DISNEY'S MICKEY-MOUSE RELIGION
JAMES BOWMAN

the weekly Standard

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LEADER OF THE DEEPAK

The Strange Career of a Multimedia Guru

by Matt Labash

the weekly Standard

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Cover art by John Kascht

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Filegate: Much More to Come

Despite the apologies and explanations for Filegate—"Inexcusable!" said Leon Panetta—we know that senior officials inside the White House long knew about the illicit activity and did . . . nothing about it. Is *that* excusable, Mr. Panetta?

The whole sorry story broke, you will recall, when congressional investigators discovered a White House form requesting Billy Dale's FBI file, dated seven months after Dale's dismissal. The form was one of 1,000 pages of documents the White House finally surrendered to the Congress 18 months after being served with a subpoena. The White House had made a bizarre claim that the documents were covered by "executive privilege" (a privilege usually extended to documents affecting national security)—a claim it continues to make for another 2,000 pages *still* inside the White House.

In other words, someone in the White House counsel's office went through all these papers—and claimed executive privilege for the Billy Dale request. What was the justification for this claim, which delayed exposure of Filegate for at least a year? Who made the claim? Did this White House lawyer not realize something was amiss? And what about the remaining 2,000 pages for which executive privilege is still being claimed?

So the questions are: Who knew about the files? When? And what is still being withheld?

Mr. Livingstone's Vacation

The White House is so outraged by the misconduct of its personnel security chief, Craig Livingstone, that it is—sending him on a vacation at taxpayer's expense. What else would you call "administrative leave with pay"? That's how Livingstone's boss, White House counsel Jack Quinn, described the harsh punishment being meted out to the man who scoured, or supervised the scouring of, more than 400 FBI files he had no right to look at. Either Livingstone did something wrong, in which case he should be fired, or he was acting on orders from higher up, in which case the White House seems to be trying to buy his silence by keeping him within the family. Even Democratic congressman Tom Lantos says Livingstone should be fired. After all, even Boris Yeltsin fired *his* internal security chief, Aleksandr Korzhakov. How long can the White House continue to use taxpayer funds to pay Mr. Livingstone to do nothing?

Who's Steering This Thing?

Conservatives inside and outside the Senate were taken aback by the recent decision of the Senate Republican Steering Committee to name Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas as the replacement for the previous chairman, Larry Craig. When it was started, the Steering Committee was designed to be a forum for conservatives at a time when the Senate Republican leadership was decidedly moderate.

The irony now is that with the Senate leadership dominated by conservatives, Steering will be led by someone without solid right-wing credentials (Hutchison is pro-choice). Fueling the discontent was the fact that Hutchison was named without an official vote, after her incessant lobbying for the job. Now there's talk that Sen. John Ashcroft might form a *new* Steering offshoot to undertake the committee's original mission.

MacArthur's America

Remember the Steinberg cartoon, a New Yorker's view of America? It's time for a sequel, a Left-winger's view of America, which would depict the country based on the geography of the MacArthur Foundation's "Genius" awards. This year, the activists at MacArthur selected four of the twenty-one winners from the Bay Area of California, five from New York

Scrapbook

City, two from Durham, N.C., and one each from places like Princeton, Ann Arbor, Seattle, Washington, Philadelphia, and Belmont, Massachusetts.

On the MacArthur map, Oberlin would be bigger than Chicago, Santa Monica would dwarf the rest of Los Angeles, and Texas, Florida, and other such fly-over places wouldn't exist. You can't expect the MacArthur search committee to venture more than 25 miles from the nearest lesbian-woman-of-color-voter-registration drive.

The Reading List

An attentive reader (whose name we have, alas, misplaced, so we urge him to write in again and tell us who he is) offers the following:

It might help better to understand Russia, her fate and future, if we paid more attention to her past, and not just the past seventy years. Consider the last time Russia had a leader named Boris: His surname was Godunov, and the time was the cusp of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Time of Troubles, by Sergei Platonov (1860-1933), is the classic study. With the downfall of Boris Godunov, Russia entered a period of anarchy called the Time of Troubles. Only in 1613, after a popular revolt led by the butcher Kuzma Minin and Prince Pozharsky, two of the true heroes of Russia's history, was Russia able to expel the Poles and establish a new legitimate order under the Romanov dynasty, in an air of enhanced xenophobia.

Furthermore, as the neo-Communists make their increasingly unlikely effort to retake Russia, it is worth remembering as well that at least one visionary of Lenin's time foresaw communism's collapse. Yevgeny Zamyatin was one of pre-revolutionary Russia's most talented short story writers and a prewar member of the Bolshevik party. However, he discerned the totalitarian nature of Bolshevism in power. In 1920-21 he wrote ***We***, the first of the modern anti-utopian novels, which satirized the collectivist future. In its own right a thoroughly entertaining and still timely parable, it was also an acknowledged inspiration for George Orwell's *1984*.

We Are Proud to Announce . . .

Three new contributing editors join us this week. **Joseph Epstein**, the literary critic and *American Scholar* editor who wrote our recent cover story on arts policy, will contribute a monthly essay beginning in September. **David Gelernter**, the polymath poet-painter-computer scientist-Yale professor (whose book *1939* is just out in paperback, and you should read it), will serve as our art critic, though art will not be his only subject. And *First Things* associate editor **J. Bottum** (the J stands for Joseph, Jody for short, but don't tell him we told you) becomes our fiction critic. We welcome them aboard, and trust you do too.

Casual

My Father's Day

A conceit of the modern age is that we're free and independent-thinking people who decide, wholly on our own, how to live our lives. Stereotype plays on this theme. One is the rebellion of children of conservative parents who transformed themselves into counterculture radicals in the 1960s. Another is the leftie kids donning suits and dresses and becoming Reaganites and Newtoids in the 1980s and 1990s.

I'm dubious, particularly because my case and that of practically everyone I know is quite the opposite. I'm almost completely the creation of my father, Frederic Barnes (I'm Jr.). Or to put it another way, I'm a lagging indicator: When his interests and ideas and obsessions changed, mine changed, only a few years later.

I didn't realize this until a year or two ago. A friend of mine, John Yates, mentioned that his older brothers had gone into business because in their formative years, their father's life was concentrated on his career. But when John hit those years, his father was focused more on having a deeper Christian spiritual life for himself and his family. So John became an Episcopal priest.

My dad's shifts in focus were played out on only one person: me. Of course, I thought each time I was acting of my own free will. Maybe I operated under that illusion because my father never told me what to do. He simply made clear what he thought was most important in life, and I eventually came around.

My first interest was the military. My father had gone to West Point, class of 1934. He served in the cavalry and intelligence, then transferred from the Army to the Air Force after World War II. West Point was a big part of his life. As a kid in St. Louis, he had scrambled to line up an appointment. He barely made it under the age limit. By the time classes started, he was 22, probably the oldest plebe that year.

Going to West Point became my goal. When I got an appointment at age 18, however, my dad's interests had changed. He'd become a tough-minded anti-Communist, a fan of the House Un-American Activities Committee, and, naturally, a conservative Republican. He was a charter subscriber to *National Review* in 1955. He loved *Human Events*. He read the *Wall Street Journal* every day, especially enjoying the political reporting of a young writer named Robert Novak. After a bit, I was reading newspapers and magazines regularly. And when he began writing letters to the editor, I soon followed suit.

I turned down the chance to be a cadet. My dad was livid, I'm told, at least for a spell. But he never criticized my decision to my face. After all, he had to know I wasn't rejecting him; I was only following his lead. His chief interest was now politics, not the military. When I got out of college, the only jobs I sought were in journalism, and a few years later, I began covering politics.

After he retired from the Air Force and spent 10 years as a stockbroker, he and my mother moved to Vero Beach, Fla. He had always been a devout Christian, though not a demonstrative one. But in Florida he experienced a powerful religious awakening. An evangelical, charismatic faith pervaded his life. He talked a lot about Jesus Christ. He prayed in public. He and my mom began counseling people in trouble. When my wife, kids, and I visited, there was often some stranger there. Folks dropped by at all hours for advice and prayer and warm attention and fellowship.

I was amazed and, initially, appalled. My 70-year-old father had a new personality. He took over as head of Christian education at his church. He went on retreats. He proselytized. My family and I were prime targets. Visit after visit, he and my mother told us about the joys and rewards of their heightened Christian faith. They prayed for us and with us.

My sister and her husband were first to accept my parents' renewed faith, but I resisted for six or seven years. I refused to go to church with my parents. I balked at reading the Christian pamphlets and testimonies pushed my way. I failed to bond with young Christians my dad sent my way in hopes their example would prompt my conversion. But one example was overpowering to me—my father. I saw how his life was changed for the better. And since his faith had become the most important thing in his life, I was sure to follow. In 1980, my wife and I knelt in our living room and became Christians.

My father died on June 14 at age 87. I don't know if he was aware of how much he'd shaped my life. He never claimed to have swayed anybody's life (if credit was to be given, God got it). But he changed mine more than once, and I'll never be able to thank him enough for it.

Fred Barnes

Democracy in Israel

Charles Krauthammer's article "Why Bibi Won" (June 17) should be a lesson to Thomas L. Friedman and his ilk, whose talent is viewing the world from a narrow vantage point, at best, and advancing a personal obsession, at worst.

It seems that each time Friedman deals with political issues concerning the Likud party in Israel, he loses all logic and objectivity. He has been consistent in this misguided approach since Likud achieved power in 1978. The attempt to describe Netanyahu and his party as the "moral equivalent of Gennadi Zyuganov" is not only malicious in tone but outrageously naive and tantamount to utter stupidity.

The other reason for Friedman's absence of moral judgment may be his personal conviction that he has seen the light in his travels between Beirut and Jerusalem and that therefore we, the readers, should regard him as the new seer of the Middle East.

Krauthammer's exposure of Friedman's selective morality was sorely needed. As the saying goes, since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem the art of prophecy was given to fools.

Rabbi Joseph Melamed
Carmichael, CA

The article by Charles Krauthammer and the parody of Thomas L. Friedman were a welcome change from the arrogance and misinformation demonstrated by other members of the press. Would that there were other voices to point out that the Israeli electorate has the right to choose.

Sydelle Levine
Mount Vernon, NY

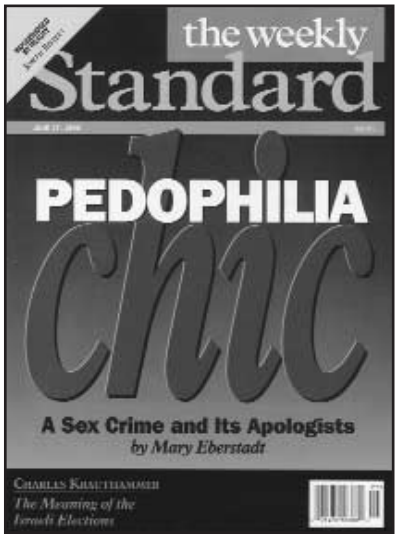
Charles Krauthammer offers a number of valid insights into the reasons why Bibi Netanyahu won the recent Israeli election. Too bad he riddles his article with overblown rhetoric that leaves several important factual misimpressions.

Krauthammer writes, "When Rabin won election in 1992 by the slimmest of margins and ruled with but a two-seat majority in the Knesset, one did not hear the claim that he lacked a mandate."

This is simply untrue. The common refrain among the Israeli Right—many Likud Knesset members included—was that Rabin lacked a "Jewish majority" and that his government was therefore illegitimate.

Democracy once required only a majority, but when the Left won the 1992 elections, the standards changed and adjectives describing ethnicity became necessary. The votes of Arab citizens suddenly weren't good enough.

Krauthammer also asserts: "In the old Knesset, those parties that supported the peace process (the Labor-Meretz coalition plus the Arab parties) had 61



seats. The elections reduced their number in the new Knesset to 52. By every measure, Labor's path was soundly rejected."

But Krauthammer doesn't mention that the Right's numbers dropped considerably also. Both major parties, in fact, lost votes to Israel B'Aliya, the Third Way, and the religious parties, all of which would have joined a coalition led by either Labor or Likud. He also doesn't mention that Labor outpolled the Likud-Tsomet joint list despite Netanyahu's win. Krauthammer wants it to be the case that Labor's path was soundly rejected, but the conventional wisdom that Bibi won a squeaker is actually correct.

Benjamin Wittes
Washington, DC

Pedophilia, Not Chic Here

I fear Mary Eberstadt's piece "Pedophilia Chic" (June 17) may leave some of your readers with the erroneous impression that the gay male community endorses sexual exploitation of adolescent males.

Unfortunately, the homosexual community's political leadership, which is dominated by radical leftists, has failed to denounce loudly the North American Man-Boy Love Association and other nefarious groups. But on this issue, as on many others, the leadership is removed from the constituency it purports to serve. For a sizable majority of gay men, sexual relations with children are viewed as morally appalling, and the adult practitioners of it are seen as pathological deviants.

Log Cabin Republicans, an organization of conservative gay men and women, supports law enforcement in prosecuting sex crimes against children to the full extent of the law. You will find no apologists for pedophilia here.

Paul W. Simmons
Log Cabin Republicans
Houston, TX

Hiring Ronald Radosh

Peter Collier's article "The Suppression of Ronald Radosh" (June 10) repeats unquestioningly Radosh's assertion that he lost a title chair in American history at George Mason University to Roger Wilkins. As vice provost at George Mason in 1986-87, I directed the search that resulted in Wilkins's appointment. Collier's account of that search is distorted beyond recognition.

First, George Mason never advertised or held a search for an endowed professorship in American history. For over a decade, we have searched for and appointed Clarence J. Robinson professors. These chairs are for broad-ranging scholars and intellectuals who deal with large and important problems of interest to people in multiple disciplines. In the search for Robinson professors, therefore, we have always looked for outstanding individuals irrespective of field, and we have never conducted a search for a

teacher in any particular discipline.

Further, Wilkins and Radosh never competed for the same position. We planned to fill between 18 and 20 Robinson professorships over several years, and we made as many appointments in a given year as there were candidates whom we wanted. The year we hired Wilkins we made seven offers and four accepted. Had we wanted to, we could have made offers to both Wilkins and Radosh.

There is more than a little irony in Radosh's accusation against George Mason. At the time, many on the left called it a "right-wing institution" because we made our first distinguished appointments in public choice economics, including James Buchanan, who subsequently won the Nobel Prize.

Steven J. Diner
Professor of History
George Mason University

Sunny Side of Morrison

It was good to see an important musician like Van Morrison reviewed in your magazine ("Van Morrison's Hymnal," June 17).

But Mark Gauvreau Judge's assertion that in the 1980s Morrison's "music became insipid, and he seemed debilitated by his legendary stage fright and hostility to the press—attributes that make it difficult to win fans and create any kind of buzz" falsely characterizes that decade (*Inarticulate Speech of the Heart* and *Sense of Wonder* came out in the 1980s) and states an irrelevancy about Morrison's dependence on any of the later rock-'n'roll trappings.

Literary and music reviewers often fall prey to the self-serving clichés that there is something "new" or "better" about an artist's latest work or that the artist has "gotten out of a funk." In my opinion, these clichés misunderstand the artistic temperament.

Emmett McAuliffe
St. Louis, MO

Race and Music

Jay Nordlinger's article "Race Notes" (May 20), which focuses in part on the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's "Classically Black" series, is a model of muddled thinking. His argument is seen in the first paragraph: "They are concerts that have been plucked from the rest and set aside. They have been—in a word—ghettoized." The "they" in question are concerts selected from various series for a sampler series called "Classically Black." While the marketing is targeted, the concerts are fully integrated among the orchestra's main series offerings.

Nordlinger admits, "It may be naive to maintain that music should be immune to the race-fever that afflicts contemporary America." While the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra does not pretend that it can undo the effect of generations of segregation and discrimination, we do make an effort to bring people together. Our symphony orchestras are essential community resources, and while they have a musical mission, their programs and policies do have social consequences.

John Gidwitz
Executive Director
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

A Scary Marxist I'm Not

Matt Labash's piece "Scaremonger" (April 29) was a trash job on our public relations firm, Fenton Communications. The premise of Labash's screed is that my work to publicize the concerns of environmental organizations consists of cleverly concocting alarmist lies that I then foist on naive and unsuspecting mainstream news organizations, which, not knowing the depths of my duplicity, admit me to their inner sanctums and then are stupid enough to publish or air "my stories," unchecked and unverified, and in so doing make life harder for chemical companies, timber barons, and other true guardians of the public interest.

The article's whole thesis is funny: "Fenton serves as an exemplar of the notion that with the failure of communism, environmental policy is now the Armageddon of the hard left." The unstated syllogism: Environmentalism is communism. Right.

Charge one: Our work consists of scaring the public and scoffs whenever legitimate scientists and environmental organizations raise responsible concerns about the safety of chemicals in our food or in the air. My heart goes out to the Chemical Manufacturers' Association, which, we are told, is "harmed" when it has to play "catch-up" and respond to calls for corporate responsibility. This is pure propaganda for dismantling environmental laws.

Charge two: Fenton is responsible for the ALAR apple "scare." The EPA conducted its own investigation, agreed with the critics, and banned ALAR. The apple industry is thriving without the chemical.

Charge three: *Our Stolen Future* is a bad book. I didn't write it but helped promote it. It's a controversial whistleblowing work of reporting based on he work of over 400 scientists and many hundreds of peer-reviewed scientific studies that has been compared to Rachel Carson's classic *Silent Spring*.

Normally I wouldn't even respond to such one-sided propaganda. But in the cyber Lexis/Nexis age, some response has to be put on the record.

David Fenton
Washington, DC

the weekly Standard

Quotas: The GOP Goes AWOL

A fund-raising appeal for the Republican National Committee's coffers has recently arrived in GOP mailboxes across the state of California. The pitch letter is printed on "Bob Dole" stationery. The hook, in classic direct-mail marketing fashion, is an "official 1996 Republican Party Campaign Issues Survey." This "poll" has eleven questions, ten of them intended to inspire a "yes" answer on the eleventh: "Will you make a contribution?" And the very first of those questions is this: "Do you favor the repeal of Affirmative Action Quotas?"

Meanwhile, the California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI), whose fate on the coming November ballot will significantly influence the political future of "affirmative action quotas" in America, struggles to defend itself against a well-funded interest-group smear campaign. CCRI is a proposed amendment to the California constitution that would ban racial, gender, and ethnic discrimination, for or against, in state employment, education, and contracting. So where are Bob Dole and Company in the contest over this proposition, consistent as it is with long-established Republican principle—and with federal legislation that Mr. Dole introduced in the Senate last year? Nowhere: silent and immobile.

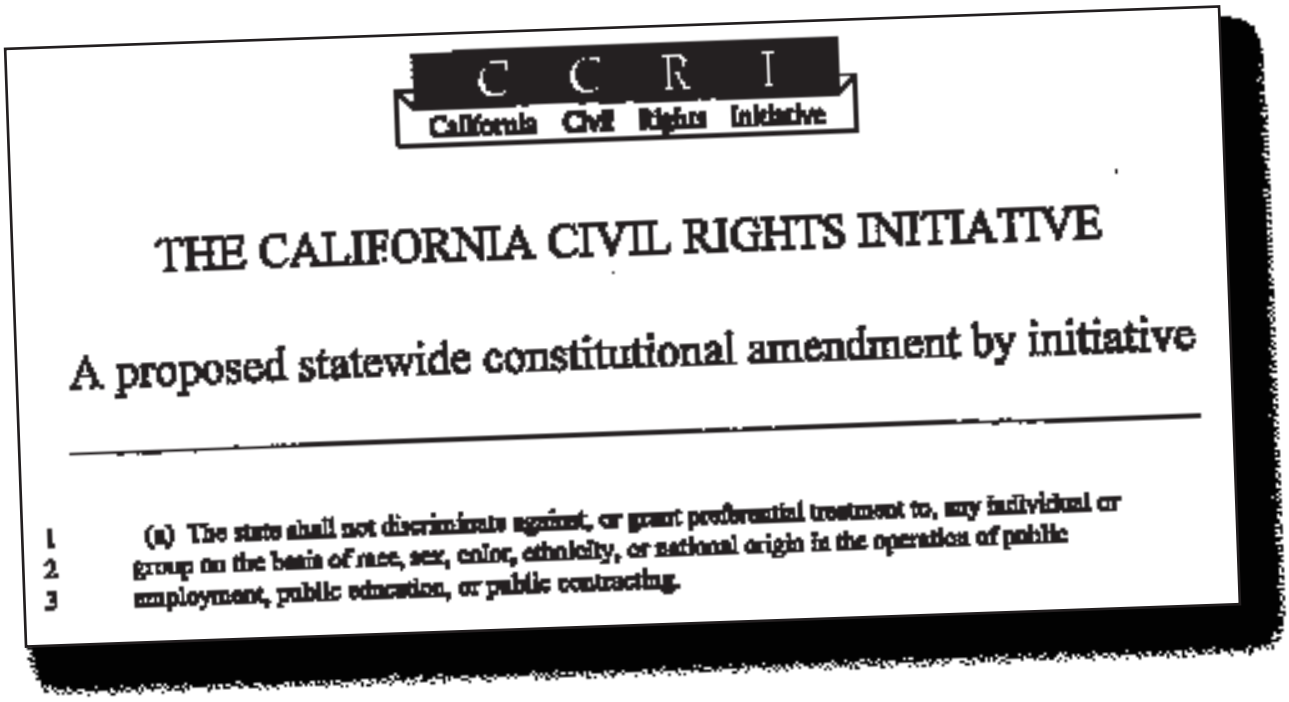
> WITH THE HONORABLE EXCEPTIONS OF BILL BENNETT AND GOV. PETE WILSON, LEADING REPUBLICANS HAVE BEEN UNWILLING TO LIFT A FINGER FOR THE CAUSE OF RACE-NEUTRAL GOVERNMENT POLICY.

The GOP is obviously still eager to exploit popular support for race- and gender-neutral government policy in the nation's largest state—and translate that support into cash for the party's Washington, D.C., bank accounts. But with the honorable exceptions of Bill Bennett and Gov. Pete Wilson, leading Republicans have been unwilling to lift a finger of help for that cause this year. Instead, the GOP's highest councils have clearly indicated these past few weeks that they would prefer to take a powder on CCRI. Forget *disappointing*. This is sleazy.

It's quite hard to get a "yes" vote on citizen-sponsored ballot initiatives in California. When in doubt, skeptical Californians tend to vote "no," as they have on 21 of 33 such initiatives since 1990. And unless previously closed wallets suddenly snap open—calling Steve Forbes!—CCRI is likely to be outspent by its critics. Most California businessmen, who might otherwise be expected to back a "conservative" issue, are withholding their support from this one. And preening about it. They stand four-square for "equal opportunity," they brag. And also, presumably, for the hiring quotas that help insure any given company against employment-discrimination lawsuits.

CCRI's opponents do not have such worries. Barbra Streisand is in for $1,000. The Ford Foundation is in for $1.4 million, money to be spent by people like the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights—not against CCRI directly, you understand, but only for "research" and "advocacy" of affirmative action generally. Feminist organizations are helping out, spreading the laughable falsehood that under CCRI, "women could get fired if they had children or if they got pregnant." And right-thinking newsmen are helping out, too. The June 16 *Sunday Examiner and Chronicle* in San Francisco featured an editorial cartoon depicting two laughing figures labeled "Ca. Civil Rights Initiative." They are carrying a can of gasoline and running away from a church, labeled "affirmative action," that they have just set on fire.

Is this repulsive cartoon an anomaly in the CCRI debate? Hardly. Initiative chairman Ward Connerly, a businessman and member of the University of California board of regents, has repeatedly been called an Uncle Tom by his critics. Here's state senator Diane Watson of Los Angeles, speaking about Connerly's role in last year's regents debate over affirmative action in university admissions: "He probably feels this makes him more white than black, and that's what



he really wanted to be. He married a white woman."

For his trouble, Mr. Connerly has now been rewarded with an additional—if slightly more elevated—rebuke from the most admired Republican in the United States. Colin Powell, in a May address to graduating seniors at Bowie State, offers an extended defense of affirmative action as it is currently practiced. Affirmative action only "provides access for the qualified," he announces, as if the argument could ever be resolved so crudely. And "we must resist misguided government efforts that seek to shut it all down, efforts such as the California Civil Rights Initiative, which poses as an equal opportunity initiative, but which . . . puts the brakes on expanding opportunities for people who are in need."

In response, on June 7, Ward Connerly sent Powell a powerfully eloquent (and remarkably even-tempered) seven-page letter. Among other things, Connerly respectfully asked the general how it is, if affirmative action only "provides access for the qualified," that black, American Indian, and Chicano students are automatically admitted to Berkeley when they score at least 6,500 points on an 8,000-point academic index. "California residents," Berkeley's euphemism for white and Asian students, are automatically *denied* admission whenever they score below 7,000. Powell has not responded to Connerly. He is on vacation with former president Bush, catching fish off the coast of Greece.

Worse, Powell's most important co-Republicans have also gone fishing on CCRI. Bob Dole has just completed yet another campaign trip to California without once volunteering a favorable word about the initiative. Pressed by a television interviewer on the subject June 10, Dole practically whispered his support, adding meekly that "I've been for affirmative action. I think there are some changes that should be made." Asked recently by the *Los Angeles Times* to identify issues that might help Dole's presidential effort in California, GOP chairman Haley Barbour did not include CCRI. Californians "don't have to have somebody from outside to make a big issue about it," he said. You hear that same idea over and over again these days. His California state campaign manager, Marty Wilson, says "Dole is a national candidate and this is a state initiative." Former governor George Deukmejian, Dole's honorary state chairman, says, "I don't think he should get much involved in affirmative action. It's not very helpful for presidential candidates to get involved in state initiatives."

Of course, these gentlemen were happy to have a whistlestopping Dole break with his own party in Congress and support something called the Auburn Dam, a local billion-dollar public-works project unheard of outside California. So it isn't states-rights delicacy that deters the GOP from engaging on CCRI. Nor does public opinion explain the party's behavior. The initiative remains overwhelmingly popular in California. A March *Los Angeles Times* poll indicated 66 percent statewide approval of CCRI, including 80 percent of registered Republicans, 55 percent of Democrats, and majorities among women and minority groups. A more recent *Times* poll showed 69 percent support for CCRI in the City of Los Angeles—includ-

ing 56 percent of black respondents and 68 percent of Latinos.

What's going on with Dole and his advisers, then? The answer is simple, and ugly: CCRI's opponents are playing dirty. And Republicans, embarrassingly unsure of their ability to mount a serious argument about this matter of principle, and concerned over how the whole thing will "look," are flinching from the fight. On behalf of the Clinton White House, George Stephanopoulos accuses Republicans of "making political calculations, not moral and legal calculations" about CCRI. Look who's talking. And how terrible it is that he's telling the truth.

— David Tell, for the Editors

The FBI Isn't Off the Hook

by Tucker Carlson

For those who believe in the Liberal Media Conspiracy, the lead editorial that ran in the *Washington Post* on June 17 must have come as something of a surprise. Over the course of 600 sarcasm-laden words, the *Post* dismissed the notion that the White House had committed anything so innocuous as a "bureaucratic snafu" when it sought the confidential FBI files of departed Republican staffers. The editorial was remarkably critical of the Clinton administration.

And remarkably soft on the FBI. Indeed, the *Post* all but exonerated the FBI for its role in the scandal, blaming instead political hacks inside the White House. Concluded the *Post*: "The FBI was had, big time." By whom? By White House personnel security chief Craig Livingstone, a 37-year-old political flunky and one-time bar bouncer who has been characterized by a Senate investigator as "more or less clueless"? By Anthony Marceca, a former small-town constable the *Post* itself described as so dull that he once responded to an order to "keep a low profile" by driving around with his head down?

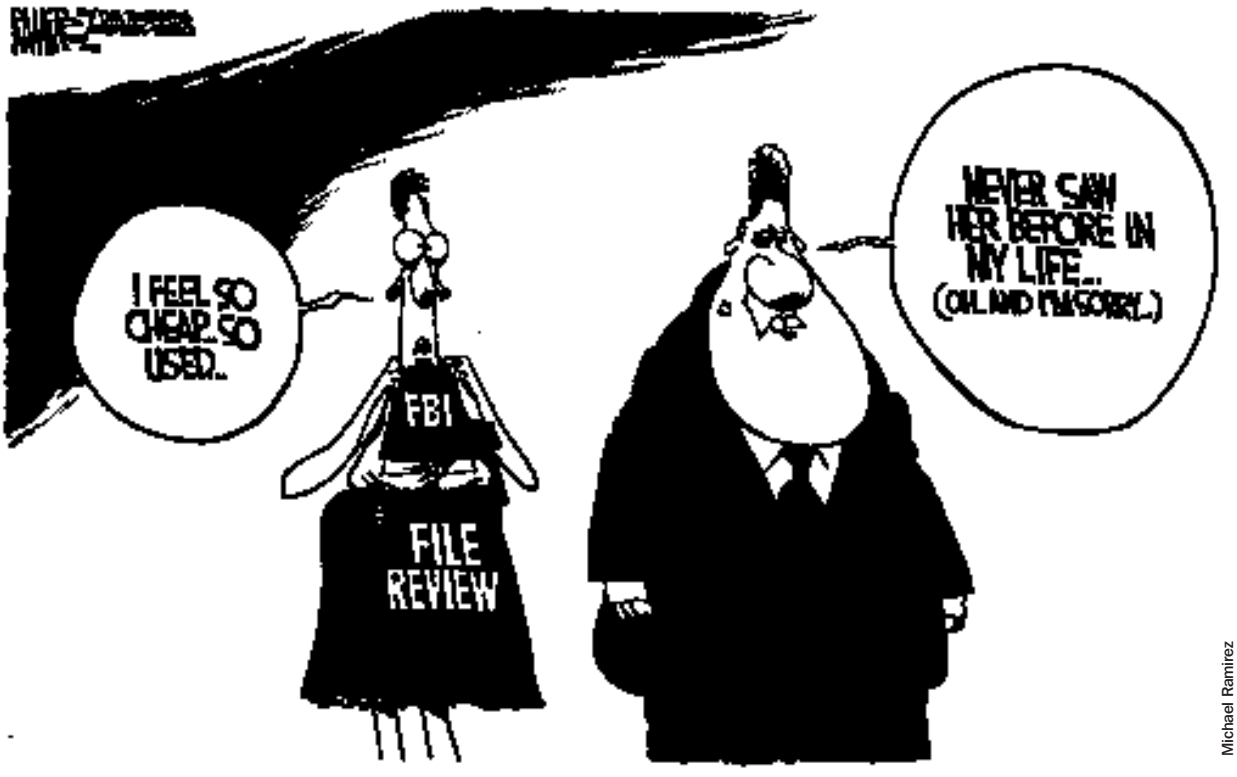
Michael Ramirez

Louis Freeh

This version of events has obvious appeal to those charged with maintaining the public image of the FBI. It helps explains FBI director Louis Freeh's Oprah-inspired complaint that the Bureau had been "victimized" by the Keystone Cop-like Livingstone and his Curly-like second stooge, Marceca. But the portrait of a sadly abused FBI bears little resemblance to the way, in all likelihood, things actually happened. It is inconceivable that the FBI—widely and correctly considered among the most suspicious and politically savvy agencies in Washington—could have been tricked into giving confidential files over to the bumbling likes of Craig Livingstone.

According to a recently retired special agent who spent more than 20 years working at FBI headquarters, the White House's requests for the files would have been routed to at least one of three divisions within the FBI—the records department, the congressional liaison office, or the office of the general counsel. From there, given the unusual nature of the White House requests (and taking into account, too, the self-protective habits of bureaucrats), it is likely they were seen and approved by quite a few people, including almost certainly one of the FBI's deputy directors. Red flags would have popped up along the way. According to the retired special agent, "any official at headquarters who has any experience at all would take one look [at the requests] and go, 'What the f— is this?'"

It shouldn't be hard to determine who those officials were, since their initials would appear on the requests, or on the attached cover sheets. On public versions of these documents, signatures and various



Michael Ramirez

significant marginalia are sometimes missing, whited out before release. Not so on the "yellow," or internal and unmodified, copies that now reside, each stamped with a serialized number to prevent tampering, in archives at FBI headquarters. Those files are there. It is time to pull them.

It's remarkable how easily official Washington, which once regarded J. Edgar Hoover's outfit with a suspicion and fear bordering on Oliver Stone-like paranoia, bought into the Freeh spin. No agency is more acutely aware of how potentially damning and politically sensitive background investigations can be than the FBI; it conducts those investigations, after all. Nor is this the first time it has dawned on FBI officials that confidential personnel files might be used for political ends.

As C. Boyden Gray, chief counsel in the Bush administration, recently explained, the FBI relies on more than "good faith and honor" (Freeh's words) in its dealings with the White House. "If we had asked for the reports on Carter White House aides like Ham Jordan or Stuart Eizenstat," Gray said, "I think the FBI would have said, 'Why?'"

So how did the FBI allow this to happen? A 31-page report, issued June 14 after a brief internal investigation, purports to tell us. Prepared by Howard M. Shapiro, the Bureau's general counsel, the report is an impressively self-justifying document, sure to be required reading for students of bureaucracy well into the next century. According to Shapiro, despite the fact that the requests for confidential files on a number of well-known, long-departed Republicans arrived from the White House in bulk and in alphabetical order, no one at the FBI noticed anything amiss. (The one exception, a footnote explains, was an analyst who "believes that the request for the files of James Baker may have caught her eye at the time.")

Moreover, Shapiro says, the FBI office that gathers personnel files for the White House is nothing less than "a stunningly efficient operation" whose staff works "tirelessly and with admirable success in managing the constant dam-burst of incoming requests." "It would be unconscionable," therefore, "to now fault these employees for not having somehow discerned that these facially-valid requests from the White House were made without justification."

If not the analysts, who then should be faulted? Who succumbed to stupidity—or, more likely, to political pressure, explicit or implied—and released these files to the White House? It is not clear from the report, which tends to be specific in its praise but awfully general when it comes to finger-pointing. Fortunately, the internal report, which was prepared for external consumption, is not the only evidence future investigators will have to consult as they search for a culprit—or more than one—inside the FBI. ♦

Smoking Out Bob Dole

by Matthew Rees

When Bob Dole traveled to Kentucky on June 13, he hoped to convey to the state's huge tobacco constituency that as president he would end the Clinton administration's war on nicotine. "To some people," Dole said, "smoking is addictive. To others, they can take it or leave it." These politically imprudent words drowned out Dole's sensible utterances about keeping the Food and Drug Administration out of the tobacco business, and the onslaught began. Bill Clinton devoted his weekly radio address to the dangers of tobacco; someone dressed in a cigarette costume began appearing at Dole campaign rallies in California; and both Jay Leno and David Letterman joked that Dole was in bed with the tobacco industry.

Dole's blunder was in publicly questioning the addictive qualities of nicotine rather than the regulatory frenzies of the FDA and its power-hungry administrator, David Kessler. But even if he keeps his attack focused, Dole is going to bump up against some tricky politics. He has, to the surprise of most political analysts, found himself on the wrong side of a potent political issue.

> HIS BLUNDER WAS QUESTIONING THE ADDICTIVENESS OF NICOTINE RATHER THAN THE FDA'S REGULATORY ZEAL.

When Clinton announced an intitiative last August designed to limit teen smoking by placing new restrictions on sales and advertising, it was widely believed there would be such an intense backlash in tobacco-dependent parts of the country that he could write off states like North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Kentucky then and there. But the latest polls show him leading or narrowly trailing in all four. Indeed, not only has a backlash against Clinton failed to materialize, there isn't going to be one. Clinton's anti-smoking efforts have been met with open arms by the voters. An assault on teen smoking isn't considered a big-government intrusion; it's considered an appropriate act by a government serving *in loco parentis*. No matter that there are laws against teen smoking in all 50 states; Clinton is getting big points on this. In polling done for Philip Morris, Republican pollster Linda DiVall found that 89 percent of those surveyed identify teen smoking as a "serious problem" and that 72 percent believe Clinton deserves "a significant amount of credit" for trying to do something about it.

With numbers like these, it's not surprising Clinton is using teen smoking to portray himself as a true "family values" candidate. Hillary Rodham Clinton captured the theme two months ago when she spoke before the Democratic party in Los Angeles: "We know that if we have a government that takes on the tobacco lobby, we have a government that stands with families and parents who are trying to protect their children."

Among married couples, a majority of whom haven't voted for the Democratic presidential nominee since 1964, Clinton leads Dole by 13 points, according to a recent *Los Angeles Times* poll. And while it's unclear how much of that, if any, is due to the teen-smoking issue, a recent *Time*/CNN poll found 49 percent of registered voters saying they would be more likely to vote for someone who tries to restrict children's access to tobacco. The poll also found nearly identical levels of support among Republicans and Democrats for curbing teen smoking.

That, in turn, has emboldened Democrats to accuse Dole and the GOP of being in the pocket of that old villain, a "special interest": the tobacco lobby. Al Gore recently charged that "the Republican party does whatever the tobacco companies tell them to do" and described the party as "almost a wholly owned subsidiary of the tobacco industry." To bolster the point, the Clinton/Gore campaign recently publicized Dole's receipt of $383,350 in campaign contributions from the tobacco industry. This could have some traction: The *Time*/CNN poll found 46 percent of registered voters saying they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who accepts tobacco money.

How will Dole fight the bad public relations? One option is to embrace a new piece of legislation, not yet introduced, that mimics many of the administration's own teen-smoking initiatives but keeps tobacco regulation firmly in Congress's hands. The legislation would ban vending machines, distribution through the mail, and the sale of individual cigarettes, while setting a federal minimum age of 18 for any tobacco sales. There's one problem, however: The legislation is the brainchild of Philip Morris. And that, in turn, will give the administration more fodder if Dole tries to attach himself to it.

That Philip Morris chose to craft and push an initiative designed to limit smoking, even if just by teenagers, underscores the nation's anti-tobacco climate. And the fact that it takes a tobacco company to alert Dole and his fellow Republicans to the need for a tougher stance on tobacco is the best evidence of all that their political antennae are badly out of whack. ♦

Wealth-Gap Claptrap

by John C. Weicher

Remember all the news stories and columns from last year about how the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer? Well, you can forget about them—it isn't so.

New research from the Federal Reserve Board finds that the distribution of wealth did not change over the last business cycle (or, from late 1982, when the economy hit bottom, to the spring of 1991, when it hit bottom again). In 1983, the richest 1 percent of American households owned about 31 percent of the country's total wealth; in 1992, they owned about 30 percent. So the distribution in 1992 was virtually the same as in 1983—and, for that matter, the same as in 1963, when the richest 1 percent owned about 32 percent of the wealth.

The interesting figure is the one from 1992. Until recently, the latest data had been for 1989, and these indicated a more unequal distribution. In 1989, the richest 1 percent owned about 36 percent of the wealth—which sparked that spate of stories blaming Ronald Reagan for a growing "wealth gap." This concern is now out of date, and it may never have been valid. Even if inequality did increase during the long Reagan boom of 1983-89—and that's a big "if"—the increase was completely erased during the mild recession that followed.

About that "if": Every few years, the Fed conducts surveys to determine household assets and liabilities. To discern national patterns, analysts must extrapolate information about 85-95 million households from a sample of 3,000-4,000 households. For 1983 and 1989, they used several methods. The increase from 32 percent to 36 percent—the one so widely reported—was one of the largest that could have been calculated. By most of the methods available, the change in distribution was not statistically significant; by some, the distribution actually became more equal. The broadest measures reveal a clear pattern: a small increase in inequality during the boom, reversed during the recession. The notion of a growing wealth gap, really, is wrong.

This comes as a surprise to many people. Mention wealth, and the first thing they are apt to think of is the stock market. There was certainly a stock-market boom in the 1980s, and everyone knows that rich people own most of the stock in this country. So why didn't the distribution of wealth become more unequal? Because stock ownership became more diffuse during that vigorous decade. The non-rich increased their holdings. In 1983, the richest 1 percent of households owned 57 percent of publicly traded stock; in 1989, they owned just under 50 percent; by 1992, they owned less than 40 percent.

What rich people do own, more than anything else, is their own businesses. This accounts for about 40 percent of their wealth. Next in importance is real estate—apartment buildings, office buildings, other commercial property—which comprises about 20 percent of their wealth. Stocks are a distant third, at about 12 percent. The way to wealth, it seems, is to make it, then take care of it yourself.

> THE PURPORTED INCREASE IN INEQUALITY UNDER REAGAN GOT FRONT-PAGE ATTENTION, BUT RECENT EVIDENCE SHOWING THE OPPOSITE HAS BEEN BANISHED TO MORE OBSCURE PAGES.

The distribution of wealth may have remained unchanged during the business cycle, but the amount of wealth did not. The total wealth of American households increased by over $4 trillion between 1983 and 1992, from $15.6 trillion to $19.8 trillion (both measured in today's dollars)—more than 25 percent in nine years. Average wealth per household increased by about 11 percent, from $185,000 to $206,000. These are substantial, and statistically significant, gains in a short period of time.

But press attention to these numbers has been muted. The purported increase in inequality under Reagan got front-page attention, but the recent evidence about wealth has been banished to more obscure pages, or ignored altogether. Also front-page news was last week's Census Bureau report about household income. The headlines blared that the income gap (as distinct from the wealth gap) continued to grow in 1993-94, even though this is just part of a trend that started back in 1968.

In one way, it's fun to observe the reaction of liberals to the latest news about inequality. Those who happily blamed the Reagan tax cuts and social-program reforms for the widening income and wealth gaps in the 1980s now are trying to explain why the wealth gap was reversed under Bush, and why the income gap continued to increase in the era of Clinton tax and spending increases, before the Republicans gained control of Congress.

But in another way, it's disappointing that only bad news about economic inequality makes the front

pages. What's more, it is a disservice to the public, because the distribution of wealth goes to the heart of what we think about our society. Americans have always believed that they live in a land of upward mobility, where everyone has a chance to succeed. And if we become convinced that this is nonsense—that the rich just get richer, while the poor are permanently barred from improving their lot—then this altered self-image is likely to have unwelcome consequences for our society and public policy.

Thus, the facts—and their dissemination—are important. Yes, the rich are getting richer. And the poor are getting richer. And they're doing it more or less equally.

John C. Weicher is senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and was chief economist at OMB in the Reagan administration.

No Boys Allowed

by Deroy Murdock

IT TOOK 32 YEARS, BUT I FINALLY have come face to face with discrimination. From Cape Cod to Capetown, from Santiago to Stockholm, my black skin never has kept me from going anywhere I have tried to go. As long as I could pay, no establishment has barred me because of my socioeconomic class. Neither Christian, Muslim, nor Jew has held a Bible, Koran, or Torah in my path. And my American national origin has been good enough for restaurant, theater, and museum owners at home and abroad.

No more. Purely out of curiosity, I strolled into a bar at the corner of Houston and Suffolk streets on Manhattan's Lower East Side on the balmy evening of June 8. With the name Meow Mix painted in festive yellow letters across the entrance, the place was too intriguing to go unexplored. But before I could take even three steps inside Meow Mix, a short, tough, drill sergeant of a bouncer blocked me like a barricade.

"Sorry," she declared. "Tonight's ladies' night."

"So I can't come in?"

"That's right," she answered, standing her ground.

Just then, a young woman tried to wheel an amplifier out the door. She had finished entertaining this small room full of women with one sort of music or another. "Would you move so she can get out of here?" the bouncer huffed. "I'll talk to you about this outside."

She stood before me on the sidewalk beneath a street light, more clearly illuminated than before. She looked even burlier than she had seconds earlier, what with her tight, white cotton tank top and cropped blonde hair. Her biceps were bigger than mine.

"Men are allowed in during the week if they are accompanied by women. We try to keep Saturday a ladies' night," she said, using a quaint term for which she might have slapped me had I referred to her customers as "ladies." (Indeed, Pamela McKenzie of the National Organization for Women once said of ladies' night, presumably at straight bars: "It results in loss of dignity, reinforces harmful stereotypes, and pushes women as sex objects.")

"So you're saying you won't let me in just because I'm a man?"

Silently, the bouncer took a step back and pointed to a small black and white sign in the window that read, "We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone."

And so it goes. The First Amendment guarantees the American people the right to associate freely with, and, presumably, without, anyone we choose. On the other hand, four decades of civil rights law have so whittled and shaped the right to free association that commercial establishments rarely discriminate against potential customers on the basis of race, sex, religion, nationality, or, most recently, handicapped status.

For my part, I'm willing to accept the concept of a canteen full of lesbians too self-absorbed to permit a man to stand in their midst even long enough for his eyes to adjust to the subdued lighting. But cover your ears before pondering the shrill response that would erupt were a Gotham gay bar to announce a "gentlemen's night" where women would be intercepted at the door and told, as the bouncer breezily informed me, "There are lots of other bars for you to go to." I have yet to visit a gay bar anywhere in America where females were turned away. In fact, most places today have at least a handful of women who walk in and are welcome or, at least, tolerated. But in this era of double and triple standards, equal access flows, like Suffolk Street, one way.

As for me, I'm left with the words the bouncer uttered when I told her I was appalled to experience sexual discrimination in late-20th-century New York City: "Get yourself a lawyer."

New York political commentator Deroy Murdock is president of Loud & Clear Communications, a marketing and media consultancy.

The End of History and the Last Guru

By Matt Labash

Deepak Chopra has just about reached the pinnacle of the multimedia age: synergistic omnipresence. His 1993 *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind* topped the bestseller list with millions sold in both hardcover and paperback. He's concurrently haunting the lists with *The Way of the Wizard* and *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*. Audiotapes based on his books net around $300,000 annually. *Forbes* recently put his two-year take at $11 million. He speaks to corporate titans at Time Warner and Sony, he calls Oprah amiga, and he's represented by International Creative Management, which is hawking his novel *The Return of Merlin*—a New Age take on the Arthurian legend—as a TV series or Broadway musical. That is, if Demi Moore doesn't first help him make it into a movie.

Just as his former boss, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, had his George Harrisons and Mia Farrows, Chopra counts Naomi Judd, Elizabeth Taylor, Joan Lunden, Michael Milken, Diane Von Furstenburg, and other glitterati-in-the-know among his followers. He writes lyrics and yogic hops with Michael Jackson (yogic hopping is the Maharishi's first stage of levitation; the second is hovering; the third is actual flying, which no one has ever achieved). Olivia Newton-John, renowned physicist and star of *Xanadu*, extols his scientific bona fides. And he even has Demi—O Demi! lissome flesh-and-silicon oracle!—spouting, "He's my guru now. Through his teachings I hope to live to a great age, even 130 years isn't impossible." Which is perhaps why she has now, like Ringo before her, trekked to India in a sari and offered (along with Donna Karan) to rent Chopra a crash pad in East Hampton. After all, no gratuity is excessive for a man whose advice you hope "will even help me produce the baby boy Bruce [Willis] and I want so badly."

Unlike cults that promise character transformation through strict adherence to a charismatic leader's demands, the cult of Chopra requires only that you purchase his wares. But Chopra is still treated as a quasi-religious figure by his followers, in whom he inspires a kind of reverence. The Demis and Donnas either don't notice, don't acknowledge, or don't care to learn about Chopra's shortcomings.

There are overt shortcomings, primarily involving the questionable promises he makes to his readers. In *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*, the man whom the Maharishi once anointed the "Lord of Immortality" advertises nothing less than the reversal of the aging process. "Because the mind influences every cell in the body," he writes, "human aging . . . can speed up, slow down, stop . . . and even reverse itself."

And there are the shortcomings that he goes to great lengths to keep secret. Last year, he was charged with plagiarizing a passage in *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*. The Weekly Standard has discovered another apparent act of plagiarism in the very same book, as well as strong evidence that the new guru to the stars has hired a prostitute on numerous occasions.

Doctor to the Maharishi

In the last eleven years, eight spent serving at the pleasure of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and his Transcendental Meditation movement, Chopra has written 15 books (translated into 25 languages) on spiritualism and Ayurvedic medicine. Ayurveda is a folk medicine based on ancient Hindu Vedic texts that the Maharishi distilled and then updated in the early and mid-80s to spur waning interest in TM.

Born in New Delhi to a physician and educated in a Christian missionary school where he was steeped in the likes of Tennyson and Chaucer, Chopra did not start out on the mystic's track. After attending the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, he chose Western medicine, emigrating to the United States in 1970 and becoming a licensed endocrinologist. After numerous stints at respectable hospitals spanning the northeastern seaboard, he was chief of staff at New England Memorial Hospital by age 35. But he also adopted the anesthetic rituals of stressed-out Westerners, taking nightly tipples and smoking a pack a day.

In his search for higher meaning, he chanced upon a TM title in a used bookstore in 1980, became a regular meditator independent of the movement, and within five years, gained an introduction at a Washington

conference to the Yogi himself. There, the Maharishi gave him a long-stemmed rose and an invitation to join the team. Chopra, it seemed, had precisely the kind of scientific stock the Maharishi needed to advance Ayurvedic methods and products.

Presently, Chopra cashed out of his lucrative practice, joining the even more lucrative field of New Age guruism—a $2-billion-a-year industry. He headed an exorbitantly priced Lancaster, Mass., retreat and was cofounder and president of Maharishi Ayur-Veda Products International (MAPI), which peddled his books and the Maharishi's line of herbal remedies. Among them: an herb and fruit paste called Maharishi Amrit Kalash that TM researchers represented as effective in combating cancer.

Chopra left the TM organization in 1993, claiming he was never comfortable as a leader and saying the movement was "too dogmatic." Nevertheless, toeing the Maharishi's line has been extremely profitable—both before and after the fissure. Until recently, Chopra was associated with Sharp HealthCare, a behemoth of a San Diego hospital consortium that had him executive-directing its Institute for Human Potential and Mind-Body Medicine. He also oversaw a spa/treatment center called L'Auberge, where traditional Ayurvedic treatments like double-team sesame-oil massages, meditation, and colonics were administered to an elite clientele at Maharishi-like prices (around $4,000 a week). Chopra plans on setting up shop again in La Jolla, Calif., later this summer.

Illustrations by John Kascht

A Gift to Public Television'

"I still don't know what the fuss is about," Chopra frequently protests to full auditoriums of rudderless upper-middles who have paid $40 for three-hour oral renditions of his books (or as much as $600-$1,500 for extended seminars). I first saw him on PBS—a special from which he raised $2.5 million in six months, causing a swooning pledge driver to call Chopra "a gift to public television" and "a gift to humanity."

Chopra's pitch goes down a bit easier than others in the genre. There's no Susan Powter-ish barking at the audience, nor is there any relationships shtick begging to be sopped up with cornbread, such as the "Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus" pablum of TM alum John Gray. Absent is the Stephen Covey mind-numbing paradigm-speak, as well as the gimmickry of the mobile-miked, cheerleading, coal-walking Tony Robbins.

It's all so . . . restrained—no histrionics, no ululation, no gymnastic pirouettes through the crowd, no embarrassing audience participation. Just a little Ravi Shankar-ish sitar riff coming back from pledge breaks, with Chopra standing on a thick Persian rug set off by comforting balsa earth hues.

He explains the transcendence of everyday reality to a higher consciousness. The trick is to disengage your intellect, suspending rational judgments and critical thinking: "If you want to make karmically appropriate choices," he says, then "do not trust your intellect. Do not trust the voice of reason. Do not trust your brain, but go to your heart." As a doctor and not a poet, he assures us that "the heart has a computer system which is far more accurate," and so, when faced with difficult choices, the heart is where you should first check your messages. "If you get a message of comfort, then it's karmically appropriate; if you get a message of discomfort, it's probably not."

And lest he sound undoctorly, he reminds us of the source of illness:

> Through conditioning, through memory . . . we generate the same intelligences, the same quantum events, the same waves of information and energy, that give rise to the same molecules, that give rise to the same biochemicals, that give rise to the same physiology, and ultimately the same problems.

Thus, healing is simple. It "is nothing other than the return of the memory of wholeness," which is reached through heightened consciousness, which is mainly achieved through meditation, which puts us right back in the Maharishi's playbook, though he is rarely mentioned.

It may seem silly on paper, but in person, the effect can be mesmerizing. On a May evening, I saw them pack the Masonic Auditorium in San Francisco, Catholics and Methodists and fundamentalist Christians all, with nary a TMer or even a Hindu in sight. They weren't there for religion. They were there for generic spiritual renewal through the good doctor's healing techniques.

And he gives it to them! While calmly and steadily pacing the stage with a panther-like soft-shoe, he holds sway with his jet-black hair and saddle-bag eyes. To

disarm skeptical Occidentals, he tosses off well-measured references to Herodotus, St. Augustine, Huxley, and Blake. He even gives the occasional ecumenical nod—"Be still and know that I am God," he says, is a scriptural affirmation of the need to meditate.

There's a little quantum physics here, a little metaphysics there, all wrapped up in an existentialist biscuit that asks the unanswerables: "What is life? . . . What is this nothingness from where we all come? . . . Have you ever wondered what a thought is—where it is from?" And all these workadaddies and carpool mommies lap it up, third eyes aflutter, mouths agog, preparing for The Moment when Shiva comes down and French-kisses them into enlightenment right there in the air-conditioned amphitheater, their credit cards still warm from Chopra's imprint.

Ask them why they're here, thinking thoughts they haven't thought since college when they dreamed of packing up their bongs and heading for the ashram, and the answers of many of these self-professed "skeptical," "reasonable" people who "don't usually go in for this sort of thing" is nearly universal. One geriatric gentleman who told me his wife had dragged him there insisted: "This is not quack medicine, there's a lot of truth to it—it's science!"

Or at least that's the idea that's supposed to come across. Actually, everybody from the National Council Against Health Fraud to the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (which Chopra and cohorts sued for nearly $200 million, though the suit was dismissed) has taken great pains to show just how unscientific it all really is.

The More Ancient the Wisdom, the Better

Chopra claims Ayurvedic medicine is a 5,000-year-old health system—a mark of distinction for a Western audience which, slavishly adhering to the "wisdom" of the ancients, knows that the more ancient the wisdom, the better. But according to a report by Pat Ryan, a former high-level TMer now involved in counseling people coming out of cults, the editor of the seminal Ayurvedic text called the *Caraka Samhita* actually dates from 200 B.C.

However ancient, the Ayurveda of yesteryear is basically different from today's sanitized Maharishi-Chopra version. Most diseases were originally attributed to demons; often they were cured with the wearing of gems and the use of fragrances. And according to the dictates of the *Caraka Samhita*, anyone with an aversion to ablutions would have a serious problem with ancient Ayurveda. Poor digestion was treated with goat feces prepared by washing with urine. Got constipation? Drink milk—with urine. Male potency was supposedly enhanced by 216 different kinds of enemas, including the testicles of peacocks, swans, and turtles. If that didn't work, one was supposed to follow up with an enema of urine. Hemorrhaging was a nice break from the regimen, since it was treated with an enema of the fresh blood of a rabbit, deer, cock, or any one of numerous other beasts. Epilepsy was treated with ass urine.

I wasn't able to find references to this version of Ayurveda in any of Chopra's books. But his own techniques are plenty odd. Dr. John Renner reported in the *Kansas City Star* in 1991 that Chopra had encouraged conference attendees to "wash the eyes out with saliva" as "an effective treatment for even well-established cataracts" and that "sometimes they claim that they can be reversed and we have some experience with this. . . . You improve your vision." Dr. Renner talked to numerous ophthalmologists who concurred this was a dangerous procedure with no proven benefits, especially since mouth bacteria could cause corneal ulcerations. Of course, Chopra stressed one's mouth must be clean, which can easily be achieved with one of his silver tongue scrapers ($10.95 from his mail-order catalogue).

John Knapp, a former TM "governor" who now heads TranceNet, an online TM tracking group, says he used to be a volunteer at Ayurveda Health and Education Resources of San Francisco, an AIDS clinic. According to Knapp and other employees, Chopra was chief consultant, flying in three or four times a year to instruct the staff.

Knapp says he saw staffers give patients the idea that Ayurvedic treatment would "help their immune system." "The idea was that AIDS was a . . . disease of the skin and blood," said Knapp. In addition to meditation and yoga exercises, patients "had to take a course of herbs that would cleanse their blood." While Knapp says Chopra did not treat patients, he contends, "We reported to Chopra. His role was that these guys were authorized by him to sell his products."

The clinic folded amid financial problems after losing three key administrators to AIDS. Numerous patients also died. Paul Brown, a TM teacher who worked at the clinic, concedes this but says the patients "we worked with stayed alive longer." Brown said the clinic even did a study to try to solicit government funding, but the results were inconclusive and therefore never published.

In 1987, during a triumphant *Donahue* appearance, Chopra spoke about studies demonstrating that "when people undergo these techniques, their immune system builds up, so it's easier for them to fight the disease, the cancer." A woman named Marian Thompson was brought out as a guest to prove it. Plagued with breast cancer, Thompson had undergone a mastectomy. After applying Chopra's techniques of meditation and experiencing inner bliss—along with chemotherapy—she said, "I'm in complete remission," and, "I feel that the Ayurveda, especially the psychophysiological technique, allowed the chemotherapy to work." Three years later, the immediate cause of death listed on her death certificate was breast cancer.

Even many vehement critics like William Jarvis of the National Council Against Health Fraud believe Chopra is honest when he defends and praises the Ayurvedic system. But, Jarvis told *American Health*, "zealotry is more dangerous than fraud. Zealots don't know where to stop." Curtis Mailloux, former head of the Washington TM Center and now a mortgage banker, thinks otherwise: "Chopra's a charming kind of guy. He really projects warmth and happiness, but he's got a heart of ice, because he's willing to give sick people false hope."

Some of that hope is dispatched through his many mail-order herbal remedies. Chopra does not make specific health claims for the remedies—that would require approval by the Food and Drug Administration—but the products are the subject of hyperbolic advertising.

Take his Biochavan herbal jam and tablets. He says these remedies contain antioxidants that neutralize free radicals, which cause medical problems. Fair enough; such is the claim of any over-the-counter Vitamin E supplement. But, Chopra's catalogue warns, free radicals don't merely cause cell damage; they also are associated "with the acceleration of the aging process." Fortunately for us, Biochavan "nourishes the potential for overall health, longevity, and well-being." Similarly, his OptiMind "aids mental activity," his OptiWoman "nourish[es] and balanc[es] a woman's vitality." And there are more potent herbs like OptiCardio and OptiRheum, which a disclaimer says should only be taken when recommended by a professional trained in Ayurveda (you can become one by attending Chopra seminars). These have no accompanying descriptions, but their very names hold great promise.

After obtaining a list of the herbs present in these remedies from Quantum Publications, I ran them by Purdue University's Dr. Varro Tyler, a professor of pharmacognosy (the study of drugs that come from natural sources). Tyler said none of these herbs was proven to have the alleged effects, though he did allow that products like OptiCalm contain ingredients that can be calming. And, he added, "anything has a placebo effect if you believe it. It acts about a third of the time in a positive fashion—especially for subjective sensations like headache pain."

'Reading My Own Prose'

Chopra has found self-effacement effective. He is just a humble seeker walking point on the road to Enlightenment, for which he is paid a generous stipend. He recently told the Associated Press, "I don't consider myself scholarly or academic. I'm not saying anything that hasn't been said before."

Quite literally.

Last summer, the *Washington Post* reported that Dan Georgakas accused Chopra of plagiarizing his book *The Methuselah Factors* in a chapter on longevity in *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*. Georgakas charged that a third of the material from a nine-page section of Chopra's book was taken "sometimes directly, sometimes with modified phrasing, sometimes in unattributed quotations" from his.

Chopra's spokesmen claim the whole mess was an editing error that divorced attribution from the material, though Georgakas was mentioned some six pages later with no apparent connection to the prior material and with his name misspelled. They have promised a correction in subsequent editions.

"I thought he really wrote well," Georgakas told me. "Then I realized I was reading my own prose." THE WEEKLY STANDARD discovered he's not the only person to have that sensation. Chopra appears to have plagiarized a second time in another *Ageless Body* chapter entitled "The Invisible Threat: Aging, Stress, and Body Rhythms."

Seven passages over seven pages in Chopra's book appear to track exactly or approximately with material from a three-page spread (without any attribution, misspelled or otherwise) in the textbook *Behavioral Endocrinology*, by Robert M. Sapolsky, published by MIT Press a year earlier. Though some of the anecdotes, word emphasis, and conclusions are straight out

of a chapter in that book, Chopra appears to have taken care to mix up the language. But not always. On page 312 of *Behavioral Endocrinology*, Sapolsky summarizes the effects of prolonged exposure to stress. His chart has a striking counterpart on page 152 of Chopra's *Ageless Body.*

Sapolsky	*Chopra*
THE STRESS RESPONSE	**RESPONSE**
Mobilization of energy at the cost of energy storage	Mobilized energy
Increased cardiovascular and cardiopulmonary tone	Increased cardiovascular activity
Suppression of digestion	Suppressed digestion
Suppression of growth	Suppressed growth
Suppression of reproduction	Suppressed reproduction
Suppression of immunity and the inflammatory response	Suppression of immune response
Neural responses, including altered cognition and sensory thresholds	Sharpening of thought and perception
ITS PATHOLOGIC CONSEQUENCES	**DISEASE RESULT**
Fatigue, myopathy, steroid diabetes	Fatigue, muscle destruction, diabetes
Hypertension	Stress-induced hypertension
Ulceration	Ulceration
Psychogenic dwarfism, bone decalcification	Psychogenic dwarfism
Anovulation, impotency, loss of libido	Impotence, loss of libido, interruption of menstruation
Impaired disease resistance	Increased risk of disease
Accelerated neural degeneration during aging	Neuron damage or death

Sapolsky declined comment, as he is strongly considering litigation. Chopra's publicist wouldn't return my phone call requesting her response to the charge. But Crown Publishing spokeswoman Tina Constable said that, though Sapolsky's lawyers had presented them with the information, "Our lawyer's position is that it was not lifted from the book. . . . As far as we're concerned, it's not an issue."

A Holy Man, at Night

Chopra has attained a rare status as a secular Holy Man—what one supporter calls a "Hindu televangelist," but without the seedy Western connotations. Scientific claims aside, he's largely received a free pass, the kind usually reserved for Billy Graham and other occupants of the spiritual pantheon.

Indeed, if one were picking a Billy Graham of the New Age movement, Chopra would be a candidate, largely because of his ability to flesh out his essentially Hindu orientation in ecumenical language. Though Chopra's brand of Hinduism is rather short on conventional moral dogma, he appears to eschew much of the promiscuity that permeated mystic ashrams of the 60s and 70s. He has said he wants to be seen as "a good person." In *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*, one of the major factors said to retard aging is "a happy marriage." He told *People*, "Get rid of toxic relations . . . and you can influence your life span by 30 years." He told the *Chicago Tribune*, "A good family life? I have that." In *Creating Affluence*, a book of alphabetical aphorisms, "'V' stands for Values: Truth, Integrity, honesty, love, faith, devotion. . . . Without values, there is confusion and chaos." And his 1991 book *Perfect Health* is dedicated to his family—he has a wife and two grown kids—"for their deep love and support, which is the basis for everything I do."

Or just about everything, at least according to Judy Bangert, a former San Francisco call girl who says she's now a college student. Bangert alleges that Chopra paid her for sex on three different occasions in the summer of 1991—two times by credit card and once with cash.

Bangert says that at the time of the alleged incidents, she had no idea who Chopra was: "He told me he was a doctor and a poet and had written something for Michael Jackson." Then in 1995, she saw him on PBS. "It seemed like every time I turned on the TV, they were promoting him," she says. "I thought it was disturbing because I know how he treated me." She

describes him variously as "an arrogant man," "supercilious," "argumentative, abrasive in conversation, dismissive and insulting." Though she says Chopra was in no way threatening, "he just had this kind of smug arrogance like everybody is beneath him."

Revolted by what she perceived as the hypocrisy of a highly lauded dispenser of spiritual wisdom seeing "a working girl and giving her a hard time, besides," Bangert sent a letter outlining the story to various newsmagazines, most of which rejected her charges out of hand. The only response came from a reporter for the daily TV show *American Journal* who had recently completed a story confronting Chopra with lab reports that showed high levels of bug parts and rodent hairs in Chopra's herbal products; the show's editors decided to pass. Bangert was later approached by an *Esquire* reporter, who elected not to use her account in his Chopra profile.

Though Chopra refused to speak to me for this story, even after I approached him twice at a conference after flying cross-country (well before I'd heard Bangert's allegations), his lawyer, Mike Flynn, vehemently denied the charges. "Total horse—," he called them. But it is hardly Bangert's word against Chopra's lawyer's. She has produced Chopra's American Express credit-card vouchers with the imprint of her escort service (which she owned), showing two different billings in June 1991 and August 1991, as well as copies from American Express that show she sent the bills through. The credit card reads, "Dr. Deepak Chopra Pres. MAPI Inc." Chopra was former president and a consultant to MAPI at the time.

Since Bangert alleges he paid in cash on one occasion, she can't be sure of the second of the three dates she says Chopra hired her. But she did obtain a receipt from the Stouffer Renaissance Stanford Court Hotel in 1995 (called the Stanford Court Hotel in '91). The receipt bears a folio printout of Deepak Chopra's stay on June 13-14, 1991, copied on hotel stationery from 1995, which a hotel source verifies as an authentic receipt. Included on that receipt: Chopra's name and the same credit card number that appears on the other vouchers, as well as two calls to Bangert's home number. It has since been changed, but Bangert produced documentation from Pacific Bell confirming that the number had indeed been hers.

Bangert volunteered to take a lie-detector test, which we took her up on—and which she passed, even after our examiner asked her the same questions four times. When I inquired whether Chopra would be willing to take a lie-detector test, his lawyer said, "You think Chopra's gonna spend five minutes on this stupid thing?"

Maybe not, but Flynn, whose in-your-face tactics a former *New York* magazine fact-checker described as "one of the most unpleasant things I've ever endured," spent nearly 30 highly combative minutes on the phone with me, bandying countercharges, offering a host of defenses, and providing no documentation for either. Calling Bangert "a screwball," Flynn insisted: "The whole thing is a scam, she's an extortionist." In the polygraph test, we asked Bangert if she had ever asked Chopra or his associates for money. She said no and passed.

"You know," Flynn said of Bangert, "that she went to like four or five different sources trying to sell the story." But when repeatedly pressed, he offered the name of no specific news organization. Bangert's pitch letter made no mention of recompense. And the two journalists she had previously dealt with both told me she never asked for a dime.

"The signatures," Flynn said of the credit-card receipts, "are a forgery." We sent them to Ann Hooten, a handwriting expert. Hooten said the signatures on the vouchers matched the signatures we gave her from other Chopra promotional material and correspondence. Flynn also claimed that other employees of MAPI were using Chopra's credit card at the time. But a MAPI spokesperson released a statement to me that said: "During the dates in question . . . [Dr. Chopra] was issued an American Express MAPI corporate credit card under his name. MAPI's understanding was that Dr. Chopra was the sole possessor of this card and totally responsible for it."

Flynn offered an additional defense—that Chopra was in India speaking at a conference on the dates mentioned on the hotel receipt. But he would not provide me any documentation or phone numbers to prove it. Overall, I asked Flynn to corroborate his assertions or offer evidence to discredit Judy Bangert 26 times in the course of our interview. Though I told him 8 times that I wanted nothing to do with this story if he could prove it false, Flynn threatened repeat-

edly to sue for libel. "If [Chopra] wants me to tell you to go jump in the f—ing lake—print whatever you want, and then we'll bring a lawsuit to expose the truth," was one of his gentler admonitions.

Diet Karma Cola

Chopra says we "are in the midst of what can only be called the climactic overthrow of the superstition of materialism," when speaking of the evils of Western medicine. Yet like transcontinental swamis past—Rajneesh with his Rolls Royce fleet and the Maharishi bottling his "Himalayan Bliss" mineral water—there Chopra is, hawking his herbal potions and massage lotions, his aroma kits and tongue scrapers.

There is something of a trade-off in the jetstream guru endgame, as Gita Mehta explained in her brilliant 1979 book *Karma Cola*: "The westerner is finding the dialectics of history less fascinating than the endless opportunities for narcissism provided by the Wisdom of the East. . . . Coming at the problem from separate directions, both parties have chanced upon the same conclusion, namely, that the most effective weapon against irony is to reduce everything to the banal. You have the Karma, we'll take the Coca-Cola, a metaphysical soft drink for a physical one."

It also dovetails nicely with self-help movements of the last 40 years, which have conditioned Westerners to accept loosely affiliated teachings as a kind of nerf religion. They traditionally deify the inner self while simultaneously absolving that same self of responsibility. While psychologist Abraham Maslow, dean of self-actualization, hints at the god within, Chopra comes right out with it: "We are divinity in disguise, and the gods and goddesses in embryo that are contained within us seek to be fully materialized."

Attaining divinity, of course, is appropriate status for Chopra's contingent karmic delivery system, which is a handy euphemism for the usual relativism: "If the choice feels comfortable, I will plunge ahead with abandon. If the choice feels uncomfortable, I will pause and see the consequences of my action with my inner vision."

And for all Chopra's hifalutin TM-talk of taking a spin on the "cosmic computer" or a dip in the "quantum soup," his message at its core is no different from any red-blooded American huckster's. It's a formula easy to distill, as Wendy Kaminer did in her book *I'm Dysfunctional, You're Dysfunctional*: "Promote the prevailing preoccupation of the time—the acquisition of either health or wealth—as the primary moral imperative. Package platitudes about positive thinking, prayer or affirmation therapy as sure-fire, scientific techniques."

So just as Napoleon Hill wrote *Think and Grow Rich,* Chopra wrote *Creating Affluence*. Norman Vincent Peale had his "10 rules for getting effective results from prayer." Chopra offers *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*. Hill had his "autosuggestion." Chopra has his "mantras." And while Maslow had his "peak experiences," Chopra has his "bliss."

But unlike, say, the soiled-drawered, marathon abuse sessions of Werner Erhard's est, or the pore-opening ga-ga speak of Inner Child role-play, Chopra's TM-lite methods are highly palatable. They offer an effortless existence for the laziest self-reformer: "The higher self is that place where everything is accomplished by doing nothing. A mere desire becomes the trigger for transformation." Likewise, he writes in *Creating Affluence*, "It is not necessary to consciously practice the attitudes I am about to describe in order to materialize wealth." It is only important to "be aware of them," since conscious effort could cause "stress and strain."

FOR ALL CHOPRA'S HIFALUTIN TM-TALK OF TAKING A SPIN ON THE "COSMIC COMPUTER" OR A DIP IN THE "QUANTUM SOUP," HIS MESSAGE AT ITS CORE IS NO DIFFERENT FROM ANY HUCKSTER'S.

But even with such minimal effort, all one has to do is read his books, or "literally metabolize" them "again and again," which should be made "a lifelong habit," and Chopra promises that you will attain Nirvana on earth, or at the very least, that "wealth in all its forms will follow you wherever you go."

Chopra's pseudomedical treatises are noticeably devoid of specific references to peer-reviewed studies, and in recent years, he's pressed his publishers to remove the "Dr." from his book covers—the very title from which he derives much of his authority. These days, the anti-materialist Chopra mostly cranks out slim volumes of fortune-cookie aphorisms, retreaded nuggets from prior offerings so readers can more readily skim their pocket guides to wealth and immortality. Chopra recently told *Publishers Weekly* upon publication of his first novel, "I'm going to write fiction from now on." With his first 14 books, he's had plenty of practice. ♦

The New Russophobes Are Here

By Robert Kagan

The Russians are coming, the Russians are coming. Right? Wrong. Nearly 70 percent of the Russian people voted against the Communist party in the first round of the Russian elections on June 16. The balloting proved free and fair, despite confident predictions of widespread government fraud by experts like Dmitri Simes. President Boris Yeltsin, targeted by the Communists because of his free-market reforms, is poised to win a second term in the coming runoff against the Communist candidate Gennadi Zyuganov—and possibly by a landslide.

Average Americans might see all this as good news. Over the past few months, however, an army of foreign policy experts led by grand strategist Henry Kissinger has been reporting back to the op-ed pages and talk shows with gloomy news from the analytic front. The elections don't matter, they say. There is no democracy in Russia and will be no democracy there no matter who wins. Freedom House president Adrian Karatnycky believes the elections will lead to a "more authoritarian," anti-Western Yeltsin. Where foreign policy is concerned, Simes says there's not much to choose between Yeltsin and Zyuganov, only shades of "dark gray and very dark gray." We can expect a continuation of Russia's "ancient imperial drives," Kissinger argues, and "relentless expansionism" no matter who is in the Kremlin. George F. Will informs us that "expansionism is in Russia's national DNA"; the populace has "an expansionist gene."


Boris Yeltsin

Michael Ramirez

Like a bad penny, the doctrine of Russophobia is back with a vengeance. It first gained prominence in the late 19th century, when grand thinkers like Alfred Thayer Mahan and Henry Adams expressed their view of Russia as an inhuman and unstoppable force. To Adams, Russia was "a wall of archaic glacier, as fixed, as ancient, as eternal . . . and more likely to advance." At a time when social Darwinism suffused the thoughts of serious strategists, Mahan saw in Russian foreign policy neither intelligence nor design but rather "obedience to natural law and race instinct." Teddy Roosevelt feared that the Russians saw themselves "as huge, powerful barbarians, cynically confident that they will in the end inherit the fruits of our civilization . . . despising as effete all of Europe and especially America." Then, as now, Russophobia combined in roughly equal measure fear of Russia's barbarian strength and a profound self-doubt about "effete" America's will to resist it.

The Russophobia of the 1890s looked pretty foolish when Japan thrashed the Russians on both land and sea in 1904. And before the United States ever got around to clashing with the barbarian Slav civilization, it had to fight two world wars *on Russia's side* against Germany and Japan, two emerging threats the old Russophobes almost completely ignored.

Are we poised to make the same kind of mistake again, stirring ourselves up about an overblown Russian threat to the exclusion of all other strategic considerations? During the Cold War, Moscow controlled an empire that stretched into the heart of Europe, maintained a huge army on German, Czech, Hungarian, and Polish soil, and posed the most dangerous threat after Hitler to America's vital national interest in a Europe free from domination by any single power. Soviet ideology called for eternal struggle against and eventual overthrow of the democratic capitalist system of the United States and its Western allies. Its leaders were prone to saying things like, "We will bury you." Fear of the Soviet Union was not Russophobia; it made good strategic and ideological sense.

But in the past few years, a post-Communist Russia has withdrawn its troops not only from Eastern and Central Europe but also from the Baltic states,

Ukraine, and most of the former Soviet Union. And so the alarms being raised about Russian "aggression" and "relentless expansionism" are excessively shrill.

Here are a few simple facts: The CIA estimates that since 1988 Moscow's defense spending has declined by about *80 percent*. While the U.S. defense budget was a little over $260 billion this year, Russia plans to spend about $60 billion on defense. The once-formidable Red Army has been cut nearly in half and is starved of funds. "The Russian army today is weaker in relative terms than it has been for almost four hundred years," writes Moscow correspondent Anatol Lieven in the summer issue of the *National Interest*. Demoralization and desertions are up, professionalism and combat capabilities are down. Although on paper the army boasts a force of 1.7 million men, Lieven notes that the "real disposable strength of the army is much lower, and the number of effective combat units lower still."

In a recent column, Will compared present-day Russia to Napoleon. He must have meant Napoleon on St. Helena. Even if Russian leaders devoted every waking minute, and every scarce ruble, to reinventing the Red Army, it would take ten years to bring it back to its 1980s strength. They don't seem inclined to try. Gen. Aleksandr I. Lebed, who ran a strong third on June 16 and days later joined Yeltsin's team, has made it clear that he considers a serious arms buildup out of the question. "If we cannot afford to maintain 5,000 airplanes, let there be fewer," declared the veteran paratrooper whom Kissinger has described as advocating a "strong, nationalist foreign policy." "It is time to understand that the world has changed . . . We do not have to keep up with the United States or NATO in terms of quantity." Only in the area of submarines have the Russians even attempted to keep pace with the United States in recent years. And you can't overrun Ukraine or Poland with submarines.

Is there much evidence that the Russian people or their leaders really want to reacquire their lost empire? The Russian government has taken a heavy-handed and at times brutal role in some of the former Soviet republics along its southern frontier. It has played a rough game in Georgia, first supporting separatists there and then offering President Eduard Shevardnadze "protection" in the form of two Russian army divisions. It has taken advantage of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan to solidify its predominance in that oil-rich region. It has stationed troops on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan (but with the consent of the Tajik government, which is locked in a civil war with Muslim rebels). At the same time, Russia has taken a more benign approach to other former Soviet republics.

Does this mixed record constitute a reemergence of Russian imperialism? One of the most intemperate Russophobic outbursts was Jacob Heilbrunn's warning in the *New Republic* against a new Russian "drive to the East," a "return to the former dreams of Russian imperialists for a landward expansion into Central Asia, China and the Far East." Now, as it happens, when Russia's imperial drive took it eastward to China in the late 19th century, it arrived only to find the place teeming with British, French, German, and Japanese imperialists who had gotten there first. For Heilbrunn, evidence of the "recrudescence of the Kremlin's imperial ambitions" included the fact that Yeltsin traveled to Beijing this spring and signed a "strategic partnership" with Chinese leaders. Heilbrunn found this meeting "ominous," somehow presaging a Russian takeover of "Eurasia." Kissinger also found the Russo-Chinese meeting alarming, although one recalls no similar anxieties on his part when Mikhail Gorbachev dramatically visited Beijing in 1989.

Exhibit number two demonstrating Russia's "new imperial" ambitions in "Asia" has been the war in Chechnya. Indeed, that war has figured prominently in all the Russophobic accusations about a "new aggressiveness" in Asia. But without in any way absolving Yeltsin and his military for their brutal conduct of a war that most Russians, including Lebed, have vigorously opposed, there is nevertheless one simple point to be made: A military action on Russia's own territory cannot be considered a first step in an imperial drive for the conquest of Eurasia. Heilbrunn writes that Russian leaders deem possession of Chechnya a "vital interest." Well, most leaders would take that view of territory that had been part of their country for more than a hundred years.

Which is why Russia's benign behavior toward Ukraine and the Baltic states these past few years has been amazing. No one could have predicted five years ago that Ukraine, which had experienced scarcely five minutes of independence from Russia during the previous millennium, would be as independent as it is today. The two countries have argued over the nearly worthless Black Sea fleet and border demarcations in a small part of the Crimea, but their negotiations have been peaceable. Russia formally recognized Ukraine's sovereignty in 1994 and has done nothing since to try to subvert the government, incorporate the heavily Russian eastern section of Ukraine, or use military intimidation to force the new nation's "Finlandization." Nor has Moscow taken any steps to try to regain

lost positions in the Baltic region, which since the 18th century have been thought essential to Russian security. Were Ukraine or the Baltic states to be swallowed up by Russia, a new "Cold War" would indeed begin, as Kissinger suggests—and rightly so. That seems to be precisely why Moscow has handled its disputes in these places so gingerly.

The Russophobes don't see it that way. They depict Eastern and Central Europe as trembling before what Will calls Russia's "overwhelming military superiority." History, according to Kissinger, proves Russia won't be able to resist the imperial temptation: "Russia has generally excluded Eastern Europe [and] the Balkans . . . from the operation of the balance of power, insisting on dealing with them unilaterally and often by force." One would never know that throughout the last three centuries Europe has managed to contain some other aggressive powers—like Austria, which consistently tangled with Russia in the Balkans, or France, which under the foolish Louis Napoleon set off the unnecessary Crimean War. In the new Russophobe's view of European history, there is little mention of the fact that two great powers on three separate occasions carried out a conscious, aggressive design for the conquest of all Europe—neither of which was Russia. (For those without a scorecard, they were Napoleon's France, and Germany, twice in this century.) Yet Kissinger is quick to indict present-day Russian foreign policy by bringing up the 1833 Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. (Nicholas I imposed some very harsh terms on the Turkish Porte. Would you believe it?)

Russia, like almost all great powers in history, has ambitions, and in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet empire it is suffering some wounded pride. It should be watched, influenced, deterred, and, when necessary, confronted. But we should not build our global strategy around unfounded fears. In the June 16 elections, exit pollers asked Russian voters which issue was most important to them in making their decision. Thirty-five percent said government payment of their pensions and salaries. Twenty-five percent said it was the economy; 20 percent said it was Chechnya; 13 percent said it was crime. Only two percent of Russians identified foreign policy as their main concern, and of these a plurality chose Yeltsin over the candidates with an anti-Western platform. The new Russophobes say it doesn't matter who governs Russia, or how. But in Europe, especially Eastern Europe, and in the former Soviet republics, most people openly wished for a Yeltsin victory in a free and fair election. Fortunately for them, and for us, those wishes are likely to be granted. ♦

Jesse at the Helm

By Matthew Rees

It wasn't supposed to be this way. As soon as the Republican victories of November 1994 made clear that Jesse Helms, fire-breathing senator from North Carolina, would be the next chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, there were dire predictions: Helms would impair U.S. diplomacy. He would spur the trend toward isolationism. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, traveling in South Korea the day after the election, nervously pledged to America's allies that U.S. foreign policy would "go forward in the spirit of bipartisanship and continuity." Soon the press was dredging up Helms's more outlandish statements—he once compared Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Hitler—and the bureaucrats at the State Department were aghast. Then a few weeks after the election the senator confirmed his critics' fears by remarking that Bill Clinton wasn't up to the job of commander in chief and that he "better have a bodyguard" on his next trip to North Carolina.

But the apocalyptic predictions haven't come true. Indeed, one of the least-remarked developments of this Congress is the emergence of Helms as a major influence on Clinton foreign policy. He's done this while retaining his legendary obstinacy—he prevented all ambassadors from being confirmed for four months last year while Senate Democrats filibustered his State Department reorganization plan—though he signaled early on that he would not fit the caricature his opponents had painted of him. "As long as I am chairman," said Helms the day after the 1994 election, "there will be no vindictiveness. No getting even."

The effect has been striking: Time and again Helms has forced the administration to modify, if not reverse, its stance on foreign policy concerns. Even the

press has been complimentary. Carla Anne Robbins, diplomatic correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*, noted in a profile last year that Helms had "changed his substance, if not his style."

Democrats still won't say anything positive about him in an election year, but there is a consensus that Helms has made the Foreign Relations Committee relevant again after the lackluster chairmanship of Claiborne Pell. Henry Kissinger, a frequent target of Helms in the past, has been sufficiently impressed to contribute $1,000 to the senator's reelection campaign. Lawrence Eagleburger, secretary of state at the end of the Bush administration and once another frequent target, compares Helms favorably with William Fulbright, the celebrated Foreign Relations chairman during the Vietnam war. Says Eagleburger, "He's put the committee back in a thoughtful role . . . forcing debate on issues that otherwise wouldn't be debated."

Helms brushes off the accolades, saying, "I've been successful because of the awkwardness of Bill Clinton," and, "There's nothing complex about foreign policy." This modesty masks real accomplishments. Pressure from Helms forced the administration to pay closer attention to the pace of democratization in Nicaragua. And his opposition to any promotion for Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott all but guaranteed that Christopher would stay in the top job. Yet these successes pale beside Helms's achievements in four important areas. Consider the following:

CUBA: In 1993 and 1994, the Clinton administration had a de facto policy of *rapprochement* with Fidel Castro. While publicly supporting the embargo, the White House privately labored with Cuban-Americans who could provide cover for a policy of détente.

Enter Helms, who the day after the 1994 election signaled a desire to tighten the noose around Castro's neck. "Whether Castro leaves Cuba in a vertical or horizontal position is up to him and the Cuban people," intoned Helms, "but he must—and will—leave Cuba." To this end he introduced the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, known as "Libertad." Among other things, the legislation proposed beefing up sanctions against Cuba, punishing any former Soviet state providing aid to Castro, and denying entry into the United States to any person benefiting from American-owned property confiscated by Havana.

The legislation directly challenged the administration's policy, and in late April 1995 the State Department spelled out its objections in a six-page letter to Congress. The Helms proposal, wrote Wendy Sherman, an assistant secretary of state, "would not effectively advance the United States' ability to further our shared goals of promoting a peaceful, rapid transition to democracy." A heavy administration lobbying effort against Libertad followed, but Helms responded with a blizzard of op-eds, speeches on Radio Martí, and congressional testimony—all of it blasting Castro and the administration's whispers of appeasement. In October 1995 the Helms legislation passed the Senate with 74 votes. At the time, the chief White House adviser on Cuba, Richard Nuccio, expressed the administration's opposition this way: "Many of the people who are supporters of the legislation have told me that their view of what is needed in Cuba is a pressure-cooker, that you need to screw down the lid, turn up the fire, and watch what happens when the pot boils over. That's not the Clinton administration's approach to changing Cuba."

Then on February 24, two American civilian planes were shot down in international airspace by Cuban fighter pilots. Suddenly, Clinton was describing Cuba as "repressive, violent, scornful of international law"—terms that were unprecedented for his administration. After a few days of fevered negotiations in which Clinton aides repeatedly caved in to Senate Republican positions, Clinton embraced the Helms legislation, calling it "a strong, bipartisan response" to the shootdown. Helms emerged with the embargo codified (it had been created by executive order), which means it can only be undone by an act of Congress. At the White House signing ceremony on March 12, Clinton made no reference to Helms's leading role, but in a friendly aside he thanked the senator for his help.

Some have argued that Clinton never would have signed the legislation in the absence of the shootdown, thus negating Helms's key role, but this misses the point: Cuba's decision to shoot down two Americans confirmed Helms's view of Castro as a tyrant—a view not previously espoused by the White House. Moreover, in the absence of Helms's bill, says Mark Falcoff of the American Enterprise Institute, "the administration wouldn't have had the energy or the initiative to do this." In other words, Helms's view of Castro was borne out by events, and the administration opted to follow his path. A White House spokesman, David Johnson, acknowledges that Helms "clearly played a strong and almost unique role" in the Cuba debate.

COLOMBIA: For years Colombia has been a major source of narcotics entering the United States, largely because its government refuses to crack down on the drug cartels. But the United States has tradi-

tionally taken a soft line on Colombia, reluctant to jeopardize roughly $7 billion in trade.

In July 1994, at a time when no one else in the Senate was talking about Colombia, Helms attached an amendment to a foreign aid bill proposing to "decertify" the country unless it beefed up its anti-drug investigations. The practical effect of decertifying a country is to cut off its U.S. aid, in Colombia's case about $35 million a year. More important is the symbolism of decertification, since it relegates a country to the same class as scofflaw states like Burma, Iran, Nigeria, Syria, and Afghanistan. So when the amendment passed 94-0, the State Department and the Colombian government lobbied furiously—and successfully—to have it struck from the conference committee report.

Jesse Helms

Kent Lemon

Once Helms became Foreign Relations Committee chairman, however, the administration, which had been mostly mum about narcotics for its first two years, escalated its rhetoric. In February 1995, testifying before Helms's committee, Secretary Christopher said that in 1994 Colombia "did not meet our expectations, and frankly we were disappointed." Even so, the administration opted not to decertify Colombia, granting it a "national interest waiver." Helms lambasted this decision in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed coauthored with Bush drug czar William Bennett. The article, which drew wide comment in the Colombian press, also blasted Bogotá for failing to rein in the traffickers.

Helms kept up the pressure for the next year. He introduced legislation with Sen. Connie Mack of Florida to decertify Colombia if it failed to crack down on drugs, and he charged that Colombia's president, Ernesto Samper, had "sold his soul to the devil" by taking money from the Calí cocaine cartel. The Helms drumbeat had two effects: In Colombia, it prompted President Samper to crack down on trafficking; six of the top seven leaders of the Calí cartel were arrested in the summer of 1995. And the legislation forced the Clinton administration to pay closer attention to Colombia. Thus, drug czar Lee Brown and Vice President Al Gore praised Samper for the Calí arrests. A former administration official who handled narcotics matters points out that because of Helms, the center of gravity within the administration on the issue of decertifying Colombia shifted from the State Department, where top officials opposed it, to the Justice Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration, which both favored it.

Evidence that Samper was in cahoots with the drug lords accumulated throughout 1995, and pressure on the administration mounted as a March 1 deadline neared. On February 29, Helms released a staff report citing "compelling evidence" that top officials in Bogotá had taken bribes from the cartels. The report helped confirm suspicions about Samper, and the White House announced the next day it was decertifying Colombia. By nearly all accounts, the administration's shift over 18 months from being blind to Colombia's transgressions to lumping it in with countries like Iran and Burma was the result of relentless pressure from Helms.

BOSNIA: Throughout congressional deliberations on how to respond to Serbian aggression, the administration argued there were two obstacles to lifting the United Nations arms embargo unilaterally: U.S. allies in Europe wouldn't like it, and it would leave the cash-strapped and inadequately trained Bosnians vulnerable to the Serbs. Helms, a longtime critic of foreign aid, responded by introducing legislation in August 1995 to establish an international fund to arm and train the Bosnian Muslims. The bill proposed authorizing $50 million for the international fund and another $50 million for equipment and services from the Defense Department.

The thinking behind the legislation was that the Bosnian Muslims were "freedom fighters" akin to the Nicaraguan contras and the Afghan mujahadeen, and Helms believed the United States should treat them

the same way: Supply arms, provide military training, offer financial assistance, share intelligence, and exert diplomatic pressure in their behalf. The goal, said Helms, was to "ensure that, upon the withdrawal of the failed United Nations mission, the Serb military will be unable to take advantage of any lag in the arming of the Bosnian people." On the day Helms first broached the idea in June 1995 in the *Wall Street Journal*, the then-prime minister of Bosnia, Haris Silajdzic, gave him a bear hug as he emerged from a Senate hearing room and profusely thanked him for his concern.

Yet the administration immediately panned "arm-and-train" as misguided. White House spokesman Michael McCurry asked senators to "explain where the money comes from, where the arms come from, how they will get them to the Bosnian Muslims." The day after Helms introduced his legislation, Clinton said he opposed it; he would be for selling arms to the Bosnians "if the U.N. mission fails." The administration continued to oppose Helms's bill until the Dayton conference in November but modified its opposition upon discovering the Bosnians would support the peace plan only in exchange for a written commitment to a Helms-style arm-and-train effort. Clinton administration officials would only consent to this orally, and "on the strength of that commitment the agreement was signed by the Bosnians," says Richard Perle, an adviser to the Bosnians at Dayton. Only in December, during negotiations with Senate majority leader Bob Dole over the U.S. troop deployment to Bosnia, did President Clinton formally declare his support for the arm-and-train effort.

Now, seven months after Dayton, the essence of Helms's policy is being carried out, albeit slowly. A Pentagon official, Jim Pardew, has been assigned to the State Department to coordinate international fundraising for the Bosnian-Croat federation. The State Department announced on May 29 that the Bosnian government had selected Military Professional Resources, Inc., of Alexandria, Va., to lead the effort. While Helms was not alone in pushing arm-and-train, he gave it the visibility that enabled the Bosnians to use it as a bargaining chip at Dayton and eventually forced the administration to drop its opposition. Marshall Harris, executive director of the Washington-based Action Council for Peace in the Balkans, says Helms, unlike many other senators, "understands the need for aid when it can be used effectively to promote U.S. leadership in the world."

STATE DEPARTMENT REORGANIZATION: Last year, Helms proposed a massive restructuring of the foreign policy apparatus that would move the functions of three agencies—the Agency for International Development, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and the United States Information Agency—into the State Department. The plan reflected the belief of Helms and many others that the government's foreign policy structure needed to be streamlined in the absence of a Soviet threat.

More than anything else Helms has done as Foreign Relations Committee chairman, the State Department reorganization plan captured the attention of the foreign policy establishment and forced it to acknowledge that Helms was proposing something substantive, if unglamorous, and long overdue. The plan was sufficiently serious to win the support of five former secretaries of state, and the only Democrat willing to testify against it was McGeorge Bundy. After Helms and his staff presented the proposal to the president in August 1995, Clinton turned to the senator and asked, "Who could be against that?"

Despite this moment of apparent concord, the administration was determined to reject whatever Helms proposed. Soon after he introduced his bill in March 1995, the administration began an intensive lobbying campaign against it. This was led by Brian Atwood, head of AID, who repeatedly tagged Helms as an isolationist and a demagogue.

This time, the White House didn't cave in. President Clinton vetoed the legislation in April, saying he objected to the requirement (watered down from the original bill) that at least one of the three agencies be merged into the State Department. Thus, Clinton vetoed a proposal that he confessed to liking and that key figures on his foreign policy team favored in principle, in order to deprive Helms of another triumph.

For all his success at influencing Clinton foreign policy, Helms is still scathing about the administration. "I never saw such a disorganized group," he says; their foreign policy framework is "a mess." Luckily for the White House, Helms will be consumed with his own reelection fight for the rest of this year. If he wins, however, and if the Republicans maintain control of the Senate, Helms can be trusted to keep using his Foreign Relations perch to highlight sensitive issues ranging from human rights in China to nuclear proliferation to waste at the United Nations.

He will also keep giving fits to the foreign policy mandarins—his State Department reorganization will be back—and he will remain a figure of scorn in diplomatic circles. Not that he will care, of course, any more than he does now, when he says of his critics: "They're not going to run my foreign policy, and they're not going to run me." ♦

Disney's Mickey-Mouse Religion

By James Bowman

When the Southern Baptist Convention recently voted to censure the Disney Corporation, principally for offering health insurance coverage to the partners of gay employees, a spokeswoman for the convention explained the vote: "The Disney Company is not the same Disney that it was years ago when we were growing up. We find there is a philosophical shift at the highest levels of the company which is not friendly to families and people of faith." She spoke more truly than she knew. For it is not Disney's policy on gay employees, nor even the distribution by its subsidiaries of such trashy and anti-Christian films as *Kids* or *Priest*, that constitutes a threat to the "family values" Disney still claims to uphold. On the contrary, the very films touted as the most "wholesome" and "family-oriented" movies made in the world today tend to undermine not only civil and religious but also parental authority.

The latest in the long line of the company's popular animated features is *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, named for and modeled more on the film version of 1939, starring Charles Laughton, than on Victor Hugo's 1832 novel *Notre Dame de Paris*. The anti-Christian tendency of Disney is more obvious in this film than ever before.

The only prominently believing Christian in the cartoon, set in and around a church, is the evil Claude Frollo. In the novel and even in Laughton's version, which was largely devoted to an attack on "superstition," Frollo was a good man and a sincere believer tormented by a pride and a passion with which he could never come to terms. In the Disney version he is nothing but a villain and a hypocrite. As the jolly song in which we are introduced to him has it:

> Judge Claude Frollo wished to
> purge the world of sin,
> And he saw corruption every
> where—except within.

> **THE VERY FILMS TOUTED AS THE MOST "WHOLESOME" AND "FAMILY-ORIENTED" MOVIES MADE IN THE WORLD TODAY TEND TO UNDERMINE CIVIL, RELIGIOUS, AND PARENTAL AUTHORITY.**

At one point, it's true, Frollo does seem to be praying, in his toffee-nosed English accent (voice of Tony Jay), for grace to resist the illicit passion he feels for the gypsy girl, Esmeralda (voice of Demi Moore). But he is quickly reduced, like a moustache-twirling villain of melodrama, to crying out to her phantasm in the fire: "Be mine or burn!" The only spiritual sustenance he receives from the church comes in the advice of the archdeacon (in the novel Frollo *was* the archdeacon, but to make a clergyman the villain would have been, perhaps, just a little too blatant) that he "can't run from the eyes of Notre Dame"—by which is meant, of course, not Our Lady but her animated Cathedral. To make the point, the Cathedral's statuary moves its eyes to look balefully at Frollo.

It seems somehow fitting that Disney, our most efficient mass marketer of universally venerable icons, should encourage an idolatrous, if not blasphemous, view of religion. The comic sidekicks that have ever been a staple of the Disney formula are here not little animals but three animated gargoyles from the cathedral. Appropriately, it is the world-class spoilsport Frollo who forces Quasimodo to admit that stone cannot talk, though we have just seen it talking to him. Quasimodo, too, has been turned into a stock Disney figure: a sensitive child (or childlike figure) the constraining of whose imaginative life by a stern and unsympathetic father (or father figure) stands for or accompanies a larger curtailment of freedom.

Disney's gentle Quasimodo (voice of Tom Hulce), though ostensibly ugly, is in fact quite cute, a much softened and cleaned-up version of the hunchback as conceived by Charles Laughton. But naturally this Quasimodo has none of the dark side of Laughton's—let alone Hugo's. His kidnapping of Esmeralda and his furious misanthropy are omitted from this version (as is his love for Frollo). The grotesque and the frightening is, as always, sanitized and banalized and made safe, and where it cannot be made safe it is simply dropped.

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Instead, everything reinforces the film's central premise: that it is wrong to be prejudiced against people on account of their appearance. It is really Frollo who is the ugly one, because of his inner corruption, and Quasimodo who has an inner beauty, because he's nice to gargoyles and others. "Who is the monster and who the man?" a song asks.

There can be no doubt about the answer, though it is interesting to note that Esmeralda, who teaches Quasimodo to hate Frollo for calling him a monster, still gives him not the slightest consideration as a lover. This gypsy dancer carries another stage further the rather disturbing sexiness noticeable in the title character of last year's *Pocahontas*. The Indian maiden had a cute little off-the-shoulder dress which showed off her figure to advantage; but Esmeralda is obviously a more experienced woman. She does a pole-dance that could have come out of *Showgirls* and positively leers at her admirers—all except Frollo, whom she dislikes on sight. When he cries "Witchcraft!" his opinion appears to be ironically confirmed by the fact that she disappears into thin air. But of course she's only a cartoon witch and therefore quite harmless, at least compared with a Christian believer like Frollo.

At one point Esmeralda seems to pray to the Virgin after she has taken sanctuary in the cathedral, but only after expressing skepticism about Mary's existence and confidence that, if she does exist, it is as a protector of "outcasts" like herself. Thus the religious theme neatly elides into the more political one that it is wrong to be prejudiced—against the ugly, against gypsies, against gargoyles, or against anybody, really, except Christians.

At the climax of the film, Frollo tries to kill Quasimodo and Esmeralda together, crying out in old Bible English: "And he shall smite the wicked and plunge them into the fiery pit!" But the gargoyle on which he is standing gives way and he falls to his death. "Three cheers for Quasimodo!" cries the crowd below.

Laughton's film (directed by William Dieterle) is a radical simplification of Hugo's astounding feat of literary and historical imagination, but it at least bears some resemblance to *Notre Dame de Paris*: It is not just about a few individuals, their desires, their passions, and their crimes, but is a large-scale portrait of ideas about freedom and popular will that were to affect the whole of mankind. The Disney version ignores all that. Instead it produces a cookie-cutter version of the standard Disney message, which is that overindulged children and sentimentalists are good and moralistic adults are bad. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in Disney's hands may not look much like Victor Hugo, but it is morally indistinguishable from *The Little Mermaid* or *Pocahontas*.

To be sure, it has never been particularly difficult to distinguish between a Disney product and great art. Not long ago, Minette Marrin of the London *Sunday Telegraph* took the occasion of the death in the same week of the original of A.A. Milne's Christopher Robin and of P.L. Travers, author of *Mary Poppins*, to note that Christopher Milne's fictional counterpart

> met his end long ago. He was murdered, struck down by the dead hand of Disney. Christopher Robin, Pooh, and Eeyore and all the rest were then resurrected as tasteless, anodyne Disney stereotypes, mass-market ghosts sent out to possess the imagination of the world's children, to enrich the evil cartoon empire.
>
> Disney destroys almost everything it touches. When the creator of *Mary Poppins* . . . first saw the Walt Disney film version of her book, she burst into tears. It was, she said, a desecration of her work. I passionately agree with her. The strange and mysterious world of the book that I read as a child has been travestied in the film in every way, complete with the mincing Dick Van Dyke among a crowd of sycophantic dancing cartoon penguins. "They missed the point," Travers said. "It's not about sugar and spice."

It is worth noting that, even for those who loved the Disney of the 1960s, the Disney of *Mary Poppins* and *The Jungle Book*, the company's more recent products have been not just sentimental but morally pernicious as well. For culture, like nature, abhors a vacuum, and into the bland vacuousness of the standard Disney fantasy of talking animals and childish sentimentalists has rushed a ghastly kind of political correctness.

This became apparent with *The Little Mermaid* (1989), the first of the new Disney animated megahits and the one that set the pattern for the steady stream of Disney animated products that have followed at 18-month intervals ever since. The 16-year-old mermaid Ariel is tyrannized by her father Triton, who is unreasonably prejudiced against "humans"—whom he variously calls "barbarians" and "fish eaters." When the girl falls in love with one of them, the prince Eric, her father automatically condemns him.

"Daddy, you don't even *know* him," whines little Ariel.

"Know him! I don't have to know him. They're all the same," he says. He then proceeds to destroy her entire collection of human artifacts, collected from the sea bottom. But when Ariel runs away from home and does a deal with a sea-witch to be human herself and go seek her true love, Daddy is bitterly penitent. In the end he must learn the lesson taught by the West Indian crab Sebastian: that "children have to be free to live their own lives."

If you think that is a trifle premature in its application to a 16-

Sean Delonas

year-old girl, it is about as harmless a message as you are likely to get from the New Disney, for whom parents, when they are not tyrannical, are simply irrelevant. The princess in *Aladdin* also defies her father the king, who is weak and manipulated by his chief minister, in order to be with her suitor, Aladdin. Originally a thief, Aladdin is here a street urchin with a heart of gold and a potent genie. It's true he does steal a crust of bread, but he shares it with the poor. Once again the film celebrates the ingenuous good intentions of children, which are rendered magically powerful, and perversely associates the worldly wisdom of their parents with moral impotence.

The irrelevance of parents is also a theme of *Beauty and the Beast*; here the father is a forgetful and incompetent inventor. But the movie's real theme comes with its rejection of a macho hunter named Gaston in favor of the gentle if grouchy Beast, because the latter is more respectful of Beauty's feminine autonomy. Thus the myth on which it is based, which stresses the risk and sacrifice involved in loving someone, is stood on its head. The real beast is Gaston, who is a slaughterer of Disney-cute animals as well as a male chauvinist, and our Beauty won't touch him with a ten-foot pole.

The Lion King at least features a sympathetic and admirable father, who serves as an appropriate role model for his son. But what is pernicious in *The Lion King* is not its view of the family, but of nature, which it sanctifies and makes an object of worship. The "circle of life" seems to have mystical significance of a vaguely Eastern and pacifistic kind. Our hero's revenge against the uncle who killed his father and tried to have him killed never comes.

"You're not going to kill me?" says the uncle.

"No," says the lion cub turned lion king, "I'm not like you."

The animist bias of *The Lion King* is at the center of *Pocahontas*. The title character is a typical American suburban high school girl who, like Ariel the mermaid, defies her overbearing father to meet a lover from a different ethnic background. Papa must learn from his daughter not to be prejudiced etc., and her liaison with Captain John Smith represents the hope of racial harmony.

But now what stands in the way is not just a misguidedly overprotective father but virtually the whole band of English settlers in Virginia, who, unlike John Smith, are foolishly afraid of the Indians and their "savage" ways. Their only

interest in the New World is in the gold which they imagine is to be found there, and the evil governor, Radcliffe, celebrates greed by singing: "All the gold is mine!" Not only is he a proto-capitalist but also a proto-NRA member, since he tells one of the younger settlers that "a man's not a man unless he knows how to shoot." In all the confrontations with the Indians, naturally, the whites are the more sinister party, and shoot first.

Even Smith appears ethnocentric and insensitive when he says to Pocahontas: "We'll teach your people how to use this land properly." Naturally she bridles at this and primly instructs him that when he calls the Indians "savage" and "uncivilized" what he really means is "not like you." The Indians never make any such errors. Pocahontas's instruction points out the error of thinking that the earth is "dead, and can be owned" when, in fact, "every rock and tree and creature has a life a spirit and a name." Hence:

> You can own the earth but still,
> All you'll own is earth until
> You can paint with all the colors of
> the wind.

That clanger of a mixed metaphor seems somehow appropriate to the casual detachment from reality of the New Disney: Only in a cartoon could the wind have any colors. Yet at the same time there is here, more than ever, a pretense of seriousness in dealing with the clash of white and Indian. As usual, however, this comes down to the child's-eye view of serious conflict. "Maybe we should try talking to them" says Pocahontas to her fellow Indians. Hmm. Never thought of that. So the Indian Chief, Powhatan, goes forth to make peace. "We have all come here with anger in our hearts," he explains. "From this day forth, if there is to be more killing, it won't start with me."

Radcliffe, who has promised the whites to "eliminate these savages once and for all," and ordered that "anyone who so much as looks at an Indian without killing him is guilty of treason and will be hanged," shoots anyway. The stereotypes of the good guys as well-intentioned and harmless nature-worshippers and the whites as greedy and violent Christians are fulfilled in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

The sensibility of the New Disney is anti-religious and especially anti-Christian for the same reason the rest of Hollywood is: fashion. But Disney's reputation as a purveyor of wholesome children's entertainment gives it a special ability to do harm. Christianity will very likely survive the Disney version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, but the damage done to children by linking the anti-religious tendency to a more general attempt to discredit adult and especially parental authority may be more long-lasting.

CHRISTIANITY WILL SURVIVE *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME,* BUT THE DAMAGE DONE TO CHILDREN BY DISNEY'S ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT AUTHORITY MAY BE LONGER LASTING.

Look, for instance, at *James and the Giant Peach*, released in the spring. The changes made in this charming fable by Roald Dahl are not as blatant as those wrought upon Victor Hugo's novel, but their vulgarity and fakery are the more insidious for being subtle. Dahl's escape-and-revenge fantasy, always appealing to children, has here lost all its whimsy and become instead an appallingly earnest paean to "self-esteem."

Roald Dahl had managed to keep the novel's verbal texture light enough that its villains—the oppressive aunts Sponge and Spiker—occupied the same moral dimension as the angry rhinoceros that is said to have eaten James's parents. But in the film, the aunts become an all-too-real fantasy of adult oppression. They insist that James "work, work, work, work, work"; they starve him and say no to him and tell him he is "lazy" and "worthless" and "nothing." Their cruelty is so insistent, so obtrusive, so overblown, that it suggests childish exaggeration. You *never* let me have any fun, says the spoiled child, you *always* make me work. This is that fantasy writ large. And so the center of attention is not, as it should be, the marvel of the giant peach, a wonderfully gratuitous image, but rather poor James.

Likewise the equally marvelous bugs—a spider, a centipede, a ladybug, and an earthworm—who inhabit the peach are turned from the wonders of a mysteriously souped-up nature into James's support group. They build his self-esteem by telling him that they owe everything to the brilliance of his plan in harnessing the seagulls to fly the thing to New York. The Spider tells him: "No one can make you do anything, James, if you do not want to"—those words that every child subject to parental correction wants with all his soul to hear. "We're Family," the bugs all sing to James: "We never could love anyone as much as we love you." Indeed, they say, "Without you there would be no 'us.'"

It is interesting that that is the one thing every child knows is *not* true of his parents. It is a kind of signal that the chief point of Disney fantasy is to conjure up a world and a "family" in which it is true—to provide children with a family

that makes no demands and yet loves them unconditionally. "We'll always be together, won't we?" asks James. "You're stuck with us, kid," says the Centipede.

There is also the one moral such a fantasy will admit: Be yourself no matter what; pursue your dream in spite of all obstacles. James must face down the rhinoceros that supposedly did in his parents; the rhino appears in the clouds and charges James's flying peach. "You're not even a real rhino," James hollers at it. "You're just a lot of smoke and noise. I'm not afraid of you."

But if it's not a real rhino, how did it manage to eat his parents? Disney wishes to tell children that they live in a world where the only dangers are imaginary, where perfect strangers should love each other, where they should reject nothing but religious instruction and parental guidance, where they should seek wisdom in their own imaginations. In the world of the New Disney, imagination itself has become a dangerous thing. ♦

Art

New York, Time and Again

By David Gelernter

The six "Ashcan" artists painted New York City with headlong ardor and limited subtlety starting around the turn of the century; George Bellows, Robert Henri, and John Sloan are the big names. They petered out gradually in the wake of the 1913 Armory show, which introduced Americans to the Fauves and Cubists and turned the six erstwhile American avant-gardists into fuddy-duddies overnight—one of the meanest tricks in modern art history. Picture Hillary Clinton awakening one morning to discover that the entire country had moved left and she was now a Republican, utterly devoid of compassion *ex hypothesi*. I for one would want to make sure all White House lamps were battened down tight. The Ashcanners had little originality and merely adequate technique, but their passion and swagger make them interesting. "Metropolitan Lives: The Ashcan Artists and Their New York," at the New-York Historical Society through August 4, underlines a strange fact: The conviction that you are an important painter doesn't make you one, but it helps. Given the necessary minimum of dexterity, vision, and heart, authority is the magic ingredient that separates Art from Noodling Around. The only way to get it is to take it; the Ashcan painters took it.

> THE ASHCAN ARTISTS HAD LITTLE ORIGINALITY AND MERELY ADEQUATE TECHNIQUE—BUT THEY MADE UP FOR IT WITH PASSION AND SWAGGER.

"Metropolitan Lives" is intriguing for another reason too. These artists were rock-ribbed leftists, but steadfastly refused to mix art and politics. "While I am a Socialist," John Sloan wrote, "I never allowed social propaganda to get into my paintings." It is a line so radically different from what most artists say today, so obviously germane to the ongoing political and cultural debate, you might have expected the press to descend like flies on "Metropolitan Lives." But somehow most journalists missed this story.

George Bellows lays out the Ashcanners' wares—good and bad, fine and cheesy—in a 1911 drawing called "Splinter Beach." Three horizontal stripes: Along the bottom, bantering boys strip to their shorts and dive into the East River; in the middle, a huge tug noses south; on top, Manhattan looms. Brooklyn Bridge slices into the picture like a bolt from heaven; it comes to ground amid the Manhattan clutter. "Splinter Beach" has the vibrant, packed-together feeling of a scene through a long telephoto lens, as if the river were two feet wide and you could reach across, and the tight composition keeps the chaos in hand. Yet it has a typical Ashcan weakness also: an unwelcome cartoonishness. The boys have comic-strip faces. Every Ashcanner but Henri worked at some point as a newspaper or magazine illustrator, and so cartooning is a natural influence on their art, and it's not bad in itself. But when it flares up as it does in "Splinter Beach" amid restrained-and-serious realism, like Ronald McDonald strolling onstage during *Aïda*, you don't know what to make of it.

"New York is so different from here," Henri wrote from Philadelphia in 1897; "one feels alive there." The best Ashcan paintings give you (as "Splinter Beach" does) a feeling of swept-upness. The crowd is a dynamo, throwing off sparks. The Ashcanners never sentimentalized, but these crowds are

With this issue, David Gelernter assumes the duties of art critic of The Weekly Standard.

George W. Bellows, Splinter Beach*, 1911. Boston Public Library.*

as cheerfully resolute as ripping flags; they are made up of self-possessed people who know they are part of the mass and like it. William Glackens shows the dynamo crowd skating in Central Park, George Luks shows it crammed into the heart of the Lower East Side, John Sloan paints the crowd whooping and boisterous outside a newspaper office on election eve, or dining at a busy restaurant—in a painting ("Renganeschi's Saturday Night," 1912) you might have mistaken for a loose-limbed proto-Hopper, except that the diners are having fun.

You won't find many higher-energy paintings than Sloan's "Six O'Clock, Winter" (1912). Presiding in the heavens is an elevated train paused at the platform (you feel it throbbing), ready to barrel forward out of the picture. At street level the rush-hour crowd boils and surges round the station. These 1912 New Yorkers are too preoccupied to pay you any attention, but they are alert and engaging, many of them smile, and the power of the electric train and the brilliant lights and the big, vibrant, roaring city is reflected in their faces, and you envy them. Although Ashcan paintings rarely have good colors, in "Six O'Clock, Winter" the dusk sky is transparent deep blue going to purple and the lit-up storefronts are glowing, beckoning gold. Cartoonish elements intrude here too: The perspective is unconvincing; for the tracks to veer off so radically upwards, you ought to be standing much closer than you are, and the train itself has the pumped-up look of a superhero (LocoMan!) about to fly off and rescue a damsel. Sloan could have settled for dramatic but insisted on histrionic. Still it is a fine, memorable, vitamin-packed picture of a brilliant blue-and-golden moment.

Warning: The New York Historical Society installation is among the worst I have ever seen. It concludes (by way of illustration) with a series of out-of-focus black-and-white slides projected onto a mustard wall, the bleary images over-running a molding strip towards the ceiling, as if the curators were eagerly pursuing the 1996 World's Deadliest Anticlimax award.

That was New York art then; what about now? Where do things stand as we prepare for the next turn-of-the-century? I visited some fashionable SoHo galleries to find out. SoHo (which is not far from the once-Jewish Lower East Side that intrigued the Ashcanners) is the center of New York's gallery scene and, therefore, of the world's.

The Ashcan artists were parochial and SoHo's are cosmopolitan. But the Ashcanners spoke with authority; in SoHo you can smell the slackness and drift the instant you step out of the cab. The best Ashcan paintings give you that swept-up feeling; in today's art, the individual stands bedraggled and alone, whining. ("When I was a girl," writes mournful-but-perspicacious Squeak Carnwath, one of the artists whose shows I visited, "being good brought no entitlement, no privilege. A girl was still a girl. Good or bad.") Americans at large inspired tolerant amusement among the Ashcanners; today's artists tend to look on their fellow citizens with undisguised contempt.

Yet the story isn't *all* bad.

Installation Art is a major factor today, so I went first to Gallery 303 to admire Kristin Oppenheim's "Hey Joe." You step off the elevator into a bare high-ceilinged room where two searchlights (warm white and cold white) roam the floor. The droning soundtrack issues from small corner speakers: a sweet, fruity woman's voice chant-

ing a song by Jimi Hendrix ("Hey Joe") about a man with a gun.

I have nothing against the *idea* of installation art; it's just that I have never seen an example that's any good. Often an installation will try to be evocative and only succeed (as this one does) in being inanely literal. One way to suggest "prison courtyard" is with an actual concrete floor and actual searchlights and a soundtrack about guns, but it's neither an evocative nor an interesting way. The piece is so threadbare that the thoughts it induces aren't about violence or menace or poignancy at all; they are more like "what an odd way to fill a room. Do they *sell* this sort of thing?" (Yes; you can buy the whole shmear for $7,500.) "How can people work in this gallery without the endless singsong driving them insane?" (That I don't know.)

The strange thing is, Oppenheim is an artist of real talent. Off in a back room are two modest but memorable drawings of slips or nightgowns (no one in 'em) in lipstick-red felt marker. Markers are no good for art, ordinarily: The color sags (it is saturated at the stroke's edges, weak in the middle) and offers no dynamic range. Press hard or press soft, nothing changes. But Oppenheim turns these weaknesses to advantage. She uses the watery center-strokes to create a liquid, rippling effect, and the monotonous color makes the drawn objects seem (just enough to interest, not to deceive you) like real cloth under glass. The red shapes on white paper in plain black frames are the sort of vision that comes whole in a flash, and they are lovely.

(In the schools, by the way, felt markers have all but displaced cheaper-and-better wax crayons because they are easier to use and showier. That trivial fact speaks volumes about modern America.)

The Jay Gorney gallery is showing bad paintings by David Deutsch and a bad sculpture by Haim Steinbach. It is notable, however, that this work isn't bad because it is tasteless or political. It's just bad. Break out the champagne! Squeak Carnwath at the David Beitzel gallery, on the other hand, is a fine painter. Her work at its best has a mesmerizing come-hither intensity, engaging color, and rare decorative richness. One small square painting, for example, shows a second square made up of nine smaller squares each in a different color (peaches and oranges, reds and yellows, greens and blues), superimposed on a richly textured blue ground with a line drawing of a drinking glass in front. The square-of-nine-colors draws you from across the room; when you look at it, it feels as though you are peering into a window right through the painting, through the wall behind to a magic color-world beyond.

Carnwath's whimsical drawing and the childlike scrawl in which she adds words to her designs make her paintings seem, at times, like a cross between Dubuffet and *New Yorker* cartoonist Roz Chast. The unsuccessful ones are dominated by her text, which runs to platitudes. ("Reasons to get up in the morning . . . "; "Love," "Sunlight," "Friendship," etc.) Leftist politics is no big issue here; it is merely a thin gray scrim, like the dust on your computer screen: You wish you could grab a rag and wipe it off. One painting centers on a list of male-words on blue versus female-words on pink ("man, him, master, male . . . " versus "woman, her, missus, female . . . "). Is she

John Sloan, Six O'Clock, Winter, *1912. The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.*

George Luks, Hester Street, *1905. The Brooklyn Museum, New York.*

parodying Serious Statements about gender stereotypes, or *making* a Serious Statement about gender stereotypes? More likely the latter, unfortunately. Another painting gives a list of "Worries," prominently featuring "bad air," "ozone hole," "linear science." Still, Carnwath is the real thing, and if you visit the Beitzel gallery and buy some of her paintings (go for the smaller ones), you won't regret it. You will even make money in the long term. They are good; I only wish they were better.

Who says today's art scene is balkanized into idiot categories having everything to do with politics and nothing with art? True, the Mimi Ferzt gallery *is* showing "Women painting women," consisting of pictures of girls and ladies by four female artists who are aged around 40 and come from Latvia. Of the four, Iltnere is an engaging painter whose pictures don't quite work but are intriguing anyway. In "Danae and Computer," a girl lies on a chaise holding a keyboard and contemplating the monitor. Over her head is a flock of white 0's floating in a speech-balloon on a black ground; the rest of the painting is burlapy-gold. This image has the dream quality of being neither happy nor sad but ambiguously troubling. It's intriguing, but would work better if the drawing were less lackadaisical.

"Danae and Computer" raises the interesting question of why computers appear so rarely in modern paintings—after all they are ubiquitous, and artists of an earlier day loved high-tech objects. The problem is, I suppose, that the mere box reveals so little about the machine's capacities. Whatever the ultimate cause, the inclination not to depict computers is strong. (I've never felt the least urge to draw one myself; *have* felt positive repulsion on the few occasions when I tried to make myself do it.) A landscape that is dominated by objects no one wants to paint is unprecedented in modern times, and sad.

SoHo, in sum, could have been a lot worse. After all, today's art bosses are enthralled with the Geraldo School, which passes itself off as the latest thing but in fact merely confirms (in the grand tradition of Barnum, Liberace, and Phil Donahue) that, just as there is no "world's biggest number," there is no "world's biggest twit." Our capacity for vulgarity is unlimited. Of this year's SoHo exhibits, the one that has attracted the most attention by far is the work of an English individual who doesn't deserve to have his name in the papers; his specialty is animal corpses preserved in formaldehyde. Another boffo attention-getter on the English scene (eagerly awaited at the Whitney Museum, no doubt) is a partnership whose art is dedicated to human excrement. I could go on.

But at the galleries I visited, you see the raw material for a vibrant art scene. If only Oppenheim didn't feel she had to make installations to get attention; if only someone would notify Carnwath that she gets full credit for being a right proper Democrat even if her paintings don't constantly remind us of the fact; if only the good people at the Ferzt gallery (I chatted with an exceptionally knowledgeable and charming staffer) would train their discerning eyes on the art and not the artist, we would be in fine shape.

In recent years conservative political thinkers have turned the intellectual world upside down by drawing readers in droves to their books and magazines. The same thing is aching to happen in the art world. Any day now, some venturesome New York gallery will run a standard up the pole—the standard of Aesthetic Absolutism, not pallid "conservative" realism but bold, confident, technically sound—and you will be amazed at the talent that rallies round. ♦

Sports

Eschatology on Ice

By Neal B. Freeman

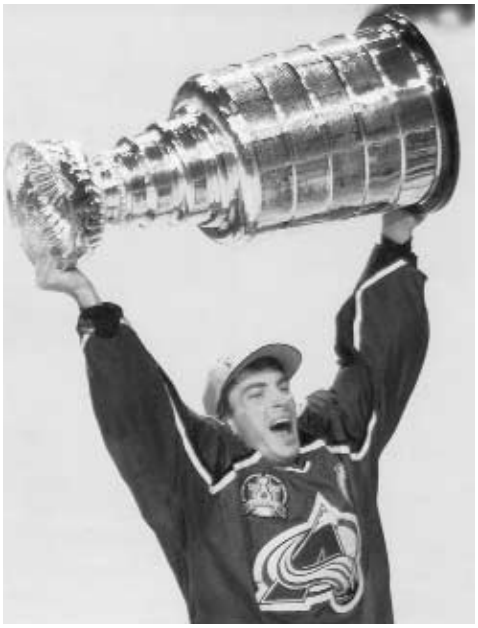
Ice hockey is a Bob Dole kind of sport: It's about hard work; it's about small-town values; experience; whatever. Growing up in the New York exurbs, I became a New York Rangers fan, waiting on them year after year as they fumbled away every chance to repeat their Stanley Cup triumph of 1940. But I hung in there and it was well worth the wait. After 54 grinding years and a bone-tiring seven-game series, the Rangers finally did it. For those who like their gratification deferred, the 1994 season was perfect heaven.

Deferred longing need not be the fan's common state. There's a new paradigm in town and it will be studied in sports-management courses for decades to come. The new paradigm will appeal to all those sports fans who favor immanentizing the eschaton, and, Lord knows, nobody ever went broke estimating their number. Call it the Colorado Avalanche paradigm, for the Avalanche last week set a record that will never be broken—by winning the Stanley Cup in the team's first season.

I am on the board of the company that owns the team, and here are the lessons of this unparalleled experience:

1. *Buy an existing team, not an expansion team*. Why build a team out of rookies and has-beens when you can buy a team for roughly the same price that already has players, some of them very good? We bought the Quebec Nordiques last summer and shipped them—yes—1,996 miles to Denver.

2. As a corollary, *Buy a Canadian team and import them across the border*. First, by the miracle of currency exchange rates, the players get a raise—which means they get a good first impression of the new owners. Second, because Canadian teams are virtually invisible in American media, you can reposition the franchise and promote the players anew. Just as significant, the players can't hold you up. They have no fan support. When one of the team leaders, Wendel Clark, got crosswise with management, he was priority-mailed to the lowly New York Islanders. From the fans, not a peep. Denver didn't know Wendel Clark from Ramsey Clark. In the trade for Clark, we received an East Coast malcontent, Claude Lemieux, who instantly became one of our best and toughest players.



AP / Wide World

Joe Sakic of the Colorado Avalanche.

3. *Ride a secular trend*. Hockey in all its forms—rollerblading, street hockey—is in a bull market. The games are fast, intense, and watchable. Both Fox and ESPN are learning how to televise the sport and, over the last two years, have developed the first network stars. ESPN's Gary Thorne and Bill Clement may be the best broadcast team since the early days of the great football duo of Pat Summerall and John Madden, and Barry Melrose may be the best studio analyst ever.

4. *Find a genius as general manager and let him make a deal a week*. GM Pierre Lacroix, a former agent, went out and got Lemieux, Sandis Ozolinsh, Mike Keane, Dave Hannan, and a former client named Patrick Roy—all without stripping the team of young talent. An amazing batting average, considering that his only possible recruits were players other teams were willing to do without. Just as important, Pierre traveled to the Arctic Circle last summer and persuaded Chris Simon, known as "the Chief," to return to the team. Simon, a native Canadian, was out of sorts and preferred to go fishing. Literally.

Just what Pierre said to Simon will remain forever sealed in the igloo, but Simon's contribution to the team turned out to be irreplaceable: Every time an opposing player took a shot at our nifty All-Star center Joe Sakic, the Chief, at 247 pounds, would hit the offender twice as hard. Don't tell me deterrence doesn't work. It's almost as good as retaliation.

So there you have it. Buy a team in July. Get them a name in August. Design some uniforms for the October debut. And skate the Cup in June. I think that may be the way to go. ♦

Neal B. Freeman is chairman of the Blackwell Corporation, a television production and distribution company.

Dole campaign considers including "tolerance" language in several sections of the GOP platform, not just the abortion plank. —*News item*

Parody

DOLE FOR PRESIDENT

TO: Henry Hyde, Chairman, GOP Platform Committee
FROM: The Dole Campaign
RE: Draft Platform Language

CONFIDENTIAL

SUGGESTED TITLE

Tolerance Is Our Middle Name: A Republican Vision for the 21st Century

SUGGESTED TEXT

We are convinced that the Republican Party offers the right choice for America as it enters the 21st century. But we're not totally hung up about it. If your conscience requires that you vote for some other party, we are tolerant of that. Let us go forward under the sage and terse guidance of Bob Dole. As he has said: "Whatever."

Republicans stand for the freedom of the individual and for the idea that the government that governs least governs best, but of course there are some people, who are really nice and decent—lovely people—who believe that the government that governs best governs kind of a lot. There are some others—on whom we don't mean to cast aspersion or disrespect in any manner—who think that whoever governs for personal gain governs pretty well too. It's not like our position on this issue is written in stone or anything. Really. Whatever works for *you*.

So in the document that follows we take positions for and/or against most of the major issues of the day. And we'd just like to stress that we're not going to freak out or anything if you disagree. Like, you're probably right. What do we know?

For example, we appreciate that emotions run high about the microwave spectrum subgrafs in the latest telecom reform subclauses, and we'd just like to say while we support the subclauses in question, we totally respect those who disagree with our position.

And while we Republicans oppose the diethylstilbestrol cattlefeed ban imposed by the EPA, we understand that passions run high on this issue, too, and we in the Republican Party feel that there is room for both pro-diethylstilbestrol and anti-diethylstilbestrol forces. Such debates are really moral questions, and who are we to say whether or not cattle should have a choice as to their own cattlefeed? We happen to think that cattle should have the right to control their own two stomachs, but we totally respect those who think otherwise.

Let us come together under a big tent with a banner across it that reads: "No Hard Feelings." After all, extremism in pursuit of moderation is no vice, although moderation in the pursuit of extremism is not nearly as good, and, come to think of it, one man's—or woman's, or person's—extremism is another fellow's—or chick's—moderation. No gender gap here, no sir. Or madam.

This platform is an equal-opportunity document.
Feel free to add your own planks and delete ones not to your liking.