NEWT'S LEGACY
DAVID FRUM

the weekly Standard

SEPTEMBER 13, 1999 $3.95

ONE NATION CONSERVATISM

How George W. Bush and John McCain—without quite realizing it—are creating a new Republican philosophy

by David Brooks

Saving Bodies by Saving Souls
Charlotte Allen

The Phony Farm "Crisis"
Stephen Moore

the weekly Standard

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 48 • SEPTEMBER 13, 1999

ONE NATION CONSERVATISM

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the second week in April, the second week in July, the last week in August, and the first week in January) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-303-776-3605 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.50. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage and handling). Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The Weekly Standard Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is 1-202-293-4900. Advertising Production: Call Ian Slatter 1-202-496-3354.

BPA INTERNATIONAL

Buchanan Goes Reform?

Cliché has it that the Reform party is a car looking for a driver. But with over $12 million in federal campaign funds at its disposal for the 2000 election, the party's more like an airplane looking for a hijacker. And according to reports last week, Pat Buchanan might be fishing out his ski mask.

Though one high-placed campaign source told The Scrapbook the chances of Buchanan's running for the Reform nomination "are 50/50 at best," an inordinate amount of trial-ballooning sure is going on. Bay Buchanan, Pat's sister and campaign manager, told Reuters, "He is seriously considering this, but he won't have a decision anytime soon." Meanwhile, former Reform party vice-presidential candidate Pat Choate, a Ross Perot spear-carrier and Buchanan-family intimate, has been preparing the way. For the past few months, Choate's been working over Reform state chairs, about half of whom he says already support a Buchanan candidacy. Other Buchanan partisans, like William von Raab, who co-chaired Buchanan's '92 campaign, managed to arm-twist nearly a third of the delegates at July's Reform party convention into signing a pledge for Buchanan.

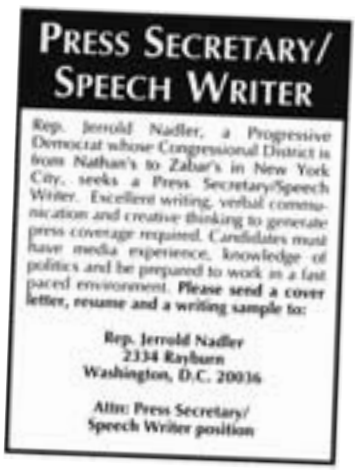
Perot and Russ Verney, the party's soon-to-be-departing chairman, are maintaining their public neutrality (though tears would be scarce if Buchanan, whom Perot rival Jesse Ventura opposes, captured the nomination). Verney, in fact, has a tough time hiding his enthusiasm for Buchanan. Of all the vanity candidates, from Warren Beatty to Donald Trump, who have been playing footsie with the Reformers, Verney says, "Buchanan is the only one I see who could say, with a straight face, 'I endorse what the Reform party stands for.'"

Buchanan is also well suited to manipulate Reform's nomination process. To win the nomination, candidates must individually petition for ballot access as independents in the 30 states that don't have Reform party lines on their ballots. Choate estimates this will cost "two to three million bucks—a cheap entry fee." Buchanan has raised $2.4 million (about $2.1 million of which comes from the Buchanan Brigades, small donors who give less than $200). With his devout following and new Reform party support, Buchanan should have little problem capturing the prize of $12.6 million in federal general-election matching funds (thanks to Perot's better-than-5-percent showing in the 1996 race), not to mention primary matching funds, of which Buchanan is already entitled to a couple of million.

As for votes, the Reform party actually encourages candidates to put the fix in: Anybody can vote in a Reform party primary. With telephone, Internet, and mail-in ballots available on request, Buchanan organizers can simply convert his extensive mailing lists, which number in the tens of thousands, into a ballot drive, which could help Buchanan sew up the nomination. "Can a candidate stuff it? Yes!" Verney says, dizzily. "We hope we have six candidates out there trying to stuff it. I want everybody in this party." Verney may just get his wish. But right now, if Buchanan wants it, and it seems he does, he could be on 50 election ballots come next fall.

And No Doubt Many Fine Eateries in Between

Admittedly, it's not easy to describe the shape and extent of New York's eighth congressional district. In The Scrapbook's brand new edition of Michael Barone's *Almanac of American Politics 2000*, the district is characterized as being three-fifths in Manhattan, two-fifths in Brooklyn, comprising in its Manhattan parts "the Upper West Side from 59th Street north to Morningside Heights and Columbia University: the venerable apartments along Central Park West and West End Avenue and Riverside Drive, and the brownstones on the cross streets which house some of America's most idealistic and dedicated liberal-to-radical voters."


PRESS SECRETARY/
SPEECH WRITER

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, a Progressive Democrat whose Congressional District is from Nathan's to Zabar's in New York City, seeks a Press Secretary/Speech Writer. Excellent writing, verbal communication and creative thinking to generate press coverage required. Candidates must have media experience, knowledge of politics and be prepared to work in a fast paced environment. **Please send a cover letter, resume and a writing sample to:**

Rep. Jerrold Nadler
2334 Rayburn
Washington, D.C. 20036

Attn: Press Secretary/
Speech Writer position

Nadler's want ad

But, while taking away nothing from Barone and his co-author Grant Ujifusa, The Scrapbook finds infinitely more charming this gastronomically oriented description—"from Nathan's to Zabar's"—offered by the Democratic member who represents the district, the shall-we-say roly-poly Jerrold Nadler. His office placed a want ad with that description in the *Hill* last week.

Scrapbook

Beijing's Colorado Policy

The Chinese Communist government in Beijing is fond of beating its breast about supposed U.S. interference in China's "internal affairs," but it apparently has no such compunctions itself. Thus the remarkable fax from the mainland Chinese government to governor Bill Owens of Colorado in mid-August.

Owens, who had welcomed Chinese premier Zhu Rongji to Denver during Zhu's spring 1999 American tour, was about to play host to Stephen Si-Fang Chen, the equivalent of Taiwan's ambassador to the United States. According to the account in the *Denver Post*, the Chinese consulate in Chicago faxed this protest to the governor: "It is the strong demand of the Chinese consulate general that meetings between governor Owens and high officials from Taiwan should not be arranged. We do not want to see that such improper arrangements damage the friendly relationship between the State of Colorado and China."

Owens went ahead with his meeting as planned, saying he called Beijing's vice consul in Chicago to let him know that "if he worried about his calendar, I'll worry about mine."

Hero Worship at the Times

For a remarkable bit of puffery, check out the *New York Times*'s August 30 profile of former Tennessee senator Jim Sasser, who has just wrapped up a three-and-a-half-year stint as Bill Clinton's ambassador to China. From the first overheated line—"He faced down the rampaging mobs in the streets of Beijing last spring"—the *Times* seemingly suspends all critical assessment of what the (triteness alert!) "courtly" ex-senator has to say.

Sasser, for example, is "convinced that senior leaders of the Chinese Government did not encourage the violence and that they were unaware that police had lost control of the mob outside the embassy."

Why is he so convinced? Because, as Sasser tells the credulous *Times* reporter, "What they saw on television—Chinese television—were peaceful student demonstrations. They weren't seeing the rocks being thrown, the Molotov cocktails." Of course, what appeared on Chinese TV was what the senior leadership wanted to have appear on TV. Sasser seems to believe that the Chinese leadership depends on its own propaganda organs for news of what is going on in its own capital. What's more, Sasser seems to think it's meaningful that when a "junior Foreign Ministry official" visited the embassy, "his jaw just sort of fell. . . . The Foreign Ministry just didn't have any idea, I don't think, of what was going on."

This explains a lot. Sasser evidently thinks the Chinese government is organized such that a *junior* foreign ministry official has access to the top leadership's thoughts and actions. Only slightly less ludicrously, he apparently thinks that the foreign ministry itself would be cut in on something like the siege of the U.S. embassy. If the top leadership wants to use the American embassy as a target for the venting of popular anger, it is unlikely to consult the Foreign Ministry about it.

In striking contrast to his Chinese hosts, who professed deep dissatisfaction with what they deemed the insufficient American apologies for the accidental NATO bombing of China's Belgrade embassy, Sasser seems to think it meaningful that, while not apologizing, Chinese President Jiang Zemin "said to me that 'things happened that we did not intend to happen.'" At least Sasser doesn't claim that Jiang was unaware of Clinton's apology, even though it never appeared on Chinese TV.

Casual

Mr. Barnes, I Presume

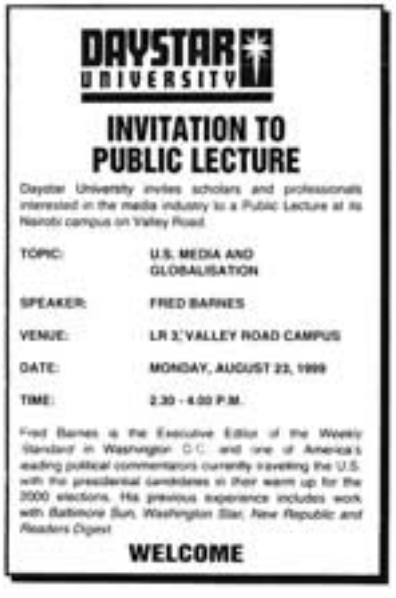
I wasn't mad—really I wasn't—but I was surprised. A notice in a newspaper in Nairobi, Kenya, announced that I would be delivering a major address at a local university the next day on the highfalutin subject of globalization and the American media. This was news to me. True, I planned to drop by Daystar University for a relaxed chat about journalism with a handful of students and professors. That, I figured, would be fun, a pleasant interlude during my vacation in Africa. A speech was work.

I had no one to blame but my host, Sam Owen. Sam is a Christian missionary with a remarkable ministry to political, civic, and business leaders in Kenya and nearby countries. We became friends two decades ago at a Virginia church my wife had picked out. I was a new believer and Sam was the first person I met. When he and his wife Lynn and their three kids left for Kenya in the late 1980s, we kept in contact. Since then, they've invited my family to visit every year. We'd taken a raincheck until this August.

The thing you have to know about Sam is that he's extremely resourceful. He has to be. His ministry is unusual. He doesn't preach on streetcorners, though he'd be good at it. He brings leaders together for discussions of faith, study of the Bible, fellowship, and prayer. The idea is to help them apply Christian principles to their daily lives and work.

The Kenyan government doesn't quite understand what Sam's up to. From time to time, attendees at his weekly breakfasts are interrogated by investigators suspicious that something subversive is afoot. Of course, it is, but only in the sense of a spiritual awakening, not a coup.

For Sam, our visit to Kenya was not only a chance for our families to get together (we spent lots of time at wildlife preserves). It was an opportunity. Our second night in Nairobi, he and Lynn had a dinner in our honor, and I made a few informal remarks about the U.S. presidential race and my Christian faith. A discussion among the 50 or so guests followed.



DAYSTAR UNIVERSITY

INVITATION TO PUBLIC LECTURE

Daystar University invites scholars and professionals interested in the media industry to a Public Lecture at its Nairobi campus on Valley Road.

TOPIC:	U.S. MEDIA AND GLOBALISATION
SPEAKER:	FRED BARNES
VENUE:	LR 3,' VALLEY ROAD CAMPUS
DATE:	MONDAY, AUGUST 23, 1999
TIME:	2.30 - 4.00 P.M.

Fred Barnes is the Executive Editor of the Weekly Standard in Washington D.C. and one of America's leading political commentators currently travelling the U.S. with the presidential candidates in their warm up for the 2000 elections. His previous experience includes work with *Baltimore Sun, Washington Star, New Republic and Readers Digest*

WELCOME

My remarks didn't matter much. They were merely the pretext for bringing together people who seldom meet socially. There were members of parliament from the governing party, KANU, of President Daniel arap Moi. And there were opposition leaders. Now, this wasn't the same as Democrats and Republicans socializing in the United States. Kenya is not a full-grown democracy. Moi agreed only under duress a few years ago to allow opposition parties at all, and he still occasionally throws dissident members of parliament in jail for years at a time.

One ex-prisoner at Sam's dinner asked me how America maintains a two-party democracy. In Kenya, the opposition is hopelessly fragmented. My answer must not have been helpful because he asked the same question again. Anyway, opposition and government pols mingled, chatted, joked, and also agreed I had missed the point about what Kenya needs from America.

This was significant. An opposition member, Beth Mugo, said I kept referring to foreign "aid" when that's not what Kenya wants. Moi's ex-finance minister, Simeon Nyachae, elaborated on Kenya's need for private investment and expertise. It was a bipartisan moment in a normally hostile environment—at my expense. But that's what I was there for in Sam's scheme.

I don't mean to sound critical. If I could assist Sam's ministry, I was more than willing. Still, the publicly announced lecture at Daystar would take work. I'm sure there are journalists who can spontaneously hold forth on globalization, but I'm not one of them. Besides, it turned out a panel would critique my remarks.

In the end, I got off easy. The audience of maybe 150 filled a classroom, and as best I could tell it was politically—and religiously—diverse—just what Sam had hoped for. Daystar is a Christian school, and the session began and ended with a prayer. So I also talked about my experience as a Christian. There's one especially nice thing about speaking at a Christian gathering: You don't get hammered by questioners as you might, say, at an American university.

After the speech, a fellow approached me and said he'd heard that a newspaper in Uganda had reported I'd be speaking there in a couple days. I turned to ask Sam about this. "Am I supposed to give a speech there too?" I asked. "Not this trip," he said.

Fred Barnes

Censorship: The Response

David Lowenthal makes an almost convincing case for censorship ("The Case for Censorship," Aug. 23). Allow me to sum up in one sentence my fears: I don't want Tom Daschle, David Bonior, and their ilk deciding what can be published in The Weekly Standard, the *Washington Times*, or any other publication.

No doubt there is a strong desire among many Americans to see a return to conservative values and principles in American media. But it seems all too likely that the result would be full-scale, all-out censorship of everything that conservative Americans want, rather than any kind of censorship of the things that conservative Americans rightfully hate and fear.

Bill Johnson
North Hollywood, CA

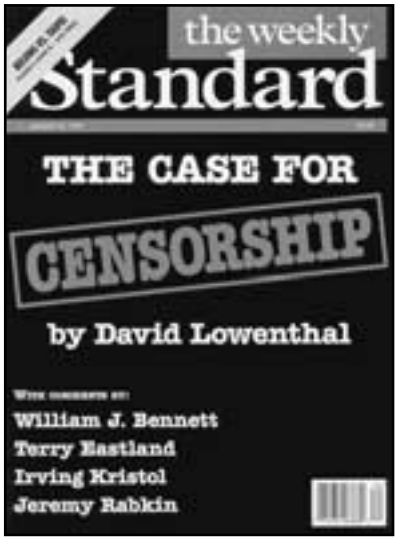
Censorship may be a fine idea if those imposing it are friendly to the values of William Bennett, Richard John Neuhaus, Steve Allen, and David Lowenthal. But we live in a democracy, and our leaders change from time to time. What happens when the censors are appointed by, or friendly to, the likes of Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin? Or Al Sharpton and Louis Farrakhan? Or Al Gore and Ralph Nader?

If the experience of speech codes on college campuses is any indication, government censorship will simply give us political correctness run amok—and many more people than college students and faculty will be affected.

Still, there is a certain romance to the notion of furtively reading my *samizdat* copy of The Weekly Standard by candlelight in a dark basement. It is a romance I hope never to encounter.

Richard E. Sincere
Arlington, VA

Professor David Lowenthal makes a compelling case for censorship, a case that needs to be made. However, he writes, "We cannot be sure that the first stout defenders of the press . . . would make an exception for movies and television were they alive today." Lowenthal need not go this far. Most every obscenity and pornography case dealing with broadcast media and movies cites the First Amendment protection of "speech," not "press." Certainly our Founders knew what they meant and wanted to mean when they wrote both "speech" *and* "press" into our First Amendment. If they meant all forms of communication or even entertainment, or the broad swath of protection the courts now call "expression," they would not have found the need to protect both "speech" and "press." To the Founders, there was a difference between the two: Speech was speech and press was press. Neither protection embodies "expression" and neither embodies pornography or obscenity.



Would that we could return to the verdict of a unanimous Supreme Court in 1942 (a Court that included Black, Douglas, and Frankfurter) that understood "there are certain well-defined and narrowly limited classes of speech, the prevention and punishment of which have never been thought to raise any Constitutional problem. These include the lewd and obscene, the profane . . . [S]peech . . . of such slight social value as a step to truth that any benefit that may be derived from them is clearly outweighed by the social interest in order and morality." Not so long ago, social interests in order and morality were taken seriously by the courts. If we could get them to take those issues seriously again—indeed, if we could even get them to use the word "morality"—we would be well on our way to recapturing our culture.

Seth Leibsohn
Washington, DC

David Lowenthal's "The Case for Censorship" is an unfortunate example of thoughtless writing. For instance, Lowenthal compares physical pollution to "moral pollution," a strained analogy at best, but this hardly concerns him. An obvious problem with this comparison—I can choose my reaction to immorality, but I can't choose my reaction to, say, carbon monoxide—is of course never mentioned, nor, I'm sure, did it ever cross Lowenthal's mind, so righteous is his conviction.

Lowenthal briefly entertains the arguments against the regulation of the mass media—that "censorship is dangerous, ineffective, unconstitutional, and inconsistent with liberal democracy"—but again he doesn't even consider the possibility that the American moral climate is not deteriorating in the first place. A more balanced article would have at least acknowledged that crime rates have plummeted, teen pregnancy is down dramatically, and moral barometers like racial tolerance are on the rise. Littleton and other recent tragedies, horrible as they are, are blips on a media radar screen that monitors the violent behavior of the quarter billion people who share our nation. If a quarter billion people less two teens in Colorado and a nutcase in California are well behaved, an epidemic is emphatically not at hand, a radical reduction in personal liberty is not called for, the nation is not on "an accelerating descent into barbarism" (the hyperbole is scarcely to be believed here), and the destruction of "free society itself" is not to be feared. (That last bit is particularly ironic—why fret the destruction of freedom and call for it at the same time?)

Tom Castle
Oakwood, OH

David Lowenthal's advocacy of censorship to stem society's ills is so repugnant that it's like treating an infection with mercury or arsenic. His cure is worse than the disease; any

Correspondence

clear-thinking conservative will be able to see that. True, violence and sexism are rampant in the media and betray all of the decent values we try to teach our children. But if we were to somehow censor these messages, who would appoint the censor? What points of view would be represented by the censor? The best approach to monitor and diminish the appalling anti-social messages in the media is still a free-market strategy that true conservatives should embrace: If there's something objectionable in the marketplace, don't buy it, watch it, or patronize the advertisers supporting it. An economic decision is a much more powerful decision than a moral one that rips at the core of our constitutional freedoms.

JOHN F. WASIK
WAUCONDA, IL

William J. Bennett is right: The key to changing what's abhorrent in the popular media is to move public opinion and thus the marketplace—to label it abhorrent, rather than censoring it, as David Lowenthal suggests. This is true for a couple of basic conservative reasons.

First, if we believe in the market, we must believe that demand will change supply. No Hollywood mogul sits in his office and says, "Wow! How can I corrupt the youth of America today?" They say, "What will people buy?" and those who guess right are rewarded. A recent example of how a change in the political and social opinions of Americans has changed the media is found in the area of alcohol abuse: Remember the movie *Arthur*? Remember the comedian Foster Brooks? Could these comedic portrayals of alcoholism possibly get a "go" in any network or studio executive suite today? Absolutely not—thanks to groups like Mothers Against Drunk Driving and other public outcries, we as a nation have decided that being a drunk simply isn't funny anymore. The media reacted, and we no longer see such portrayals.

In spite of these ready examples, perhaps more important for conservatives is this question: Why would anyone who seeks a smaller and less invasive government ever want to hand over to a government censor the keys to this much power? Those of us who decried HillaryCare as the confiscation of a huge chunk of the national economy by the federal government surely don't want an even larger percentage of the national attention span, mindset, and opinion-forming mechanism equally purloined by the feds, do we?

The censorship of the marketplace is the only kind that will both solve the problem and keep us true to our ideals as a democracy and as conservatives. Furthermore, it is the only kind of censorship that works. The task for those of us who rightly see decay and degradation in much of the media is to point it out—as Bennett and Charlton Heston did when they read obscene and misogynistic rap lyrics at a Time-Warner stockholders meeting. Make a stand by rubbing the corporate noses of those who make these decisions in their own misguided dirty work. In short, rather than censorship, once we grab the body politic by its heart and mind, its eyeballs and ears and wallet will follow the only truly conservative means to this worthwhile end.

DAN FENDEL
HOLLYWOOD, CA

The only way to clean up the media is to hit the CEOs in the shorts—cut their revenues with effective nationwide boycotts orchestrated with concentrated money and organization. The key to victory: Focus like a laser on just one relatively weak entity—a struggling movie studio—and boycott it until it is either bankrupted or reformed. Then, with sharper teeth, move on to a bigger target. Then another. The rest would soon get the picture and clean up their act. But to get started, a healthy percentage of apathetic, preoccupied average Americans must be repeatedly educated, as in a professional political campaign, using all available media.

The Lord overturned the tables of the money-changers and drove them from the temple. We are taught to be slow to anger, not to never get angry. We have turned the other cheek for years and have been slapped silly by these gold-grabbing molesters of our children's minds. They feel no shame and so far have not reached out for redemption. It is time to legally slap the spit out of them.

MARCO GILLIAM
SAN ANTONIO, TX

Masses of people do not come to their senses, only individuals do. This is why Professor Lowenthal's argument for censorship doesn't fly. Conservatives and liberals alike should know by now that in both open and closed societies, people are going to get what they want, for good or ill, by hook or by crook. Pornography, drugs, alcohol, illegal guns, gambling, prostitution, abortions, you name it; if someone wasn't buying, someone wouldn't be selling. And the entertainment industry is no exception. Therefore, the problem lies not solely with the producers of filth, but with the purveyors of filth as well.

Who listens to the likes of Marilyn Manson, Snoop Doggy Dog, and Nine Inch Nails? Who watches *Jerry Springer*? Better still, who defends the likes of Bill and Hillary Clinton? Conservatives tend to view these dubious and despicable sorts as saddle partners to the Four Horsemen of The Apocalypse; hence, the gloomy prognostications that we are "slouching" or that outrage has died.

Neither is the case. Movies which lampoon or attack religion are box-office bombs, television programs that try to legitimize homosexuality are at the bottom of the ratings, and celebrities who flaunt their dirty laundry get zero respect—except among their own kind, of course.

This leads us to look at the other side of the social morality debate or culture wars. The Lichter studies of Hollywood and media elitists reveal some not-so-surprising details about the image-makers and newsmakers: They are out of touch and out of sync with the public. They are, in every sense of the word, elitists. If anything, Hollywood and the media know marketing—what kind of sound-bites sound best and what kind of images get the most play—but that's about it. Academia is worse. From academia come hare-brained notions such as multiculturalism, political correctness, gender studies, identity politics, and so on. Again, no one except the liberal academic subculture takes these things seriously.

Hollywood, the media, and academia are all closed clubs to which conservatives need not apply, and for good reason. Irving Kristol touched on this in his comment that the majority of people are too busy working, worrying, and drinking, and that others are busy insulating their families from decadence.

With few exceptions, conservatives are not and have not been interested in entertainment and the arts. Is it any wonder why the media are predominantly left-of-center and always have been? William Bennett's argument that we should ostracize the producers of filth and make them social pariahs only goes so far. They, like the Clintons and their minions, have no shame or sense of decency to begin with.

Government-directed censorship is not the right way or the best way to curtail the flood of filth Hollywood calls entertainment. Grass-roots organizations that boycott advertisers are more effective. Coalitions led by upstanding, respectable celebrities such as Steve Allen have more potential. Ultimately, the people who will have the most profound impact are the people who are not buying what the Left is selling.

JONATHAN ATHENS
COLUMBUS, OH

DAVID LOWENTHAL RESPONDS: Let's see what the points of agreement and disagreement are among the four original commentators, the present letter-writers, and myself. With only two exceptions, we agree that the mass media pose a grave problem. Jeremy Rabkin thinks my emphasis on them misplaced; Tom Castle claims that the moral climate in America is not deteriorating and that incidents like the Columbine High School shooting are slight departures ("blips," he calls them) from our general good behavior. The others acknowledge that moral pollution by the media is real enough. John Wasik says violence and sex are rampant in the media and "betray all of the decent values we try to teach our children." Dan Fendel speaks of "decay and degradation in much of the media," Marco Gilliam of the "gold-grabbing molesters of our children's minds," and Jonathan Athens of the mass media as "producers of filth." The recent Appeal to Hollywood by 56 eminent citizens refers to our "increasingly toxic popular culture."

Those granting the gravity of the situation call for serious measures. Most oppose censorship, with the exception of Irving Kristol, one of the very first to urge it publicly; Seth Leibsohn, with his wise reminder of relevant constitutional law; and possibly Jeremy Rabkin, who is "sympathetic to efforts to limit the most graphic depictions of sex and violence in the mass media." The opponents of censorship object not primarily on constitutional grounds, but because they fear it. An exception is William Bennett, who calls himself "a virtual absolutist on the First Amendment," and for whom the main objection to censorship is that the American people are dead set against it.

Instead of censorship, opponents favor either the operation of the free market to get rid of media excesses, recourse to organized boycotts, or forthright public attacks (including attacks in Congress) to shame media heads into altering their ways. Notice that all these approaches presume we can ascertain the standards by which to judge media excesses, otherwise it would be impossible to know at what point the excesses cease. There is no way of avoiding this task of definition, whatever the approach taken.

Compared with these alternatives, legislation has certain advantages. Whether involving the regulation of television at the federal level (through the FCC or a similar body) or of movies in the various states and cities, it will have to declare general principles to be applied to particular cases. And it will not be restricted to criticizing only the most egregious instances of mass media harm, as is likely with boycotts, shaming, and the rest. If the mass media can be likened to poison, filth, or pollution, they should in principle be treated by the various political communities, not just by private individuals and groups, however numerous. It is important for society, in its organized capacity, to face up to such threats to its health and existence.

William Bennett suggests that Congress shame media heads the way it shames the heads of the tobacco and gun industries. But these industries realize that congressional action can put them out of business. Without credible threats of regulation, congressional shaming will have little effect on Hollywood and the networks, which are among the wealthiest, most powerful, and most hard-boiled, public-good-be-damned businesses in the world.

But let us try these alternatives and see how far they get. As we do, I suggest that the door be kept explicitly open for censorship of the movies and regulation of television as the ultimate threat behind the pleadings and shamings. Above all, let us not give the impression that the Constitution itself prohibits the regulation of the mass media. Much of the popular antipathy to censorship rests on this sedulously cultivated but completely false impression.

Fear not, Bill Johnson: David Bonior will never decide what can be published in this or any other independent journal, because they constitute precisely the kind of "press" the First Amendment was intended to protect. As for the possibility (raised by Richard Sincere) that such contemporary excesses as political correctness will inevitably corrupt any system of regulation, that will depend on whether our legislatures can distinguish between such excesses and the legitimate object of making the mass media less noxious to a decent and moral citizenry. This will depend, in turn, on the remaining good moral sense of the people themselves. If that's gone, we are too.

the weekly Standard

Judges and Schools

In 1995, the Ohio legislature enacted its Pilot Project Scholarship Program for disadvantaged elementary school students in Cleveland. Under PPSP, low-income families became eligible for state grants covering up to 90 percent of tuition costs at any Cleveland private school or nearby suburban public school prepared to accept their sons and daughters. By this past spring, at the end of the program's third full year, it was helping send 3,674 students—by far the largest number of them African-American and most from families living at or below the official poverty line—to upwards of 50 local private schools. And PPSP continued to grow. Until a few weeks ago, its vouchers were expected to defray 1999-2000 tuition expenses for more than 3,800 of Cleveland's poorest schoolchildren.

But now things will not work out so happily. On August 24, several days *after* at least two participating private schools had already begun classes, federal district judge Solomon Oliver Jr. issued a sweeping injunction against the program. Oliver noted that the Constitution commands Congress and the states to "make no law respecting an establishment of religion." Oliver further noted that a heavy majority of private schools registered for PPSP—representing a similar majority of its voucher recipients—were sponsored by sectarian institutions. Thus, he reasoned, the legislature's pilot project "has the primary effect of advancing religion" and must immediately be halted pending a formal trial on First Amendment issues.

Three days later, confronted by shocked and weeping PPSP parents and bitterly condemned throughout the city (the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* called Oliver a "vulture"), the judge modified his order. Nearly 600 students who would have been new to the program this fall will still lose their state grants forthwith. To minimize "disruption," Oliver will allow roughly 3,200 other students, enrolled in PPSP last year, to continue their voucher-funded private educations. But only for a single semester more. The judge has scheduled an expedited trial in the case for December. And he has left little doubt what his permanent ruling then will be. "There is no substantial possibility," Oliver warns the Ohio state government and Cleveland's neediest schoolchildren, that his court "will ultimately conclude in their favor."

Which means that—unless an appeals court intervenes or private money can be found to sustain PPSP's current beneficiaries—come January, if not before, several thousand underprivileged students will be yanked out of their chosen private schools and returned to the inner-city public schools whence they came.

Not to worry, blithely announces the *New York Times*, whose editorial page staffers steadfastly defend urban public education and would surely never dream of sending their own boys and girls to one of those elitist Manhattan private schools. Judge Oliver is right, the paper of record concludes: Public vouchers redeemable at private religious schools are always obnoxious to the Constitution, and it is long past time for someone to say so explicitly.

Not to worry, join in the White House and education secretary Richard Riley. And Democratic presidential candidates Al Gore and Bill Bradley. And the National Education Association, and the ACLU, and People for the American Way, and Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Public schools, *good*; voucher-funded private schools, *very, very bad*.

Not to worry—we have saved the best for last—says union president Sandra Feldman of the American Federation of Teachers, whose Cleveland affiliate has led the drive against PPSP since 1995. She, too, thinks vouchers are "bad law." And she pretends to think they also produce "bad education" relative to the public schools where her members work. (The nearly 40 percent of Cleveland public school teachers who quietly send their kids to private schools would appear to disagree, but never mind.) Something wonderful is gonna happen, Feldman cheerfully predicts, when those 3,200 remaining PPSP kindergarten through sixth-graders get their private school lifelines cut for good. "The public schools are used to welcoming all children. They will greet them with open arms."

The mind reels. It reels, on the level of theory, at the crude First Amendment jurisprudence of Solomon Oliver Jr. and his admirers, which reflects nothing so much as reactionary paranoia about anything remotely involving religion. But the mind reels first at the ice-cold, real-world cruelty of such anti-voucher dogma. Any full understanding of which cruelty must be informed, oddly enough, by a quarter-century-long Fourteenth Amendment case overseen by Oliver's colleagues and predecessors on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio.

The case in question is *Reed* v. *Rhodes*, filed against

the city of Cleveland by the NAACP in 1973. In 1976, the district court found Cleveland liable for maintaining a deliberately segregated school system. In 1978, citing more than 200 specific Fourteenth Amendment violations, the court crafted the most sweeping desegregation order ever imposed on a single American school district. The order included mandatory, citywide busing. And by all accounts, this busing mandate, more than any other single factor, prompted roughly 100,000 households—most of them white—to flee Cleveland over the next 20 years. Public school enrollment dropped by 50 percent. The system's tax base dried up. So by 1995, the Cleveland municipal school district was in "total fiscal and administrative collapse," and the district court was forced to transfer local authority to the state of Ohio.

The Cleveland schools have recently begun to emerge from legal receivership. But in every other respect, they remain a disaster. Of more than 600 public school districts statewide, Cleveland has the poorest attendance rate. It has the highest dropout rate. It fails to meet any of the 18 academic proficiency standards established by the Ohio General Assembly. Among the state's eight largest school districts, Cleveland has the lowest sixth-, ninth-, and twelfth-grade test scores in every measured subject. This is a city, in short, with the worst major public school system in Ohio—and arguably the entire country. And these are the schools in which 3,200 temporary voucher escapees must absolutely and immediately be reincarcerated. According to the Constitution, as it is interpreted by Judge Solomon Oliver Jr. and his various cheerleaders.

As a matter of law, they are all quite wrong.

Modern Supreme Court doctrine on the First Amendment's "establishment clause" continues to rest on the 1971 case of *Lemon* v. *Kurtzman*: No federal or state law, even one with a clearly secular purpose, may have a "principal or primary effect" that "advances" religion. Using this test in a 1973 case, *Committee for Public Education* v. *Nyquist*, the Court struck down a New York State program that reimbursed low-income parents for a portion of their children's private school tuition—since most of the money was being used to subsidize parochial education. It is true that *Nyquist* has never been formally overruled.

But in a long line of subsequent cases, as the Supreme Court made plain in 1997, "we have departed from the rule . . . that all government aid that directly aids the educational function of religious schools is invalid." And the Court has never again since *Nyquist* ruled unconstitutional a government program that provides education-related assistance to a general class of private citizens, some of whom might independently choose to use or spend that assistance at a religiously affiliated school. The justices have determined that it does not matter if a majority of those citizens then *do* so choose (as now in Cleveland, where more than half of all PPSP students are enrolled in schools run by the Catholic diocese). Where such *indirect* aid to religious education is concerned, so long as a law remains neutral as between sectarian and non-sectarian institutions, it is perfectly okay.

Ohio's PPSP voucher does better than satisfy this requirement. It financially *disfavors* private schools, religious or otherwise. Eligible families who decide to remain in Cleveland's public system receive a $500 cash "tutorial" grant. Families who decide to take a private voucher get no cash at all and must come up with at least 10 percent of their new school's tuition. In other words, the only real incentive low-income Clevelanders have to choose parochial schools—an incentive that is constitutionally irrelevant—is the fact that the parochial schools are *better*. And with all due respect to Sandra Feldman, anyone who claims they aren't better—and that the primary purpose and effect of PPSP, instead, is to "advance religion"—is a liar. If the Cleveland vouchers come before the current Supreme Court, they will very likely be upheld.

But we say the *current* Supreme Court, which would probably provide a bare, five-vote majority for Cleveland's vouchers, advisedly. Some future Supreme Court is another question altogether. Which suggests something important about the status of private school vouchers in the nation's general political debate.

In the aftermath of Judge Oliver's Cleveland ruling, most Republican presidential candidates have reaffirmed their support for vouchers in principle. Frontrunner George W. Bush of Texas last week announced a plan to condition federal aid to low-income students on their schools' academic performance—and to voucherize that aid in the event those schools fail to match up. The idea appears worthy. But Governor Bush and other education-reform-minded presidential hopefuls would do well to remember the truly salient lesson of Ohio's PPSP experiment. The executive branch these candidates hope to lead is *not* the federal government's most powerful weapon with respect to our schools. As the experience of Cleveland over 30 years makes clear, the federal government's most powerful school-related weapon is the judicial branch.

Presidents can tinker with the Education Department. Judges—individual judges very often—can ruin or rescue tens of thousands of schoolchildren with a stroke of the pen. Presidents do appoint those individual judges, however. So taking seriously his obligation to appoint the *right* ones, and explaining that commitment to the country ahead of time, may be the most valuable education reform initiative any would-be president can offer.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Newt's Legacy

by David Frum

It can seem so terribly unfair. Newt Gingrich led the Republicans to their first majority in the House of Representatives since 1955, and then to two successive majorities for the first time since the 1920s. He forced welfare reform and a balanced budget onto President Clinton. His reward for this record of accomplishment? Spurious ethics charges, anonymous quotes in the *Washington Post* from Republican congressmen about how much better things have worked since he quit the speakership, and a Republican frontrunner for the presidential nomination that Gingrich coveted whose rhetoric is very largely intended to separate himself as widely as possible from the once all-conquering Newt. On the other hand, it all seemed rather less terribly unfair last week, when C-SPAN broadcast its three-segment interview with Gingrich.

By unfortunate coincidence, C-SPAN broadcast the third and final segment only four hours after it carried a major policy address by George W. Bush, a speech on education to the Latino Business Expo in Los Angeles. Bush called for enlarging the federal Department of Education, imposing stricter federal supervision on state and local school systems, and limiting the role of vouchers to an emergency treatment for the worst-functioning districts. Four years ago, and certainly eight, a Republican candidate who took such a New Democrat approach to schooling would have provoked a mutiny on the right, but Bush has already pocketed the conservative vote, and his only serious competitor for the nomination is Elizabeth Dole, who has gravitated even further leftward.

The abject disarray of the once-formidable conservative wing of the party is not entirely Gingrich's fault. But it is very largely his fault, and his interview nicely reminded viewers of how he led conservatives to their present unhappy pass.

Through most of the 1980s, Gingrich had been just one of dozens of clever young congressmen who identified themselves with the excitement of the Reagan revolution. In those long-ago days, a Vin Weber or Jim Courter would have seemed as good a bet to recapture the speakership for the GOP—actually a better bet than Newt, since Gingrich was then widely seen as a flighty and undisciplined free-lancer. But time and chance worked in his favor. Congressmen from swing states, like Courter's New Jersey, lost their seats. Congressmen from solid Republican states, like Mississippi's Trent Lott, ascended to the Senate. Others despaired of perpetual minority status and quit politics altogether. By 1990, Gingrich had become the unquestioned leader of the conservatives in the House. The Bush budget deal promoted him to conservative national leadership. Jack Kemp's decision to seek a cabinet seat in the Bush administration—rather than challenge Mario Cuomo for the governorship of New York in 1990—and Kemp's unwillingness to resign that seat silenced the supply-sider when the senior Bush broke his no-new-taxes pledge. Gingrich denounced Bush, and with that act positioned himself to lead the opposition to Bill Clinton after 1992.

Every leader remakes his movement in his own image, and between 1990 and 1998, Gingrich reshaped Republican conservatism. Unlike his deal-making elders in the House leadership, Gingrich was a fighter, and he imbued conservatism with his own fierce combativeness. Gingrich's concept of fighting was the scoring of parliamentary victories to expose the high-handedness and corruption of the Democratic majority. In the C-SPAN interviews, Gingrich discusses at some length how he used television (C-SPAN, actually) as a weapon against Tip O'Neill. Gingrich, Bob Walker, and other allies would use the quiet hours of "special orders" to give one-minute speeches in the well of the

C-SPAN

AP/ Wide World Photos

House denouncing the Democratic leadership. These stinging orations so irritated O'Neill that he ordered the House camera to pan the chamber during special orders so that viewers could see that nobody was listening—provoking such a ruckus that more people than ever tuned in.

Gingrich's greatest parliamentary victory, of course, was his more or less single-handed bringing down of Democratic Speaker Jim Wright on corruption charges. Gingrich dutifully acknowledges that it was the errors of the Clinton administration—the health care plan, the tax increases, and gays in the military—that toppled the Democratic Congress in 1994, but he does not really believe it. After the perfunctory acknowledgment, he devotes most of his airtime to talking about what he imagines really did the trick: the discrediting of the Democratic leadership through scandals like Wright's.

There may be some truth to this, although one wonders whether ethics charges could really produce the 10 million vote shift of 1994. Believing in the truth of it had, however, immense consequences for the Gingrich-led conservative movement. In trying to upend the congressional Democrats through procedural victories in Congress, Gingrich directed the reforming zeal of conservatives toward the procedures of Congress. Instead of tax cuts, the building of a post-Communist world order, equal justice under law regardless of race, the cultural and linguistic unity of the United States, or any of the dozen other powerful potential issues available to them in the mid-1990s, conservatives found themselves talking about term limits, a balanced budget amendment, House members' bank, the line-item veto, and a series of other issues equally remote from Americans' everyday concerns. The logical culmination of this way of thinking was the Contract With America, which spent the energies of the biggest Republican congressional swing since 1894 on six months of votes on the internal governance of the House of Representatives.

Throughout his C-SPAN interview, Gingrich referred to his passion for "ideas." But in the procedural politics that Gingrich sold to conservatives, ideas had only a weak independent existence. (Even now, Gingrich's idea of an idea is, as he repeatedly stressed, delivering better health care at a lower cost. Until one has some notion of how the job can be done, that's an aspiration, not an idea.) Gingrich's indifference to the grand themes of a Ronald Reagan followed naturally from his approach to politics. Grand themes appeal to national electorates. Congressmen, obviously, don't have national electorates. Their electorates are particular and local. A leader who seeks to attain national power by building a congressional majority is naturally going to be inclined to shun the grand themes of a presidential candidate and instead try to identify issues that could move particular and local blocs of voters out of his opponent's coalition and into his own. That's how proposals like the repeal of the so-called marriage penalty (the higher tax rates faced by married couples with two incomes as compared to two equivalent single filers) and treating western water-use rights as private property protected by the Fifth Amendment

came to move ahead of Reagan-style grand initiatives on the Republican agenda.

This made considerable tactical sense, but it left Republicans speechless and defenseless in their 1995-1996 battles with Bill Clinton. As the president framed his defense of Medicare in the broad language of ideals, Republicans were left sputtering that their so-called "cuts" amounted to barely a couple of dollars a month. Clinton had a big idea about Medicare; Gingrich never did. It was the Reagan-Carter fight in reverse—principle vs. technicalities. To this day, conservatives have not recovered from Gingrich's downgrading of thematics. In 1999, for the first time since the 1940s, there is no generally accepted conservative agenda. Conservatives have dozens, even hundreds, of projects and concepts. But the clarity and power that comes from saying first we'll do this, then we'll do that, when this and that speak to the values and interests of tens of millions of people—that has been lost.

Because Gingrich lacked a unifying political vision of his own, he was susceptible to the sort of populism that postulates some hypothetical "will of the people" that politicians must detect and serve. This susceptibility explains why Gingrich got so caught up in fads and trends: He felt that if he squinted hard enough at them, he could detect the people's wishes. In his 1984 book *Window of Opportunity*, he interpreted the success of the Star Wars movies as proof that Americans yearned for a renaissance of the space program. In his 1992 speech to the Republican convention, he interpreted rising quality standards in the private sector as proof that the public had wearied of the bureaucratic welfare state. Gingrich taught a generation of conservative intellectuals to sleuth out the potential political implications of the success of particular movies, songs, and television shows. It was an amusing parlor game, but it dangerously disparaged the importance of political leadership. In truth, nothing in politics happens spontaneously—which is why it proved such a catastrophe when Gingrich made the fateful decision in early 1998 to let the electorate lead Congress on the Lewinsky scandal, postponing action on Clinton's perjury for the eight fateful months until Ken Starr delivered his report.

As Clinton again and again bested Gingrich, conservatives lost faith in the political appeal of their message. As Gingrich's parliamentary tactics proved useless against the agenda-setting power of the president, conservatives came to doubt not merely their tactics, but their doctrines. And once Clinton escaped punishment for his crimes, conservatives' uncontainable rage convinced them that his successor must be defeated, even at the price of nominating a Republican presidential candidate who owed conservatives little and liked them even less.

Much fun has been made of Gingrich's self-comparison to Henry Clay. But what was dismaying about Gingrich's interview was not the reappearance of his familiar fondness for grandiose historical self-comparisons, but the reminder of how much he once promised conservatives—and how low they have since fallen.

David Frum is a contributing editor to* The Weekly Standard *and author of a forthcoming history of life in the 1970s,* How We Got Here *(Basic).

Let's Not Make a Deal

by Greg Mastel

This week, the presidents of China and the United States are poised to strike a historic and probably irreversible agreement paving the way for China to join the World Trade Organization. Unfortunately, although China's membership in the WTO would allow some in both countries to declare victory, the agreement as now formulated is unlikely to serve the long-term interests of the United States.

China has sought membership in the World Trade Organization for well over a decade, but in the last few months the usually staid negotiations have had more twists and turns than a soap opera. In April, on his visit to the United States, China's premier, Zhu Rongji, offered some impressive concessions. President Clinton correctly delayed a decision; much remained to be negotiated, and he wanted time to analyze the package carefully and consult with Congress.

Normally, such a decision by Washington would have ended the immediate issue, but in a strange turn of events, some major American companies engaged in a lobbying campaign coordinated with Premier Zhu to win support for China's WTO ambitions. Surprisingly, the Clinton administration seemed to give in to this lobbying campaign and issued repeated joint statements with Zhu before his departure from U.S. soil to the effect that the deal would be wrapped up quickly.

In an even stranger turn of events, however, on May 7, NATO forces accidentally bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, killing three Chinese citizens.

AP/Wide World Photos

Premier Zhu, with the president

Looking to deflect public attention from the upcoming ten-year anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, Chinese leaders loosed their propaganda machine. The one-sided coverage of the embassy bombing whipped up a frenzy that Chinese leaders were willing to tolerate as long as it deflected attention from their own much larger, intentional killing of Chinese citizens a decade earlier.

At the same time, China suspended all negotiations on WTO membership, which were already troubled because Chinese negotiators seemed to be backing away from earlier promises. Some Chinese leaders suggested that the United States should lower its demands for WTO membership in the wake of the bombing. The U.S. business community and some in the Clinton administration began nearly begging China to move forward with its WTO application.

All these developments—not to mention the fact that China has lately been threatening to take military action against Taiwan, a democratic power and valued American ally—make it particularly odd that the United States is contemplating rewarding China with WTO membership. Even in the best of times, however, the rush to reach an accord on WTO membership would be ill advised. It might be possible to fashion a WTO accession agreement that would promote U.S. interests, but the incomplete offer made by Premier Zhu was not by itself such an agreement. Negotiations were incomplete on matters such as access of U.S. telecommunications and financial services companies to the Chinese market and the all-important issue of enforcement; and other major WTO members, including the European Union, had not wrapped up their talks with China.

Beyond that, China has a truly awful record of keeping the promises it makes in trade agreements. For years, it routinely violated bilateral agreements with the United States on protection of intellectual property and market access for U.S. exports. Nevertheless, with at least tacit administration encouragement, several groups began reporting economic "projections" that U.S. exports to China would rise by billions of dollars a year if China joined the WTO. (Last week, the International Trade Commission more realistically predicted an increase in the U.S. trade deficit.) These estimates conveniently overlooked the problem of enforcement of past agreements, even though it had been acknowledged by the administration.

The administration also was undeterred by the fact that letting China into the WTO would amount to a major concession from the United States. The United States would give up the one lever that has forced China to make some grudging progress on trade and other issues as well: the threat of unilateral sanctions. If China were a WTO member, Washington could not impose such sanctions.

In theory, scrutiny by the World Trade Organization itself would replace the threat of unilateral sanctions. The possibility of multilateral pressure on China to move away from its mercantilist policies is promising in concept, but it is not at all clear how successful the WTO would be at disciplining China. Beijing has proven adept at playing international politics to divide its critics and frustrate efforts to isolate it or challenge its policies. For example, it has adroitly employed a combination of developing-country rhetoric and economic threats to block criticism of its human rights policies at the United Nations.

Further, the WTO is a rule-based institution, much like a U.S. court. China, however, is not a rule-based society, and policy is often made without a transparent paper trail. It may prove difficult even to establish the existence of objectionable Chinese trade policies before a WTO dispute-settlement panel, much less win a ruling against them.

Conceivably, a WTO accession agreement that included very tough oversight measures would actually improve the prospects for American trade with China. But Beijing has strongly opposed such provisions, and a Clinton administration that sees China's WTO accession as part of its "legacy" seems unlikely to press the matter.

In 1992, candidate Clinton attacked President Bush for kowtowing to the Chinese. Perhaps swayed by eagerness for a foreign policy success, as well as by the lobbying of some U.S. companies, the Clinton administration has pursued policies nearly identical to those of the Bush administration. Indeed, it has repeated Bush's mistakes. President Clinton and his team have allowed engagement to blind them to the dark side of the Beijing regime and obscure America's interest in relation to China. With a largely unenforceable trade agreement at the core of their strategy, they seem willing to accept on faith the promises of China's leaders to fulfill hundreds of complex trade commitments.

Foreign policy mavens are fond of blasting Congress and elections for distorting U.S. foreign policy. In this instance, however, Congress and the upcoming elections provide the best chance to reverse a flawed foreign policy. Congress, to which the Constitution assigns responsibility for international trade, could ignore the blandishments of China's apologists and demand that any WTO agreement be truly enforceable—even if that means slowing the bandwagon for China's membership.

In addition, Vice President Al Gore or the leading Republican contender for the presidential nomination, George W. Bush, could decide to distinguish himself from his political predecessors and propose a more realistic policy toward China. A powerful statement from Bush in particular on this topic would probably give the administration and Congress pause.

If President Clinton and President Jiang announce a deal this week, future historians will wonder at the logic that led Washington to accede to China's wish for WTO membership even as Beijing threatened possibly imminent military action against Taiwan. But even if China makes no military move, the United States is striking a deal likely to be celebrated for mere months and regretted for decades.

Greg Mastel is director of the Global Economic Policy Project (GEPP) at the New America Foundation.

The Seven Habits of Effective Mayors

by Eric S. Cohen

Asked for a definition of compassionate conservatism at a recent luncheon in Washington, Stephen Goldsmith didn't miss a beat: "To me it means that Republicans have an obligation to help those who are in difficult straits, and that we can do that and still be conservative at the same time." He should know. Goldsmith, the two-term mayor of Indianapolis, is presidential candidate George W. Bush's guru of urban renewal.

Goldsmith's record in Indianapolis is impressive: Since coming to office in 1992, he has cut the budget every year, cut taxes four times, opened up over 80 city services to competitive bidding, and reduced the city workforce (everybody but police officers and fire fighters) by 40 percent. Crime is down, record numbers of new homes are going up, and unemployment is below 3 percent. The lessons of Goldsmith's success offer a model of urban reform across the country. Call them the seven habits—or strategies—of a highly effective mayor.

Habit 1: Encourage competition

Markets do many things. They inspire creativity, tailor services to public demand, and weed out bad assumptions. Government monopolies, on the other hand, are fat and inefficient. It's not that city workers are inherently lazy; they just lack the freedom, incentive, and expertise to improve services and cut costs.

Like the prospect of hanging, Goldsmith says, competition concentrates the mind wonderfully. Yet, "the crucial factor in a free market is not fear but freedom." Markets empower workers, who "are more than willing to answer for their results in exchange for real authority over how their jobs are done." In Indianapolis, Goldsmith made it clear that workers who reject accountability, who want to be coddled and protected, should do so on their own time and not at taxpayers' expense.

To the mayor's surprise, union workers, freed from unnecessary middle managers and allowed to bid against private companies, openly won a fair number of city contracts. The city soon contracted out many services, including wastewater management, towing abandoned vehicles, and running the Indianapolis airport. The total savings: $400 million. Moreover, Goldsmith was proved correct. The new services are, as he likes to say, "not just cheaper, but better."

Habit 2: Fire your friends

City governments are notorious for the well-con-

nected party hacks who get appointed as "supervisors" throughout the bureaucracy. Goldsmith fired enough of them to make city departments competitive with private sector companies. It was not an easy task—the managers he fired were predominantly his own Republican supporters—but it paid off. Goldsmith cut a number of needless positions, saved the city money, and won the respect of the union workers, who at first viewed his "marketization" plan as merely a threat to their jobs.

Habit 3: Cut taxes

Just a few years ago, both big government liberals and budget hawks dismissed the importance of marginal tax rates as "voodoo economics." Today, big city mayors, both Republicans and Democrats, believe that supply-side tax cuts are not just common sense but economic necessity. "Let me be absolutely clear about this," says Mayor Ed Rendell, the Democratic mayor of Philadelphia. "Tax reductions are one of the highest priorities of my second term. If we are to have any chance of permanently reversing the decades-long trend of losing residents and businesses, we have to continue to . . . cut the tax burden that chokes our residents, our workers, and our businesses."

Habit 4: Do the fundamentals

A basic failure of the liberal vision of government is that it is long on the things communities should do and short on the things government should do. Fundamental problems like bad roads, syringes on the playground, and backed-up sewers go unaddressed while city governments roll out one "personal well-being program" after another. In the end, dilapidated public spaces send a signal that if you live in a tough neighborhood, you're a second-class citizen.

Under Goldsmith, the city government has been focused on fundamentals. Seven poor areas have been targeted through an initiative called Building Better Neighborhoods. In all, more than $1 billion has been invested to rebuild sidewalks, resurface streets, and build and restore parks and public buildings. Law enforcement spending has been increased by $160 million; 178 sheriff's deputies, police officers, and park rangers have been added. And yet, Indianapolis has seen four tax cuts over the same period.

This approach has reaped many rewards. When Goldsmith visited poor neighborhoods at the beginning of his first term, residents shouted at him. Thirty years of big-government programs and city planners had turned the underclass into hardened cynics. At a neighborhood meeting, one man "stood up and stated flatly that the city had ignored [them] for too long," Goldsmith recounts. "'Face up to your responsibilities,' he said, 'and then we will respond.'"

Habit 5: Support little platoons

The man who stood up at the meeting was a former Black Panther named Olgen Williams. He has since become one of Goldsmith's biggest supporters and a very effective community leader. At the Christamore House, a community center in Haughville, one of Indianapolis's toughest areas, Williams serves as director, mentor, counselor, and fix-it man.

Williams lives in Haughville. The father of ten, he has a personal stake in the community. Moreover, he knows the hard-luck stories of the people around him. His involvement with the children who come to Christamore House has a distinct civic importance. Their lives shaped by gangs, crack, and above all, poverty, the youngsters are nevertheless neatly dressed and well-mannered. They even show a polite interest

in me, a white guy in a suit, and ask what I do for a living. They are developing good habits, the foundation of any just and prosperous regime.

City hall has supported the "little platoons" in Indianapolis with a series of civic initiatives. Community policing, an idea developed by Mark Moore and George Kelling at Harvard and James Q. Wilson at UCLA, has transformed the formerly antagonistic relationship between Indianapolis police and the urban poor into a constructive partnership. In addition, Goldsmith has turned around public housing by moving public money into private investment and working with various community development corporations.

As a result, crime is down dramatically (except for homicides, which Goldsmith attributes to the late introduction of crack into Indianapolis). Over 4,000 homes have been built or restored in the city's most broken-down neighborhoods. And despite the many social and economic ills that still confront the city's poorest residents—out-of-wedlock births, crack, poor schools—there is a new optimism that springs from seven years of slow, but steady, renewal.

Habit 6: Bring God back to the ghetto

Recently, Texas governor George W. Bush traveled to Indianapolis to make his first major policy address. "In every instance where my administration sees a responsibility to help people," he said, "we will look first to faith-based organizations, charities, and community groups that have shown their ability to save and change lives." Bush is not alone. Americans have lost confidence in government's ability to do what religious and community institutions always did—help the disadvantaged—and, as a result, many politicians have embraced the solutions offered by institutions of faith.

Goldsmith has been leading the way. The Front Porch Alliance has placed the resources of city hall behind faith- and community-based efforts to rebuild the city's social capital. The program has helped churches turn abandoned parking lots and crack alleys into parks and playgrounds. It has supplied community groups with city trucks and dumpsters for neighborhood cleanup projects. It has linked faith-based organizations with local charities and businesses to fund after-school, job-training, and family-outreach programs. As Goldsmith explains, "We listen to community and church leaders, who tell us what they need. And we try to get it for them—with private resources if possible, and public resources where appropriate."


Kent Lemon

Stephen Goldsmith

Habit 7: Keep government humble

Mayors across the country are abandoning the Great Society philosophy of government-knows-best in favor of pragmatic, neighborhood-based, faith-based approaches to urban renewal. Goldsmith has shown that a humble government is not a limp government, just one that focuses on its core responsibilities and knows its limits. Businesses are better at providing jobs and creating wealth. Churches and families are better at maintaining the social fabric and instilling virtue. Private companies are often better at providing essential public services.

A humble government accepts its role as a support player. It takes its signals from neighborhood leaders and entrepreneurs. Where appropriate, it supplies limited resources; a humble government does not see in every problem the beginnings of a new agency or government mandate. Those mayors, Republicans and Democrats, who have followed Goldsmith's example—cutting government and taxes while encouraging competition and community—are being rewarded with popularity, electoral success, and national praise.

Eric S. Cohen is assistant editor of the **Public Interest.**

Save Medical Savings Accounts

by Robert M. Goldberg

If Republicans are serious about wanting to protect health care consumers, they should revive the campaign for medical savings accounts. Rather than joining the Democrats' push to let people sue their HMOs, Republicans should insist that MSAs be part of any Patients' Bill of Rights.

The MSA concept is simple: Allow Americans to pay for health insurance and out-of-pocket medical expenses out of tax-free accounts. Let individuals keep what's left in their accounts tax free (to be withdrawn only under certain conditions), giving them an incentive to spend carefully and so helping to contain the price of direct services. Design insurance to cover major medical expenses, protecting people from medical catastrophes and the high expenses of old age, but leaving premiums far lower than for comprehensive coverage; then let employers, or individuals, deposit the premium savings in their MSAs, to cover routine expenditures. The price of both insurance and direct medical services would drop—and doctors and consumers would gain increased control over medical decisions. It's an idea that could truly transform health care.

Back in 1995 Republicans introduced a simple plan intended to make MSAs widely available. Democrats, however, led by Ted Kennedy, claimed that the wealthy would use the accounts as tax shelters, leaving only the sick and poor in managed care and lower-deductible insurance pools. Although a RAND study showed that in fact MSAs would save money for low-income people with serious illnesses, the opponents succeeded in confining MSAs to a pilot program, available only to companies with 50 or fewer employees. Worse, they loaded it with other restrictions. For example, an employee and his company cannot contribute to his MSA in the same year. The legislation enacted in 1996 deliberately made the program hard to market and hard to administer, a bookkeeping nightmare.

Most harmful were a cap on the number of MSAs that could be created nationwide (750,000) and a time limit (no new MSAs could be opened after September 1, 2000). As a result, only 57,000 people have set up MSAs. Says Allen Wishner, CEO of Flexible Benefit Service Corporation of Chicago, one of the nation's largest marketers of health insurance to small business, "Compare the response of people to the Roth IRA which has fewer advantages for people than the MSA. First, what bank is going to invest in the software and personnel to run MSA accounts if they are limited to only 750,000 and to four years? Second, why should insurance agents spend time on something so short term? Third, because they were an experiment, the press never picked up on MSAs as anything worth writing about."

And that's not all. Under the MSA program as enacted, the sum a person or his employer may deposit in his tax-free account in any given year is perversely capped at less than his insurance deductible. As a result, the account may not cover all of the person's out-of-pocket expenses. (The cap is 65 percent of the deductible for an individual, 75 percent for a family.) Then there is the issue of keeping track of deposits and withdrawals and enforcing their proper use. It's hard enough to administer one MSA, let alone dozens as a small business must. Not surprisingly, it is difficult to find a bank in my home state of New Jersey willing to handle an MSA account.

The Democrats intentionally structured MSAs so as to discourage all but the most tenacious from pursuing them. Wishner notes, "You'd be amazed at how many employers and self-employed people had never heard about MSAs or heard about them from me for the first time." Indeed, most of his MSA customers turned to him in desperation: They were small business owners who had discontinued their workers' health insurance coverage after years of double-digit increases in premiums and futile efforts to keep costs down through HMOs.

That's where there is actually good news. Despite the thicket of limitations thrown at MSAs, they are performing as promised: providing low-cost health care coverage to people many of whom would otherwise be uninsured. Wishner, for example, recently signed up a small printing company that had been on the verge of canceling its workers' insurance. The company's new MSA program cuts premiums in half. Most of the employees are modestly paid workers. Wishner says, "Everyone I switched over wound up saving money, spending more money on actual health care expenses and less on premiums, and wound up becoming a more careful consumer." In a review of the MSA program through 1998, the General Accounting Office found that 37 percent of participants had been previously uninsured.

The kinds of patient protections that Democrats—and some Republicans—are proposing (more lawsuits, more mandated health benefits) will probably make health insurance less affordable for small businesses, leading more companies to drop coverage. Hence, MSAs, if truly available, could become an important way for consumers to obtain health insurance. Whatever else a Patients' Bill of Rights contains, it must make MSAs permanent. It must make them available to everyone. Employers and employees must be able to contribute to MSAs at the same time. And people must be permitted to deposit all the money they'll need to cover their out-of-pocket expenses, up to the full amount of their deductible.

These changes in the law would pull a lot of uninsured people off the sidelines. Billions of dollars now locked up in insurance premiums would flow into investment accounts earmarked for health care services, and the play of money and incentives throughout the health care system would be realigned. Consumers would have more control over decisions about their own health care. Whatever Republicans do in the name of patient protection or health care coverage this session will pale in comparison to making MSAs available for everybody. Nothing else they have proposed comes close to creating a real market for health care in America.

Robert M. Goldberg is senior research fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

ONE NATION CONSERVATISM

How George W. Bush and John McCain—without quite realizing it—are creating a new Republican philosophy

by David Brooks

At first blush, the Republican presidential field doesn't exactly overflow with new ideas. Steve Forbes updates the free-market policies and themes of Jack Kemp's 1988 campaign. Gary Bauer's campaign echoes the social conservatism of Pat Robertson's 1988 run. Elizabeth Dole reprises the Main Street Republicanism of Bob Dole's 1988 and 1996 efforts. And Pat Buchanan recycles the working-class populism of his own 1992 and 1996 campaigns.

Nonetheless, alongside these well-established lines of Republican thought, there are two newer approaches struggling to break through. If you listen carefully, you discover George W. Bush and John McCain are running campaigns that sound unlike any others in recent GOP history. The candidates themselves don't seem fully aware of the implications of what they are saying, but together, Bush's Compassionate Conservatism and McCain's New Patriotic Challenge are steps toward a fresh vision for the Republican party. Indeed, if you meld the core messages of the two campaigns, you get a coherent governing philosophy for the post-Clinton age.

The free marketeers and the religious conservatives have been singing their tunes for a while. But the Bush and McCain campaigns emerged in response to the events of the 1990s: the rise of Third Way triangulators on the Democratic side, the waning salience of the culture war (as revealed, for example, by the public's tolerance of the Lewinsky scandal), and the collapse of the Gingrich revolution. That means they are new in tone as well as substance. The older conservative strains were formed in an era of liberal dominance. Conservatives were reacting against the growing welfare state and the liberationist movements of the 1960s. The older conservative strains, therefore, have a confrontationalist mentality: Polarize the

David Brooks is a senior editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

debate, attack the liberal elites. But in the 1990s, liberalism is no longer dominant; the sixties is something that happened a generation ago. This decade has been a period of ideological mush and muddle. So temperamentally, the new conservative approaches are not as confrontational as the old ones.

The new strains reflect a much less polarized view of the role of government. In the era when liberal social programs were on the march, Ronald Reagan could say that government was the problem, and in 1995 Newt Gingrich and Dick Armey echoed that view. But welfare reform is the biggest domestic policy development of this decade, championed by people like Republican governors John Engler and Tommy Thompson, so social policy no longer looks so menacing. Both Bush and McCain criticize the excessive anti-government zeal of the 1995 congressional Republicans. George W. Bush recently attacked "the destructive mindset: the idea that if government would only get out of our way, all our problems would be solved. An approach with no higher goal, no nobler purpose than 'Leave us Alone.'" That phrase—that government should "Leave Us Alone"—was the rallying cry of the Gingrich revolutionaries. Meanwhile, John McCain notes that a "healthy skepticism" about government has turned into "widespread cynicism bordering on alienation." Instead of telling people that government is evil, McCain reminds them that public service is "the highest calling."

Both Bush and McCain believe in conservative governance. Both seek to use government in circumscribed but energetic ways. "Government must be carefully limited, but strong and active," Bush says. The two candidates, however, emphasize activism in different spheres. George W. Bush seeks to restore the power of local and intimate authority—the authority of parents, neighborhood, charity, and local government. Bush says the next task of welfare reform is to build up the religious and community institutions that can touch people on the profoundest level. Bush vows to dedicate $8 billion in his first year in office to expand tax incentives for charitable giving, increase drug treatment, federally fund after-school programs run by community groups, establish "Second Chance" homes for unwed teenage mothers, and offer federal grants for private anti-poverty efforts—an activist agenda. Furthermore, he wants to use government to target specific areas of need. He calls for programs to aid the 1.3 million American children who have a parent in prison.

If Bush fails to fully develop his Compassionate Conservatism, it may degenerate into a tepid form of noblesse oblige: a few tax breaks so that rich people will give a little more money to help poor people, a lot of gauzy, Thousand Points of Light rhetoric. Two leaders of the civil society movement, the Bradley Foundation's Michael Joyce and William Schambra, highlighted this danger in a memo to Bush adviser and Indianapolis mayor Steve Goldsmith last winter. "It conjures up readily for its critics a kind of foolish, mushy, sentimental soft-heartedness that suggests a readiness to return to the days of well-intentioned government hand-outs, which made the giver feel good but did little for, and even harmed, the recipient."

Already, Compassionate Conservatism points toward something much more radical: an across-the-board effort to revive responsible citizenship. Conservatives have not worried much about the decline of citizenship over the last few decades. With their bias in favor of private-sector activity and against public-sector activity, many conservatives have even looked benignly on the decline in voting rates. It's a good thing many people aren't voting, conservatives argued; it shows their lives are not overpoliticized.

But in the 1990s, the danger is that America might become *under*politicized. People might withdraw into the private contentment of their lustrous McMansions—which would be bad not only for those left out of the current prosperity, but for the McMansion dwellers as well. Active citizenship, Tocqueville observed, inculcates certain virtues that are necessary to any great democratic nation. Getting involved in public and political endeavors forces people to develop broader judgment, sacrifice for the greater good, hear the call of duty, and stand up for their beliefs. In other words, the promise of a fully realized Compassionate Conservatism is not merely that Faith Based Foundation X has a higher success rate than Public Welfare Agency Y. It is that working for the general good through voluntary organizations—instead of leaving such functions to professional state agencies—gives people the opportunity to govern themselves. School choice doesn't just yield higher test scores. It is also good for *parents*, because it gets them involved in running their kids' education, rather than surrendering that responsibility to bureaucrats.

Bush seems to realize this. In an education speech

in Los Angeles on September 2, Bush argued that state governments should play an active role in setting out standards and tests. "We test because informed parents become more involved," Bush declared. Further, he suggested that Title I money should be made available to parents who have children in failing schools. They could take this money, up to $1,500, and spend it on tutoring, on private school tuition, or to transfer to a better public school—whatever they choose. The emerging theme is clear: The modern bureaucratic welfare state weakens citizenship. Compassionate Conservatism will mean something to the extent that it renews citizenship and rejuvenates self-government.

Another problem with Compassionate Conservatism is that it is so modest. It might be an adequate governing idea in Switzerland or Colombia or Canada. But America is not like those countries; it is the world's leading power as well as the world's exceptional nation. When Edmund Burke praised the "little platoons" of neighborhood and town, he said they were merely "the first link in the series by which we proceed toward a love to our country and to mankind." A person running for the presidency of the United States of America can't be content to be alderman or even governor to the nation. He has to possess a governing philosophy that connects citizens to higher national aims and that organizes American behavior around the world.

COMPASSIONATE CONSERVATISM IS SO MODEST, IT MIGHT MAKE AN ADEQUATE GOVERNING IDEA FOR SWITZERLAND OR COLOMBIA OR CANADA.

This is where John McCain's campaign makes its contribution. If the Bush campaign promotes limited but energetic government on the local level, the McCain campaign has articulated a philosophy of limited but energetic government on the national and global level.

The core speech of the McCain campaign was delivered at the Johns Hopkins University commencement last spring. "The threat that concerns me is the pervasive public cynicism that is debilitating our democracy," McCain declared. Skepticism about government, he continued, has turned into a biting contempt for public life. And this cynicism doesn't lead people to want to scale back government, as many Republicans used to believe. Instead, it just causes them to detach themselves from public life and active citizenship. Cynics look on outrageous scandals that disgrace our democracy with bemused detachment. Standing aloof and considering themselves superior, they oppose change of any kind, even efforts to reform or cut back the very things that disgust them. The only politics they respond to is Bill Clinton-Dick Morris-style maneuvering, which is petty and sentimental on the surface but corrupt and selfish at its core.

"Now we have a new patriotic challenge for a new century: declaring war on the cynicism that threatens our public institutions, our culture, and, ultimately, our private happiness," McCain said at Johns Hopkins.

The first task, he continued, is to reform the institutions that no longer make us proud. McCain is unabashed about his support for campaign-finance reform, feeling that government can never inspire public confidence as long as politicians are caught up in the money chase. He proposed reforming the Social Security trust fund by taking it off budget so Congress can't raid it. He proposed reforming the tax code, to reduce the loopholes that reward corporate donors. In August, he lambasted his fellow Republicans for larding their tax bill with special breaks for favored donors.

"We need to be a little less content," he continued at Johns Hopkins. "We need to get riled up a bit." In a speech in Kansas earlier in the spring, he matched his reform activism at home with his own brand of democratic activism abroad. Other candidates sometimes seem to pretend that America is not the world's sole superpower. They treat American supremacy as something that will go away if you ignore it long enough. And in this they are right. But McCain embraces American might, believing that it gives us the opportunity to better promote our interests, roll back rogue nations, preserve international order, and advance the cause of democratic self-government around the world. As he demonstrated during the Kosovo crisis, McCain, more than any of the other Republican presidential candidates, believes in using American military might to advance America's democratic ideals and punish outrageous dictators who threaten peace.

The danger in McCain's New Patriotic Challenge

is that it might dissolve into a sour Ross Perot-style reform effort, motivated more by populist resentment than by a genuine effort to restore luster to public life. And the second flaw is that it may be a little too grand. For better or worse, the American people this decade are primarily interested in restoring local authority and reestablishing the intimate structures that have been torn by the social disruptions of the past quarter century. The McCain campaign speaks confidently about global affairs and reform on the national level, but it speaks less confidently than the Bush campaign about repairing the fabric of family and local community. It risks being out of step with a nation that, at this moment, distrusts grand talk and grand projects.

In the political arena, George W. Bush and John McCain are now rivals. But if you look at their policy agendas, you quickly realize that theirs are complementary visions. One primarily addresses the needs of the family and community, and the other the needs of the nation and the world. But they share the traditional conservative belief in responsible citizenship, uniting Americans. Both defend politics and civic activity from the tide of anti-political fervor that is sweeping the country. Together, they make a coherent vision, which might be called One Nation Conservatism.

That phrase has been used elsewhere with various meanings. But it is apt here. In his speech on Compassionate Conservatism, George Bush went out of his way to remind his listeners that we have a duty to assist those left behind by the current prosperity because all of us are part of the same nation. "These are not strangers," he said. "They are citizens, Americans, our brothers and sisters." Bush is right to imply that in an era of decentralization and market segmentation, America risks dividing along class, cultural, and ethnic lines into tribes, each with its own parochialisms, problems, and affirmative-action sinecures.

And John McCain is right to remind us that it is our public institutions that bind us together. We Americans did not become one nation because our ancestors were once members of the same tribe or kingdom, or because we have some blood-and-sweat connection to this soil. We are united by the Declaration and the Constitution of the American Founders. We are united by the system of government they established and the ideals it embodies—so how can we love our country if we hate its government? McCain hopes to restore confidence in that system of government, both at home and abroad.

If you follow these two campaigns to their logical conclusion, you arrive at a One Nation Conservatism that marries community goodness with national greatness. It starts with a series of proposals to eliminate the chunks of the modern welfare state that smothered civic activism. It replaces that old system with something else: a burbling civic life. It accomplishes this through education vouchers, seed grants for charter schools, charitable tax credits, grants to religious and other institutions, Social Security privatization—all of which encourage people to govern themselves.

Then it restores faith in government with an aggressive reform agenda: banning "soft money" from election campaigns, revamping welfare-state programs such as Medicare to give citizens more control over their lives, simplifying the tax code, and cutting corporate pork in order to give citizens the sense that the government works for them, rather than for the corporate titans with the best lobbyists.

It champions a series of measures designed to remind American citizens of their common bonds. It revitalizes our transportation network, which has always bound us together. It nourishes the parks, forests, and preserves that are our common heritage. It reforms the nation's culture policy, so that museums and arts institutions that accept taxpayer dollars are more likely to explore what it means to be American than they are to nourish alienation and multicultural parochialism.

Finally, it promotes an energetic foreign policy—because Americans will never devote themselves to democratic self-government at home if they do not see themselves ardently championing democratic self-government abroad.

No party is worth supporting if its goals are wholly negative, just cutting and dismantling institutions. No party is worth supporting if it cannot distinguish the parts of the state that foster self-government from those that crush it. And no party is worth supporting if it is wholly materialistic; if it seems to be interested in nothing more than building up its supporters' bank accounts. The Republican party may be learning this. It may be on the verge of absorbing the lessons of its recent mistakes. Out of the present quiet and seemingly nonideological presidential campaign, there may emerge a vigorous One Nation Conservatism that will connect a revived sense of citizenship with the long-standing national greatness Americans hold dear. ♦

The Phony Farm "Crisis"

Don't cry for American agriculture

By Stephen Moore

There is an ancient Chinese proverb that warns: "Too little food, one problem. Too much food, many problems." What an appropriate diagnosis for this year's farm "crisis." This summer the media have saturated the airwaves with Norman Rockwell-type portraits of beleaguered family farmers in their overalls, planted on their tractors in the searing sun valiantly battling "the worst drought since the depression." The corn and soybean crop in Maryland this year is almost entirely lost. Tens of millions of dollars of livestock have dropped dead from the heat. A recent David Broder column in the *Washington Post* tells the tragic story of an Iowa farmer who committed suicide rather than face another year of declining revenues and impending bankruptcy.

Illustrations: Kevin Chadwick

Yes, this is one of the worst years ever to be a farmer. But despite the bad weather, the real source of angst for most farmers these days is not too little food but too much. In just the past year, cotton prices are down 46 percent, and wheat has tumbled by more than 60 percent. Corn now sells in some places for $1.50 a bushel, the lowest price since Elvis was alive. A bushel of soybeans sold for twice as much four years ago as it does now. So while half the nation's farmers are complaining that their crops are ruined by drought, the other half, with bumper crops, protest that they can't make any money selling them.

In most other industries, we would be celebrating this surge in output and affordability as a triumph for consumers and a further sign of the fruits of technological progress. Thanks to the amazing productivity of American farmers, the typical family in the United States now spends just 10 percent of its disposable income on food—the lowest percentage anytime, anywhere in the history of the human race. To argue that low food prices are a worrisome development because they hurt farmers makes about as much sense as complaining that increased life expectancy is a bad thing because it wrecks the undertaker's profits.

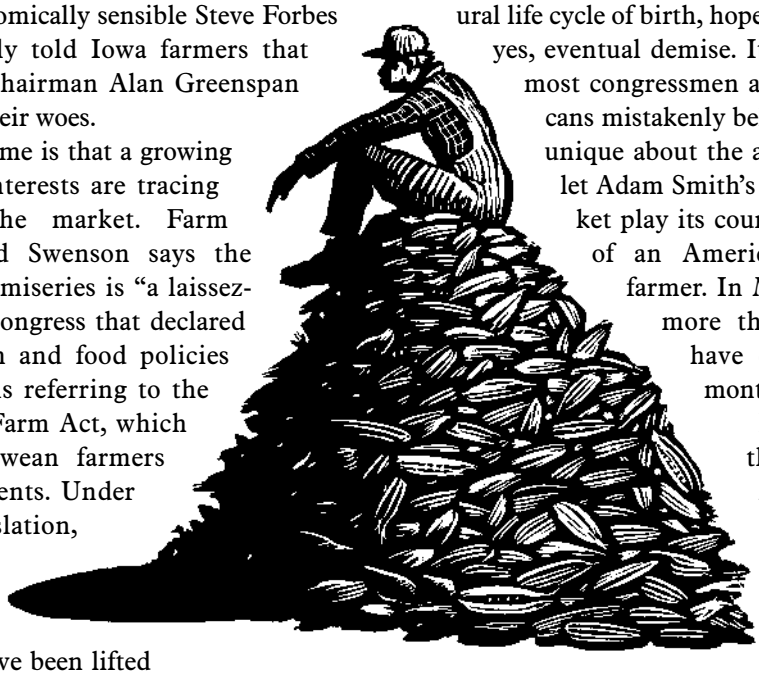
Just 20 years ago, the doomsayers at the Club of Rome, the United Nations, and the Carter administration State Department were glumly predicting the opposite kind of food crisis: global scarcity by the year 2000 and ever escalating prices. In the early 1980s, Lester Brown, president of the Worldwatch Institute declared, "The period of global food security is over. As the demand for food continues to press against the supply, inevitably real food prices will rise."

Clearly, rising and falling commodity prices can't both be catastrophes or we really are doomed. The truth is that the doomsayers were amazingly errant in their predictions. What we are living through now is a triumph, not a crisis, of American agriculture. There are multiples more beneficiaries than victims when the prices of agricultural commodities fall. Only about 2.5 percent of Americans actually produce food. The other 97.5 percent of us just buy and eat it. For almost all of us, falling food prices have

Stephen Moore is director of fiscal policy studies at the Cato Institute.

meant a real increase in our standard of living.

Unfortunately, Washington doesn't see it that way. In a town whose very existence is predicated on providing concentrated benefits to narrow interest groups, and spreading the costs to the rest of us, Congress and the White House can only think of the victims of cheap and abundant food. That the farm population happens to live in political battleground states like Iowa just makes matters worse. The 2000 presidential hopefuls—from George W. Bush to Bill Bradley—have been making buffoons of themselves pandering to Iowa farmers over ethanol subsidies. The normally economically sensible Steve Forbes even preposterously told Iowa farmers that Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan was the source of their woes.



What is worrisome is that a growing number of farm interests are tracing their woes to the market. Farm spokesman Leland Swenson says the source of farmers' miseries is "a laissez-faire euphoria in Congress that declared the country's farm and food policies unnecessary." He is referring to the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act, which was intended to wean farmers from federal payments. Under this laudable legislation, federal restrictions on the acreage farmers are allowed to plant have been lifted entirely, and price supports are supposed to be phased out within four years.

So far the act has been a partial success. Liberated to plant whatever they wish whenever they wish, farmers are generally producing bumper crops. But they are also still demanding and receiving federal subsidies when prices fall too low—which is one of the reasons for the oversupply of food. In 1998 and 1999, farm payments have risen, not fallen as planned. On top of the $16 billion in federal dollars lavished on farmers already this year, and the $6 billion of "emergency" farm subsidies last year to Oklahoma, Texas, and Dakota farmers suffering from what was then said to be the worst drought since the 1930s, Congress now wants to dole out $7.5 billion more for 1999. The White House wants to appropriate twice that amount.

President Clinton, who signed the Freedom to Farm act, now talks of creating a permanent "farm safety net," which seems to suggest that farmers should be treated as welfare moms once were: forever dependent on federal transfers to make ends meet. This would set a frightening precedent. For if we are to create a farm safety net that prevents farmers from going bankrupt, what next? A steel safety net? A semiconductor safety net? A General Motors safety net?

An essential part of free market wealth creation is allowing firms—whether steel mills, GM plants, or Wall Street investment firms—to pass through a natural life cycle of birth, hopefully rapid growth, and, yes, eventual demise. It is clear, however, that most congressmen and many other Americans mistakenly believe there is something unique about the agriculture business. To let Adam Smith's version of the free market play its course could mean the loss of an American icon: the family farmer. In Minnesota, we are told, more than 1,000 small farms have ceased operation each month this year.

But to blame this on the Freedom to Farm Act is ludicrous, because the family farmer has been disappearing gradually for 100 years. In 1900 more than one in three American workers were in agriculture. By 1950 it was still about one in ten. Today the number is around one in forty. Most of us had a grandfather who worked on a farm and virtually all of us had a great-grandfather who was a farmer. It hardly stands to reason that we or our children should therefore be tilling the soil. And we certainly wouldn't be better off if we were.

Even if we decided that national policy should be to preserve the family farmer, what is clear is that the quarter trillion dollars of crop subsidies over the past 20 years—enough money to have bought all of the family farms west of the Mississippi—have done nothing to achieve that goal. Economists have noted that the major financial impact of our generous matrix of farm payments is not to raise farm income, but to artificially inflate the value of farm land. Those payments often enrich absentee land owners, not the

people actually tilling the soil. Fewer than 10 percent of land owners own more than 75 percent of the farmland. So farm supports tend to replenish the already deep pockets.

Most of us remember the news stories a few years back of tens of thousands of dollars of agriculture subsidies paid to famous American farmers like ABC's part-time rancher Sam Donaldson. That was no aberration. The *Wall Street Journal* recently reported that "the government forked over $2.4 billion between 1985 and 1994 to about 16,000 farmers, most of whom did not live on their land, did not drive their own tractors and were mostly indistinguishable from their affluent suburban neighbors."

Most farm subsidies today flow to the same profitable agribusinesses that the public, the politicians, and small farmers complain are cornering the market. About half of the $1 to $2 billion in annual sugar subsidies, for example, enrich fewer than a few dozen large multi-million dollar sugar plantation owners. About 1 percent of the largest farm corporations command about 50 percent of the market—and receive the lion's share of the government's largess. Farm subsidies are corporate welfare for agri-giants and do little to help the small family farmer compete. According to the Department of Agriculture, most of the small "family farmers" that our sense of nostalgia says are worth preserving, are not full-time farmers at all, and receive only about 17 percent of their income from farming.

Opponents of Freedom to Farm retort that the peculiarities of agriculture make free markets unworkable. But out of some 400 major agriculture commodities produced and sold commercially in the United States, only a few dozen receive a helping hand from government. Milk, sugar, corn, wheat, cotton, peanut, and soybean producers receive welfare payments. Most fruit, vegetable, timber, flower, and livestock producers survive and even flourish under the whims of generally free market conditions. It defies all logic why some of these farmers are endowed with a blanket of government protection, and others brave the market. But clearly there is no law of economics or nature that necessitates government intervention for farmers to survive.

The main impact of subsidies is to destabilize the agricultural marketplace and perpetuate what have become nearly annual farm "emergencies." It is an economic truism that when you subsidize something, you get more of it. At the very time that food prices are falling rapidly and the invisible hand of the market is trying to squeeze out the marginal producers who are least efficient, the government perversely pays these farmers to keep at it. Worse, Congress continues to provide farmers with an implicit income guarantee and a floor on the prices they will receive for their crops. These de facto income supports and price controls inhibit the development of a market for insurance policies against droughts, floods, and wild price fluctuations. In the absence of federal intervention, such insurance would be both more affordable and more sophisticated, allowing farmers to buy protection against precisely the kinds of miserable summer conditions that have prevailed these past two years.

> WHEN FARMERS ARE PERMITTED TO PRODUCE FOR THE MARKET, NOT FOR GOVERNMENT, THEN OUR FOOD SUPPLY IS SECURE AND PRICES ARE LOW.

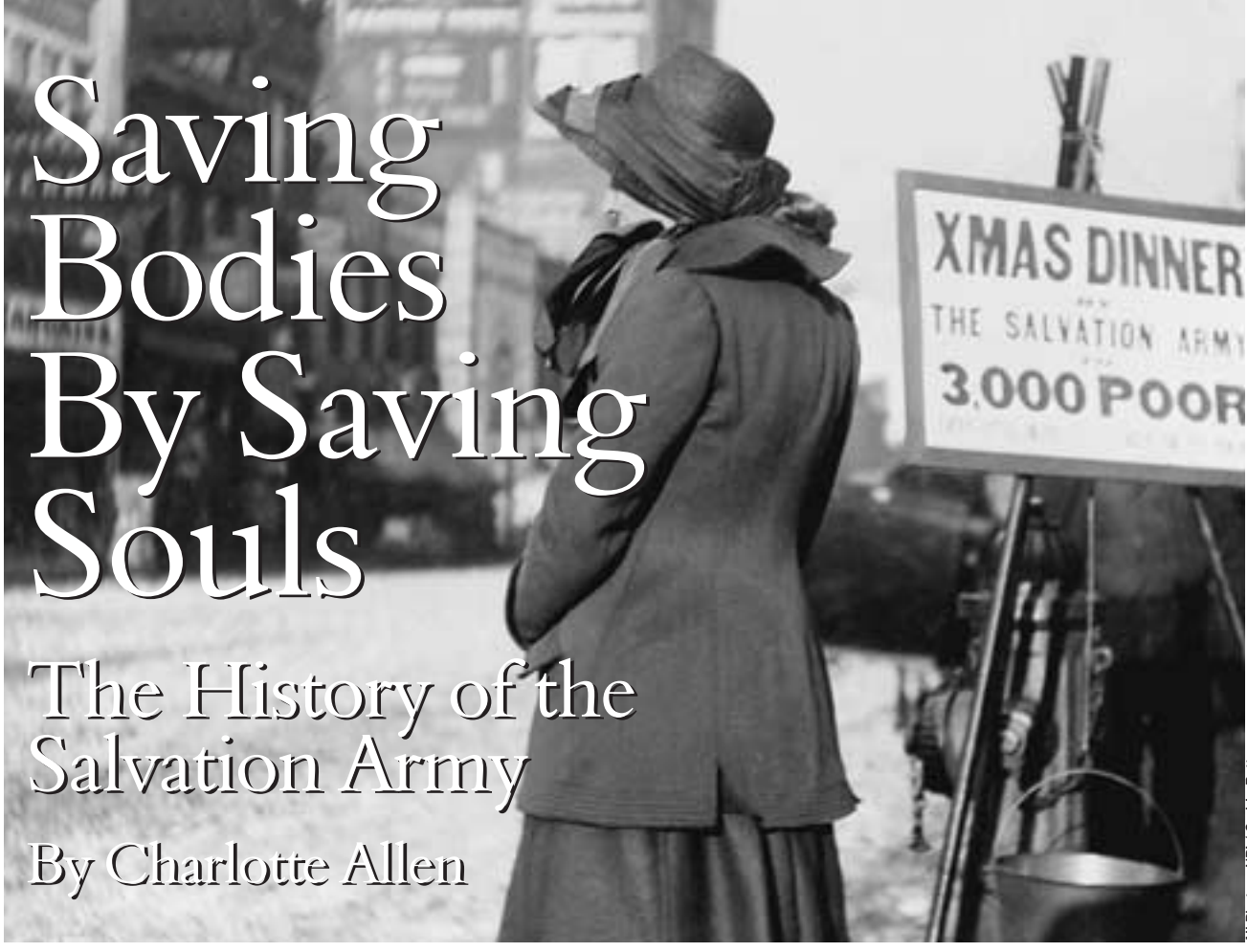
To be sure, free market farming will inevitably lead to greater farm consolidation and more bankruptcies, with the attendant social costs attached to these unwelcome events. These are tragedies, yes, but of small proportions. We ought to keep some historical perspective on our modern-day farm problems. A farm crisis once meant that crops died in the field and people went hungry or even starved to death. The same week this summer that the Senate approved $7.5 billion in relief to American farmers because prices are so low, the United Nations reported that in the past three years 250,000 people have starved to death under socialist farm policies in North Korea. North Korea has one huge farm problem. America has many small ones.

The lesson of the first few years of the Freedom to Farm Act is that when farmers are permitted to produce for the market, not for government, then our food supply is secure and prices are low. Our superabundance of food is one of the great modern-day success stories and one of mankind's greatest technological triumphs. It is a success story that emanates from the incredible productivity of the American farmer. If the Freedom to Farm Act is rolled back or repealed, it will be a victim not of its failure, but of its success. And American consumers will pay the price. ♦

Saving Bodies By Saving Souls

The History of the Salvation Army

By Charlotte Allen



All Photos: UPI / Corbis-Bettmann

The Salvation Army, with its brass bands, blue uniforms, and Christmas kettles, seems to be everyone's favorite charity. The $1.2 billion that the 121-year-old Army receives yearly in private contributions makes it the nation's top-grossing philanthropy, dwarfing such rivals as the YMCA, the American Red Cross, and Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities, for instance, spends a bit more—$1.9 billion annually to the Salvationists' $1.4 billion—on social programs, but it depends on local government contracts to supply nearly two-thirds of its funding. Government aid represents only a little more than 15 percent of the Army's spending budget.

It is difficult not to admire the Salvation Army—as even some of its historic detractors, such as the socialistically inclined George Bernard Shaw, grudgingly conceded (Shaw commended the Army's work with the poor while condemning its practice of financing that work with donations from the capitalist overclass). The Army is the only modern religious movement to have inspired a still-performed highbrow stage play (Shaw's *Major Barbara*), a hit Broadway musical and Hollywood movie (*Guys and Dolls*, based on a Damon Runyon story), and, for a time, the melodic and sartorial style of the world's most famous rock 'n' rollers (the Beatles, on the cover of their 1967 *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*).

DIANE WINSTON
Red-Hot and Righteous
The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army
Harvard University Press, 290 pp., $27.95

And the Salvationists are once again under an approving literary spotlight, in *Red-Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army*, Diane Winston's sympathetic new history. Winston's book is not without its flaws, mostly stylistic. Although she is a former newspaper writer, when she decided to pursue a doctorate in religion at Princeton (the book is her worked-over dissertation), she traded in journalistic crispness for the jargon-laden postmodern vocabulary of present-day academia.

She seems, for instance, to have lost her newswoman's knack for telling a straightforward story, and such dreary and overused words and phrases as "transgressive," "discursive," "performance," "gender identity," and "white male Protestant hegemony" abound. An eight-page excursus on the semiotics of the doughnuts that female Salvationists served soldiers on the World War I front lines is as sodden as those crullers after a day in the trenches.

Nonetheless, this imaginative and thoroughly researched book convincingly traces the way in which the Salvation Army tailored its message and image to accomplish the maximum practical good in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, while winning the hearts of a public not quite ready—as it still seems not to be—for its distinctive spiritual message.

The Army began its formal existence in 1878 with the stated mission of bring-

Charlotte Allen is a contributing editor to Lingua Franca *and author of* The Human Christ: The Search for the Historical Jesus *(Free Press).*

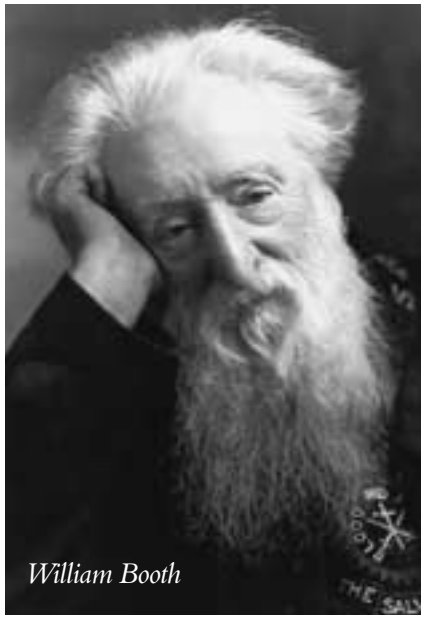
ing the Gospel to the urban poor. Its founders, William and Catherine Booth, were working-class Methodists from the north of England, heartland of the Industrial Revolution and, even in the mid-nineteenth century, of chronic economic depression. Waves of religious revivalism swept northern England, just as they had swept the eastern seaboard of America during the Great Awakenings, and William Booth became a preacher in a revivalist branch of Methodism that held large, emotional meetings in tents and theaters and banned the use of tobacco and alcohol.

In the noisome Cheapside alleys where the Booths started holding revival services in 1865 (with Catherine Booth sharing the preaching, an unusual activity for women at the time), ale-soaked indifference to religion reigned. The Victorian journalist Henry Mayhew—whose mammoth study of London's working class remains the classic nineteenth-century source-book—once asked a London costermonger if he knew who St. Paul was. "A church, sir, so I've heard," the man replied. "I never was in a church." The Booths offered these down-and-outers a raucous, "happy" religion whose freewheeling services copied street-corner entertainment with band-playing, dancing, stage acts, parades, and "red-hot" sermons that reminded listeners of hellfire but were also laced heavily with humor.

In formulating the Army's distinctive theology, William Booth drew on the "Holiness" tradition of Protestantism, in which the decisive event for a Christian is not a particular sacrament such as baptism (Salvationists do not recognize sacraments), but the experience of "sanctification"—the transforming awareness of God's redeeming love, which can take place revival-style during the church service.

The other key tenet of Salvationism came from Methodism's founder, John Wesley, whose tendency toward Arminianism modified the traditional Protestant doctrine of justification by faith in Christ alone, which at its strictest entails predestination to Hell for those not selected for redemption. Wesleyans, like Catholics, reject predestination and hold that works of charity are more closely related to a believer's salvation.

The Booths called this "being saved to save," and from the very beginning they lived it out, operating soup kitchens for the destitute whom they hoped to make part of their flock. From Methodism, too, the Booths derived the hierarchical structure of their new sect, with its ranks of soldiers and officers. The Salvation Army's military titles, uniforms, and rhetoric of battle (Salvationists call their churches "outposts," and their American newspaper is named the *War Cry*) were derived from the "muscular Christianity" of the late nineteenth century, which encouraged Christ's disciples to cultivate the manly virtues. From the Quakers, whose practices Catherine Booth admired, came the Salvationists' commitment to simple living and radical self-denial. To this day, the Army's officers—its ordained clergy—survive on subsistence wages and modest housing allowances.


William Booth

The Booths also figured out how to deal with what might be called the "moral hazard" of the vast eleemosynary enterprise that theirs would grow to be. The conundrum of moral hazard—how to deliver charity without creating a class of dependent idlers—plagues welfare theorists, and it especially plagues the conscientious Christian accosted by a street-beggar, who may well be a fraud or professional panhandler, but who is also, according to the Gospels, Jesus himself in hungry and ill-clothed disguise. The prevailing mode of approach in the Booths' day was the one that had inspired the British Poor Laws of the 1830s: so-called "scientific philanthropy," which attempted to weed out the "undeserving" from the "deserving" poor by making relief as unpleasant as possible (workhouses, breaking up families), and by sending "friendly visitors"—the predecessors of today's social workers—into homes to investigate worthiness and offer unsought advice on housekeeping, cooking, and child-rearing.

The Salvationists eschewed scientific philanthropy as un-Christian: "nailing poverty to a cross of shame," as a Booth descendant put it. As the Army began expanding its services in England and America (where a Salvationist contingent arrived in 1880), it proudly advertised that its soup kitchens and breadlines, its maternity homes and orphanages, its shelters for men, women, and children, its holiday food baskets purchased with kettle proceeds (which made their debut in San Francisco in 1891), and its massive, lavish Christmas banquets for the poor, complete with linens, china, holly decorations, toys for the youngsters, and Santa Claus, were free to all who showed up, whether worthy or unworthy, and of whatever race or creed.

Salvationist soldiers personally waited on table at these feasts, imitating Jesus at the Last Supper. In dank tenement blocks, Salvationist "slum sisters" rented rooms and wore the ragged garments of the indigent to whom they ministered. At the same time, however, the Army set strict rules of conduct for those who availed themselves of its services—no drinking, smoking, or cursing—and it required residents of Salvationist shelters to perform chores for their keep or pay a small fee. Its homes for women trained residents in such trades as bookbinding and hat-trimming so they could find work other than domestic service after they left. The Army's famous thrift shops are lineal descendants of early enterprises of collecting and recycling

junk with shelter-resident labor. The Army treated the poor with dignity, sympathy, and generosity, recognizing that their condition often had economic as well as moral causes, but it expected them to behave responsibly while on Salvationist premises, and it worked to turn their lives around before they left.

The Army was at first a target of ridicule for its circuslike religious services, its constant parading with brass and drums, and its seemingly indiscriminate approach toward charity. (Another target was the virtue of the slum sisters and the Salvationist "lassies" who invaded saloons to sell the *War Cry* and rescue fallen women.) But within twenty years of the Army's arrival in America, the sheer scope of the coast-to-coast social service network that it quickly set up and the exemplary lives of its soldiers had made the new sect respectable. In 1886 a visiting William Booth was a White House guest of President Grover Cleveland.

In 1904 Booth's thirty-nine-year-old daughter Evangeline became commander of the Army's American branch, and during her lengthy tenure (until 1934, when she became general of worldwide operations), the Salvationists became not just respectable but downright glamorous. Tall and good-looking, with a torrent of auburn hair and a talent for the dramatic, Evangeline Booth had begun her Army ministry as a teenager, when she quickly established a reputation as one of its most compelling public speakers.

By age eighteen, she was working Picadilly Circus as a slum sister, dressed as a flower girl in order to find out how the poor really lived. She reprised the role in fetching Eliza Doolittle tatters in an autobiographical pageant she created for a 1906 Army benefit for San Francisco earthquake victims that drew six thousand spectators to New York's Hippodrome Theater.

Although she maintained a genuine devotion to the impoverished, she had her Salvation Army uniforms handmade by a French seamstress and lined in silk. Her tastefully furnished house in Hartsdale, New York, abutted the estate of the financier Felix Warburg, who let her ride her horse on his grounds. Her summer retreat at Lake George was close to that of another friend, *New York Times* owner Adolph Ochs. One of her recruits in Canada was the mother of Aimee Semple McPherson, whose own flamboyant preacherly style owed much to Evangeline Booth's theatrics. To help with Army publicity, Booth brought in Bruce Barton, the preacher's son and advertising tycoon whose 1925 bestseller *The Man Nobody Knows* cast the historical Jesus as a suave and savvy CEO.

Evangeline Booth seeks Christmas donations in 1917.

Booth was a gifted steward of the Army's finances (she increased the value of its property more than thirtyfold during her tenure as U.S. commander and added $35 million to its capital account), and she campaigned tirelessly against her favorite horrors: alcohol and white slavery. But her real flair was for giving the Army sex appeal. It was she who oversaw the sending of female Salvationists to the front during World War I to serve coffee and sweets to the doughboys, mend their clothes, pray with them, and remind them of the girls back home.

The tin-hatted, impeccably virtuous "Sallies" garnered such high esteem among the troops and in the public mind that an idealized version of one of them appeared (of all places) on the cover of *Cosmopolitan* magazine. (Although Winston insists that the Army uniform muffled female sexuality, its close-fitting bodice and high collar flattered many a face and figure.)

Thanks to the work of the Sallies and other Salvationist volunteers during the war, the Army never had to worry about money again; it vaulted to the forefront of American charities, where it has remained ever since.

Guys and Dolls was only the culmination of an early-twentieth-century stage and screen tradition in which the shapely, bonneted lassie with a tambourine was as much an urban stock type as the streetcorner crapshooter and the prostitute with a boa and a heart of gold. Clark Gable, Cary Grant, Marlon Brando, Joan Crawford, and Mae West all had starring roles in films that gave the Salvation Army an honorable niche in the cultural landscape.

After the Evangeline Booth years, and as moviegoing tastes changed, the Army's quasi-worldly, silver-screen sheen wore off. The current national commander, Robert A. Watson, lives quietly and frugally in Army-owned lodgings near its national headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. Many of the Salvationists' huge array of social services are surprisingly similar to those the Army offered a century ago (it still dishes out seven million free Christmas dinners a year), but they have become, like social services elsewhere, institutionalized and professionalized, with a paid staff of 37,000 trained caseworkers and managers supplementing the religious troops.

The Army retains its knack for positioning itself to be all things to all potential contributors. Religious and social conservatives can take comfort from the Salvationists' wholesome style and quasi-military structure, deducing (correctly) that their donation dollars will not be spent on transient political and ideological causes. In 1998 the Army turned down $3.5 million from the city of San Francisco rather than comply with a gay-rights ordinance that requires city contractors to extend spousal health insurance where offered to "domestic partners" of their employees. The Catholic Church, like the Army, holds that sexual relations outside marriage are wrong, but Catholic Charities decided to keep its $5.6 million worth of San Francisco contracts by finessing the issue, persuading the city to include in its definition of domestic partners family members and platonic roommates.

The Salvationists' more forthright stance could only shore up their conservative support—while their irenic attitude toward city officials and their clearly sincere commitment to alleviating suffering probably earn them some respect from liberals. Unlike other evangelical groups in America, the Army has steered clear of politics and declined to take high-profile positions on such issues as abortion.

Thus, when a suburban shopping mall outside Washington barred the Salvationists a few years ago from setting up their distinctive red kettles to collect for the needy at Christmas, there was an outcry from press and public, and the mall backed off.

The Army's religious identity is delicately muted (its distinctive red logo is a shield, not a cross), enabling it to draw donors from well across sectarian lines: Catholics and non-Christians aplenty, along with the Protestants who might be expected to support Protestant philanthropy, many of whom are probably unaware that the Salvation Army is a church as well as a nonsectarian charity.

THE SALVATION ARMY NEEDS TO REINVIGORATE ITSELF AS A RELIGIOUS TRADITION IF IT IS TO SURVIVE.

Indeed, the Army is surprisingly small compared with the vast network of services that it tends. As a religious denomination, it has fewer than 500,000 members in the United States, of whom only 124,000 are uniform-wearing soldiers, many the offspring of other Salvationists. In England, the Army's membership is in sharp decline: 43,000 soldiers in 1998, compared with 124,000 in 1947, and its leaders are considering whether to abandon military grades, the uniform (over much protesting from the ranks), and a requirement that officers marry only other officers.

Over the years other groups—from the Jesus People of the 1970s to Mother Teresa's nuns to a host of storefront ethnic preachers—seem to have replaced the Army in the streets searching for sick bodies or souls ripe for conversion, and in the public mind as the embodiment of urban Christianity.

In *Red-Hot and Righteous*, Diane Winston contends that the Army realized early on that evangelizing the poor was a much tougher proposition than helping them materially, and that it forsook its original goal of sacralizing the culture in order to become an entrenched part of the culture, phasing out its rowdy revival meetings as its philanthropic activities grew in scope and prestige. Commentators on Winston's book have warned that the Army's near-abandonment of its Gospel-bearing mission may presage the eventual fate of other churches that entangle themselves in "faith-based" partnerships with the government to deliver social services.

It is certainly true that the Salvation Army needs to reinvigorate itself as a distinct religious tradition if it is to survive (and it seems to be taking some steps in that direction, such as reintroducing communion services in order to enrich its liturgy). Another way to look at the Army, however, is not so much as a separate denomination but as a Protestant monastic system, whose members take vows of self-denial, wear distinctive garb, and embrace the primordial monastic mission: to pray and to extend God's welcoming love to the physically, spiritually, and economically broken.

G.K. Chesterton once remarked that Catholics have religious orders, while Protestants have sects—and the Salvation Army fills for Protestants the niche that a diffuse array of male and female orders fills for Catholics. It does so selflessly, uncompromisingly, and successfully. As such, it is unrealistic to expect the Army ever to become an evangelical megachurch. Some of its trappings of Victorian-era muscular Christianity may evolve into something else, but the Army's distinctive spiritual fervor and sense of calling—above ideology, geared to service—ought to ensure it a lasting place on the American scene. ♦

Always the One

The Political Career of Richard Nixon

By Alvin S. Felzenberg

It's been twenty-five years since the only resignation of an American president, but our fascination with that complicated man, Richard Nixon, seems to continue unabated.

How are we to make sense of his extraordinary achievements, his monumental flaws, the heights to which he rose, and the depths to which he fell? From the day he was first elected to Congress in 1946 at the age of thirty-three until his death in 1994, Nixon was a dominant force in American politics; no American president since the Founders was on the political stage longer than Nixon. And now, a quarter century after he left the White House, Nixon is the subject simultaneously of the comic movie *Dick*, and two serious studies: *The Contender* by Irwin F. Gellman and *The Presidency of Richard Nixon* by Melvin Small. Indeed, these two new volumes might serve as bookends to their subject's career: Gellman shows how Nixon was at the beginning, Small shows how he was at the end, and between them we can begin to discern the lineaments of the man.

IRWIN F. GELLMAN
The Contender
Richard Nixon, the Congress Years 1946-1952
Free Press, 590 pp., $30

MELVIN SMALL
The Presidency of Richard Nixon
University Press of Kansas, 368 pp., $29.95

Gellman reveals himself to be something more than a serious historian interested in weighing evidence and telling a story. This well-regarded author of three books on Franklin Roosevelt's foreign policy is a man with a mission. As he takes Nixon from his humble beginnings in Yorba Linda, California, to the vice presidency, Gellman passionately works to dispel the myths Nixon's detractors have perpetuated about his early years in politics. It's just not true, Gellman claims, that Nixon was a Red baiter of the first order, out-McCarthying Joe McCarthy. Neither is it true that he was a stooge of California's powerful industrialists, who had secretly financed his campaigns. It's not even true that he constantly lied, especially about the records of his opponents.

But Gellman has achieved something more important than simply exploding these old myths. The basic facts of Nixon's life and career have long been available in works by Stephen Ambrose, Jonathan Aitken, Tom Wicker, and Herbert S. Parmet. But what Gellman has added in *The Contender* is one of the very few outstanding legislative biographies ever written.

Most of the successful studies of this kind have either been about extremely powerful senators (Richard Remini's Webster and Clay, for example, or Randall Woods's Fulbright) or about dominant congressmen (Richard E. Cohen's new study of Dan Rostenkowski being the latest). Good studies of the work of junior members are rare—usually because there's so little to say. But Nixon turns out to have had a surprisingly effective and busy legislative career.

He did have a hand in drafting both the Taft-Hartley Act and the Mundt-Nixon internal security measure (better known as the McCarran Act), but his influence was more strongly felt in legislative oversight than in the crafting of legislation. He took his seat as part of Harry Truman's famous Eightieth "Do-Nothing" Congress, and he enjoyed wide latitude courtesy of divided government—becoming one of the first freshman to chair a subcommittee in the House this century and using his powers to expose misdeeds in the executive branch.

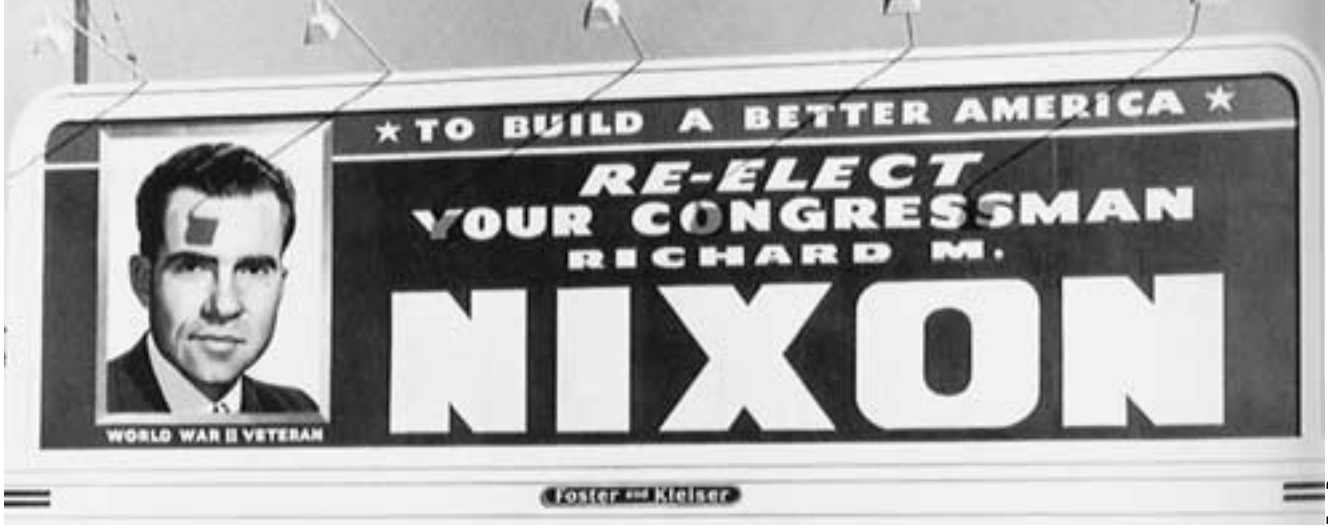
Of course, it was by taking risks (as he did when he believed Whittaker Chambers's assertion that former state-department official Alger Hiss had been a Soviet agent) that Nixon caught the attention of party elders and the media. But it was also by sheer persistence. Indeed, it would be fair to say that Nixon was catapulted to higher posts more by his record of success than by calculating ambition. He had not planned on running for office. Others sought him out. Once elected, he concluded that the way to rise was through hard work. Nixon's was the only name Dwight Eisenhower's advisers ever seriously considered for the second spot on the 1952 ticket.

Because readers know where Nixon's career will take him in the years beyond the scope of Gellman's study, they will be tempted to probe for evidence of how what Nixon learned as a legislator would influence his actions as president. And Gellman supplies the information in abundance.

Nixon's internationalism, anti-communism, and interest in foreign affairs, for example, were evident very early. In his first months in Congress, Nixon took his first trip to Europe as part of a fact-finding tour of postwar conditions assembled by Massachusetts representative (and future secretary of state) Christian Herter. Nixon returned prepared to take on his party's isolationist wing in support of the Marshall Plan. In the last address he ever gave, he vividly recalled the impact that trip had on him. (William Elliott, the Harvard professor who advised the Herter Committee and befriended Nixon, would later help launch the career of another young man of promise, Henry Kissinger.)

On economic matters, the early Nixon appeared less sure of what he wanted to do. He consistently condemned Truman for imposing price controls, but would sometimes advocate them as an unpleasant and yet necessary means of controlling inflation. In his first campaign for Congress, Nixon referred to himself as a "practical liberal." In office, he advocat-

A visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation, Alvin S. Felzenberg writes frequently on the history of the American presidency.



Free Press

ed increased Social Security benefits, public housing, and federal education subsidies to states that lacked "sufficient taxable property to maintain minimum standards." Conservatives and liberals who think Nixon changed course as president when he accepted some Democratic spending initiatives and introduced others of his own will learn from Gellman that Nixon was never as much an enemy of activist government as both he and his opponents claimed.

When it came to trade, Nixon "voted his district." Although a free-trader by inclination, he made the case for protection of the California citrus industry as vigorously as John F. Kennedy stood up for New England tanneries. On labor matters, he tended to oppose large and unaccountable conglomerations while he was in Congress—just as he would reach an accommodation with the AFL-CIO and the Teamsters while he was president.

Another Nixon myth that Gellman sentences to the dustbin of history is the claim that Nixon was the creation of Murray Chotiner (who some consider the first modern political "consultant"). *The Contender* demonstrates that Chotiner played only a minor role in Nixon's early races (though the two grew closer afterwards), and one comes away from the book hungry for more information about the two politically astute California businessmen, Herman L. Perry and Roy Day, who promoted Nixon's rise.

So too Gellman demolishes the myth that Nixon defeated Helen Gahagan Douglas in his race for senator through deception, deceit, bribery, and fraud. The campaign was rough and tumble, but Nixon played within the bounds: Just as, in 1988, it was Michael Dukakis's Democratic primary opponent Al Gore who first raised the issue of Willie Horton that the Republican George Bush would later use, so Nixon used attacks against Douglas's left-leaning voting record that had originally been mounted by her Democratic opponents.

When it came to scandals, however, Nixon seems to have drawn the wrong lessons as president from what he witnessed as a legislator. He had observed the lengths to which the Truman administration—and especially its politicized Justice Department—had gone to protect its own from both congressional and grand jury investigations, and he seems to have come away from the experience believing presidential stonewalling was simply part of the political game.

Gellman does castigate the young Nixon for at least one ethical lapse. To assist another Chotiner client, Joe Holt, to win a congressional primary, Nixon supplied the campaign with information from the House Un-American Activities Committee about Holt's opponent (a former Nixon ally). Gellman does not consider whether Nixon committed other sordid actions of this kind. What business was it of Senator Nixon's, for instance, who "The American Friends Service Committee" invited to speak at Whittier College (a private institution and Nixon's alma mater)? It may be that in these and other episodes of the time, the "dark side" of Richard Nixon was visible very early in his career.

One who thinks so is Melvin Small. And, like many others, he finds in Nixon's dark side the key to the president's demise. As he builds his case in *The Presidency of Richard Nixon*, however, Small relies too much on the myths Gellman works to dispel. Indeed, he not only accepts the conventional stories about Nixon, but adds some new ones to the canon.

Small may believe that Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and White House Chief of Staff Sherman Adams worried during President Eisenhower's illnesses that Vice President Nixon and his "right-wing friends" were plotting to take over the administration. But every other account of Nixon's behavior during that period, even those by his most severe critics, praise his restrained and dignified behavior.

If Gellman awards Nixon too much slack, Small grants him none. "Nixon was an unpleasant human being," he observes in his preface. "Nixon was a crude, bigoted, and mean-spirited fellow whose entire life seemed to be devoted to destroying real or imagined enemies," he adds in his conclusion. And throughout the book, Small appears preoccupied with Nixon's drinking. Rather than demonstrate how (if true) this activity influenced his actions as president, Small obsessively quotes almost everyone who ever saw Nixon take a beer.

In assessing Nixon's presidency, Small is more critical of Nixon's record in foreign policy and more laudatory about his domestic achievements than previous writers. He does credit Nixon for ending the Vietnam War, albeit too slowly, and bestows upon him the usual plaudits for taking the initiative with China and for the thaw in American-Soviet relations. But he then faults Nixon for bumbling in the Middle East, undermining an elected government in Chile, and supporting undemocratic regimes in the Third World.

On domestic policy, Small proclaims Nixon the most environmentally conscious president since Teddy Roosevelt and asserts that Nixon was honestly committed to increasing the number of minority-owned businesses and keeping treaty obligations to native Americans. (He quotes Nixon as saying that neither action would bring him many votes.) Small claims to find no "ulterior motive" in Nixon's affirmative-action "Philadelphia Plan." But he does record that Nixon recognized how "quota hiring" in the building trades would help divide the Democratic constituencies of African Americans and organized labor—which surely sounds like an ulterior motive.

Small comes closest to capturing the essence of Nixon's style of leadership when he discusses how Nixon approached the desegregation of southern schools. He would equally oppose statutory segregation and forced integration. He would extend transition periods, but enforce court ordered ends to them. Nixon assembled biracial advisory commissions to provide for an orderly integration of southern institutions, which, given the polarization of the times, no Democrat could have had done. One Nixon aide said that the "miracle" of all this was that Nixon in five years achieved "total desegregation of the South in such a way that the courts and the Democrats received the blame."

In his treatment of Nixon's White House operations, Small forgets that Nixon was neither the first nor the last president to organize public support for his programs, enact a common strategy for media and speechwriting, or attempt to talk to the American people over the heads of the media. His discussion of initiatives Nixon put into place is too colored by how they were used to cover up and contain the abuses of Watergate.

Nixon enthusiasts and detractors alike would be well advised to read Gellman and Small side by side, for each contains the antidote to the other. Of course, even taken together, they merely provide the bookends for the man's career. When it comes to that myriad of contradictions that go by the name of Richard Nixon, no one ever will capture all that lies between. ♦

JACKPOT

The Strange State of Nevada

By Bill Croke

It's "Burning Man," a bizarre high-tech Woodstock held annually on the Black Rock Desert. It's U.S. 50, "The Loneliest Road in America." It's state-sanctioned prostitution (and the final closing last month of the infamous Mustang Ranch, complete with teary-eyed hookers caught on TV). It's the radioactive wasteland of Yucca Flats and the nightly sea battle on the Treasure Island Hotel's man-made lake. It's Basque sheepherders who spend months alone in the desert and 127,000 rooms for rent in Las Vegas.

DAVID THOMSON
In Nevada
The Land, the People, God, and Chance
Knopf, 320 pp., $27.50

It's Nevada, and may God have mercy on our souls.

Whether the cause is finally the unforgiving elements of geography, the tales of lost mines, the UFOs in night skies, or the slot-machine jackpots, writers as diverse as Mark Twain, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, and John McPhee have found something compelling about Nevada. And the latest addition is David Thomson, an author known for a number of books about Hollywood, including *Beneath Mulholland*.

In Nevada, his new book, is a series of short chapters—forty-seven snapshots, if you will—on the history, culture, and contemporary mores of the "Silver State." Nevada drew its nickname from its first boom: the discovery of the Comstock Lode near Virginia City in 1859. This famous silver strike drew the usual fortune hunters and lowlifes. It also attracted a man named Orion Clemens (a Lincoln administration appointee sent to serve as secretary to the territorial governor) and his younger brother Samuel.

Twenty-seven-year-old Sam Clemens's literary pretensions led him to the editorial office of the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*, where he confidently announced, "I've come to write for your newspaper." The pseudonym "Mark Twain" soon followed (pseudonyms were a defense mechanism adopted by newspapermen in lawless western towns where journalists were sometimes shot in the street for their printed opinions), and one of his first pieces was a hilarious review of *The Book of Mormon*.

Despite periodic upsurges in the mining and cattle industries, however, Nevada remained a backwater (even by western standards) until 1931. That was the year that the state legislature—seeing the Great Depression's ravages of the state's mines and ranches—passed two new laws. One legalized gaming, and the other reduced the waiting period for divorce from ninety days to six weeks.

The first produced nascent stirrings in the little town of Las Vegas. And the second turned Reno into a boomtown full of well-off East Coast socialites and Hollywood stars seeking to break the bonds of matrimony in the crystalline desert air. All this coupled with the Hoover Dam Project of the early 1930s (Las Vegas's prosperity always depended on water) gave Nevada a jumpstart in its recovery from hard times. Savvy sagebrush politicos, used to the boom-bust economy of the West, hadn't waited to be rescued by Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal. And so the modern Nevada of Rat Pack glitz and casinos run by the Mafiosi was born. If it had nothing else to offer, the bleak desert presented to a world of sinners an almost endless variety of sin.

Las Vegas is the place many people think of when the word "Nevada" is mentioned, and Thomson devotes a con-

Bill Croke is a writer in Cody, Wyoming.

siderable portion of *In Nevada* to its bizarre saga. In Vegas, water is life, history is biography, and the sound of prosperity goes ring-ding-ding. Over the years the town has had its share of boosters and philanthropists (though some got their start breaking kneecaps with baseball bats).

Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel is credited as being the visionary who is the father of modern Las Vegas. He foresaw that the post-World War II economic surge would bring to the desert city hordes of middle-class Americans with both leisure time and discretionary income. That, along with Nevada's liberal gaming laws, made the state a magnet for organized crime in its endless quest in the post-Prohibition era for influence in semi-legitimate, or at least legal, enterprises.

Bugsy Siegel opened his Flamingo Hotel the day after Christmas in 1946, and promptly made the sort of financial blunders typical of a novice with a great idea. Since he was already in extreme debt to several of the major Mafia figures of the day, he became a business liability. Siegel was murdered in Los Angeles in June 1947, and the Flamingo was passed into fiscally conservative hands and thereafter prospered.

Frank Sinatra came in on the postwar mob coattails, buying a small share in the Sands Hotel and owning, at one point, 50 percent of the Cal-Neva Lodge in Lake Tahoe. In Las Vegas, Sinatra cultivated the infamous image of the boorish-bad-boy-mob wannabe, an obnoxious "runt with bodyguards," as Thomson calls him. But Las Vegas can thank the boy crooner for inventing the "lounge act," the staple of its casino entertainment for decades.

Thomson's strangest character is Howard Hughes, the near-billionaire ex-movie mogul who from 1966 to 1970 resided in obsessive seclusion on the top floor of the Desert Inn, surrounded by a staid Mormon entourage. When Moe Dalitz, the hotel's manager, complained that Hughes was taking up too many suites that could be used to "comp" gamblers, the eccentric Hughes simply bought the hotel. It wasn't a great investment—he was, in fact, taking up too many suites—and in the end his financial losses (along with an irrational fear of nearby underground nuclear testing) caused him to decamp for the Bahamas.

Since the advent of the Cold War, Nevada has been—along with some remote atolls in the South Pacific—the primary nuclear test site used by the Atomic Energy Commission. In the 1950s, guests on the upper floors of Las Vegas hotels could rise at dawn and watch from their windows the quick, bright flashes and the mushroom clouds sprouting on the desert horizon. Las Vegas enjoyed the show, but, being upwind, never suffered the consequences. Downwind, towns in southern Utah such as St. George have high cancer rates that persist to this day.

Thomson doesn't hide the dark side of the neon. He reminds us that Las Vegas has the highest suicide rate in the nation, hosts gangs running a lucrative drug trade, and publishes a local Yellow Pages featuring a hundred pages of "adult entertainment" listings.

IT'S LAKE TAHOE AND THE DESERT, BASQUE HERDERS AND LAS VEGAS. IT'S NEVADA, AND MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON OUR SOULS.

But Thomson is convinced the future is brighter. A new breed of entrepreneur is emerging, personified by Steve Wynn. Wynn first saw the Emerald City as a child of eleven in 1953, and he seems to be one of those people who foresee their life's work at a tender age. By the time he was in his twenties he was managing the slot machines at the Frontier, and from there—through hard work and an eye for the main chance—he has attained his current status as "Mr. Las Vegas."

In 1989, Wynn opened the Mirage, with three thousand rooms and a huge lobby containing a live tropical rainforest—out-glitzing Caesar's Palace and the MGM Grand, and inaugurating the new family-friendly city: Las Vegas as a Disneyesque multi-theme park.

But Wynn was right that something needed to be done to keep the city attractive to the tourists it depends upon. Today, thirty-six states offer casino gambling or lotteries, and gambling is now a $500 billion business in the United States. Six percent of the gross national product went for gambling in 1996. Eight percent went for groceries.

Wynn was among the first to realize that prosperity would depend less and less on casino revenues. Thus the Mirage. And the Bellagio, the Venetian, the Paris, and the Mandalay Bay. Eleven of twelve of the world's largest hotels are in Las Vegas, and lately daily occupancy runs at 90 percent. Venerable Rat Pack haunts like the Sands and the Dunes were sacrificed to make room for the new mega-hotels. In Las Vegas, there is no such thing as the National Historic Register.

Politically, an annual influx to the city of 75,000 new residents is tipping the state's demographic scales and pushing a western conservative bastion toward liberalism. With their dependable Las Vegas base, Democrats are increasingly being elected to national and state offices, and this doesn't sit well with the folks in Reno and Elko. The southern counties around Las Vegas are growing so fast that they have become an almost autonomous political entity in themselves: They get the water, have the political clout, and create wealth on a grand scale. In northern Nevada, ranchers struggle; in Las Vegas, twenty-year-old waiters make $60,000 a year.

Thomson's *In Nevada* is history scattered like birdshot, but his short, disunified vignettes do, in fact, capture something of our most peculiar state. At least, they capture something of Nevada's intrinsic disunity—the difficulty everyone has holding in mind all at the same time the salt-flats outside Wendover, the clear waters of Tahoe, the sheepherders' restaurant in Winnemucca, the cattle ranchers' café in Elko, the ring-ding-ding of Las Vegas, the water piled up at the Hoover Dam, and the endless desert. Of course, what we're really waiting for is not a writer who can show us how the pieces of Nevada don't fit together, but a writer who can show us how they do. ♦

Good in Every Sense

The surprising excellence of The Sixth Sense

By John Podhoretz

The most striking recent evidence that mystical and supernatural forces may be at play in America is this: The best movie of the year is a horror flick starring Bruce Willis as a psychiatrist.

On paper, nothing could sound less promising, especially if you were one of the few unfortunates who paid cash money to see Willis's last performance as a psychiatrist in a hilariously rotten piece of soft-core porn called *The Color of Night*. Add to that the fact that Willis's co-star is an eleven-year-old boy whose most notable previous credits were playing Murphy Brown's illegitimate son and the child of Forrest Gump, and you would have every reason to avoid *The Sixth Sense*.

But *The Sixth Sense* is, in fact, a masterpiece—original, spooky, funny, literate, thought-provoking, and profoundly moving. It possesses a quality almost entirely absent from recent American movies: It's in the best possible taste. It even makes Philadelphia look good.

The aptly named Cole Sear (Haley Joel Osment) is a troubled boy who is bearing the weight of the world on his narrow shoulders. His father has run off with another woman, leaving his valiant mother (Toni Collette) to struggle on her own in South Philly with two jobs and a son who is being eaten alive by a secret he's too afraid to tell her. It's the task of child shrink Malcolm Crowe to divine that secret.

Malcolm is in trouble too. Once a sanctimonious success and the toast of the town, he is coping with a marriage that began to crumble after a former patient broke into his house, screamed "You failed me!" and shot Malcolm in the gut before killing himself. In the midst of a career crisis and haunted as he is by that failure and his unjust punishment, Malcolm is in a unique position to come to grips with the fact that his new patient is quite literally haunted.

Malcolm first meets Cole in the pews of the boy's parish church, where Cole goes to find sanctuary from his troubles. Ominously, Cole speaks a phrase in Latin unknown to Malcolm, who goes to the dictionary and discovers it is the *de profundis*—the first words to Psalm 130: *Out of the depths I cry unto you, O Lord*.

Spyglass Entertainment Group

That touch alone is indicative of the delicacy and sophistication that writer-director M. Night Shyamalan brings to *The Sixth Sense*. Born in India and raised in Philadelphia, Shyamalan is all of twenty-nine years old, and he proves himself a natural-born storyteller. *The Sixth Sense* unfolds itself with quiet and dogged persistence. It takes its own sweet time, and even seemingly throwaway scenes (like one with Shyamalan as an emergency-room doctor having to tell Cole's mother she's under suspicion of child abuse) are both beautifully conceived and necessary to the plot.

As anyone who has seen the film's newspaper ads knows, Malcolm finally gets Cole to tell him and the audience his secret: "I see dead people," the boy says. "All the time." After he speaks those words, we begin to see what Cole sees, and the sights are frightening and tragic, like a teenage boy who eagerly says he wants to show Cole where his dad keeps his guns. When the boy turns away, the camera reveals that his skull has been half-shattered by a bullet.

The ghosts Cole sees don't know they're ghosts, but they do know they're angry and dissatisfied, and aside from the church there's no place he can hide. The ghosts want something from Cole, but he's too young to know what it is, and in their frustration they occasionally do Cole physical harm.

It's up to Malcolm to help the boy figure out how to cope with his uncanny second sight, because if he doesn't Cole will end up like the patient who shot Malcolm and brought his idyllic married life to an end.

While *The Sixth Sense* does deal with the supernatural, it could be the story of any extraordinary child emotionally ill-equipped to deal with the insight and knowledge of the world his giant intellect remorselessly provides, and whose flashes of freaky genius make him a mystery to his peers and an inscrutable burden to his elders.

The movie itself offers an example of how unsettling that kind of genius can be in the person of Haley Joel Osment, who plays Cole and gives what I believe is the greatest performance by a child actor ever captured on celluloid. This is not some neo-realist kid who is natural and unaffected on screen, like most other great child-acting stunts. This is a performance by a professional so expert and nuanced that Laurence Olivier would have envied him.

As his mother, the Australian actress Toni Collette is smashing as well. And it would be easy to overlook the subtle and touching work by Willis, who disappears inside his character so totally that you forget you're watching the preening star of *Armageddon* and *Die Hard*.

Moviegoers often echo young Cole in crying out to the Lord for something, anything, worthwhile to see. *The Sixth Sense* is an answer to their prayer. ♦

A contributing editor to The Weekly Standard, *John Podhoretz is associate editor and editorial-page editor of the* New York Post.

"When the death of a disabled infant will lead to the birth of another infant with better prospects of a happy life, the total amount of happiness will be greater if the disabled infant is killed. The loss of happy life for the first infant is outweighed by the gain of a happier life for the second.

"Therefore, if killing the hemophiliac infant has no adverse effect on others, it would, according to the total view, be right to kill him."

—Peter Singer, leading utilitarian theorist and newly appointed professor of bioethics at Princeton, quoted in the New Yorker, *September 6, 1999*

Diary of John Thinkalotopous, associate professor of philosophy, Princeton

September 3, 1999
Dear Diary,

Peter Singer is such a brilliant man. I'm so thrilled he came to join us at Princeton. Already he has transformed the Friday colloquium. He held us spellbound with his insights into how one could improve on Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil. Dazzling. So lucid and so deep. Only one comment puzzled me. What did he mean when he said the total amount of happiness at Princeton would be increased if certain academics with unattractive warts on their noses were exterminated and replaced by supermodels?

September 4, 1999
Dear Diary,

We all went over to Professor Singer's house for lunch, where he dazzled us again with his erudition. I don't think I've ever tasted such magnificently prepared veal. Funny thing was, he kept coming back to that point about the supermodels. His position is that some people look wonderful with breast implants, whereas these devices would add nothing to the sum of human happiness if implanted into, for example, Sidney, the chairman of the Philosophy Department. Sidney could offer no logical rejoinder.

September 5, 1999
Dear Diary,

Terrible day. Sidney collapsed at the used bookstore this afternoon. Rushed to the hospital. Some rare case of food poisoning, it seems. We all visited him. Peter noted that no one would really miss him if he croaked, whereas the world would be in mourning if Elle Macpherson died. I wonder what Peter was doing offering a chair in philosophy to that young nurse. Obviously he operates in a realm far above my understanding.

September 6, 1999
Dear Diary,

Sidney's funeral was sad, yet beautiful. Only jarring note: Professor Singer sitting in the back row negotiating with someone from the Ford modeling agency over his cell phone.

September 13, 1999
Dear Diary,

What a wonderful day! Morning colloquium was canceled and instead the new chair of the department, Olga, showed us what lap dancing is. Talk about your increase in total happiness! Again, just a single ominous moment. Why did Professor Singer look at me so menacingly when he observed that blondes have more fun than swarthy people? But I guess Professor Singer likes me—he gave me some delicious deviled eggs to take home.