.

Lefkowitz does not need or take much space to refute the Afrocentric account of the Greek debt to Africa. No archaeological data suggest that the people who became the Greeks migrated to Greece from Egypt; there is little reason to believe (and good reason to doubt) that Greek religion and philosophy derived from Egyptian originals; there is no evidence supporting the contention that Socrates, Hannibal, and Cleopatra had African ancestors.

I can convey the level of the argument that Lefkowitz rebuts with a single example. Cleopatra was, of course, born in Egypt, but that makes her geographically and not ethnically Egyptian; she descended from a Greek dynasty that ruled Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great. We do not know the personal or ethnic identity of her paternal grandmother, but otherwise her ancestry was Macedonian Greek. Although there is no evidence that the paternal grandmother was Egyptian or Ethiopian, Afrocentrists (who note that there is also no evidence that she was not Egyptian or Ethiopian) assert that she must have been, and that Cleopatra must therefore have been black. The intellectual quality of her opposition enables one to understand Lefkowitz's lament that "instead of getting on with our work, [classicists] must rehearse what has long been known."

Lefkowitz's account of the genesis of the Afrocentric claims makes for a more compelling story than her refutation of specifics. She shows that the belief in the superiority of ancient Egyptian civilization was originally propagated by European Freemasons in the 18th century (and subsequently adopted by black Masons in the 20th). Thus, the Afrocentric conception of ancient Egypt is only a recycling of the wildly inaccurate depiction of ancient Egypt found in Mozart's Masonic opera *The Magic Flute*—which is not to suggest that Mozart is likely to join Scott Joplin as a composer favored by Afrocentrists, but to second Lefkowitz's ironic observation that "the Afrocentric myth of antiquity . . . is essentially not African. . . . It is a product of the same Eurocentric culture that the Afrocentrists seek to blame for the eclipse of African civilization."

The obvious problem with Afrocentric assertions is that they are plainly false; a problem possibly more troubling than this is the reticence of classical scholars who know the truth—out of some combination of cowardice, desire to further the self-esteem of minority students, and the general erosion of intellectual standards. I greatly admire Lefkowitz for writing this book; but *Not Out of Africa* would have benefited from a more sus-

Joel Schwartz has taught political philosophy at the University of Michigan and been a program officer at the National Endowment for the Humanities.

tained critique of her colleagues and their diffidence about voicing similar criticisms. (There would certainly have been room; the page count is inflated because the book is double-spaced—the only double-spaced book I have ever seen.)

Lefkowitz provides occasional, and always sensible, explanations to account for this profile in intellectual cowardice. She notes that academics today tend to reject claims of truth or falsity, believing that "facts are meaningless because they can be manipulated and reinterpreted."

Thus for many scholars factual accuracy is no longer the criterion for judging versions of history, which instead are judged in terms of the motivations of the historians: An Afrocentric account of classical antiquity can be regarded as "an alternative way of looking at the past," arguably even superior to the traditional account, because "it confers a new and higher status on an ethnic group whose history has largely remained obscure."

But some things really are true, and others really are false. If truth is so unrecognizable or irrelevant that we can't have certainty about simple matters of empirical fact, it is hard to see how we can be so certain about the moral truth underlying the Afrocentric rewriting of history: If we cannot say that some historical accounts are wrong simply because they are false, it is unclear that anything entitles us to reject (for example) the version of history promulgated by deniers of the Holocaust (even as we acclaim the version promulgated by Afrocentrists).

A renewed substantive interest in the classics would nevertheless be welcome, however dubious its motivation. But this consideration leads to an important question about the Afrocentric view of classical antiquity: If Greek philosophy is all that remains to provide us a clue to the wondrous Egyptian system of thought from which it supposedly derived, shouldn't undergraduates influenced by Afrocentrism be flocking to classics courses, seriously studying Plato and Aristotle, to recover as best they can the wisdom of ancient Egypt?

Needless to say, no influx of Afrocentrist students into classics courses is occurring. That, finally, is what is most depressing of all: The Afrocentric concern with Greek civilization seems to be restricted to sterile (and unpersuasive) arguments about the color of the skin of the great men and women of antiquity and resolutely to ignore the contents and the character of their words and deeds. ♦

James W. Tuttleton teaches American literature at New York University.

Books

Fathers and Sons

By James W. Tuttleton

Imagine yourself a tough, widowed, sixty-something Western rancher—Atticus Cody—with two sons who are polar opposites: Frank, a successful businessman and a state senator with a large family; and Scott, an irresponsible thirty-something drifter whose bad driving caused the death, several years earlier, of his mother. Just when Atticus is expecting a festive Christmas with Frank's family, Scott turns up from God knows where. The strain of his reappearance affects everyone in the family of Atticus, the title character of Ron Hansen's latest work of fiction (HarperCollins, 247 pages, $22).

Though Hansen makes little enough of the older brother Frank, it is clear that Scott's reappearance activates an old rivalry between the two brothers. Scott is by turns ashamed, envious, and embittered at his brother's success. And it is clear that Scott is full of guilt at having killed their mother in a car accident. He is also resentful of a resolute, powerful father whom he thinks he will never be able to please.

But the strain of Scott's reappearance is greatest on Atticus Cody. For Scott is really a beloved younger son whose promise was perhaps greater and who ought to have made his father proud. But the accident had a disastrous effect on the boy. He has been in and out of mental hospitals, is sick of himself and his life, is resentful of his brother, and is angry at his father for seeming to have preferred the older brother, the brother who followed the rules, obeyed his father, and did everything right. Scott's life has no center, and his father, still grieving for his dead wife and now his lost, drifting son, knows it.

After Christmas, Scott returns to Mexico. He lives in a little town called Resurrección. He has been drawn there by Renata Isaacs, a beautiful but unstable woman Scott met some years before in a mental hospital. He loves her, but her feeling for him is on-again, off-again. Shortly after Christmas, Atticus gets a call from Renata: Scott has killed himself.

Atticus is the story of the father's trip down into Mexico to bury his son and to collect his effects. The story is rich in moral reflection, emotional insight, and

remembered experience. Much of it has to do with the father's effort to come to terms with Scott's failed promise, the teenage accident that killed his mother, the anguish of Atticus at the loss of his wife, the boy's recurrent hospitalizations. If your son had killed your wife, if your son had been in and out of asylums, if he had now made a terminal mess of things with a shotgun in Mexico, wouldn't you feel justified in feeling disgust for him? Not Atticus. Why did he kill himself? Was it guilt over his mother? Rejection by Renata? A suicidal depression brought on by the wrong neural chemistry?

The title is an index of what the book is about—what it means to be a father and, indeed, to have a father. It is about a source of strength and unconditional love in Atticus that survives the boy's repeated failures, including the disaster of the suicide itself. It is a novel, finally, about absolution and forgiveness and the reconciliation of the oft-estranged.

But *Atticus* is more than just a portrait of a troubled father-son relationship. Once down in Mexico, Atticus meets and talks to Scott's friends and acquaintances. He wanders through Scott's apartment and his artist's studio out in the hills. From the photos, surviving letters, answering machine messages, and the ordinary debris of living, Atticus tries to reconstruct his son's dissolute life in Resurrección. "We all live on the fringe here," Renata tells him. "We make up the rules as we go along." Hansen sketches in very deftly the background of this world: the drugs, the booze, the casual sex, Scott's ineffectual painting, his aimless social life with an American colony of idlers, the chance encounters with the international *turistas* at the hotel bars, and his Mexican friends—Indian peasants, mostly, and one of them a shaman. The handling of the local color is expert, and the use of Spanish—and the way it is translated into English—is indeed accomplished.

The mosaic pieced together by Atticus of Scott's life in Mexico shows Hansen's great skill in characterization. *Atticus* is his fifth novel; its best-known predecessor is *Mariette in Ecstasy*, about a turn-of-the-century novitiate in upstate New York who displays the stigmata. The delicate handling of detail, the stray reference, the odd fact casually dropped in—all these show Hansen's ready command of his novelistic materials. And they point to one inescapable fact for Atticus: Scott was not a suicide but the victim of a murder.

As it grows upon Atticus that his son was the victim of foul play, he becomes something of a detective, and the story merges into a suspense novel in which the central question becomes who murdered Scott and why. Atticus is a close observer, has a good memory, and his powers of induction are those of a great detective. He is also a solidly moral man who tells Renata, "Seems to me every one of you here oughtta try living according to Bible values and see how *that* works out." Questioning everyone who knew Scott—Renata, Stuart Chandler (a rival for Renata's affection), the Mexican housekeeper Maria, and the police—Atticus gradually reconstructs what happened to his son.

In the unfolding of the plot, Hansen creates mirrored images of character and action, resonant objects that rise to the level of illuminating symbolism, and there emerges a type of fatherly love for the prodigal son that has its source in a very deep parable of the human condition. *Atticus* is a novel by a writer who has read widely, thought seriously about what is important in human experience, and who has enriched his novel out of a deep fund of wisdom. ♦

DOLE FOR PRESIDENT

Memo

To: Scott Reed, Campaign Manager
From: Tony Fabrizio, Campaign Pollster
Re: Bumper stickers

Bob Dole's soundbite -- "We're gonna veto Bill Clinton" -- is a smash hit! And it's given us some great ideas for bumper stickers that play off our candidate's thirty-plus years of experience with the real nuts and bolts of the United States Senate. Attached are five ideas: