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MEN AT WAR... AND THE PLANES THEY LOVED

BY DAVID GELERNTER

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Books & Arts

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

The Mean-spirited Religious Left

The sheer magnitude of the demand for better public schools was revealed last Wednesday when billionaire philanthropist Ted Forstmann and Wal-Mart heir John Walton revealed that there were 1.2 million applicants for the 40,000 private-school scholarships they are awarding to low-income kids for the coming school year (see "The Million Student March," on page 17).

But for die-hard backers of the public-school establishment, the popularity of such scholarships is not a sign of a deep failure in the education establishment: It's evidence of an evil plot. Consider the remarkably mean-spirited anti-voucher editorial in the April 6 newsletter of the Baptist Joint Committee—the Washington lobby for many of the nation's Baptist churches (though many conservative Baptists don't support it).

"One's heart goes out to all those who have bought the limited vision of voucher propagandists," writes James M. Dunn, executive director of the committee. "It's not politically correct, nor is it sweet and gentle, to name the demons that drive the push for vouchers. Yet, those darker dimensions can be characterized as: Political—appeals to cynicism and hopelessness, the worst aspects of our nature. Selfish . . . parochial . . . greedy . . . racist."

And that's not all. According to Dunn, "Most voucher advocates . . . have not thought it through or are thinking too anecdotally. Some folks turned a blind eye to Hitler's grand schemes because the trains ran on time."

So the Washington voice of liberal Baptists equates advocacy of school vouchers to "Hitler's grand schemes"? Remember this the next time someone calls religious conservatives haters.

Leonard Jeffries's Junket

Next month, a delegation of elected officials from Newark, New Jersey, is scheduled to depart on a two-week, taxpayer financed trip to Ghana. Billed as part of a "cultural exchange program," the trip includes $225-a-night luxury hotel rooms, jaunts to what the itinerary describes as "splendid beaches lined with coconut palms," and a week at the "African-African American Summit" in Accra (conference fees: $3,000). A professional videographer (fee: $7,900) will record highlights of the trip for future viewing. Under ordinary circumstances, such a trip might have escaped attention in Newark—since 1993, according to the Newark *Star-Ledger*, the mayor and city council have billed the city for vacations in Portugal, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Florida, Arizona, Boston, Memphis, Atlantic City, Washington, and Chicago. This time, however, the city council decided to shell out an extra $7,000 in city funds to bring along an "advisor." His name: Leonard Jeffries.

You may remember Jeffries, a professor who theorized that blacks ("sun people") are physically and mentally superior to whites ("ice people"), thanks to mysterious qualities found in melanin. Jeffries was dismissed from his position as chairman of the black studies department at City College of New York several years ago, when he began screaming during a public appearance about the pernicious influence of whites generally, and Jews specifically, in American society. (In one memorable riff, he denounced the pope as a "cracker.") Yes, that's the Leonard Jeffries going on the junket. At city expense. In a city that is among the poorest in the country.

Pretty outrageous. At least one member of Newark's city council thought so. Cory Booker, a 29-year-old Rhodes scholar and Yale Law graduate who was elected to the council last year, objected to using public money to pay for Jeffries's trip. Rather than come to their senses, some of Booker's fellow council members implied he had become a tool of the Jews. At press time, Leonard Jeffries was still on his way to Ghana.

And the Parents?

Even making allowances for hasty writing on deadline, the initial *New York Times* editorial on the Columbine High massacre was a revealingly lamebrained piece of work: "It is not too early to begin drawing lessons," the *Times* intoned, before proceeding to prove that, yes, it was a bit too early.

You can probably guess what lessons the *Times* was itching to draw: "One is that schools must become more

Scrapbook

adept at spotting potential troublemakers before they resort to gunfire. Another even more obvious lesson . . . is the urgent need for concerted action by Congress, state legislatures and gun manufacturers to keep guns out of the hands of troubled youngsters. School shootings had been in decline this year, but yesterday's blasts in Colorado are a grim reminder that guns are still too readily available."

Okay, let's take these lessons in order: The two murderous "troublemakers" had in fact been spotted, in a sense, as the *Times* and other news organizations would later report. They were arrested last year for what the *Times* would term "minor charges of criminal mischief, theft and trespass." The woebegone court officer who released them early from their juvenile diversion program (which included studying "anger management" and ethics) thought the boys to be "bright," "intelligent," and "very articulate." Well, yes, they were obviously articulate enough to con their probation officer.

Now, about the gun-control lesson: That phrase "troubled youngsters" is particularly rich. It may or may not be time for "concerted action by Congress, state legislatures and gun manufacturers" to do the *Times*'s bidding, but unless the legislative plan envisaged includes downsizing the Bill of Rights and instituting a nationwide ban on private firearms, it's hard to see how suicidal killers like the two boys in Colorado would be much affected. Yes, they had guns; they also manufactured shrapnel-filled pipe bombs and propane explosives under their parents' noses.

Indeed, assuming that one should even try to draw lessons from such anomalous crimes, the most obvious lesson of all was conspicuously absent from the *Times*'s list of action plans—namely, that parents have an obligation to supervise their alienated teenagers.

Provincialism at the *Times*

Their first-day editorial was the low point of the *Times*'s coverage of the Colorado massacre. A lengthy story on Friday about Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the two killers, was an exceptional bit of reporting. It did have some under-explained details, though. The boys, according to the story, came "from middle-class, two-parent families. . . . Colorado vehicle registration records show that the Klebold family owns at least seven cars, including four BMW's that date from the 1980's. 'As far as I can tell, this family was utterly, utterly normal,'" a colleague of Klebold's father said.

Seven cars? Four BMW's? Utterly normal? Some sort of West 43rd St. provincialism is at work in the idea that this is the middle-class suburban norm. But The Scrapbook isn't sure whether it's the provincialism of the *Times*'s Manhattanite reporters without cars—who think everyone else has more wheels than they actually do—or the provincialism of the *Times*'s *haute*-suburban editors, living in New Jersey tract mansions with four-car garages.

And Don't Forget to Floss

Lawyers never sleep. The *Chicago Tribune* reported a couple of weeks ago on a class-action suit just filed in Cook County Circuit Court against Colgate-Palmolive, drugstore chain Walgreen Co., the American Dental Association, and assorted other defendants. The charge: failure to warn consumers of the risk that vigorous brushing might cause "toothbrush related injury" to gums. The plaintiffs are seeking warning labels on toothbrush boxes. Just in case you need something else to worry about.

Casual

Political Shopping

Owing to the fact that my normal five o'clock shadow had of late begun to appear around noon, three weeks ago I bought a new safety razor, a Schick, with a red handle, called, in good pseudo-macho manner, the Protector. This may not at first seem significant, but my buying a Schick razor marks a political Rubicon I have taken a very long time to cross. Twenty years ago I would never have bought a Schick razor, or a Schick anything else—no careful political shopper with even a lingering shred of liberalism would.

Political shopping involves boycotting those products whose owners have politics opposed to one's own and are thus, *ipso facto*, injurious to the common weal. Robert Welch, owner years ago of a candy company, was a major figure in the strongly right-wing organization known as the John Birch Society, and this required my taking a pass on all Welch products, which I did. Other products were similarly taboo. I don't recall exactly what Schick's political connection was, but it was generally agreed that he, too, was dangerously on the right, which for those of us then on the left meant on the wrong, side of things, and so *verboten*.

Today a political shopper is more often exposed to the products of the left than those of the right. The politics of the hippie generation of the 1960s always tended toward retailing—and now, through retailing, they have arrived, in a smashing big way. One sees it in all the New Age products, in the outdoor-clothing madness, in the Holistic medicine vitamin-and-herbal biz, in the healthy-eating gastronomic *putsch*.

Hippie living at upper-bourgeois prices has infiltrated the quotidian life of the so-called educated classes. It's the way we live now. If you don't like it, there's nothing for it but to take the hemlock, perhaps nicely chopped in a salad of arugula, watercress, cilantro, basil, maybe just a touch of tarragon, lightly dressed with balsamic vinegar and canola oil, and commit low-cal, no saturated fat, absolutely cholesterol-free suicide.

Apart from the hemlock, all the ingredients for this salad and many more are available in a supermarket that opened across from our apartment a year or so ago. I go into it regularly, even brandish a card at the check-out that allows me a 10 percent discount on items from the frozen food and dairy sections. I pass on the grains and on the vegetable cocktail bar, also on the trout jerky and sprouts, and instead buy granny Smith apples (never organic ones—that organic stuff will kill you), milk, cereal, flavored yogurt, treating the place as if it were a convenience store.

Even though I have been there hundreds of times, each time I enter I feel myself a tourist—but on another planet. One enters at the produce section, yet the fauna is much more striking than the flora. Among the customers, pallid desiccation seems the dominant look, causing me to think of the joke about the new anorexic restaurant that's opened in town—the one that's closed twenty-four hours a day. Many mangy male gray ponytails are in evidence; the women seem to favor hats that have what I think of as Laplander chic. One day I saw a woman there wearing a lush mink coat. I told her to depart the premises promptly before they killed her.

Most people are eager for longevity, but these people, I feel, go in for it a good bit more ardently than the rest of us. I judge this by the intensity that they bring to their shopping; it is an intensity that precludes even perfunctory good manners: excuse me; thank you; no, please, you go ahead—this sort of thing goes unanswered here. Men pick out their green beans one at a time. The herbal section draws big crowds. Massage is offered on the premises. No one smiles. This is a serious place.

So serious that, at the check-out portals, there is no *National Enquirer*, no *Star* or *Globe*, but instead *Mothering*, *Mother Earth News*, *Mother Jones*, *Organic Gardening*, *Yoga Journal*, *Veggie Life*, *Herb Quarterly*, *Natural Cat*, *Sage Woman*, and *Out!*. Many of the checkers are refugees from that strange country, the Sixties, or the sons and daughters of refugees. Not a few nose rings, flowing manes, dreadlocks among the employees, a high proportion of whom, I note from their standing out behind the store in coldest winter, smoke cigarettes. The other day I saw one of the checkers, a chubby young woman in her twenties, walking away from the store eating what looked suspiciously like a Twinkie. My heart warmed. Go for it, kid!

Meanwhile, my right-wing Schick razor seems to have pushed my five-o'clock shadow two or three hours forward, so that now I don't seem to need a second shave until two or three in the afternoon. As for what caused my beard suddenly to grow more quickly, your guess is as good as mine. Do you suppose it's the yogurt?

Joseph Epstein

Correspondence

Rethinking Intervention

William Kristol and Robert Kagan are partially right about two things: The United States under a Democratic president is uniquely at one with its NATO allies in Western Europe, now governed by socialists; and the only cure to the Kosovo tragedy is to excise Milosevic ("Win It," April 19).

President Clinton cannot, however, provide the leadership necessary to develop and execute a strategy to resolve the conflict in Kosovo, and the presidency is the only office from which the country can be led. Any member of Congress who tries to lead will learn the same lesson that Newt Gingrich was taught.

Unfortunately for us, and tragically for those in Kosovo, leadership in large part depends upon trust. But who will willingly sacrifice a son or daughter based upon Clinton's explanation of events? At some point a real war will undoubtedly involve sacrifice, cause significant pain, and require bold military action. At such time, for lack of leadership, our efforts will likely collapse and the president will issue a press release declaring victory.

The failure in Kristol and Kagan's analysis is that, just as one cannot build a house on shifting sand, we cannot successfully fight a war with an admitted liar serving as president.

James Rigby
Seattle, WA

I am absolutely appalled by William Kristol and Robert Kagan's editorial. What is conservative about their mania for bombing Yugoslavia without any prospect of desirable results? We do not, and should not, seek to rule the world through our power.

Norman Ravitch
Riverside, CA

I must ask William Kristol and Robert Kagan: Is it anything other than high-tech hubris to tell the Russian prime minister to stick to his domestic economic problems and not meddle with our mission in Serbia? When Boris Yeltsin, the former darling of the West and the head of the pro-democratic forces in Russia, speaks in the angriest tones against the use of NATO ground troops and warns of retargeting atomic missiles against NATO countries, can we continue to sneer? The Russian bear is weak, but is it so weak that it can't find ways of striking out at us, or won't harbor resentments? Do we really want to fuel the flames of Russian nationalism across all parties—as we have already done so blithely by extending NATO to Russia's borders? How is it that those who call urgently for ground troops never even mention Russia's threats to help the Serbs if our intervention enlarges? You don't have to be an expert in diplomacy to see what a

dangerous game we are playing.

Under President Clinton's leadership we have: (1) made Kosovo a NATO problem rather than one to be dealt with primarily by the Russians and other countries with traditional ties to Serbia; (2) changed NATO's mission arbitrarily from one of defense to one of intervention; (3) undertaken the massive bombardment of Serbia, thereby assisting Milosevic by removing outside observers and allowing him to accelerate his plan for ethnic expulsion (not genocide); (4) failed to provide for the streams of refugees that were bound to pour out of Kosovo; (5) ignored the fact that Milosevic was engaged in a civil struggle against the Kosovo Liberation Army—an organization of terrorists seeking to wrest Kosovo from Serbia; (6) dictated terms at Rambouillet that showed no historical understanding of Kosovo's importance to all Serbs; (7) united the whole country behind Milosevic and weakened the domestic opposition forces that had been building against him; (8) "degraded" his military, but at the same time, by destroying oil refineries, power stations, railroads, and bridges, made life for the ordinary Serb very difficult and put into question the ability of any Serbian regime to preserve order afterward; and (9) intensified the widespread resentment of America as an arrogant bully that uses its massive power against small nations.

We cannot cope with all human misery, but we can do much more than we did, short of war, to tame men like Milosevic. We can use embargoes, expulsion from world organizations, and widely backed moral suasion to influence evildoers. But we can't, and shouldn't, try to intervene everywhere with our full might. Had we the foresight, the amount of money we have already spent on this war would have been much better spent on assistance to Russia, a country desperately trying to establish firm footings for its newfound liberty.

David Lowenthal
Princeton, MA

I sincerely hope the leaders of the Republican party don't fall into the same gaping hole that William Kristol and Robert Kagan did in their editorial "Kosovo and the Republican Future" (April 5/April 12). They do a fine job of summarizing Clinton's foreign-policy failures; then, inexplicably, they try to make a very weak case for supporting the present action in Kosovo. No sale!

All that the NATO strikes have done, to date, is unite the Serbs against NATO, and specifically the United States. Do Kristol and Kagan still believe that "the air campaign may be more successful than panicky critics are forecasting"? Not likely! Ground troops? I would remind the authors that ground troops—lots of them—have not been able to solve this problem that is centuries old and very complex.

I would also question Sen. McCain's conclusion that although President Clinton has failed to preserve our nation's credibility so frequently, that "is not a reason to deny him his authority to lead NATO in this action." Nonsense. That is the very reason that his request to lead America into this poorly planned quagmire in Kosovo should have been denied by Congress.

The United States will only gain credibility internationally by having leadership that is credible. President Clinton has put our troops in precarious positions over 60 times during his presidency. Not one more serviceman should be asked to die to satisfy the president's threats or promises to other countries. No more. That should be the Republican position. That is credible.

JAMES T. JOHNSON JR.
NEWPORT BEACH, CA

As an admirer of the old *New Leader*, I strongly dissent from William Kristol and Robert Kagan's editorial. Three cheers for the Republicans who said "no" to Clinton's war on Serbia.

In many ways Kristol and Kagan's mind-set is of the post-World War II milieu that spawned the Clintons: They have great ideas, but cannot apply them. How can they countenance the waste of resources and élan on Serbia, when there are greater threats from China and the Middle East?

MARVIN MAURER
WEST LONG BRANCH, NJ

GUILTY AS CHARGED

I was dismayed to learn of Jonathan V. Last's article which compared one of my poems to a Don Marquis poem ("Renaissance Man," April 5/April 12). Once aware of the allegations, I sought out the poem in question and was anguished at what I discovered.

I apologize for unintentionally plagiarizing a work by Don Marquis. Upon comparing the two poems, I now recognize Marquis's poem as one I must have memorized as a young man. When I was compiling *Pocketful of Verse* in 1991, I dug through material dating back some 40-50 years, much of which was only vaguely familiar. I found the poem on a lined notepad in my own handwriting, with no title and no attribution, along with much of what I had written while in the Navy. I remembered it as something I loved to recite. I regret that my fondness for the poem, my lack of record keeping, and my own lapse in memory resulted in an inadvertent act of plagiarism. I am filled with a sense of deep chagrin. I love the creative process too much to ever knowingly copy someone else's work.

I regret the editors of THE WEEKLY STANDARD chose to publish the article without ever contacting me for comment. In the article, Last made a serious charge and never asked me for comment. In my opinion, this is not a fair act of reporting. Yet in the end, I am grateful to William Porth for bringing this to light so that I may set the record straight.

ROBERT J. LURTSEMA
BOSTON, MA

Jonathan V. Last's very interesting piece about Robert J. Lurtsema might have left a couple of incorrect impressions. WGBH is not *the* NPR "affiliate" in Boston; WBUR and WUMB are also NPR member stations. Second, your readers might infer that NPR distributed Lurtsema's program, *Morning Pro Musica*. In fact, Lurtsema has never appeared regularly on NPR.

MURRAY HORWITZ
VICE PRESIDENT
CULTURAL PROGRAMMING
NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO
WASHINGTON, DC

PITCH OUT

I enjoyed Steven Slezak's review of my book about the rise and fall of the 1890s Baltimore Orioles, *Where They Ain't* ("Baltimore's Birds," April 19). I wasn't surprised that Slezak disagreed with the thesis of the book—that the logic of capitalism wreaked havoc on the legendary team and turned Baltimore into a branch town. Indeed, I quite agree with some of his points. It's true: Excellence in baseball can coexist with the ugliness of its business side. That was as true when Willie Keeler and his teammates roamed the land as when McGwire and Sosa went at it. The national game survived the business excesses then, and it will again.

But I differ from Slezak's assertion that big business made baseball's golden age possible. In reply, I offer three words: Green Bay Packers. The dominant pro football team of the past few years is owned by its fans (in a league that practices revenue sharing). Golly, isn't that a kissing cousin of socialism?

BURT SOLOMON
ARLINGTON, VA

EDUCATION BY COMMITTEE

Chester Finn and Nina Shokraii Rees make a strong case for block-granting education programs covered by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which Congress is due to reauthorize this year ("Flex Those Ed Muscles," April 5/April 12).

The absurdity of federal micro-management of education has spiraled to new heights with the U.S. Department of Education's recent issuance of 300-plus pages of regulations to govern special education. Indeed, the department is not shy about telling principals or parents how to act.

The department notes that when it comes to disruptive and troublesome students, "school personnel may remove a child with a disability for up to ten school days, and for additional removals of up to ten school days for separate acts of misconduct, as long as the removals do not constitute a pattern."

Parents, meanwhile, must work with other members of their child's "Individualized Education Program" team to reach a "consensus" about how the child will be educated—resulting in de facto education policy by committee.

Federal interference in K-12 education is alive and well—and should be banished from the schoolhouse.

PAUL F. STEIDLER
ARLINGTON, VA

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the weekly Standard

All Necessary Force

Eventually, the United States and its NATO allies will send ground troops into Yugoslavia. Ground forces will be needed to accomplish what the air war is not now accomplishing—that is, to deal Slobodan Milosevic the decisive military defeat that is the only acceptable outcome of the war. Public support for ground troops continues to rise in the United States and is already high in the major states of Europe. The leaders of Great Britain and France favor ground troops. General Wesley Clark believes ground troops are essential, and we are told he has the support of many senior military and Pentagon officials, though not yet that of Secretary of Defense William Cohen. The last holdouts, in fact, are Bill Clinton and his senior foreign policy advisers. But the logic of this war will surely drive even them to the realization that without ground troops, the United States and NATO will lose, and that such a loss would have truly disastrous consequences.

> THE LONGER PRESIDENT CLINTON WAITS, THE MORE LIKELY IT IS THAT THE WAR WILL BE LOST BEFORE HE MAKES UP HIS MIND.

Unfortunately, although it *is* only a matter of time before Clinton is forced to do the right thing, time is what we don't have. Even if the president decided right now to go in on the ground, it would be weeks before a ground force could be assembled and made ready to fight. The longer Clinton waits, the more likely it is that the war will be lost before he makes up his mind. How long can NATO carry on an air war, with inconclusive results and increasing Serb civilian casualties, before the alliance starts to fracture? How long will NATO be able to justify an air campaign that is destroying Serbia but doing precious little to stop the slaughter and displacement of Kosovar Albanians? How long will the allies be able to resist peace overtures, however phony, emanating from Moscow and Belgrade? How long will the public support the war if it is clear that the president is paralyzed with indecision and has no clear plan for victory? If anyone is looking for a Vietnam analogy, that is it.

The American public supports wars where American leaders make clear they are intent on winning and on using the means necessary to win. When the public begins to doubt this, support evaporates. Clinton's poll numbers are down because the public may justifiably be coming to doubt his resolve, even though it has not come to doubt the need to win the war.

That is why the resolution proposed by John McCain and co-sponsored by Chuck Hagel, Richard Lugar, Thad Cochran, and a number of Democratic senators granting the president the authority to use "all necessary force" to win the war is so urgent. Unlike before the Gulf War, when President Bush led and the Congress followed, it is our strange predicament that Congress must show some leadership in the hope that the president will follow. That is why McCain's resolution should be brought to the floor as soon as possible, debated, voted on, and passed. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott can show leadership by making this happen.

This would be good for the country. It would also be good for Republicans. A number of Republican political strategists have been arguing in recent weeks (usually in private) that the best political strategy is to keep Republican fingerprints off this war, call it the "Clinton-Gore war," wait for it to fail, and then blame the administration for the whole debacle. This posture is irresponsible and damaging to the national interest.

It's also politically shortsighted. Clinton will be blamed if the war is lost no matter what position Republicans take. But Republicans need to stand for something more than predicting, hoping for, and exulting in Clinton's failures. They must make the

case for American strength and leadership. After all, it's going to be hard to outflank the Democrats on the side of timidity and weakness, although some McGovern Republicans are trying mightily.

The good news is that the Republicans seen most frequently on television discussing Kosovo have been McCain, Lugar, Hagel, Bob and Elizabeth Dole, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and other supporters of a more vigorous prosecution of the war. That's why, we believe, surveys show an increased GOP advantage over Democrats in the area of foreign policy. Those Republicans opposed to the war have done most of their grumbling off-camera. As far as the American public knows, therefore, Republicans are once again the party of Ronald Reagan. A Reaganite foreign policy, in addition to being best for the country, is a political winner.

But in truth, whatever the politics, the challenge in Yugoslavia transcends electoral calculations. Milosevic is engaged in barbaric ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Two U.S. presidents have formally pledged to use military force to prevent this from happening. NATO's future and American credibility are at stake. For the Republican party to put its head in the sand is unacceptable.

It's bad enough that once-Reaganite think tanks are putting out anti-war position papers predicting, on the basis of no serious argument, that a ground war would cost thousands upon thousands of U.S. casualties. Meanwhile, a Republican member of Congress travels to Belgrade to negotiate with the enemy, à la Jim Wright, and a few right-wing talk show hosts ludicrously argue that the war in Kosovo is a Clinton *Wag the Dog* effort to distract attention from Johnny Chung. A couple of GOP presidential candidates have even decided that we should place vital U.S. and NATO interests in the hands of Yevgeny Primakov. This is the moment for serious people in the Republican party and the conservative movement to rise above such silliness. Republicans talk a lot about leadership. Now's the time to show some.

—William Kristol and Robert Kagan, for the Editors

"Occasional Conformity" on Abortion

With the Stuart Restoration of 1660, the tide of English politics turned sharply against the Puritans, and it became illegal for any man who refused Holy Communion in the Church of England to hold public office. What, then, was a dissenting politician to do? To a good many of the most influential Puritans—men of the wealthy gentry and merchant classes, the establishment Republicans of their day—this question was easy. The new office-holding qualifications, they thought, were no big deal at all.

Take Sir Humphrey Edwin. He was Lord Mayor of London by day but a Puritan dissenter "in his private views," as we now would say. So one Sunday morning each year, he would swathe himself in his official finery, proceed to St. Paul's, and—in order to retain eligibility for the mayoralty—ostentatiously receive the Anglican rites. Then, that afternoon and every other Sunday of the year, Sir Humphrey would repair to Pinner Hall Conventicle, his regular non-conformist chapel, and satisfy himself that he'd somehow done right by his convictions. This neat trick was called "occasional conformity."

More conscientious Puritans despised the practice. The great Daniel Defoe, a lifelong Protestant dissenter, took direct aim at Sir Humphrey in a widely circulated pamphlet of 1698. Defoe likened Edwin's habit of popping up sequentially in opposed churches to "playing Bo-peep with God Almighty." The mayor had silenced his faith for "publick advancement and glittering gawdy honours of the age"; he had made his ideas "become pimps to secular interest." When Edwin's friends objected that there were more important things in life to worry about, and that multiple church attendance advanced the noble cause of peaceful compromise, Defoe satirically replied that dissenters had then best be sent to the gallows: "They that will go to church to be chosen Sheriffs and Mayors would go to forty churches rather than be hanged."

Which brings us to George W. Bush and Elizabeth Dole. Today in the United States, 300 years and an ocean away from the Lord Mayor and Daniel Defoe, the overriding moral issue that divides our politics is no longer adherence to a religion. The issue, instead, is abortion. But the requirement it imposes on public figures is the same. And like Sir Humphrey before them, Bush and Dole—and many other Republican dignitaries besides—flinch from that requirement. Bush and Dole both call themselves pro-life, but both also wish very badly to be chosen Sheriff. So each has performed an act of occasional conformity with the governing orthodoxy. Each has inaugurated a presidential campaign by kneeling down before the watchful priests of Big Media and accepting the basic pro-choice sacrament—disclaiming, that is, any interest in the abolition of America's regime of abortion on demand.

"I'm a realistic enough person to know that America is not ready to ban abortions," Governor Bush announces, because "America's hearts are not right." Mrs. Dole, for her part, says she "would support the idea of a constitutional amendment, if it were possible." But, she quickly adds, "Of course, it's not. It's not going to happen because the American people do not support it."

All of which is perfectly fine so far as it goes—as pure analysis. There is, from Left and Right, a standard rap against the "incrementalist" abortion strategy that Bush and Dole now both nominally endorse: the strategy of ending the ghastly, late-term "partial-birth" surgery; imposing parental notification and consent requirements on abortions for minors; expanding opportunities for adoption as an abortion alternative; and so on. The rap against such a plan is that it represents "insincere" pro-lifery—that no politician genuinely convinced that abortion is appalling slaughter would take such a "leisurely" approach to the problem, but would instead want to go all the way, right away, heedless of public opinion.

This particular criticism, it seems to us, is insincere itself—more a childish sneer than a serious argument. A man did not have to be John Brown to honorably and meaningfully oppose slavery in the 19th century. And in the current era, where abortion is concerned, it is the better part of wisdom, and much the more effective approach, to be William Lloyd Garrison or Abraham Lincoln. It is absolutely, undeniably *true*, after all, that "America's hearts are not right" on the question. Millions upon millions of minds must first be changed before abortion's full-scale grip on the country can finally be loosed. If piecemeal debate over subsidiary issues like partial birth can help change those minds, as surely it can, then all to the good.

But it is the *debate* over such measures, not the measures themselves, that will do most of this necessary work of persuasion. Incremental measures must be increments toward a larger, identified goal. And it is here that a just complaint can and should be lodged against Governor Bush and Mrs. Dole. For debate over abortion—calm, intelligent, sustained, and unembarrassed *advocacy*—is precisely what both candidates seem least able to provide and most intent to avoid.

> INCREMENTALIST ANTI-ABORTION STRATEGIES ARE FINE. A MAN DID NOT HAVE TO BE JOHN BROWN TO HONORABLY OPPOSE SLAVERY.

The governor makes his discomfort clear by implication. He wants to do . . . well, whatever it is he wants to do "instead of arguing over *Roe* v. *Wade*." The abortion controversy "has been very polarizing." It has been "debated for 30 years." There are "strong positions on both sides." How to handle first-trimester abortions is a "hypothetical" conundrum, and George W. Bush quite plainly hopes you will not pose it to him again.

Elizabeth Dole is a good bit more explicit on this score. Dole says debate over the fundamental right to life is "irrelevant and highly divisive" and threatens to obscure "sexual harassment," "an overly burdensome tax code," and suchlike more "urgent" concerns. "We should agree to respectfully disagree on the subject of abortion," she urges the country. We should "refuse to be drawn into dead-end debates." We should "not just kind of endlessly debate something that really is not going anywhere."

These are responsible politicians, determined to guide democratic discourse about the most pressing social-policy dispute of the day? We suppose it is possible for a public figure to be only "personally opposed to abortion," as Mario Cuomo used to say, and still remain somehow "sincerely" pro-life. We suppose, as well, that such a theoretically pro-life *but operationally pro-choice* Republican might well win himself the presidency—by reassuring the country that no troubling idea about abortion will ever work its way past his lips. We are quite certain, however, that no such candidate can or will do much to retard America's abortion-industry culture of death. On a matter of such signal importance, truly principled statesmen owe the public much, much more.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Twilight of Authority

by John J. Dilulio Jr.

Between October 1997 and June 1998, six well-publicized school shootings in as many states left 15 dead and 42 wounded. This school violence was perpetrated by at least seven boys, one age 11, one age 13, two age 14, one age 15, one age 16, and one age 18. Like the two teenagers who terrorized Littleton, Colorado, and traumatized the nation last week, all the boys were white and lived in suburbs or rural communities. But these incidents differ widely with respect to everything from the killers' motivations to their relationships with parents. Police charged a Fayetteville, Tennessee, high school honor student with fatally firing on a boy who dated his ex-girlfriend; an Edinboro, Pennsylvania, eighth-grader was charged with killing his science teacher at a graduation party; a Pearl, Mississippi, 16-year-old was convicted of murdering his mother before shooting nine classmates, assisted, police believe, by two other boys; and so on to Littleton.

Even before Littleton's bodies were cold or its police investigation begun, the tragedy-mongering national media broadcast instant analyses. This no-time-for-mourning medium must have its message, and its message about the Columbine High School bloodbath was on balance reassuring. In particular, psychologist-psychiatrist-counselor-whatevers spoke authoritatively about certain "warning signs" which parents, teachers, and other adults can reliably use to spot (and stop?) a sullen or surly 16-year-old who is on his way to becoming a suicidal-homicidal psychopath.

Let me see if I understand. If Junior's a lethargic loner, hide the cat. But if he's instead an energetic joiner of a creepy crowd, you should also hide the cat. Or, if you find the cat strangled, hide the gun. And if you find the gun hidden under Junior's three-month-old pile of dirty all-black laundry, just hide.

The truth is that it is not possible, either for the small but spectacular set of recent school-violence cases or for vicious acts of youths generally, to isolate the causal influence of any given variable. Access to guns. Absence of fathers. You name it. The list of risk factors scientifically associated with criminal violence is long, changing, stubbornly probabilistic, and woefully hard to manipulate to achieve desirable outcomes, whether via public policy or other means.

One thing that research published over the last 15 years has established beyond a reasonable doubt, however, is that childhood abuse and neglect increase the odds of future violence. But increase it by how much? Consult a few of the best studies published in the 1990s. A longitudinal study of 1,000 seventh and eighth-grade students found that 70 percent of those who were victims of maltreatment before age 12 reported committing violent acts—as did 56 percent who were not maltreated. Another study compared the arrest records of 908 persons who had experienced substantiated abuse or neglect before the age of 12 with 667 others with no history of maltreatment. The study found that 11 percent of the abused or neglected children had a juvenile or adult arrest for a violent crime—as did 8 percent of those who suffered no abuse or neglect. "Cycle of violence" research found that 16 percent of children who experienced physical violence, versus 8 percent of those who suffered no violence (either physical or sexual), were later arrested for violent crimes.

> WE NONJUDGMENTAL 1990s AMERICANS DO NOT WANT TO MONITOR OTHER PEOPLE'S UNRULY KIDS, AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS WON'T STOP THEM EITHER.

Thus, the television expert who asserts that "abuse makes today's child twice as likely to be tomorrow's violent offender," or the government research agency that headlined its latest prisoner survey "Prisoners Report High Rates of Physical and Sexual Abuse," has scientific legs to stand on. It is nonetheless true that most kids affected by most risk factors—regardless of race, creed, or socioeconomic status and including kids who look, sound, and act weird, troubled, or scary—are more likely to become quiet CPAs than they are to become career criminals or cold-blooded killers. Prisoner surveys justify the headline "Over 80 percent of Prisoners, Like Over 80 percent of All Americans, Have No History of Physical or Sexual Abuse."

Honest experts can endlessly debate the macro-social trends relevant to such multivariate phenomena as youth violence. Broadly speaking, as the subpopulation of teens exposed to factors known to increase the marginal propensity to violence grows, we might expect the incidence of those rare youths who become seriously violent—the statistical "outliers"—also to grow. We can attempt to counteract the trend by supporting anti-violence education pro-

grams, restrictions on gun sales, faith-based youth outreach, or whatever else we think might do the most to prevent the few dangerous outliers from eventually harming us and themselves.

But we can rarely explain or forecast individual propensities to youth violence. And even if we could, we would seldom do much about it. Whether in middle-class rural towns or poor inner cities, the obstacles to getting a child-specific grip on youth violence are not merely intellectual but legal and social. The veteran school psychologist whose training, common sense, and intuition tell her that a particular sophomore is a time bomb is supposed to do—what? Write a report and file it, call his parents, notify the school board—and get fired or sued or both? And when is the last time you so much as looked crosswise at somebody else's monstrously ill-behaved toddler or teenager, let alone opened your mouth about the child's offensive dress or anti-social demeanor?

The late great University of Pennsylvania criminologist Marvin E. Wolfgang was the first to document that a small fraction of boys is responsible for a large fraction of violent crimes. He was also among the first to warn about the "subculture of violence" among America's youth. Near the end of his life, he spoke and wrote to me about his research in certain Chinese villages that had remarkably low rates of crime, delinquency, violence, and recidivism. The Communist state's draconian punishments were hardly a major factor, for the relatively crime-free existence of these people predated it. Rather, he marveled at the villagers' "moral affluence," at their propensity to "teach morality" in private as well as in public. Adult villagers, he stressed, did not hesitate a moment before kindly but firmly correcting another person's child or scolding an abusive parent. It reminded me of the one-for-all blue-collar ethnic Philadelphia neighborhood where I grew up—a mother watching behind every curtain and a father behind every door.

But we nonjudgmental 1990s Americans do not want to monitor other people's kids, and it's absurd to pretend the parents of a child who makes a profession of hating or harming others need a checklist of "warning signs." Dangerous outliers, whether they reside in two-parent middle-class suburbs or fatherless welfare-dependent cities, are able to behave dangerously because their parents are not ready, willing, or able to control what they do.

Public schools won't stop dangerous outliers, either. In recent years, inner-city public schools have tightened security and cracked down on misbehavior, often with wonderful results. But suburban and rural schools have expanded students' opportunities for "self-expression," often to the point where drugs are openly traded, thugger-mugger wannabes routinely disrupt classes, and older kids seriously hassle or hurt younger kids on school buses, all with impunity.

Character abhors a vacuum. Children of all demographic descriptions are raising themselves in America today, and these children will be a bit less darling and a bit more dangerous so long as they have neither decent on-the-job parents nor other responsible adult authorities present every single day of their lives.

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Commander in Chief Blair

by Fred Barnes

AN AMAZING THING HAS HAPPENED on the NATO side in the war against Slobodan Milosevic. The American president, Bill Clinton, has declined to lead, and British prime minister Tony Blair has filled the vacuum. Blair arrived early in Washington for the weekend NATO summit, met with congressional leaders on Capitol Hill, appeared often on TV, and delivered a strong speech in Chicago, all the while making to the American audience a forceful case for combating Milosevic. Meanwhile, he prodded the Clinton administration to consider the use of ground troops in Kosovo. Blair has staged a kind of return engagement of Winston Churchill, who visited America in 1946 and braced the country to fight the Cold War.

Tony Blair

Chas Fagan

Where does all this leave Clinton? Not as a commander in chief who dominates the alliance, the role American presidents have played since NATO was formed in 1949. Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush led when there was a crisis. Clinton hasn't. As American commander in chief, he's expected to lead the alliance boldly, set strategic goals to guide the military operations with a firm hand, and rally the public. Clinton has come up short on all three.

The most immediate comparison is with George Bush in the Persian Gulf war. Both worked with coalitions, but Bush's leadership was bold, Clinton's hesitant. Bush decided on a strategic goal—ousting Saddam Hussein from Kuwait—and then organized an alliance of nations around that objective. Nation after nation, even Syria, fell in line, eager to be on what they saw as the winning side. Clinton, on the other hand, didn't establish the objective for the alliance in fighting Milosevic. Instead, he allowed it to be developed in Brussels and bent over backwards to accomodate the wishes of all 19 nations. Thus, the hope that bombing Milosevic would scare him out of Kosovo. This hasn't worked.

Ground troops were ruled out. The Clinton administration has insisted this was chiefly because European allies wouldn't go along. The truth is England, France, and even Germany have been more amenable from the beginning to land forces than Clinton has. Certainly Blair has been, and he's finally bringing Clinton around. Blair is said to be privately disturbed with Clinton's super-cautious approach, one that's based at least partly on the president's adherence to polls. Surveys show some American support for ground troops, but it shrinks if casualties occur.

In the Gulf War, Bush was leading public opinion rather than following it. There was little backing for sending American troops, but Bush sent them anyway. By changing the facts on the ground, he generated public backing for deployment. Later in 1990, there was political opposition to expanding the American force, but Bush increased it to 500,000 anyway. Once more, support jumped in the polls. The same occurred in 1991 when Bush first began the air campaign against Iraq and then the land war. He created favorable public opinion by acting. Clinton hasn't tried this.

Nor has he given European allies the confidence that he's committed to defeating Milosevic, or frightened Milosevic into believing resistance is futile. Clinton announced what he wouldn't do, namely use ground troops. Ronald Reagan, for one, never set public limits like this. One result was the frantic effort by Iran to release American hostages in 1981 before Reagan succeeded Jimmy Carter. The Iranians knew Carter's limits, but they had no idea how far Reagan would go to free the hostages. Now, Milosevic thinks he knows Clinton's limits. Also, Clinton has been fuzzy about his goal. At times, he's said it is to "degrade" Milosevic's military. Success in this could be declared at any moment Clinton chooses.

Clinton's relationship with his own military is anything but secure. His first defense secretary, Les Aspin, claimed the military was a "winnable con-

stituency" for the president, if only he'd work at it. Clinton hasn't. He's neither hands-on with the military, nor firm in establishing his control. In contrast, Abraham Lincoln was both close to his generals and in control. He searched for a general who would fight. Finding one, he still set the overall objective as defeating Lee's army rather than merely taking territory. Ronald Reagan lavished weapons on the Pentagon, but also brushed aside its reluctance to fight (Grenada, Libya) and to build SDI. Both Lincoln and Reagan were effective commanders-in-chief because they relied on the expertise of the military but didn't let generals decide strategic goals.

Clinton sometimes acts as if the military is setting the goals. Asked why he hadn't considered ground troops, Clinton said the military hadn't asked for them. Of course, the military knew it wasn't supposed to ask. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Clinton's draft-dodging isn't a big problem for him with the military. The officer corps will unflinchingly take orders from any president. Officers wince, however, when they hear Clinton talk about defense and foreign policy as if it's a subsidiary of domestic policy. Many believe Clinton sent forces to Haiti only after a friend likened this to Eisenhower's dispatch of federal troops to Little Rock in 1957 to integrate Central High. Also, they've watched Clinton allow military spending to decline alarmingly. Still, the military craves firm and steady leadership by the White House, which Clinton hasn't delivered.

As the war against Milosevic deepens, the sad fact is that the American people aren't engaged. Public indifference isn't a problem now, but it might become one if the war drags on inconclusively or if American casualties mount. Awkward in talking about the war, uncomfortable as commander in chief, Clinton may simply lack the ability to arouse public opinion on the issue. In any case, he hasn't tried.

But there's another tack that might work. Clinton could commit himself, in public, to deploying an overwhelming ground force in Kosovo, winning the war, and ousting Milosevic. In other words, he could put everything—his career, his poll ratings, his presidency, Al Gore's future—on the line. Other presidents have shown such selfless devotion to duty and not always been rewarded for it. And yes, many, many Americans would be slow to trust in something so uncharacteristic of Clinton. In the end, though, Clinton probably could pull it off. And this man who cares so much about the judgment of history might just have a legacy, beyond scandal, after all.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of **THE WEEKLY STANDARD.**

LAMAR! LAMAR?

by Matthew Rees

WHAT HAS LAMAR ALEXANDER to show for his six years as a presidential candidate? According to a recent poll, only 2 percent of New Hampshire Republicans are behind him, while another poll of Republicans nationwide puts his support below 1 percent. He has less cash on hand than any of his announced GOP rivals, save the hapless Bob Smith. One of New Hampshire's top media strategists, Pat Griffin, recently quit his campaign. Adding insult to injury, Alexander is disliked by political reporters and has become a punching bag for late night talk-show hosts. Jay Leno recently mocked his campaign slogan—"Bringing out the best in America"—as more appropriate for a mayonnaise ad.

Pretty rough stuff for someone who in 1996 came close to knocking off Bob Dole in New Hampshire, and perhaps to winning the GOP's presidential nomination. So what's wrong? Why isn't Alexander doing at least as well as, say, Steve Forbes or Dan Quayle? Credible theories abound: He has a weak message and is too risk-averse; the voters are tired of him; his base is defecting to George W. Bush.

But Alexander will have none of that. En route to a Republican dinner in suburban Washington's Prince George's County, he provides a remarkably upbeat assessment of his candidacy: "I see myself in pretty good shape. Among the new crop of candidates, I'm the best prepared to be president. I've got the best organization in Iowa and New Hampshire. I'll be able to raise enough money to compete in the earliest primaries. . . . I also have the most passion and the strongest amount of experience in the issue I believe the Republican party needs to put front and center, and that is creating the best schools and helping parents." But what about those polling numbers? "They are not an indication of much of anything except what's been on television in the last few days."

Persistence is a recurring theme with Alexander and it's easy to see why. He lost a race for governor in 1974, but was elected four years later after walking across Tennessee. And at this time four years ago, the plaid-clad former secretary of education was being dismissed by pundits as having no chance against better financed and more established candidates like Phil Gramm, Steve Forbes, and Pete Wilson. In the end, he did better than all of them.

So is Alexander to be taken seriously? In the highly complex Iowa caucus, organization is critical. While Alexander's rivals are just starting to cobble together their core supporters, he has already enlisted campaign chairmen in 62 of the state's 99 counties. They are working under the supervision of Alexander's national chairman, Terry Branstad, the state's former governor and the winner of five statewide elections, and of Brian Kennedy, a former Branstad aide who had a very successful tenure as chairman of the Iowa Republican party. Kennedy brings years of organizing experience and some talented associates, David Kochel and Mary Boote. And Alexander isn't leaving anything to chance: He's spent 44 days in the state since January 1997. All of this, says Dave Yepsen, the veteran political reporter at the *Des Moines Register*, gives Alexander the best organization in Iowa. His goal is finishing first or second in Iowa—a real possibility given his organization and the fact that he placed third there in '96. If he succeeds, he'll stride into New Hampshire with momentum money can't buy.

Chas Fagan

Lamar Alexander

But the road to Iowa is not without its problems for Alexander. His campaign reported less than $87,000 in cash for this year's first quarter. This leads many GOP insiders to speculate he's not ready to compete with rivals like Bush, who had more than $6.7 million on hand. And with the primary schedule compressed, "money is more important than ever," says Mel Sembler, the Republican National Committee's finance director, a Lamar man in '96—but, though officially uncommitted, sympathetic to Bush this year.

The Alexander team say their money figure is low because they held only one fund-raiser in the first quarter, while 26 are planned for the second quarter. But this just means they are now under do-or-die pressure to raise a lot of money. Their most significant fund-raiser will be in Nashville on May 4. Alexander needs at least $1 million—perhaps as much as $2 million—from this dinner to offset the negative impressions left by his first-quarter figures, and to have enough money to carry his campaign forward.

Alexander should be able to breathe a little easier knowing his finance chairman is Ted Welch, who's regarded as the country's foremost Republican fund-raiser. But in an interview, Welch says little to suggest all is well with his candidate. Asked to compare this year's money chase to the one four years ago, he draws an analogy to childbirth, saying "if you could remember how difficult it was last time, you wouldn't do it again." He also acknowledges "the polls are not helping our fund-raising." And when asked for an estimate of how much money the Nashville dinner will bring in, he refuses to provide even a ballpark figure.

Alexander also concedes fund-raising is more difficult now than it was four years ago. This time, he points out, the party has a clear front-runner and it lacks the "deep excitement and energy" it had in 1995. Nonetheless, Alexander predicts he'll have more money in January 2000 than he had in January 1996. If so, he'll be a viable candidate. If not, he's doomed.

Yet another problem is Alexander's message. He wants to limit the federal government's role in the schools, go to a two-rate tax code, and advance a more muscular foreign policy. Each of these will appeal to many, if not most, Republicans. But his competitors are likely to put forward even more ambitious—and more conservative—ideas. This could leave Alexander struggling just to get noticed.

The rap on Alexander is that he's been too cautious. Earlier this year, he zinged Bush's "compassionate conservatism" in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, characterizing the phrase as "weasel words." But when reaction to the article was mixed—Michigan governor John Engler said "Lamar hurt himself a great deal with those comments"—he backed off. He no longer talks about the subject unless asked. And while he says he doesn't regret launching the broadside against Bush, he did call Bush's father after the article appeared to say he meant no disrespect. That captures the gentlemanly side of Alexander, but also makes one wonder if he's too nice to survive the slings and arrows of a messy Republican primary—just the kind of primary he should be hoping for.

The do-no-harm strategy would have made more sense in '96, when Alexander was betting that he'd be the most acceptable alternative if Bob Dole stumbled. In this campaign, Bush could, of course, stumble. But it's not obvious that Alexander would emerge as the compromise choice. John McCain and Elizabeth Dole are far more likely to occupy this niche. Indeed, Alexander's biggest problem of all in Iowa and New Hampshire will be protecting his moderate base—which McCain, Dole, Bush, and John Kasich will all be courting.

The irony of Alexander's current woes is that he might be very appealing in a general election—something that worried Bill Clinton in 1996. If he's going to win the nomination though he'll need to make inroads with conservatives, raise tons of money, and take some chances. That's a lot to ask of any candidate. For Alexander, it could make the difference between mounting a serious challenge for the nomination and beating an early retreat.

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THE MILLION STUDENT MARCH

by Edmund Walsh

LAST WEDNESDAY, 40,000 low-income kids around the country got good news: They'd been awarded four-year scholarships to attend private schools, the winners in a lottery whose applicant pool was an astonishing 1.2 million. Plainly, the privately financed Children's Scholarship Fund is responding to a hunger for alternatives to public education.

Founded less than a year ago, in June 1998, by Wall Street tycoon Ted Forstmann and Wal-Mart heir John Walton, the fund is the national coordinating arm for groups in 40 cities and states. Forstmann and Walton launched the effort with initial contributions of $50 million each. The organization, based in New York, matches every dollar raised locally and conducts the national lottery, which will disburse $160 million over the next four years.

If the national numbers are impressive, it's at the local level that the drama really plays out. In Washington, D.C.—where Forstmann and Walton first joined forces in 1997—nearly 500 families won new scholarships last week, in addition to the 900 recipients whose scholarships will be renewed. Each award represents an opportunity for a child to escape public schools that even so staunch a District loyalist as D.C. congressional delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton concedes are "very, very poor."

In the District, the local charity is the Washington Scholarship Fund, established in 1993 by two former Department of Education employees, Douglas Dewey and George Pieler. Its mission, in the words of executive director Patrick Purtill, is to reach kids "consigned to a public education system that was dismally failing." District public schools are dead last in SAT scores as well as in the math, science, and reading portions of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The high-school drop-out rate is the highest in the country.

In its first year, the Washington Scholarship Fund offered 56 awards averaging $850. The arrival of Forstmann and Walton, each of whom donated $3 million, nearly tripled the number of children reached. Initial awards go to students in kindergarten through eighth-grade, with the understanding that the fund intends to continue supporting them as long as they stay in school.

The organization's rapid growth reflects the broad appeal of private scholarships. Jack Kalavritinos, a member of the Washington group's Young Executive Board, says raising money for the program is a pleasure. Many of the people he calls sign up immediately. Others want to know if WSF is a voucher program, but when he explains "the private angle, they say, 'Who can argue with that?'"

WSF founder Doug Dewey himself opposes publicly funded access to private schools. So does San-

dra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers, who feels that the success of private schools is sometimes used to bludgeon public education. But when it comes to privately funded scholarships, Feldman admitted, "It's very hard to criticize what is essentially an act of charity." The board of advisers of the Children's Scholarship Fund is an ideological rainbow—from Martin Luther King III and Erskine Bowles to George Shultz and Trent Lott.

In Washington, D.C., House majority leader Dick Armey, Eleanor Holmes Norton, and Sen. Bob Kerrey have all worked the public circuit for WSF. Meanwhile, a number of government staffers and education professionals have taken up another part of the challenge: increasing the supply of school options for low-income children. Brandi Laperriere, a legislative assistant to Michigan senator Spencer Abraham, began her involvement as a volunteer tutor and mentor in the D.C. public system. That experience allowed her to "see where the holes were," she says. Now she and her husband, Andy, a member of Armey's staff, are running the Cornerstone Community School in Northeast Washington, one of four new private elementary schools to open in the D.C. area this academic year. Cornerstone is serving 22 first through third-grade students. Next year, the directors hope to enroll 60 children and add a fourth grade.

Ted Forstmann

Kent Lemon

Some Cornerstone students receive partial scholarships from WSF, but most of the school's funding comes from individual donors. Contributors are "partnered" with individual children, creating relationships between grade-schoolers and area professionals. Four times a year the school holds "partner events." These help kids understand that, as Laperriere puts it, there are "a lot of people pulling for their success at the school." And the gatherings help contributors appreciate that the checks they write go to educate actual children.

Parents are the other crucial partners at Cornerstone. All are required to pay some tuition and contribute 20 hours of volunteer work yearly. They sign a "Parental Covenant of Involvement," in which they agree to make sure their children arrive on time, finish their homework, and have an orderly environment at home in which to work. "We feel like we've set up a system where there's accountability," says Laperriere, and where parents are encouraged "to be really engaged."

It's too soon to judge the academic results of a startup school like Cornerstone, but there and elsewhere, parents and guardians are showing enthusiasm for the new private-school opportunities. Tarina Williams followed up on an advertisement she saw in the Metro for the Washington Scholarship Fund. She learned last week that her daughter Quiana has been awarded a scholarship, which will allow her to attend a Catholic kindergarten in the fall. Tammy Price found out about the fund through an intra-office e-mail. She was so determined to get her daughter Gemia out of public school that she was ready to get a second job or take out a loan, when a WSF scholarship came through. Now she is "overwhelmed . . . so happy they gave me the opportunity" to choose a private school.

Rejina Green, whose grandnephew Ervon goes to Cornerstone, is a regular presence at the school. She volunteers well beyond her 20-hour requirement and loves the "family" atmosphere. When she sent her three children through District public schools over a decade ago, Green says she never felt "that contact, that closeness" between parents and staff. Asked why she chose Cornerstone for Ervon, Green says, "He'll always know at least I tried to get the best out there for him. I know this is the best."

Children like Quiana and Gemia and Ervon are the strongest argument for making private schooling more accessible. As WSF's Purtill says, "These kids can't wait." Reformers may be working to improve the public schools, but their efforts haven't yet borne sufficient fruit. Besides, if competition from private schools spurs the reformers to think even harder about how to make public schools attractive to parents—as scholarship proponents contend it will—everybody wins.

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Rights for the 'Rents

by Christopher Caldwell

Somewhere in the barely noticed and long-forgotten middle of his last State of the Union address, President Clinton said, "Parents should never face discrimination in the workplace. I will ask Congress to prohibit companies from refusing to hire or promote workers simply because they have children."

Who could have taken him seriously? Common sense says that employers would *prefer* to hire parents, even "discriminate" in favor of them. Surely workers who are mothers and fathers are the least likely to join cults or spend nights on the town or go a week without showering. But the White House had polls showing that doing stuff for parents is popular, nothing more so than helping them "balance work and family." A sounding done by Celinda Lake for the National Partnership for Women & Families found that 84 percent of women and 74 percent of men favored expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act, the first legislative success of the Clinton White House, which permits parents to take time off work without pay to care for sick relatives and "bond" with newborn children. The same poll shows 74 percent of women and 70 percent of men saying "government should do more to help working families."

Nowadays, when common sense battles poll numbers, common sense goes home with a black eye. The White House Domestic Policy Council, led by Clinton adviser Bruce Reed, has just finished working up an "initiative to protect parents from discrimination in the workplace." By the end of last week a draft of a bill sponsored by Connecticut Democrat Christopher Dodd was on its way to the Senate legislative counsel, and Dodd has been sniffing around for a Republican cosponsor. Meanwhile, the White House was approached by several Democrats interested in sponsoring a House version of the bill. Louise Slaughter of New York has long been mentioned as a likely House sponsor.

As it stands now, the bill aims to protect parents from employers who "falsely assume that employees with parental responsibilities are not capable of performing as well as their co-workers without children." It will do so by making parents a "protected class" under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Parent-protection laws already exist at the state level in Alaska, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota. Democratic and White House staffers are now armed with talking points drawn from successful suits in those states—most often by parents denied consideration for jobs that involve travel or long hours, or parents back from maternity leave shunted into lower-paying work "suitable for new moms." The bill's supporters think you ought to be able to sue over that.

The bill does not stipulate that the plaintiff be a

"custodial parent," so even the "deadbeat dads" single-mindedly pursued by the Clinton administration can reap litigative windfalls. Protection is also extended to a certain class of non-parent: those "seeking custody" of a child through adoption. But for the most part, the bill has been crafted to avoid potentially lampoonable excesses. Following the tactics Democrats used in their (unsuccessful) ENDA gay-discrimination bill of 1996, it explicitly bans "disparate impact" lawsuits. Only "disparate treatment" is barred. Thus, a woman can't sue her company because its failure to implement flex-time amounts to discrimination against mothers generally; and a father can't claim that the night shift *per se* violates the civil rights of anyone whose children need help on their homework. And the bill covers only the parents of children under 18, except when a disability makes an older child dependent.

Dodd is a logical sponsor, as he was an early proponent of the Family and Medical Leave Act. His advisers hope the new bill will attract roughly the coalition that finally passed FMLA six years ago: nearly all the Democrats and a large contingent of liberal-Republican defectors. Democrats think the initiative has triangulation potential worthy of the glory days of Dick Morris. Bruce Reed calls the bill "pro-family." One White House aide thinks its great potential to draw support comes from its extension of parental protection to males. "A lot of workplace discrimination arises from pregnancy issues, so it already gets covered under gender discrimination," he says. "This bill protects the working father who doesn't want to travel. It protects the single father, the non-traditional family."

It may be that the parental anti-discrimination bill's immediate political goal is to short-circuit rival "family relief" initiatives. These include Republican attempts to eliminate the "marriage penalty" from the tax code and various proposals to raise the per-child dependent deduction. Unlike those measures, parent-protection is cheap. "A tax cut or a marriage-penalty adjustment is an extremely expensive proposition," says a White House aide. "Married couples are a big part of what happens in our tax code."

At root, though, this is a feminist measure. It's an attempt to use law to reinforce the already general acceptance of two-earner families. As such, it's a bid to isolate those on the right who would like to reopen the argument over the desirability of having both parents work. Roger Clegg, general counsel at the Washington-based Center for Equal Opportunity, spells out the implications of demanding that employers take no account of workers' family responsibilities. "You're either ignoring an obvious reality," says Clegg, "or you're sending a message that people *shouldn't* change their work habits when they have children."

Certain Republicans profess themselves tempted to support the bill out of Machiavellian perversity. A bill protecting parents, the thinking goes, would extend civil rights protections so broadly as to render them meaningless. When everyone's protected, no one's protected—and in a strange way, the Clinton measure heads us back to a level playing field. But that's too cute. Even worse than what the bill does is how it does it. When labor law gets enforced through a mix of affirmative action and litigation, it produces a different kind of "level playing field"—one on which plaintiff's attorneys can interpose themselves as de facto tax-takers in every employer-employee relationship.

PARENTAL RIGHTS WOULD FEED THE PERPETUAL-LITIGATION MACHINE THAT IS THE DYNAMO OF DEMOCRATIC FUND-RAISING.

Since plaintiff's lawyers are the Democratic party's most generous source of campaign finance, this money gets funneled back into the party to fund more such legislation. In partisan terms, whenever regulation is structured as the parental anti-discrimination bill is structured, it strengthens Democrats—no matter what it ostensibly does or whom the bill ostensibly serves. That's because it feeds the perpetual-litigation machine that is the dynamo of Democratic fund-raising.

Even if the bill has been dressed up like a dog's dinner to appeal to white men, its intellectual father is not Dick Morris but the more reliably liberal pollster Stanley Greenberg. It was Greenberg who argued for a national health plan in the early days of the Clinton administration, on the grounds that it would re-marry middle-class white people to an entitlement state they had come to associate with poor blacks. What Greenberg's health plan sought to achieve for entitlements, the parental anti-discrimination initiative seeks to do for the civil rights/affirmative action/equal opportunity regime—by bringing the 46 percent of the work force who are parents under its protective wing.

This characteristic Clintonite venture is only the latest expression of the administration's overarching philosophy: Mend It So We Can Extend It.

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Men at War and the Planes they Loved

By David Gelernter

It's past time to consider America's Second World War fighting airplanes as a body of artwork—one of the most remarkable the world has ever seen. As artworks they are arresting and the best are gorgeous, and they have the overwhelming importance, here and now, of Banquo's ghost. They represent the lingering remains of an idea that was easily murdered but is not so easily disposed of.

To treat some object as "art" is to consider its emotional versus its practical significance—its subjective effect on the world inside your mind as opposed to its objective significance for the world at large. To look at a Second World War airplane in this way is to consider its physical beauty and the emotional significance (positive or negative) of its history.

Throughout this century the public has felt, in mind and gut, the emotional pull of beautiful machines. The art world oscillates between fascination and revulsion. Last year, the Guggenheim Museum in Manhattan held a hugely popular exhibit of motorcycles. Some critics attacked the museum for pandering, but the average motorcycle is far better art than the average minimalist abstraction by Ellsworth Kelly. The only outrageousness on display was the Guggenheim's claim (in the exhibit catalog) that it was challenging "the *conventional* notion of the art museum." Philip Johnson might have made that claim when he mounted the famous "Machine Art" show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1934. But to approach machinery as art has become one of the twentieth century's most characteristic maneuvers. The Guggenheim's show was deeply traditional.

You see the public's artistic predilections reflected (as if in a chrome bumper, darkly) by the ad industry in its push to sell everything from a fifty-thousand-dollar car to a fifty-cent bar of soap on the basis not of how it works but of how it makes you feel. ("There's

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only one Jeep," says a billboard near my office. Next to the words is a beaming smiley-face, and that's the whole ad.) Such ads might be crude or silly, but they reflect our longstanding tendency to respond emotionally to machines. You see a different and deeper aspect of the same thing in the attachment of Second World War flyers to their planes. "Her engines quickly took on a special sound unlike all other engines," writes a navigator about the day his crew picked up its own B-17. "We admired her gleaming flanks. . . . One B-17 is not like another." "Pilots," says a pilot, "come as close as anyone can to love and affection for an inanimate machine." (Jerome Klinkowitz cites these statements in his 1996 study, *Yanks Over Europe*.)

You can approach any machine as art, but obviously they are not all equally significant. Second World War aircraft sound a consistent emotional note; they have a theme. The theme is manliness. In America today this theme is critically important, because we are just starting to grasp (in slow nightmare horror, with a sense of gathering insanity) that we are losing our understanding of what "manliness" means.

You can't miss the theme. It permeates these airplanes like the smell of wet leaves and sweaters on a rainy spring night. A training film introduces pilots to the P-38 fighter: "It's a man's airplane." A recruiting film describes flight cadet school: "It's a man's world." A bomber pilot mentions the Distinguished Flying Cross: "In those days a pilot with a DFC was quite a man." A mechanic describes an American fighter pilot's latest exploit: "Lieutenant Hoelle is a real man." In discussing his ten-man crew, a pilot arrives at *Henry V*, more or less: "We had shared a unique and special brotherhood." To get men to risk everything and fly repeatedly into deadly combat, the nation advanced many powerful arguments. The clincher was: This is a manly thing to do.

You can't draw a picture of manliness. If you could it would look like these aircraft. But manliness is no simple idea. On the one hand these warplanes embody male violence tamed and disciplined, turned to patriotic ends—aimed and fired at the enemy, but still deadly. On the other, they stand for desperate, reined-in male longing. In many cases the airplane's dual significance is painted on its nose: ranks of swastikas or Rising Suns to register kills, next to a pin-up girl. The girl wasn't only for decoration; many of the planes had female names (as ships have often had), and crews who actively imagined them as sort-of women. A pilot tells a reporter during the war, "You know you can talk to a plane. Like a woman. I mean that." They were named Bonnie, Mary, California Cutie, Memphis Belle. So what *are* these things? Extruded male violence—elegant killing tools? Obvious phallic symbols? Or gracefully curvaceous abstract females, objects of desire? Aluminum Barbie Dolls for lonely men who had wished but not expected their girlfriends back home to sleep with them—and would never have dreamed (unlike so many soldiers down through history) of raping the enemy's women? As art-objects they can be read at least two ways. They are guyed-up by mutually opposed meanings straining against each other, death and life.

Manliness used to be a lens to focus the vague blur of male desire. It kept male violence and male longing in balance.

With manliness shot down, boys are just as likely to overplay maleness and become violent louts as to underplay it and turn sissy. The feminization of America has been discussed at length. (In a recent *Wall Street Journal*, Stephanie Gutmann describes a co-ed company on the obstacle course at a Navy training camp. The exercise starts with "a lot of preparatory giggling" and goes downhill from there.) We are less willing to confront overplayed maleness. Maleness properly seasoned and sublimated is the world's most powerful creative force. Raw, it is sadism—the world's most destructive force. We know that effeminacy is thriving, but tend not to notice that sadism is too. You see it in popular Web sites, rap lyrics, and computer games. By suppressing manliness, feminism has created a monster whose real nature we are only beginning to understand.

WARPLANES EMBODY MALE VIOLENCE—TAMED AND TURNED TO PATRIOTIC ENDS—AND DESPERATE, REINED-IN MALE LONGING.

These airplanes help us picture what manliness used to mean. But we can only approach within the proper moral context. Their grace and beauty tell us that, under the right circumstances, killing comes easily to us. Killing can take on the taut, elegant zing (clear as a struck bell) of a P-38, or the majestic nobility of a B-17. It's an unpleasant truth, but dangerous to deny. Mainstream intellectuals like to deny it; they wind up despising the military and police, allowing moral standards to lapse (who needs them?), and dreaming up one crazy utopia after another. These planes are not only lovely but chilling, and if we fail to be chilled we are missing the point. They show us how

National Archives

"You can talk to a plane. Like a woman.": the Boeing B-17; (photo on page 21: a B-24 flies over P-40s in China)

to defend ourselves and (on a deeper level) why we need to. They remind us that we had better be on guard against ourselves, because we are dangerous characters.

So we ought to approach carefully. Plenty of decent people are unable to approach on aesthetic terms at all. But violence *is* a central theme of Western art, whose most important image shows a Jew brutally murdered by Romans. Many of the artworks we treasure most, from the *Iliad* to the Last Judgment, depict violence and also endorse it. Humans want to know what it is to be human. Violence and death are part of what it is, and so they will always be central to art. Besides, violence interests us, just in itself—though we don't like to admit it.

Soldiers and airmen reacted emotionally to these planes from the start. The F4U Corsair (says a former pilot, looking back with admiration) was a "mean-looking machine." The sound of the P-38 was a "smooth purr." (P not for "purr" but "pursuit"—an aircraft type that was later subsumed under "fighter.") Fighter pilots "queued up like housewives at a bargain sale" to admire the gorgeous P-51. A journalist reports on a conversation with an airman: "'I couldn't talk to a Thunderbolt. But this P-51 now . . .' His eyes go a trifle soft." A medium-bomber pilot reports a flight instructor's comment: The B-26 "was proof that a lethal weapon could also be beautiful." Strategic bombing missions over Nazi-held Europe were perilous, and yet (astonishingly) a gunner could look outside and register "the beauty of 500 four-engine bombers in orderly formation, a thousand contrails streaming behind, forming a spectacular sky-scape." (The life expectancy of a waist-gunner on strategic bombing missions was three minutes of firing.) Flyers even responded to the art of enemy machines: Piloting his B-24, Philip Ardery is attacked by "a beautiful, perfectly-streamlined Focke-Wulf 190." (Which was trying to kill him.)

These first-person combat narratives form a large literature, voices like ours but from another world, wholly outside today's cultural mainstream. Each man describing in direct and quiet words from his own angle the same stupendous event, which he can't wholly grasp but explains as best he can: These narratives are destined to be a new cultural scripture someday. No replacement for actual scripture; but when we scrape ourselves off the floor and start rebuilding this society, they will be practical guides.

The planes were shaped by their engine types. The cylinders of an air-cooled radial flare outward like petals from the propeller shaft (in one layer or several —stacked bracelets on a shaft instead of a wrist). They

CORBIS/Lake County Museum

The "sleekest thing around": Lockheed's P-38 Lightning Interceptor

are directly behind the propeller, and so the prop-stream cools them. No radiator or coolant lines to be holed by enemy fire, with subsequent loss of the engine and, often, the aircraft. In a radial-powered single-engine fighter—a P-47, Hellcat, Corsair—the big, broad engine is a balled-up fist about to strike. Blunt, belligerent noses make these aircraft powerful and aggressive but rarely sleek.

Liquid-cooled aero-engines are like overgrown car engines. Their cylinders are arranged in a chorus line, or two lines joined at the bottom—making a V from in front. Because they are long and narrow, they fit into slinky, low-drag fuselages. Their propeller shafts usually terminate in a pointy spinner like a rocket nose cone, which blends smoothly into the fuselage or engine nacelle. From these neat spinners all the way down their gently undulating, shimmering aluminum bodies to their tails, such planes as the Bell P-39, Curtiss P-40, and the legendary North American P-51 have the uncanny poise and balance of living creatures. Many people have seen the P-40's Flying Tigers paint-job—furious eyes, gritted shark-teeth. But how many machines can accommodate a painted-on face and not look silly or cute but inevitable, perfectly natural?

Take one out of dozens of masterpieces, Clarence Johnson's Lockheed P-38 Lightning. A twin-engine fighter of strange and unprecedented design; the fastest fighter in the world by a cool 100 mph when it first flew (at 400 mph) in early 1939. Its broad wing looks like a drawn-back bow laid horizontal, crossbow-style, with the fuselage in place of the arrow. The Lightning is a "twin boom" plane: The fuselage ends right behind the cockpit. The pilot sees one prop to his right, one to his left; the engine housings intersect the wing on either side, then streak backwards until they meet the broad horizontal stabilizer. So the P-38 has a rectangular slice of sky trapped inside, edged in (like the water of a formal garden pool) by the wing in front, twin booms to the side and stabilizer in back.

Its visual power is extraordinary. On a regular airplane, the fuselage intersects the wing in a T-shape—grasps the wing with one hand, gracefully, like a bullfighter grasping his muleta. But the twin booms of the 38 grab the wing in a powerful, two-fisted grip. So the wing slashes forward like a blade. And when the Lightning flies, the trapped slice of sky skims ahead like a flat, gleaming stone skipping over surf.

Did the pilots care? Tony LeVier was Lockheed's chief test pilot on the P-38 project; the Lightning was "so spectacular in appearance," he wrote years later, "it instantly attracted the attention of everyone who had the pleasure of seeing it. . . . It had a rare beauty that was unmatched." In his exhaustive survey of American wartime fighters, Francis Dean calls the P-38 "the sleekest thing around" when it first flew. You could argue that it is the sleekest thing that *ever* flew. You could argue that it is the most beautiful machine ever conceived.

On the other hand, you could argue that the P-51 is even prettier.

American troops would have fought bravely with crummy, ugly weapons, and often did. But it's clear that the loveliness of these planes inspired the men who flew them. And it's clear that the planes absorbed a lot of history and emotion and are now quietly radiating it back—the few that survive. (Most were junked like empty beer cans after the war.) The planes are striking *and* they are witnesses to a lost social order. We ought to do justice to both their roles. In their overlooked role as witnesses, the old planes spell out three principles of manliness as it used to be.

Of course, to be a man is to stand and fight. The principle applies to moral and not just physical stands; it covers the combat aircrews, and such men as Churchill and FDR too. (For that matter it covers such women as Margaret Thatcher. She could easily be the best man of her time.)

Two other principles once self-evident, now forgotten: To be a man is to compete *for*, not *with*, women. To be a man is to get a family and support it. Both principles are built into the culture that created these planes.

To compete "for women" doesn't mean only to impress and win them, it means to fight on their behalf. To inspire men to valor, this nation used to make every conceivable use of femaleness short of allowing actual women to be treated disrespectfully. "Why do men go off to war and fight?" asks bomber pilot Vincent Fagan. His first answer of several: "Because women are watching." Narrating a wartime recruiting film for the Army Air Force, then-lieutenant Jimmy Stewart drops into a confidential close-up murmur: "When you find out the effect those shiny little wings have on a gal—it's phenomenal." A training film illustrates the "first rule" for combat pilots ("keep your eye on the ball") by means of a beautiful lady golfer straddling the tee in a short skirt. Aircrews decorated their planes with scantily clad pin-ups and no one minded.

We might gawk at those old nose-art pin-ups, but how can we grasp their meaning for a civilization in which actresses could drop by the Hollywood canteen and show the visiting GIs a good time, and no one would snicker? Do we dare condemn the "sexism" of soldiers who actually aspired to be gentlemen? Our civilization has immeasurably less respect for women than that old one did. Nose-art pin-ups shock us. The president of the United States is accused of rape and that doesn't shock us.

Manliness required that you compete for (not with) women; it required also that you get a family and support it. Flyers had no monopoly on family life, but it's easy to forget how many soldiers were married. A B-24 pilot names his plane "Sweet Eloise" after his wife and pays a GI to paint the name on the nose. A B-17 bombardier reports that he likes England, which helps him "stand my separation from Muriel," his wife. Philip Ardery waits in Denver with his fellow officers to ship out for combat; what did they do while they waited? "Talked about our wives."

Men who have something to say of a simple, emotional nature rarely say it. They rarely can. John Steinbeck makes a remarkable assertion about American GIs who are about to assault Salerno in September of '43. On the eve of battle, all the men have written letters to be posted "to wives, and mothers, and sisters, and fathers" in case they die, and these letters "all say the same thing. They all say: 'I wish I had told you, and I never did, I never could . . .'"

> IT IS A SYMPTOM OF MALE CRAZINESS THAT A MAN WHO IS UNABLE TO TELL HIS WIFE HE LOVES HER WILL WRITE THE MESSAGE ON A PLANE AND FLY IT INTO HELL.

For some married flyers, words on a plane were a last-ditch attempt to get the message out. It is a strange and moving symptom of male craziness that a man who is unable to tell his wife that he loves her (but why should he?) will write the message on a plane, fly the plane straight into hell and never look back. Women become artists because art seems like a fine occupation. Men become artists out of frantic despair. The world's greatest art originates in the fundamental male inability to communicate simple emotions directly. The pressure of history's biggest war on the men who fought it would have turned these planes into great art even if nothing else had.

Where do they leave us today? *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* is a sentimental movie about the Doolittle raid that was released while the fighting was still in progress. In one scene, three young wives sit on a beach as their husbands buzz over in B-25s. One wife plans to get work in a war factory, and the other two are pregnant.

Men fly the planes as their wives sit on the beach: The picture of a successful and complete civilization. The men seem like the star players, but they are (literally) peripheral; wives define the fixed center of this social order. Men contribute the fighting, women the meaning. Homes are important enough to this long-ago nation to be the main occupation (with due

UPI / Corbis-Bettman

"We admired her gleaming flanks": a five-engined B-17 Flying Fortress

allowance for wartime emergencies) of a large segment of the population. Without wives to make homes, male sacrifice would have been meaningless. Wives created the gravity that gave weight to male fighting and flying, living and dying.

There is a larger sense in which America used to believe in husbands in planes and wives on beaches. Women (for the most part) made homes and men went to work. They went dutifully but in the casual, mildly self-deprecating way in which they went to war. The work world, too, got meaning from the domestic world. Some men enjoyed fighting for its own sake—but the women at home imbued the fight with meaning despite them and saved the country from any chance of slipping into militarism, or treating war as an end in itself. Some men enjoyed work and getting money for their own sakes, too. But the women at home (once again) imbued the work world with dignity and purpose despite them—you worked to support your wife and family—and saved the country from the commercial equivalent of militarism. Saved us from an obsession with money and careers that turns out to be just as ugly as militarism, and just as empty.

In 1945, the idea that a rich nation at peace might one day fire its housewives and send them to join their husbands at work would have seemed bizarre, like demolishing a city in order to build up its defensive walls. A perfect illustration of destroying the village to save it.

Like the old planes themselves, the antique system of "manliness" and "womanliness" behind them worked imperfectly. The aircraft and the system were trouble-prone and took constant, tricky maintenance. The airplanes were fast and armored but thin-skinned, inflammable, explosive. Ardery describes a direct flak hit on a nearby B-24: "When the shell went off inside the bomber the sides of it seemed to puff out momentarily. It didn't blow to bits, but big chunks of it flew off and tongues of flame licked out of its spread seams in all directions." An American bombardier: "I saw three B-17s in the different groups around us suddenly blow up and drop through the sky. Just simply blow up and drop through the sky." Manliness, too, turned out to be an ideal (who would have thought it?) that for all its soaring grace was easily brought down. The old ideas took the country through the great war and created a prosperous peace; by the mid-60s, the system had erased all the old legal constraints on women and come to grips with its own deepest bigotries—and that was the point, in the mid-60s, when the country's new cultural leadership opened up on "manliness" with murderous fire and dead aim.

The mark of good planes, good social ideals, and good men is not that they are hard to kill but that they are hard to forget. Manliness, too, crumpled up and fell right out of the sky. No one defended it. The very word is gone from the language. My two young boys have never heard it (literally never) except in old books, old movies, and from me. But when I tell them what it used to mean, my claims are so strange-sounding in today's world that I'm not sure they can believe me—although I know they try. Occasionally a new "men's movement" arises and lopes around for a while like a wounded buffalo, broadcasting confusion and despair, and disappears; we are trying to invent a new man, but there was nothing wrong with the old one and we know it. We killed him out of spite. The old ideal returns from the grave—like the murdered Commendatore at the end of *Don Giovanni*—just long enough to condemn each goofy new "men's movement" to hell and then vanishes again, to lurk like a local daemon in these old airplanes. The aircraft and the ideal that made them fly were equally, terrifyingly vulnerable in the end. Maybe all you can say about them for sure is that they worked well enough, and they were beautiful. ♦

Memo to GOP Moderates: Be Nice to the Right

By Jack Cashill

On Sunday, August 15, 1993, the Rev. Bob Meneilly mounted his pulpit at the Village Presbyterian Church in the Republican stronghold of suburban Johnson County, Kansas, and proceeded to pour fire and brimstone on an enemy at work in metropolitan Kansas City.

The target of Meneilly's fulminations was not the new gambling boats steaming up the Missouri, or the record murders in KC, or the area's porn shops, strip clubs, abortion mills, broken homes, and chaotic schools, or even the informal apartheid reflected in the lives of his affluent flock. Small potatoes all.

No, Meneilly warned, this threat was dire—"far greater than the old threat of communism" had ever been. Yea, verily, this was a plague of biblical proportions, a dreadful pestilence "known as the Religious Right."

The good minister "trembled for our nation" at the thought of these "zealous religionists." They were "anti-pornography." They were trying to "discredit our public school system." They were "conniving in every political way" to bring back school prayer. They opposed, he noted primly, a woman's "having a say about what goes on in her own body." And worse, they deliberately concealed their views in order "to hook those who might not hear them otherwise." Woe betide us, bellowed Meneilly: "The Republican party in Johnson County has been captured by the New Right and stealth candidates."

The sermon was more than a hit, it was a sensation—reprinted in full in the *Johnson County Sun* and excerpted on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*. The *Kansas City Star* lauded the honorable minister as a "drum major for justice." Just about every local do-good organization with an award to give bestowed it on Meneilly, culminating with the prestigious Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor award (which this year went to Tom Clancy). With his new clout, Meneilly helped found a local group called the Mainstream Coalition whose purpose was to further "expose the agenda of the radical religious Right."

At the time, though living in the area, I paid no attention. A New Jersey native and a born-once-only Roman Catholic, I drank, gambled, danced (badly), and had learned most of the Bible verses I knew watching *Pulp Fiction*. Though a rank-and-file conservative Republican, I hadn't come across a single one of the scary radicals who so alarmed the good preacher, and another whole year would pass before I did.

> DEMOCRATS HAVE SUCCEEDED IN CONVINCING THE MASSES THAT THE "AYATOLLAHS" ARE YANKING THE CHAIN OF EVERY GOP CANDIDATE.

I remember the occasion well. It was the victory party for Ron Freeman, the sharp young black conservative who had just won the Republican nomination for Congress in Missouri's 5th District. I was talking with another Freeman supporter, the Jewish and emphatically moderate former mayor of Kansas City Dick Berkley, when Freeman's Democratic opponent, Karen McCarthy, appeared on TV. She was trembling—trembling, I soon realized, with rage. And the reason for her rage she soon made plain. "We can expect a negative, nasty campaign," she warned, "from the forces of the radical religious Right."

I had finally met Meneilly's Christian extremists. And they was us.

They is still us. After six years of effort, the Democratic National Committee and its fellow travelers have succeeded in convincing the uninvolved masses of the American electorate that the "ayatollahs" Robertson and Falwell are yanking the chain of every serious Republican candidate in America. More disturbing, too many Republicans have responded just the way the DNC has hoped. Like the self-described

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Republican Meneilly, they have joined in the attack—or, at the very least, distanced themselves from its victims. Both strategies are utterly self-defeating.

Alfonse D'Amato found this out the hard way, and Rudolph Giuliani is learning it now. A Hillary Clinton adviser recently suggested on a talking-heads show that Giuliani would end up, as D'Amato supposedly had, "more like a senator from North Carolina than New York." New Yorkers, of course, know how self-righteous and "intolerant" a senator from North Carolina can be: They know it because New York Republicans—D'Amato and Giuliani among them—have spread the word. What these "moderate" Republicans have been slow to understand is that they themselves will ultimately fall victim to the anti-Right hysteria they have helped inflame.

Here's a current illustration of how the process works. An AP reporter recycles from Jerry Falwell's obscure *National Liberty Journal* a small item on *Teletubbies*, alerting parents that Tinky Winky, one of the characters on this new TV show for toddlers, is gay. The AP releases the item three days before the final vote in President Clinton's impeachment trial. Democratic pundits from Washington to Walla Walla pick it up immediately—neglecting, however, to note that gay magazines and the *Washington Post* had long ago outed Tinky Winky or that Falwell personally had neither written the article in question nor ever even seen *Teletubbies*. By the time of the Sunday morning talk shows, Republican strategist Mary Matalin is doing the Democrats' dirty work for them: denouncing Falwell for "gay-bashing."

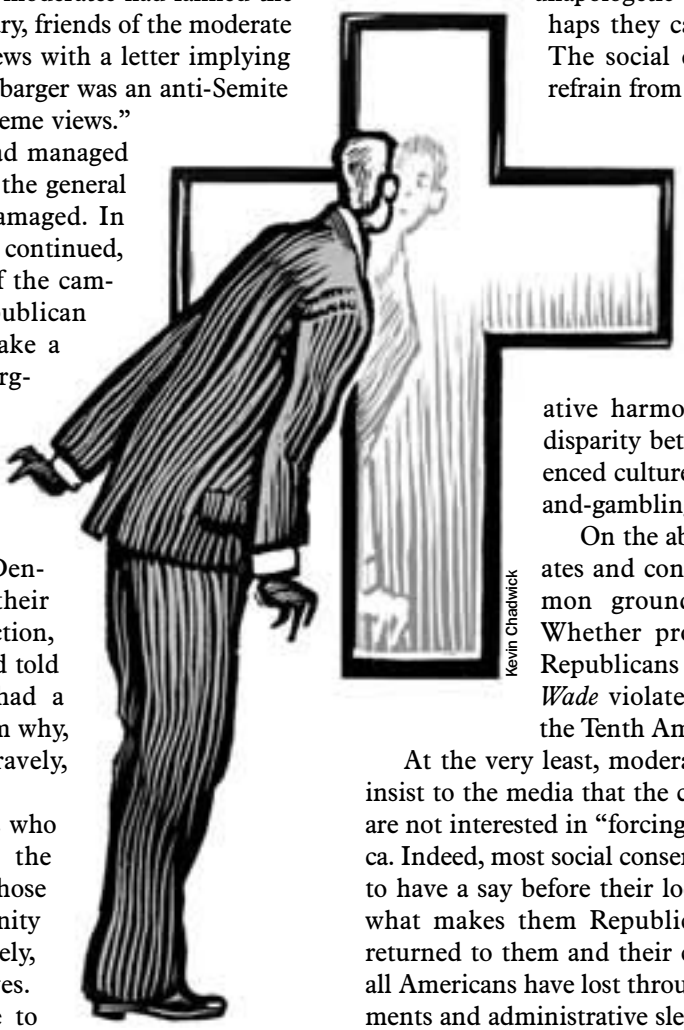
The circle will be complete when Democrats accuse the next Republican candidate Matalin supports of representing the party of gay-bashers. And when they do, how can Matalin possibly object?

In their work of demonizing the religious Right, the Democrats count on Republican moderates' silence. Just a month before the 1998 congressional elections, in a stunningly well-coordinated burst of demagoguery, Democrats and their allies blamed the death of a gay man in Wyoming not on the soulless, parentless, rap-happy high school drop-outs who murdered him but on the Christian Right. Given the instinctive tendency of many in the media to bolster the Democrats in the run-up to a worrisome election, this story dominated the news for a week or more. No notable conservative spoke out to object, so an out-

pouring of shrill anti-Right rhetoric went unanswered, costing Republicans of all stripes countless votes.

In Kansas, in the Rev. Bob Meneilly's congressional district, just such anti-Christian demagoguery paved the way for Democrat Dennis Moore's upset victory over the conservative Republican incumbent, Vince Snowbarger. Meneilly's Mainstream Coalition led the way, sowing fear of "Christian extremist theocrats," especially among the Jewish population.

Already in 1996, when Snowbarger had first run for Congress, Republican moderates had fanned the flames. In the GOP primary, friends of the moderate candidate had targeted Jews with a letter implying that the inoffensive Snowbarger was an anti-Semite and denouncing his "extreme views." Although Snowbarger had managed to win the primary, then the general election, he had been damaged. In 1998, the fear mongering continued, and only near the end of the campaign did popular Republican governor Bill Graves make a lame defense of Snowbarger—too little, too late. Hundreds of Graves's moderate Republican supporters had already defected to the Democrat and staked "Dennis Moore" signs in their yards. Soon after the election, an apolitical Gen-X friend told me Snowbarger never had a chance. When I asked him why, my friend answered gravely, "He's so extreme."


Kevin Chadwick

The only Republicans who can effectively defend the social conservatives are those who enjoy relative immunity from liberal attack—namely, moderates like Bill Graves. Had the governor come to Snowbarger's defense two years ago, it is unlikely Snowbarger would have faced a Democratic challenger in 1998—or, for that matter, Graves himself a conservative challenger in the Republican primary.

Indeed, it is the moderates who have the most to gain from a consistent, unembarrassed, strategic defense of the Right. Only such a defense will begin to erase the widespread caricature of Republicans in the media. But that will take time. Of more immediate benefit—especially to presidential candidates like George W. Bush, Elizabeth Dole, and John McCain—is the easing of intra-party friction that will result as moderates earn the gratitude of conservatives. Had Colin Powell followed this tack in 1996, treating the right wing with consideration instead of nervous mistrust, he would be president today.

If moderates need a framework for an unapologetic defense of the Right, perhaps they can find it in federalism. The social conservatives in Kansas refrain from telling the libertarians of New Jersey how to live their lives, and the New Jerseyans return the favor. Utah and Nevada, both with overwhelmingly Republican delegations in Washington, live side by side in relative harmony, despite the obvious disparity between the Mormon-influenced culture of the one and the vice-and-gambling economy of the other.

On the abortion issue, too, moderates and conservatives can find common ground in constitutionalism. Whether pro-choice or pro-life, all Republicans should agree that *Roe* v. *Wade* violates the letter and spirit of the Tenth Amendment.

At the very least, moderates should be willing to insist to the media that the conservatives in the party are not interested in "forcing their agenda" on America. Indeed, most social conservatives would be content to have a say before their local school board. This is what makes them Republicans: They want power returned to them and their communities, power that all Americans have lost through capricious court judgments and administrative sleight of hand over the last thirty or forty years.

Social conservatives may never support the Republican middle with enthusiasm. Why should they? But if the moderate middle refrains from heaping scorn on conservatives—or, better, actually comes to conservatives' defense as decent individuals and legitimate political players—they will at least accord it respect. And respect, understandably, is something conservatives don't feel now for the fellow Republicans who so casually betray them. ♦

Parody

"Washington was not a city Dominick Dunne knew well, but in covering President Clinton's impeachment trial, he stepped into a drama worthy of his own fiction."
—*Vanity Fair*, May 1999

Watching Kay Graham, an old lady who is former publisher of the Washington Post and has nothing to do with the crackers that go by that name, which I've always just loved, walk into a room is always a thrill. She places her right foot on the floor and then she puts her left foot forward, and then she puts her right foot on the floor, and then her left foot, and so on, until pretty soon she's actually walking across the room. "Hi, Kay," everyone says as she moves across the room with her feet moving, "Hi, Kay," they say. You really know you're with the A-list when they say that. "Hi, Kay," they say. "Do you like me?" And if Mrs. Graham is in a really good mood, she'll answer back something like, "Where the hell is the gin?" The lady has an aura of class that made me tingle.

I could cover the trial, and I wanted to make sure they got their money's worth.

You'd think that to cover the most important story of the year, the richest magazine in America would send someone who knew something about the story, but you don't understand Vanity Fair. Anyway, I sat in the periodical press gallery of the United States Senate, which is a big room with a chandelier. On the floor of the room a large number of people had gathered to say mean things about the president who I felt passionate about. The president is very tall, electrifying. Some days Henry Hyde, the leader of the House managers, wore a blue suit, and some days he would wear a gray suit. You could never tell from day to day what kind of suit he would wear. It was heady stuff. My notes for January 17 read: "Hyde is wearing a gray suit. Yet yesterday he wore a blue suit. The Democratic senators look totally confused. I

the "in crowd," as the kids say,

I sat next to her at a dinner party hosted by a nonentity. In Washington, dinner parties are all the rage. Anyone who's anyone—the "in crowd," as the kids say—goes to a party and eats. I couldn't believe my eyes. Look, there's Vernon Jordan. That's Alan Greenspan over there, wearing sandals and smoking a hookah. And that lady who's got Vernon's hand in her lap, that's . . . On and on it goes. They sit at tables and a plate filled with food is put in front of them. Then they pick up a fork, put some food on the fork, and they put the fork, with the food on it, in their mouths and they chew, sometimes with their mouths wide open. It's really something to see. Of course, I'm used to dinner parties in Bel Air, where all the stars eat with their hands and lick dessert off the hostess's chest. Dee Dee Myers, who I called "Dee Dee," lives in Los Angeles, which is near Bel Air.

But even in Washington the parties must end and the stars have to get down to work. And that's what I did. This magazine was paying my $300 a day hotel bill, not to mention another $2,000 per diem for miscellaneous expenses, so

know how they feel." I don't think Hyde is as tall as the president, but I can't be sure.

I've never been interested much in politics. I think I'm a Democrat but really I'm a putz. Yes, that's it. I belong to the Putz Party. I mentioned this to Sally Quinn at a party one night. I was on the floor of her Georgetown mansion, wiping her shoes to get off the lipstick that had been left there by her guests. Her shoes were mauve with darling sling-back straps. I felt shy, but I said, "Sally, can you believe anybody would pay me to write this kind of CONTINUED ON PAGE 692